



WESTERN WELDING ACADEMY
G I L L E T T E , W Y O M I N G

WESTERN WELDING ACADEMY
Student Handbook
(2023)*

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26 Kinsey Lane

Gillette, WY 82716

(307) 284-5313

westernweldingacademy.com

info@pipearcsolutions.com

Mission Statement

We are Western Welding Academy (WWA), a state-of-the-art training facility in Gillette, Wyoming. We love to teach! We want to help people become the best they can be in their careers.

Our focus is on creating the finest pipe and structural welders in the industry, with the mindset of quality over quantity. The school is set up to look and feel like an actual jobsite. Our students spend almost 100% of their time with us in the welding booth. The school is operated by a small dynamic team dedicated to our student's overall success. We teach several types of welding including Pipe, SMAW, GTAW, and FCAW on carbon steel, stainless steel, and other exotic piping materials.

WWA trains pipe and structural welders for power plant shutdowns, refinery turnarounds, gas plant base builds, oil field piping work, paper mill shutdowns, food processing plants, and various other mechanical/structural projects. WWA offers five different courses that address the needs of existing employers, people starting a welding career, and contractors who want to further their welding procedures and techniques.

One of the things that sets us apart from other welding schools is the level of commitment the WWA staff gives towards the success of our students. From the Academy Director to the welding instructors, each staff member of the WWA team is someone who has walked in the blue-collar shoes of the working man/woman who is trying to provide for themselves or a family. We understand the hardships associated with lack of skills, knowledge, and training. Our instructors all have real life experience working in the welding industry and are up to date on the latest techniques.

Another thing that sets WWA ahead of other welding schools is our atmosphere and company culture. WWA is set up and run like a job site to simulate an industrial setting. One hundred percent Personal Protective Equipment is required every minute of every day so that students are comfortable with it, and it becomes second nature to them.

We have a quality over quantity approach to everything we do. This approach has driven us to invest in top quality welding equipment. If something is worth doing, it is worth doing right.

Enrollment

Students interested in attending Western Welding Academy need to complete an enrollment application, this can be found online at www.westernweldingacademy.com.

Please keep the following in mind before completing the application:

- Applications must be completed in full. Partial applications will not be accepted.
- Please give careful attention to the date you list as your preferred start date. We do our best to honor the preferred date, but we cannot guarantee them.
- WWA can only accept students who are United States citizens or have legal US documentation.

Enrollment Requirements

All students must be at least 17 ½ years of age to be considered for any of the courses offered by WWA and must be 18 years of age upon course completion. Students who are under the age of 18 must have parental/guardian consent to enroll.

Before the student's start date, WWA highly recommends that students have their vision tested and corrected if necessary.

Physical requirements include:

- Standing for extended periods of time
- Good eyesight
- Bending, stooping, kneeling
- Grasping
- Ability to lift 50 lbs.
- Maneuvering into small spaces

WWA gives no credit for previous experience, education, or coursework.

WWA cannot transfer any completed course time to another institution.

Tuition must be paid in full 30 days prior to your Start Date. If using Financial Aid all Deposits must be paid 60 days prior to your Start Date

Western Welding Academy LLC is an equal opportunity institution. WWA complies with all local, city, county, state, and federal regulations pertaining to said school. All students are enrolled, trained, and promoted to prospective industry partners for future employment equally. WWA shall not deny enrollment to any prospective student or make a distinction or classification of students because of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

ORIENTATION DOCUMENTS

Orientation documents will be emailed to each student after verification of approval for financial aid or confirmation of cash payment. After these documents have been electronically signed by the student, they will be uploaded to the student's file. These documents must be signed before the student can begin class.

