To achieve the expected learning goals of the QEP, the Construction Management department has linked assessment to the set of core skills and behaviors (outcomes) that are central to a student’s development as an integrated, intentional learner. These core expectations include the ability to: Integrate information from a variety of contexts and to Communicate effectively and responsibly. The Department aligned QEP outcomes with the American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) accreditation expectations, and parallel outcomes were mapped. With this mapping, the Construction Management Department implements and assesses a senior capstone experience integrating several major subject areas for the completion of a project involving regional companies. Each semester, for graduating seniors, both project team assessment and scores on the American Institute of Constructors (AIC) Level-1 professional certification exam are used to measure the level of outcome attainment.

For the Capstone experience, student teams act as general contractors tasked with estimating, bidding, scheduling, and planning financial projections using the context, plans, and specifications for a specific construction project. The integration of several knowledge areas is required for completion of the project including: project management, estimation, ethics, scheduling, teaming, market analysis, contracts, legal issues, construction safety, project administration, and effective communication skills. These core skills must be applied in an integrative fashion within the context of both the company’s regional presence and their specific business plan. Recent major construction projects involving the Nissan Car Dealership in Asheville, NC and The Haywood Electric Headquarters Facility in Waynesville, NC are examples of recent capstone projects. At each stage of project development, the student teams are required to present their projects, using written, graphical, and verbal communication. Aside from assessments conducted by faculty within the department, students complete the AIC Exam, which includes a major evaluation section on effective communication. Additionally, several of the strongest teams are chosen annually to compete at the National Association of Home Builders residential construction management competition. In January 2012, one of the WCU CM teams placed 5th out of 45 teams competing at the national event.

In the last four years, 220 CM students were assessed using data from the AIC exam and capstone project integrated rubrics. Specifically, the level of attainment for each outcome was evaluated in accordance with four categories: excellent, satisfactory, marginal, and unsatisfactory. Aggregate frequency and percentage values were calculated for the four-year period of assessment. For the QEP expectation, Communicate effectively and responsibly, 29% of the students ranked excellent, 38% ranked satisfactory, 24% ranked marginal, and 9% ranked unsatisfactory. For the QEP expectation, Integrate information from a variety of contexts, 22% of the students ranked excellent, 54% ranked satisfactory, 15% ranked marginal, and 10% ranked unsatisfactory.