



## Understanding the Competency-Based Approach

Practically speaking, how do competency-based programs like those offered at Western Governors University (WGU) work? Unlike traditional universities, WGU does not award degrees based on completion of a certain number of credit hours or a certain set of required courses. Instead, you will earn your degree by demonstrating your skills, knowledge, and understanding of important concepts.

Progress through a degree program is governed not by the amount of time you spend in class but by your ability to demonstrate mastery of competencies as you complete required courses. Of course, you will need to engage in learning experiences as you review competencies or develop knowledge and skills in areas in which you may be weak. To help you acquire the knowledge and skills you need to complete your courses and program, WGU provides a rich array of learning resources. Your program mentor will work closely with you to help you understand the competencies required for your program and to help you create a schedule for completing your courses. You will also work closely with course instructors as you engage in each of your courses. As subject matter experts, course instructors will guide you through the content you must master to pass the course assessments.

The benefit of this competency-based system is that it enables students who are knowledgeable about a particular subject to make accelerated progress toward completing a degree, even if they lack college experience. You may have gained skills and knowledge of a subject while on the job, accumulated wisdom through years of life experience, or already taken a course on a particular subject. WGU will award your degree based on the skills and knowledge that you possess and can demonstrate—not the number of credits hours on your transcript.

## Accreditation

Western Governors University is the only university in the history of American higher education to have earned accreditation from four regional accrediting commissions. WGU's accreditation was awarded by (1)

as 15–20 hours per week to the program, while others may need to devote more time. For this reason, pre-assessments are there to help your program mentor form a profile of your prior knowledge and create a personalized Degree Plan.

## How You Will Interact with Faculty

At WGU, faculty serve in specialized roles, and they will work with you individually to provide the guidance, instruction, and support you will need to succeed and graduate. As a student, it is important for you to take advantage of this support. It is key to your progress and ultimate success. Upon your enrollment, you will be assigned a program mentor—an expert in your field of study who will provide you with regular program-level guidance and support from the day you start until the day you graduate. Your program mentor will set up regular telephone appointments (weekly at first) with you, which you will be expected to keep. The mentor will review program competencies with you and work with you to develop a plan and schedule for your coursework. Your program mentor will serve as your main point of contact throughout your program—helping you set weekly study goals, recommending specific learning materials, telling you what to expect in courses, and keeping you motivated. In addition to regular calls, your program mentor is available to help you resolve questions and concerns as they arise.

You will also be assigned to a course instructor for each course. Course instructors are doctoral-level subject matter experts who will assist your learning in each individual course. When you begin a new course, your assigned course instructor will actively monitor your progress and will be in touch to offer one-on-one instruction and to provide you with information about webinars, cohort sessions, and other learning opportunities available to help you acquire the competencies you need to master the course. Your course instructor can discuss your learning for the course, help you find answers to content questions, and give you the tools to navigate the course successfully. In addition, you will communicate with course instructors by posting in the online learning community and participating in live discussion sessions such as webinars and cohorts.

For many of the courses at WGU, you will be required to complete performance assessments. These include reports, papers, presentations, and projects that let you demonstrate your mastery of the required competencies. A separate group of faculty members, called evaluators, will review your work to determine whether it meets requirements. Evaluators are also subject matter experts in their field of evaluation. If your assessment needs further work before it “passes,” these evaluators, who review your work anonymously, will provide you with instructional feedback to help you meet evaluation standards and allow you to advance.

## Connecting with Other Mentors and Fellow Students

As you proceed through your Degree Plan, you will have direct contact with multiple faculty members. These communications can take a variety of forms, including participation in one-on-one discussions, chats in the learning communities, and live cohort and webinar opportunities. As a WGU student, you will have access to your own personal MyWGU Student Portal, which will provide a gateway to your courses of study, learning resources, and learning communities where you will interact with faculty and other students.

