



Program Guidebook

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) the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, (2) the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, (3) the Accrediting Commission for Community and

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.

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

'Requirement Satisfied' (RS) in some cases. Refer to your specific program transfer guidelines to determine what can be satisfied by previously earned college credits. In most cases, WGU does not accept college transfer credits at the graduate (master's) level. Students entering graduate programs must have their undergraduate degree transcripts verified before being admitted to WGU. In addition to a program's standard course path, there may be additional state-specific requirements.

[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

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.

External Content & Basic Skills Exams

Western Governors University requires that candidates pass the state-mandated content exam that aligns with their WGU program in addition to a basic skills exam (initial licensure programs only). Specific information regarding required content and basic skills exams required for each program and state can be

competency units each term. A standard plan for a student for this program who entered WGU without any transfer units would look similar to the one on the following page. Your personal progress can be faster, but your pace will be determined by the extent of your transfer units, your time commitment, and your determination to proceed at a faster rate.

Standard Path Bachelor of Arts, Educational Studies in Secondary Mathematics Education

Course Description	CUs	Term
Educational Foundations	2	1
College Algebra	4	1
Trigonometry and Precalculus	4	1
Introduction to Humanities	3	1
Educational Psychology and Development of Children and Adolescents	4	2
Introduction to Biology	3	2
Probability and Statistics I	4	2
English Composition I	3	2
The School as a Community of Care	3	3
English Composition II	3	3
Introduction to Communication	3	3
Fundamentals of Diverse Learners	4	3
Managing Engaging Learning Environments	3	4
College Geometry	4	4
Calculus I	4	4
Integrated Physical Sciences	3	4
Natural Science Lab	2	5
Calculus II	4	5
Introduction to Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	3	5
Assessing Impact on Student Learning	3	5
Probability and Statistics II	3	6
Survey of United States History	3	6
Calculus III	3	6
Educational Technology for Teaching and Learning	3	6
Mathematical Modeling and Applications	3	7
Linear Algebra	3	7
Secondary Reading Instruction and Interventions	3	7
Secondary Disciplinary Literacy	3	7
Abstract Algebra	3	8
Advanced Calculus	3	8
Mathematics Learning and Teaching	4	8
Algebra for Secondary Mathematics Teaching	3	8
Geometry for Secondary Mathematics Teaching	3	9
Statistics and Probability for Secondary Mathematics Teaching	3	9

Areas of Study for Bachelor of Arts, Educational Studies in Secondary Mathematics Education

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 degree. The Degree Plan and learning resources are dynamic, so you need to review your Degree Plan and seek the advice of your mentor regarding the resources before you purchase them.

Professional Core

Educational Foundations

Educational Foundations is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. The course provides candidates with early classroom experience where they observe multiple school settings at three different levels of schooling and interview an educator to learn how state standards and various legal and ethical issues affect classrooms today. The course also provides candidates with opportunities to gain foundational knowledge about what it means to be a teacher in the current educational context while exploring their future role within the larger landscape of historical and cultural influences. This course ensures candidates have a firm grasp on important issues affecting educators including state standards-based curriculum, legal and ethical requirements affecting educational opportunities, and professionalism, preparing them for subsequent coursework within the Professional Core and their content area major courses. Five preclinical hours are interwoven throughout this course, and cross-cutting themes of technology and diversity are introduced for further development throughout the candidate's programs.

Educational Psychology and Development of Children and Adolescents

Educational Psychology and Development of Children and Adolescents is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course prepares candidates to support classroom practices grounded in research-validated principles from the areas of educational psychology and child/adolescent development. Candidates will be introduced to learning theories that equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support the diverse populations of students with whom they will interact. This course addresses theories of human development, spanning early childhood through adolescence, and candidates completing this course will be able to explain and analyze the guiding perspectives on linguistic, physical, cognitive, and social development. This course will also cover appropriate instructional and assessment strategies to support student learning and development. Candidates will engage in four hours of virtual classroom observations related to issues in educational psychology and learner development. Cross-cutting

The School as a Community of Care

The School as a Community of Care is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course prepares candidates to meet the social and emotional needs of learners, taking into account theories and philosophical perspectives on child and adolescent development and learning. Candidates learn to

Managing Engaging Learning Environments

Managing Engaging Learning Environments is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course prepares candidates to establish and contribute to safe and productive learning environments that support the success of all learners by ensuring student engagement and motivation for learning. Candidates will learn strategies, such as incorporating consistent routines and expectations, to provide positive behavior supports, increase learner motivation, promote active learning and self-direction, and ensure a safe and productive classroom setting that fosters a sense of community through collaborative educational practices. The course will culminate in evidence-based, practical application of current strategies, theories, or philosophical perspectives related to motivating and engaging all students in a learning community. Candidates will engage in seven hours of preclinical experiences that include both virtual observations of classroom settings and time in a simulated classroom environment where theory can be put into practice. Cross-cutting themes of technology and diversity are interwoven for further development. This course is designed to be taken after successful completion of the Fundamentals of Diverse Learners course.