ORIENTATION DAY

Orientation will be on the Friday before your Official Start Date and will be held at the Student Selection Building. All NEW Students will need to be at the Student Selection Building at 10:30 a.m. for check in and Orientation will begin at 11:00 a.m. After Orientation is completed, anyone in our Housing will receive their keys to be able to move into their place on this day. You will start your assigned shift either the following Sunday or Monday. For 3rd shift students you will need to be at school Sunday night at 9:45 p.m. For 1st shift be at the school by 5:45 a.m. and 2nd shift be at the school by 1:45 p.m.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

WWA provides standard Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items for each student. These are to be used during training and are the students' to keep once they complete and graduate from their program. Students who choose to terminate their training or are expelled from the school prior to graduation are required to return the PPE to WWA.

Students may purchase additional PPE at their own expense. WWA does not provide or reimburse a student for PPE purchased as personal preference items.

ULTIMATE PROFESSIONAL PIPE WELDER COURSE

Duration – 24 weeks, 960 hours

Tuition - \$28,295

Tools - \$1,700

Total - \$29,995

Course V is a 6-month training program tailored to people interested in a pipe welding career. This is our main program that shapes and builds the next generation of pipe welders. Work ethic, jobsite safety, communication skills, and financial training are included to build top notch, solid employees. This course teaches all skills listed in Phase I, Phase 2, Phase 3, and Phase 4 and includes the following additional skills:

- Joint configuration
- Joint preparation
- Reading of welding symbols
- Blueprint reading
- Base metal pre-heating
- Weld repair
- Electrode care and management
- How to read a welding procedure (WPS)
- SMAW Downhill Welding
- GTAW welding on carbon steel, stainless steel, and other exotic materials from 2" to 20" pipe in all positions
- Confined space welding
- Welding from heights
- Dual operator style welding

Students are provided with all the tools needed to complete their course and are also provided with a welding jacket and hood. Students are 6G certified by an AWS Certified Welding Instructor at the end of the course providing they pass the required welding tests.

Phase I – STRUCTURAL WELDER

Duration – 5 weeks, 200 hours

Pre-requisite course – none

Pre-test – none

This course teaches Shielded Metal Arc Welding for beginners. Students learn the following skills:

- Use and care of welding tools
- Welding and shop safety
- Intro to Shielded Metal Arc Welding
- Proper electrode storage
- Proper electrode sizing and selection
- Arc strikes, shielding gas, and hydrogen cracking
- Base metal grading and selection
- Amperage and voltage ranges, travel speeds, and heat inputs
- How to read and understand a Welding Procedure Specification (WPS)
- Welding machine set-up for the Shielded Metal Arc Welding process
- Proper base metal preparation for welding
- Body positioning techniques when welding with SMAW
- Fillet weld measurements, fit up, and welding techniques
- Weld defects and acceptance criteria for AWS D1.1 structural steel code
- Intro to V-groove welds, electrode selection, and industry uses
- V-groove welding techniques for all positions
- Oxy-fuel torch set-up and cutting techniques
- Destructive testing techniques of V-groove welds, industry methods, and specimen preparation in accordance with the applicable code or standard

No experience is needed, show up and learn the basics. Students are provided with a tool bucket that includes all the basic welding tools needed to complete the course. Upon completion, students are certified to AWS D1.1 structural steel code and receive a course completion certificate.

PHASE 2 – SMAW PIPE WELDER

Duration– 7 weeks, 280 hours

Pre-requisite – Phase I or pass the pre-test

Pre-test – 3/8” Open Root V-Groove 3G & 4G Weld Test 6010/7018

This course teaches Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) on pipe. Students learn the following skills:

- Use and care of pipe welding tools
- Intro to pipe welding
- Proper electrode sizing and selection
- Arc strikes, shielding gas, and hydrogen cracking
- The importance of preheating base material
- Pressure ratings, temperature reaction, and expansion/contraction
- Amperage and voltage ranges, travel speed, and heat inputs
- Proper end prep and fit up techniques for pipe welding
- Body positioning techniques when pipe welding with SMAW
- Weld defects and acceptance criteria for AWS and ASME codes
- Intro to open-root pipe welding, electrode selection, and industry uses
- SMAW pipe welding techniques for all positions
- Non-Destructive testing techniques for the piping industry
- Weld defects and repair procedures in accordance with applicable piping codes
- SMAW weld repair techniques and common industry practices
- SMAW pipe rack welding techniques

Students are provided with all the basic tools needed to complete the course; however, students are expected to bring all the tools that are required for Welder I as well. Students learn how to weld pipe with SMAW on all sizes of pipe, from 8” to 2” in the booth and in the pipe rack simulator. Upon completion, students are certified to AWS specifications in accordance with ASME Section IX and receive a course completion certificate.