The learning resources in each course are specifically designed to support you as you develop competencies in preparation for your assessments. These learning resources may include reading materials, videos, tutorials, cohort opportunities, community discussions, and live discussions that are guided by course instructors who are experts in their field. You will access your program community during your orientation course to network with peers who are enrolled in your program and to receive continued support through professional enrichment and program-specific chats, blogs, and discussions. WGU also provides Student Services associates to help you and your program mentor solve any special problems that may arise.

## Orientation

The WGU orientation course focuses on acquainting you with WGU's competency-based model, distance education, technology, and other resources and tools available for students. You will also utilize WGU program and course communities, participate in activities, and get to know other students at WGU. The orientation course must be completed before you can start your first term at WGU.

## **Transferability of Prior College Coursework**

Because WGU is a competency-based institution, it does not award degrees based on credits but rather on demonstration of competency. However, if you have completed college coursework at another accredited institution, or if you have completed industry certifications, you may have your transcripts and certifications evaluated to determine if you are eligible to receive some transfer credit. The guidelines for determining what credits will be granted varies based on the degree program. Students entering graduate programs must have their undergraduate degree verified before being admitted to WGU. To review more information in regards to transfer guidelines based on the different degree programs, you may visit the Student Handbook found at the link below and search for "Transfer Credit Evaluation."

[Click here for the Student Handbook](#)

WGU does not waive any requirements based on a student's professional experience and does not perform a "résumé review" or "portfolio review" that will automatically waive any degree requirements. Degree requirements and transferability rules are subject to change in order to keep the degree content relevant and current.

Remember, WGU's competency-based approach lets you take advantage of your knowledge and skills, regardless of how you obtained them. Even when you do not directly receive credit, the knowledge you possess may help you accelerate the time it takes to complete your degree program.

## **Continuous Enrollment, On Time Progress, and Satisfactory Academic Progress**

WGU is a "continuous enrollment" institution, which means you will be automatically enrolled in each of your new terms while you are at WGU. Each term is six months long. Longer terms and continuous enrollment allow you to focus on your studies without the hassle of unnatural breaks between terms that you would experience at a more traditional university. At the end of every six-month term, you and your program mentor will review the progress you have made and revise your Degree Plan for your next six-month term.

WGU requires that students make measurable progress toward the completion of their degree programs every term. We call this "On-Time Progress," denoting that you are on track and making progress toward on-time graduation. As full-time students, graduate students must enroll in at least 8 competency units each term, and undergraduate students must enroll in at least 12 competency units each term.

Completing at least these minimum enrollments is essential to On-Time Progress and serves as a baseline from which you may accelerate your program. We measure your progress based on the courses you are able to pass, not on your accumulation of credit hours or course grades. Every time you pass a course, you are demonstrating that you have mastered skills and knowledge in your degree program. For comparison to traditional grading systems, passing a course means you have demonstrated competency equivalent to a "B" grade or better.

WGU assigns competency units to each course in order to track your progress through the program. A competency unit is equivalent to one semester credit of learning. Some courses may be assigned 3 competency units while others may be as large as 12 competency units.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is particularly important to students on financial aid because you must achieve SAP in order to maintain eligibility for financial aid. We will measure your SAP quantitatively by reviewing the number of competency units you have completed each term. In order to remain in good

academic standing, you must complete at least 66.67% of the units you attempt over the length of your program—including any courses you add to your term to accelerate your progress. Additionally, during your first term at WGU you must pass at least 3 competency units in order to remain eligible for financial aid. We know that SAP is complex, so please contact a financial aid counselor should you have additional questions. \*Please note: The Endorsement Preparation Program in Educational Leadership is not eligible for federal financial aid.

## **Courses**

Your Degree Plan includes courses needed to complete your program. To obtain your degree, you will be required to demonstrate your skills and knowledge by completing the assessment(s) for each course. In general there are two types of assessments: performance assessments and objective assessments. Performance assessments contain, in most cases, multiple scored tasks such as projects, essays, and research papers. Objective assessments include multiple-choice items, multiple-selection items, matching, short answer, drag-and-drop, and point-and-click item types, as well as case study and video-based items. Certifications verified through third parties may also be included in your program. More detailed information about each assessment is provided in each course of study.