Introduction to Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Introduction to Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course provides candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to create engaging and standards-aligned lessons that meet the needs of all learners. Candidates will learn to analyze learner needs based on a variety of inputs, including their state P–12 standards, assessment results, and knowledge of learner differences. This course will help candidates design, deliver, and modify instruction in accordance to needs and educational requirements. Candidates will engage in three hours of preclinical experiences that include virtual classroom observations. They also will record a short teaching segment, allowing for authentic teaching experience. Crosscutting themes of technology and diversity are interwoven for continued development. This course is designed to be taken after successful completion of the Managing Engaging Learning Environments course.

Assessing Impact on Student Learning

Assessing Impact on Student Learning is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course equips candidates to evaluate student learning and their own professional practice, ensuring candidates are prepared to ensure all learners' success. In this course, candidates learn multiple methods of assessment to ensure they are able to implement a balanced approach to assessment while monitoring their students' progress. Assessments types such as formative, summative, standardized, and common assessments are addressed so candidates understand their purposes and can apply them within the context of a lesson to determine impact on learning.

Data literacy skills are taught to ensure candidates interpret and analyze individual and classroom data and apply their knowledge in ways that support academic success. Candidates will engage in three hours of preclinical experiences that include virtual classroom observations. Cross-cutting themes of technology and diversity are interwoven for further development. This course is designed to be taken after successful completion of the Introduction to Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment course.

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.

English Composition I

English Composition I introduces candidates to the types of writing and thinking that are valued in college and beyond. Candidates will practice writing in several genres with emphasis placed on writing and revising academic arguments. Instruction and exercises in grammar, mechanics, research documentation, and style are paired with each module so that writers can practice these skills as necessary. Composition I is a foundational course designed to help candidates prepare for success at the college level. There are no prerequisites for English Composition I.

course plan together.

English Composition II

English Composition II introduces candidates to the types of research and writing that are valued in college and beyond. Candidates will practice writing, with emphasis placed on research, writing, and revising an academic argument. Instruction and exercises in grammar, mechanics, research documentation, and style are paired with each module so that writers can practice these skills as necessary. Composition II is a foundational course designed to help candidates prepare for success at the college level. Composition I is the prerequisite for Composition II.

Introduction to Communication

This introductory communication course allows candidates to become familiar with the fundamental communication theories and practices necessary to engage in healthy professional and personal relationships. Candidates will survey human communication on multiple levels and critically apply the theoretical grounding of the course to interpersonal, intercultural, small group, and public presentational contexts. The course also encourages candidates to consider the influence of language, perception, culture, and media on their daily communicative interactions. In addition to theory, candidates will engage in the application of effective communication skills through systematically preparing and delivering an oral presentation. By practicing these fundamental skills in human communication, candidates become more competent communicators as they develop more flexible, useful, and discriminatory communicative practices in a variety of contexts. Note: There are references within this video to Taskstream. If Taskstream is not part of your student experience, please disregard, and locate your task(s) within your course.

course plan together.

Integrated Physical Sciences

This course provides students with an overview of the basic principles and unifying ideas of the physical sciences: physics, chemistry, and earth sciences. Course materials focus on scientific reasoning and practical, everyday applications of physical science concepts to help students integrate conceptual knowledge with practical skills.

Survey of United States History

This course presents a broad and thematic survey of U.S. history from European colonization to the mid-twentieth century. Students will explore how historical events and major themes in American history have affected a diverse population.

course plan together.

Mathematics Content

Trigonometry and Precalculus

Trigonometry and Precalculus covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply trigonometry, complex numbers, systems of equations, vectors and matrices, sequence and series, and to use appropriate technology to model and solve real-life problems. Topics include degrees; radians and arcs; reference angles and right triangle trigonometry; applying, graphing and transforming trigonometric functions and their inverses; solving trigonometric equations; using and proving trigonometric identities; geometric, rectangular, and polar approaches to complex numbers; DeMoivre's Theorem; systems of linear equations and matrix-vector equations; systems of nonlinear equations; systems of inequalities; and arithmetic and geometric sequences and series. College Algebra is a prerequisite for this course.