PHASE 3 – GTAW PIPE WELDER

Duration – 7 weeks, 280 hours

Pre-requisite course – Phase II SMAW Pipe Welder, or pass the pre-test

Pre-test – 2" XXH 6G Weld Test SMAW 6010/7018

This course teaches students GTAW carbon steel plate and pipe welding. Students learn the following skills:

- Use and care of a TIG torch
- Proper tungsten prep
- How to prep carbon steel base metal in preparation for GTAW welding
- Fillet weld techniques using the GTAW process
- Proper preparation and fit-up techniques for welding with the GTAW process
- How to GTAW/SMAW COMBO weld carbon steel pipe in all positions
- GTAW weld repair techniques and common industry practices
- GTAW/SMAW COMBO pipe rack welding techniques
- Weld defects and repair procedures in accordance with applicable piping codes

This course teaches Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW/SMAW COMBO Welding) on pipe. Students are provided with all the GTAW welding tools needed (including TIG torch) to complete the course; however, tools that are not stated on their Welder III tool list must be purchased by the student. Students learn how to weld pipe with SMAW on all sizes of pipe, from 8" to 2" in the booth and in the pipe rack simulator. Upon completion of the course, students are certified to AWS specifications in accordance with ASME Section IX and receive a course completion certificate.

PHASE 4 – Advanced SMAW DOWNHILL & GTAW STAINLESS PIPE WELDING

Duration – 5 weeks, 200 hours

Pre-requisite course – Phase III or pass the pre-test

Pre-test – 2” XH 6G Weld Test GTAW (ER70s-6) – 2” XXH 6G Weld Test SMAW 6010/7018

This course teaches advanced GTAW pipe welding and advanced SMAW pipe welding. Students learn the following skills:

- How to effectively use inert gas to purge the inside of the pipe in preparation for welding
- How to prep stainless-steel base metal in preparation for welding
- Proper fit-up techniques for stainless steel
- How to weld stainless steel
- GTAW weld repair techniques and common industry practices
- Pipe rack welding techniques
- Cutting and preparing large diameter pipe for SMAW downhill welding
- 12” branch connection layout
- SMAW downhill welding techniques and industry practices

Students are provided with all the welding tools needed to complete the course; however, any other tools needed that are not stated on their Welder IV tool list must be purchased by the student. Students learn how to weld pipe with GTAW and SMAW on all sizes of pipe, from 16” to 2”. Upon completion, students are certified to AWS specifications in accordance with ASME Section IX and receive a course completion certificate.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for the duration of enrollment. It is difficult to develop marketable skills without regular, consistent attendance. Employers require welders who hold prompt, and hold regular attendance in high regard.

1. Attendance is recorded daily. Students are evaluated weekly to ensure that they are on track to graduate from the given course.
2. Excused absences include serious illness of the student and death or birth within the immediate family. If you are sick a Doctors Note is required when returning to school. A death in the family will require an Obituary Note upon returning to school.
3. All absences, whether excused or unexcused, are recorded in the student's file. If you miss more than 3 days you lose HAND STATUS (on the 3rd missed day-meeting with your Lead Instructor to talk about losing HAND STATUS). 4th Day- Your not a HAND anymore, 5th Day- Meeting with your Lead Instructor, 6th Day- You are on Academic Probation and on 7th Day- Termination.
4. Tardiness is a disruption to the Academy and shows lack of respect to fellow students. 3 Tardies (Excused or Unexcused) = 1 Unexcused Absence. Any student who is late for their shift or leaves before the end of their shift will have a tardy entered into their file.
5. Leaves of absence are greatly discouraged, given that they are disruptive to the continuity of the training. All leave of absence requests may be granted after the submission of a leave of absence request form and upon approval of the student's lead instructor. Only 1 leave of absence, whether medical or personal, will be considered per any 12-month period. A leave of absence shall not exceed 60 calendar days for personal reasons or 90 days for medical reasons. Any student not returning to school following a leave of absence will be terminated on the next school day after the agreed upon return date.