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Course Description	CUs	Term
Business Simulation	4	9
Compensation and Benefits	3	9
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*The learner explains how the leadership of cultures fosters diversity, inclusion, ethics, and problem-solving.*

## **Quantitative Analysis For Business**

Quantitative Analysis for Business explores various decision-making models, including expected value models, linear

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Principles of Management provides students with an introductory look at the discipline of management and its context within the business environment. Students of this course build on previously mastered competencies by taking a more in-depth look at management as a discipline and how it differs from leadership while further exploring the importance of communication within business. This course provides students with a business generalist overview in the areas of strategic planning, total quality, entrepreneurship, conflict and change, human resource management, diversity, and organizational structure.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized*

## **Emotional and Cultural Intelligence**

Emotional and Cultural Intelligence focuses on key personal awareness skills that businesses request when hiring personnel. Key among those abilities is communication. Students will increase their skills in written, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills. The course then looks at three areas of personal awareness including emotional intelligence (EI), cultural awareness, and ethical self-awareness – building on previously acquired competencies and adding new ones. This course helps start students on a road of self-discovery, cultivating awareness to improve both as a business professional and personally.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate applies emotional intelligence (EI) to improve intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions.*

*The graduate demonstrates cultural intelligence (CI) within multicultural and contemporary business situations.*

## **Principles of Economics**

Principles of Economics provides students with the knowledge they need to be successful managers, including basic economic theories related to markets and how markets function. This course starts by defining economics, differentiating between microeconomics and macroeconomics, and explaining the fundamental economic principles of each. It then looks at microeconomics and how it is used to make business and public policy decisions, including the principles of supply, demand, and elasticity, market efficiency, cost of production, and different market structures. The course finishes by looking at macroeconomics and how it is used to make business and public policy decisions, including measurement of macroeconomic variables, aggregate supply and demand, the concepts of an open economy, and how trade policies influence domestic and international markets.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate explains fundamental economic principles used in microeconomics and macroeconomics.*

*The graduate explains concepts in microeconomics used in business and public policy decisions.*

*The graduate explains concepts in macroeconomics used in business and public policy decisions.*

## **Business Environment Applications II: Process, Logistics, and Operations**

*course plan together.*

*The graduate identifies the systems, structure, roles, and impact of finance in the business environment.*

*The graduate utilizes interest rates, time value of money, and risk and return principles to inform financial business decisions.*

*The graduate uses financial statements to determine the health of a business organization.*

*The graduate identifies how financial forecasting and budgeting helps individuals and organizations plan for future financial needs.*

*The graduate utilizes the appropriate financial tools and techniques to inform limited financial investment decisions.*

## **Concepts in Marketing, Sales, and Customer Contact**

Concepts in Marketing, Sales, and Customer Contact introduces students to the discipline of marketing and its role within the strategic and operational environments of a business. This course covers fundamental knowledge in the area of marketing planning, including the marketing mix, while also describing basic concepts of brand management, digital marketing, customer relationship management, and personal selling and negotiating. All of this helps students identify the role of marketing within an organization. This course provides students with a business generalist overview of the field of marketing and an exploration of the marketing major.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

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physical science concepts to help students integrate conceptual knowledge with practical skills.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The learner describes the nature and process of science.*

*The learner examines applications of physics including fundamental concepts such as forces, motion, energy, and waves.*

*The learner examines applications of key chemistry concepts including the structure of matter and the behavior and conservation of matter in chemical reactions.*

*The learner describes the underlying organization, interactions, and processes within the Earth system including the Earth's structure and atmosphere, and Earth's interactions within the solar system.*

## **Introduction to Sociology**

This course teaches students to think like sociologists, or, in other words, to see and understand the hidden rules, or norms, by which people live, and how they free or restrain behavior. Students will learn about socializing institutions, such as schools and families, as well as workplace organizations and governments. Participants will also learn how people deviate from the rules by challenging norms and how such behavior may result in social change, either on a large scale or within small groups.



