Irrigation Technicians are skilled in design, installation, maintenance and repair. While a broad knowledge of irrigation systems and their applicability to specific environments is necessary, individuals may choose to specialize in applications such as agriculture, including center pivots and drip, or landscape, including residential, commercial, sports fields and golf.

Students in this program will develop skills in the following subject areas:

- Creative problem solving
- Mathematics and analysis
- Learn and apply new technologies
- Crop water and nutritional requirements
- Blueprint and schematic reading
- Electrical principles and practices
- Excellent communication skills

One of the water manager’s most important skills is the ability to react quickly to complex interaction between the environment and his/her actions. This reaction requires good reasoning ability, common sense, and a thorough understanding of soil, crop, and water relationships.

Job Opportunities:

Water is a resource that impacts our lives and our environment on a daily basis. Because of demands, today and in the future, management is a critical aspect in all applications. With the heightened emphasis on environment concerns the demand on water supplies are requiring old inefficient practices and systems to be updated or replaced. This is creating a demand for a broad range of irrigation expertise. People educated in water management, irrigation design, sales, installation and service will have abundant opportunities for employment. The idea of working outdoors with your hands, developing and implementing solutions for very demanding and challenging issues is attractive to many people.

Average Entry Salary:

- Center Pivot Technician $30,000-$35,000/year
- Landscape Service Technician $24,000-$30,000/year
- Sales/Retail/Wholesale/Rep. $22,000-$30,000/year
- Installation Crew/Foreman $22,000-$28,000/year

Walla Walla Community College’s Associate in Applied Arts and Sciences in Water Management/Irrigation Technology prepares students to enter highly skilled entry level positions. Students may also choose to continue their education with the College of Agriculture at Washington State University. This gives the student flexibility to pursue a technical field of study with an option to continue their education to receive a Bachelor of Science degree.

The Water Management/Irrigation Technology program at Walla Walla Community College is an 18-month professional-technical program which emphasizes practical “hands-on” work-based experience for both the agriculture irrigation and landscape and turf irrigation industries. The study of irrigation principles and practices, water and energy conservation, pumps, and fluid hydraulics, along with the hands-on training in electricity, troubleshooting, and installations prepare our students for the challenges of the industry.

The first six months of the program are intensive classroom and outside lab studies, with the emphasis on principles and practices. The following six month period is actual hands-on work experience in the field with a qualified employer. These co-op training positions offer employment and are available in both the agricultural field and the landscape and turf area. The final six months are spent in the classroom with an emphasis on design using both hand drafting skills and computer aided drafting tools.

Employment Opportunities during Education:
The Water Management/Irrigation Technology program has contracted with local conservation districts to provide technical expertise in the implementation of the cooperative compliance program (fish screens) and the efficiencies program. The programs are funded by grants, which are awarded conservation districts. These grants allow for paid technical support, which in turn allows the Water Management/Irrigation Technology program to employ students working in these programs. In the fish screen program the students get to meet with local land owners, listen to their concerns and then design and implement new pump suctions meeting all the landowners concerns and current federal and state criteria. In the efficiencies program the students help design new efficient irrigation systems to be installed for the landowners in trade for the saved water. The students are able to gain valuable real life experience and be paid while they are going to school. This unique opportunity is limited by the amount of grant funding available.

Water Management/Irrigation graduate options include:

- Owner/Operator
- Service Technician
- Wholesale/Retail Sales
- Irrigation Manager
- Water District Manager
- Designer/Specifier
- Conservation District/Governmental Agency
- Continued education at Washington State University