A Written Notice From The Student Must Be Turned In To The Office Prior To Leaving Campus.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately and as they would be expected to dress in the welding field. Leather boots with steel or composite toe are recommended (ASTM F2413-11). **Safety glasses must be worn at all times while in the shop area (Z87.1).** Other personal protective gear as dictated by the instructors may include face shields and ear plugs while grinding, proper shaded lenses for welding and cutting, and long pants and sleeves to protect skin from arc rays.

Progress Standards

All students are expected to maintain passing grades while attending the school and all grades become part of the student's permanent record. Academic success is a tremendous indicator to employers on the type of employee you are likely to be.

Percentage portion of final grade for each course:

- Skilled performance.....75%
- Attendance.....15%
- Written Exam.....10%

A.....90-100%

B.....80-89%

C.....70-79%

D.....60-69%

F.....>59%

Code of Conduct

Student Code of Conduct: WWA students are always expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner. This includes respect for themselves, fellow students, faculty, and staff. **Disrespect will not be tolerated!** Misconduct such as fighting, horseplay, use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or carrying of weapons will not be tolerated. The Student Code of Conduct and regulations will be signed by each student at the start of each course and is also posted in the shop, classroom, and break areas. It will always visible to all students.

- 1) **Any possession, solicitation and/or use of drugs and alcohol will not be tolerated while on WWA property.** Prescription medication authorized by a physician and taken under direct orders will be the only exception. WWA must be made aware of any medications that impact the safety of fellow students and staff. Any use of illegal substances while attending WWA is grounds for termination.
- 2) All students will be required to dress and work per industry standards. All PPE will be worn at all times, every day.
- 3) Students are only allowed to take breaks during allotted times and in locations approved by WWA.
- 4) Smoking is not allowed inside any WWA buildings. Smoking will be allowed only at specific locations approved by WWA.
- 5) **Earbuds, cell phones and loud music players are strictly prohibited during class and/or shop times.** Cell phone use is allowed during approved break and lunch times.
- 6) Personal property is the responsibility of the student. WWA is not responsible for any missing or damaged personal property.
- 7) **All students will be subject to random drug testing and/or breathalyzer testing.** Refusal to take these tests will result in expulsion from school.
- 8) Students are required to adhere to strict safety standards. Students refusing to adhere to safety standards will be subject to expulsion.
- 9) Students are prohibited from bringing firearms into WWA facilities.
- 10) WWA has a no pet policy on campus.

Note – Any student dismissed for unsatisfactory conduct will not be allowed to return to the premises. WWA reserves the right to terminate a student for unsatisfactory conduct both on and off campus. If a Western Welding Academy Student is arrested or charged with a crime while enrolled, Western Welding Academy may suspend that student's enrollment until the student has been acquitted, convicted, or the judicial process is otherwise fully resolved. If the student's enrollment is suspended, that student will not be allowed on campus while the suspension is in effect. Western Welding Academy retains sole discretion to administer any disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Termination Policy

WWA strives to maintain a high level of standards for student conduct, quality of education, and a safe environment for high level skilled training. At the discretion of the administration, any student may be dismissed from the school for any serious incident or repeat instances, intoxicated or drugged states of behavior, possession of drugs or alcohol on school property, creating a safety hazard to themselves or other persons at the school, disobedient or disrespectful behavior to another student, faculty member, or staff, refusal to take a drug test, or any other stated or determined infraction of conduct; both on and off WWA property.

If at any time a student is found to be in violation beyond the allowable limits within this student handbook or for violations of any rules and regulations, they are subject to termination. Students are subject to termination for violations of the Enrollment Contract.