Applied Algebra is designed to help you develop competence in working with functions, the algebra of functions, and using some applied properties of functions. You will start learning about how we can apply different kinds of functions to relevant, real-life examples. From there, the algebra of several families of functions will be explored, including linear, polynomial, exponential, and logistic functions. You will also learn about relevant, applicable mathematical properties of each family of functions, including rate of change, concavity, maximizing/minimizing, and asymptotes. These properties will be used to solve problems related to your major and make sense of everyday living problems. Students should complete Applied Probability and Statistics or its equivalent prior to engaging in Applied Algebra.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The learner interprets the real-world meaning of various functions based on notation, graphical representations, and data representations.*

*The learner applies linear functions and their properties to real-world problems.*

*The learner applies polynomial functions and their properties to real-world problems.*

*The learner applies exponential functions and their properties to real-world problems.*

*The learner applies logistic functions and their properties to real-world problems.*

*The learner analyzes graphical depictions of real-world situations using functional properties.*

*The learner verifies the validity of a given model.*

## **Introduction to Humanities**

This introductory humanities course allows candidates to practice essential writing, communication, and critical thinking skills necessary to engage in civic and professional interactions as mature, informed adults. Whether through studying literature, visual and performing arts, or philosophy, all humanities courses stress the need to form reasoned, analytical, and articulate responses to cultural and creative works. Studying a wide variety of creative works allows candidates to more effectively enter the global community with a broad and enlightened perspective.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate assesses the development of humans through the study of key concepts, disciplines, and primary influences of the humanities.*

*The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Classical period.*

*The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Renaissance.*

*The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Neoclassical and Enlightenment period.*

*The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Romantic period.*

*The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Realism movement.*

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## **IT Fundamentals**

### **Information Systems Management**

Information Systems Management provides an overview of many facets of information systems applicable to business. The course explores the importance of viewing information technology (IT) as an organizational resource that must be managed, so that it supports or enables organizational strategy.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate describes the role of information systems and the challenges of managing information technology in supporting essential business functions.*

*The graduate describes the characteristics, functions, and evolution of computer hardware and software in support of business functions.*

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*The graduate identifies the fundamentals of network security concepts to support an organization.*

*The graduate determines appropriate network security operations to protect an organization's assets.*

## **Human Resources**

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### **Introduction to Human Resource Management**

This course provides an introduction to the management of human resources, the function within an organization that focuses on recruitment, management, and direction for the people who work in the organization. Students will be introduced to topics such as strategic workforce planning and employment; compensation and benefits; training and development; employee and labor relations; and occupational health, safety, and security.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate articulates the strategic roles of human resource management.*

*The graduate explains the employment relationship and influential factors.*

*The graduate forecasts the human resource needs of the organization and plans the steps necessary to meet those needs.*

*The graduate explains the process of recruiting a qualified group of candidates.*

*The graduate explains the process of selecting employee(s) for a position.*

*The graduate explains common training and development activities that improve an employee's current and future job performance.*

*The graduate evaluates the contributions of employees in order to distribute direct and indirect monetary, and non-monetary, rewards.*

*The graduate identifies a system for measuring, evaluating, and influencing an employee's work performance.*

### **Workforce Planning: Recruitment and Selection**

This course focuses on building a highly skilled workforce by using effective strategies and tactics for recruiting, selecting, hiring, and retaining employees.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate manages the recruitment process.*

*The graduate evaluates jobs and develops job descriptions.*

*The graduate develops a plan for recruiting employees.*

*The graduate develops a strategy for selecting and hiring employees.*

*The graduate identifies employee-relations activities, policies, and procedures for balancing the rights of employer and employee in order to support strategic goals, objectives, and values of the organization.*

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Compensation and Benefits develops competence in the design and implementation of compensation and benefits systems in an organization. The total rewards perspective integrates tangible rewards (e.g., salary, bonuses) with employee benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement plan) and intangible rewards (e.g., location, work environment). This perspective allows students to use all forms of rewards fairly and effectively to enable job satisfaction and organizational performance. There are no prerequisites.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate explains a total rewards strategy that utilizes various forms of rewards while fitting with the organizational strategy, human resources strategy, and business environment.*

