Program/Course Standards

Program Description:

- **Acceleration**
  The accelerated version of any degree course will be differentiated in the course catalog from the traditional program by course length, class note designation, and potentially instructor consent. It will entail methods of instruction at the associate degree level that allow a reduction of in-class hours to a minimum of **8 hours** per credit, with total hours of student effort remaining similar to a student taking **54** face-to-face course.

  **What this means to you:**
  In a typical class you will need to put in 10-15 hours a week on reading assignments, papers, and outside group work in addition to class time. All work is typed and proofed.

- **Sequential Curriculum**
  In order to achieve this reduction in hours, one necessary component is a carefully constructed sequential curriculum where content and competencies build from one class to the next.

  **What this means to you:**
  Groups of students will follow a prescribed curriculum through the entire program. All courses should be taken in order.

- **Work Experience/Application Based**
  Accelerated learning is application based, so a minimum of 3 - 5 years work experience is strongly recommended.

  **What this means to you:**
  Many of the assignments ask students to apply the knowledge gained from the class/group work to their own work experiences. Without at least a base of knowledge from previous of current work experience, a student may not be able to complete the assignments and pass the course.

- **Cohort Learning**
  This is a belief that students should learn as much from shared experiences with other students as they do from textbooks and lectures. Hence, instructors should encourage students to seek opportunities for cohort learning.

  **What this means to you:**
  You will be required to participate in study groups outside of the class on a regular basis as part of your requirement.
Facilitation
The role of the instructor is to guide and stimulate the class. Because accelerated programming believes in cohort learning, most courses will have limited formal lecturing.

What this means to you:
Instructors will expect and encourage students to be actively involved in the classroom learning environment. Class participation is critical for the success of the course. It is expected and graded.

Variety of Instructional Formats
Students engage the whole mind and body while learning, using right and left brain, multiple intelligences and all sensory systems. Teaching strategies include the use of: (1) seminars, (2) small groups, (3) experiential learning, (4) simulation, (5) presentations, (6) brainstorming, (7) case studies, (8) audio-visual techniques, (9) advanced technology, (10) take-home exams, and (11) integrative products.

What this means to you:
This is not a lecture based program. Many different methods are used that encourage students to be actively involved in the learning environment. You will be expected to respect all methods and all learning styles.

Adult Learning
Accelerated Programming operates on the assumption that adult students should be responsible for their own education. Hence, the role of the staff and instructors is to facilitate students’ exposure to learning experiences; the students are responsible for assimilating the information. The instructor assumes responsibility to provide appropriate learning opportunities; the students must decide how these opportunities will be used.

What this means to you:
You will be expected to conduct yourself in a manner that is in accordance with being a leader.
Your Responsibilities as an Accelerated Student

As an accelerated student, you share some important responsibilities with your cycle- and teammates which are necessary to ensure yourself of a quality education in this fast-paced program:

1. Be an active supporter and helper to the other members of your study/support team. These groups are formed at the first class, and their management is left entirely up to you. In some modules, the study/support teams may also be the activity groups, but that will not always be the case. Nevertheless, each study/support team has but one overarching objective: to guarantee that each of its members achieve program objectives and graduates with an Associate Degree!

2. Make learning and practical application of that learning your personal priority above concern for “grades.” Grades are important, of course, and a necessary part of the tax-supported and citizen-accountable educational institution. In accelerated learning, evaluation (grading) is not competitive. Grades are wholly dependent upon whether or not you demonstrate learning objectives. If everyone demonstrates, everyone gets an “A.”

3. Carry your weight in team projects. If someone in your team is consistently “riding” on the rest of you or has let the team down at the deadline for the second time, have a straightforward talk with him or her. You will be doing them a favor. Without a personal commitment to continuing education, they are wasting their time and money as well as yours. Do not expect a facilitator to become a surrogate parent and do this for you. We are all equal adults.

4. Make a personal commitment to accept the temporary personal sacrifices that are inevitably necessary in order to persist to the end, and to develop the skills required to become an independent learner.

5. Attend all classes. Accelerated programming has resulted in a reduction of in-class time. Therefore it is imperative for students to attend all classes. A student who is absent from one class may have a point deduction up to 5% of the total points for the course. A student who is absent for two classes has missed over 25% of the content and may not successfully pass the course. Due to the accelerated nature of the program missing more than one class will result in substantial deduction of points or recommended withdrawal from the course at the discretion of the instructor. In addition, if a pattern of absenteeism is noted, the student will meet with the program coordinator to discuss alternative plans for completion of the program. (see Madison College inclement weather policy for exceptions).

If a student is to be gone from class, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor prior to class and to make sure that the required assignments are turned in on time. The student will also want to communicate with another individual in the class to discuss what occurred in the class that was missed. (See next page for specifics).
6. **Complete assignments prior to class.** Students are to complete all of the assignments listed on the assignment sheet prior to the class meeting as this part of the process is essential for the student to be actively involved in the class activities and learning. **Points will be deducted for any late assignments.** Instructors typically deduct one point or 10% a day for late weekly assignments. There will be a more substantial deduction of points on any major course paper/portfolio/project that is not turned in on the due date. Check with your instructor on his/her late assignment policy. Some instructors do not accept late work.

7. **Maintain a positive, relaxed, alert state of mind throughout the classes.** The mindset and focus of each student has an impact on the quality for all participants.

8. **Address any concerns promptly and directly with the instructor.** If the problem involves another student, make every effort to resolve it with that person directly.

9. **All papers must be typed, double spaced and turned in on time.**