



## Certificate Guidebook

---

### Post-Master's Certificate, Nursing - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Post-MSN)

The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Post Master's Certificate program (PMCNUPMHNP) is a cutting-edge competency-based graduate program for nurses wishing to become advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) with the Psychiatric Mental Health

## 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 certificates based on completion of a certain number of credit hours or a certain set of required courses. Instead, you will earn your certificate by demonstrating your skills, knowledge, and understanding of important concepts.

Progress through a certificate 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 certificate 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 instructors as you engage in each of your courses. As subject matter experts, 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 certificate, 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 certificate 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

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 complete your certificate. 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 complete your certificate. 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 an instructor for each 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 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 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 instructors by posting in the online learning community and participating in live discussion sessions such as webinars and cohorts.

You will be required to complete performance assessments to demonstrate your competency. 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 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 certificates based on credits but rather on demonstration of competency. Students entering Post-Masters Certificate programs must have completed a graduate degree from an accredited institution and their degree verified before being admitted to WGU.

[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 program requirements. Program requirements and transferability rules are subject to change in order to keep the program 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 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 completion. 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 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



## Changes to Curriculum

WGU publishes an Institutional Catalog, which describes the academic requirements of each degree program. Although students are required to complete the program version current at the time of their enrollment, WGU may modify requirements and course offerings within that version of the program to maintain the currency and relevance of WGU's competencies and programs. When program requirements are updated, students readmitting after withdrawal from the university will be expected to re-enter into the most current catalog version of the program.

### Standard Path for Post-Master's Certificate, Nursing - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Post-MSN)

Course Description	CUs	Term
Advanced Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	4	1
Advanced Pharmacology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	4	1
Advanced Health Assessment for the Advanced Practice Nurse	4	2
Foundations of Advanced Psychiatric Mental Health Practice	3	2
The Assessment and Diagnostic Process of Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Practice	3	2
Psychopharmacology for Advanced Psychiatric Mental Health Practice	3	3
Advanced Psychiatric Mental Health Care of Adults and Older Adults Across Care Settings	3	3
Advanced Psychiatric Mental Health Care of Children and Adolescents Across Care Settings	3	3
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Clinical Internship I	3	4
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Clinical Internship II	3	4
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Clinical Internship III	3	4

## Areas of Study for Post-Master's Certificate, Nursing - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Post-MSN)

The following section includes the areas of study in the program, with their associated courses. Your specific learning resources and level of instructional support will vary based on the individual competencies you bring to the program and your confidence in developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in each area of the program. The Degree Plan and learning resources are dynamic, so you need to review your Degree Plan and e3

---

improve quality of life and health outcomes.

The graduate synthesizes pharmacological changes for patients in the transition of care to improve the overall patient experience.

The graduate analyzes how pharmacology affects wellness, nutrition, and women's and men's health to improve quality of life and health outcomes.

The graduate analyzes how pharmacology affects the gastrointestinal and endocrine systems, as well as obesity, to improve quality of life and health outcomes.

The graduate analyzes how pharmacology affects infectious diseases, allergies, and musculoskeletal disorders to make evidence-based decisions to improve quality of life and health outcomes.

## Advanced Health Assessment for the Advanced Practice Nurse

Advanced Health Assessment prepares the graduate nursing student to perform the role of an advanced practice nurse with the essential competencies necessary to provide primary health care to patients and families of diverse populations. Students will develop the skills needed for systematically collecting and analyzing subjective and objective patient data. Through simulation and clinical experiences, students will use data to determine current and ongoing patient health status, predict health risks, and identify health-promoting activities for patients across the lifespan. Advanced Health Assessment will prepare the nursing graduate with the critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and advanced diagnostic skills required for advanced practice nursing. Upon completion of Advanced Health Assessment, the graduate will be able to synthesize individual and systems level subjective and objective data to facilitate the differential diagnosis processes. Also, the graduate will be able to clearly describe to patients and providers the pertinent health assessment findings and rationale supporting the diagnostic process.

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 generates a comprehensive patient health assessment using subjective and objective data.

The graduate evaluates the head, eyes, ears, nose, and throat (HEENT), lymphatic, central nervous, and psychiatric systems using a holistic assessment approach to document normal and abnormal findings and incorporate lifespan considerations.

The graduate evaluates the pulmonary, cardiovascular, and peripheral vascular systems using a holistic assessment approach to document normal and abnormal findings and incorporate lifespan considerations.

The graduate evaluates the gastrointestinal and urinary systems using a holistic assessment approach to document normal and abnormal findings and incorporate lifespan considerations.

The graduate evaluates the gastrointestinal and urinary systems using a 2(r patient health assessment using subjective and objective systems using a holistic assessmenBMgkeletal l39 0oskequi ana6 T1 1gate eT1 1 he graduate ears, nos pulmonary, cardiovascularr

---



and populations.

psychiatric disorders.

### **Advanced Psychiatric Mental Health Care of Adults and Older Adults Across Care Settings**

Advanced Psychiatric Care of Adults and Older Adults Across Care Settings prepares students to provide evidence-based mental healthcare for adults, older adults, and families. This course guides students through the application of age and developmentally appropriate advanced practice health assessment knowledge and diagnostic reasoning skills for adults, older adults, and families experiencing complex mental health issues. This course helps students develop treatment plans using psychotherapeutic treatment modalities, psychopharmacology, and community resources to manage specific mental health disorders for adults, older adults, and families. This course also includes the influences of family dynamics and societal norms on mental health progression and recovery. The following courses are prerequisites: All MSN Core courses, Advanced Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse, Advanced Pharmacology for the Advanced Practice Nurse, and Advanced Health Assessment for the Advanced Practice Nurse.

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 diagnoses acute and chronic mental conditions in adults and older adults across care settings using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR).

The learner synthesizes patient-centered treatment plans including Psychotherapeutic and/or Pharmacological treatments for adults and older adults across care settings.

The learner incorporates mental health best practice approaches, therapeutic interventions, and health teaching into



outcomes in a range of settings as a competent provider.