*Note – Grounds for termination include, **but are not limited to**, attendance policy, student conduct, dress code, progress standards, drug and alcohol policy, and failing to comply with random drug testing.*

Holiday Schedule

WWA campus is closed on the following days:

- The third week of March for spring break. Monday through Friday, actual dates will vary
- The Friday before and the Monday following Easter
- Memorial Day
- July 4th. If this holiday falls on a weekend, it will be the Friday immediately before or the Monday immediately after
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following Thanksgiving
- The two weeks surrounding Christmas and New Year's Day, as determined by WWA

Holiday schedule is subject to change

Course Completion

A graduate is defined as:

1. A student who attends the entire course duration with a minimum final grade of 70%
2. A student who completes all contracted courses in their entirety and decides to leave before their end date.

Once a course has been completed satisfactorily, the student is issued an official Certificate of Completion. This certificate includes the student's name, school name and address, course name, and date of completion. The certificate is authenticated by an authorized school official with their signature, title, date of issuance, and official seal.

Should a student require an additional copy of their course completion certificate, they may make a request in person during regular business hours or via USPS mail.

WWA documents and maintains copies of all course completion certificates.

Employment Assistance

WWA students receive employment training and coaching. Our mission is to train high quality welders and help them find employment. We only focus on the results we are able to achieve. Our graduates have no problem finding employment if they have a desire to work and are willing to travel. Students are welcome to join "WWA Members Only" Facebook page two weeks before they graduate. WWA posts current employment opportunities that are sent to us from companies looking for employees.

Grievance Procedure

Most problems or complaints can be resolved with proper communication. A meeting with the school staff is recommended. However, if the meeting does not resolve the situation to the student's satisfaction, they may submit a written complaint to the administration. This complaint should include the nature of the problem, approximate dates, names of individuals involved, copies of any important information regarding the problem, evidence the grievance policy was followed prior to this point, and the student's signature. WWA's Administrator personally responds to all grievances submitted.

Should the grievance not be resolved, the student may file a complaint with the Wyoming Department of Education at 122 W. 25th St. Suite E200, Cheyenne WY 82002.

Withdrawal and Refund Policy

If a student chooses to leave the academy before completing their training, the following refund policy will apply.

- The student will **forfeit 100% of their tuition** if they leave after completing **25% or more** of their course hours.
- The student will **forfeit 25%** of their tuition if they leave after completing **6-24%** of their course hours.
- The student will **forfeit 10%** of their tuition if they leave after completing **0-5%** of their course hours.

**A Written Notice From The Student Must Be
Turned In To The Office Prior To Leaving Campus**

**The \$350.00 booth hold payment is non-refundable and will be forfeited under any of
these circumstances.**

Hours of Operation

WWA offers 3 shifts for our student's convenience.

- 1st shift – 6:00 am to 2:00 pm Monday through Friday
- 2nd shift – 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday through Friday
- 3rd shift – 10:00 pm to 6:00 am beginning Sunday night and ending Friday morning

Office Hours

7:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday

Notice

Notice to Buyer:

Do not sign this agreement before you read it or if it contains any blank spaces. This is a legal document. All pages of this agreement are binding. You are entitled to an exact copy of the agreement, student handbook, and any other papers you may sign and are required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of those.

1098-T Notice:

WWA is not accredited with the US Department of Education. Therefore, WWA tuition is not tax deductible as a post-secondary expense when filing taxes. 1098-T tax forms will not be issued to any student enrolled in our program.

Cancellation of Contract:

If you have not started training, you may cancel this contract by submitting written notice of such cancellation to WWA at its address shown on the contract, which notice shall be sub-mitted not later than midnight of the third business day (excluding Sundays and holidays) following your signing this contract or the written notice may be personally or otherwise de-livered to WWA within that time. In event of dispute over timely notice, the burden to prove service rests on the sender.

Compliance:

WWA complies with all local, city, county, state, and federal regulations pertaining to said school.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

WWA admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the WWA's school. WWA shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs, or in employment.