*The graduate evaluates the value of jobs and capabilities within an organization, producing a job-value structure that enables internal reward equity.*

*The graduate interprets market reward surveys to anchor pay levels and pay mixes for benchmark jobs.*

*The graduate evaluates pay types and systems with consideration for their motivational foundations.*

*The graduate effectively and legally manages employee benefits to minimize risk and maximize employee attraction and retention.*

*The graduate analyzes how employees and organizations create and value intangible rewards, integrating them with tangible forms of rewards.*

## **Employment Law**

This course reviews the legal and regulatory framework surrounding employment, including recruitment, termination, and discrimination law. The course topics include employment-at-will, EEO, ADA, OSHA, and other laws affecting the workplace. This course covers how to analyze current trends and issues in employment law and apply this knowledge to manage risk effectively in the employment relationship.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate explains the U.S. legal environment governing the employment relationship.*

*The graduate recommends strategies to prevent discrimination and limit employer risk.*

*The graduate manages compliance with workplace regulations.*

*The graduate explains statutory, administrative, and judicial decisions affecting labor relations.*

*The graduate assesses compliance with employment laws governing the employment relationship.*

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## **Data Management**

### **Data Management - Foundations**

This course introduces students to the concepts and terminology used in the field of data management. Students will be introduced to Structured Query Language (SQL) and will learn how to use Data Definition Language (DDL) and Data Manipulation Language (DML) commands to define, retrieve, and manipulate data. This course covers differentiations of data—structured vs. unstructured and quasi-structured (relational, hierarchical, XML, textual, visual, etc); it also covers aspects of data management (quality, policy, storage methodologies). Foundational concepts of data security are included.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

*Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*

*The graduate explains how data, databases, and data management are used in today's organizations.*

*The graduate analyzes the relational model of data.*

*The graduate implements SQL concepts and coding.*

*The graduate demonstrates an understanding of the concepts involved in the modeling of data.*

*The graduate demonstrates appropriate strategies to normalize data.*

*The graduate interprets the concepts of analytical processing within the context of business intelligence.*

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## **Capstone and Portfolio**

### **Business - IT Management Portfolio Requirement**

Business - IT Management Portfolio Requirement is designed to help the learner complete the culminating Undergraduate Business Portfolio assessment; it focuses on developing a business portfolio containing a strengths essay, a career report, a reflection essay, a resume, and exhibits that support one's strengths in the work place.

### **Business - IT Management Capstone Project**



## Accessibility and Accommodations

Western Governors University is committed to providing equal access to its academic programs to all qualified students. WGU's Accessibility Services team supports this mission by providing support, resources, advocacy, collaboration, and academic accommodations for students with disabilities and other qualifying conditions under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). WGU encourages student to complete the Accommodation Request Form as soon as they become aware of the need for an accommodation. Current and prospective students can reach the Accessibility Services team Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MST at 1-877-HELP-WGU (877-435-7948) x5922 or at ADASupport@wgu.edu.

## Need More Information? WGU Student Services

WGU's Student Services team is dedicated exclusively to helping you achieve your academic goals. The Student Services office is available during extended hours to assist with general questions and requests. The Student Services team members help you resolve issues, listen to student issues and concerns, and make recommendations for improving policy and practice based on student feedback.

Student Services team members also assist with unresolved concerns to find equitable resolutions. To contact the Student Services team, please feel free to call 877-435-7948 or e-mail [studentservices@wgu.edu](mailto:studentservices@wgu.edu). We are available Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., mountain standard time. Closed Sundays.

If you have inquiries or concerns that require technical support, please contact the WGU IT Service Desk. The IT Service Desk is available Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., mountain standard time. To contact the IT Service Desk, please call 1-877-HELP-WGU (877-435-7948) or e-mail [servicedesk@wgu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@wgu.edu). The support teams are generally closed in observance of university holidays.

For the most current information regarding WGU support services, please visit "Student Support" on the Student Portal at <http://my.wgu.edu>.