Probability and Statistics I

Probability and Statistics I covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply basic probability, descriptive statistics, and statistical reasoning, and to use appropriate technology to model and solve real-life problems. It provides an introduction to the science of collecting, processing, analyzing, and interpreting data, including representations, constructions and interpretation of graphical displays (e.g., box plots, histograms, cumulative frequency plots, scatter plots). Topics include creating and interpreting numerical summaries and visual displays of data; regression lines and correlation; evaluating sampling methods and their effect on possible conclusions; designing observational studies, controlled experiments, and surveys; and determining probabilities using simulations, diagrams, and probability rules. Candidates should have completed a course in College Algebra before engaging in this course.

College Geometry

College Geometry covers the knowledge and skills necessary to use dynamic technology to explore geometry, to use axiomatic reasoning to prove statements about geometry, and to apply geometric models to solve real-life problems. Topics include axiomatic systems, analytic proofs, coordinate geometry, plane and solid Euclidean geometry, non-Euclidean geometries, constructions, transformations, deductive reasoning, and dynamic technology. College Algebra as well as Trigonometry and Precalculus are prerequisites.

Calculus I

Calculus I is the study of rates of change in relation to the slope of a curve and covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply differential calculus of one variable and to use appropriate technology to model and solve real-life problems. Topics include functions, limits, continuity, differentiability, visual, analytical, and conceptual approaches to the definition of the derivative, the power, chain, sum, product, and quotient rules applied to polynomial, trigonometric, exponential, and logarithmic functions, implicit differentiation, position, velocity, and acceleration, optimization, related rates, curve sketching, and L'Hopital's Rule. Pre-Calculus is a pre-requisite for this course.

course plan together.

Calculus II

Calculus II is the study of the accumulation of change in the area under a curve. It covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply integral calculus of one variable and to use appropriate technology to model and solve real-life problems. Topics include antiderivatives; indefinite integrals; the substitution rule; Riemann sums; the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus; definite integrals; acceleration, velocity, position, and initial values; integration by parts; integration by trigonometric substitution; integration by partial fractions; numerical integration; improper integration; area between curves; volumes and surface areas of revolution; arc length; work; center of mass; separable differential equations; direction fields; growth and decay problems; and sequences. Calculus I is a prerequisite for this course.

Probability and Statistics II

Probability and Statistics II covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply random variables, sampling distributions, estimation, and hypothesis testing, and to use appropriate technology to model and solve real-life problems. It provides tools for the science of analyzing and interpreting data and includes statistical variability and its sources and the role of randomness in statistical inference. Topics include discrete and continuous random variables; expected values; the Central Limit Theorem; the identification of unusual samples; population parameters; point estimates; confidence intervals; influences on accuracy and precision; hypothesis testing; and statistical tests (z mean, z proportion, one sample t, paired t, independent t, ANOVA, chi-squared, and significance of correlation). Calculus II and Probability and Statistics I are prerequisites for this course.

Calculus III

Calculus III is the study of calculus conducted in three-or-higher-dimensional space. It covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply calculus of multiple variables while using the appropriate technology to model and solve real-life problems. Topics include: infinite series and convergence tests (integral, comparison, ratio, root, and alternating), power series, Taylor polynomials, vectors, lines and planes in three dimensions, dot and cross products, multivariable functions, limits, and continuity, partial derivatives, directional derivatives, gradients, tangent planes, normal lines, and extreme values. Calculus II is a prerequisite for this course.

Mathematical Modeling and Applications

Mathematical Modeling and Applications applies mathematics, such as differential equations, discrete structures, and statistics to formulate models and solve real-world problems. This course emphasizes improving students' critical thinking to help them understand the process and application of mathematical modeling. Probability and Statistics II and Calculus II are prerequisites.

Linear Algebra

Linear Algebra is the study of the algebra of curve-free functions extended into three- or higher-dimensional space. It covers the knowledge and skills necessary to apply vectors, matrices, matrix theorems, and linear transformations and to use technology to model and solve real-life problems. It also covers properties of and proofs about vector spaces. Topics include linear equations and their matrix-vector representation $Ax=b$; row reduction; linear transformations and their matrix representations (shear, dilation, rotation, reflection); matrix operations matrix inverses and invertible matrix characterizations; computing determinants; relating determinants to area and volume; and axiomatic and intuitive definitions of vector spaces and subspaces; and proving theorems about them. College Geometry and Calculus II are prerequisites for this course.

Abstract Algebra

Geometry for Secondary Mathematics Teaching explores important conceptual underpinnings, common misconceptions, appropriate use of technology, and instructional practices to support and assess the learning of geometry. Secondary teachers in this course will develop a deep understanding of constructions and transformations, congruence and similarity, analytic geometry, solid geometry, conics, trigonometry, and the historical development of content. Calculus I and College Geometry are prerequisites for this course.

Natural Science Lab

This course gives you an introduction to using the scientific method and engaging in scientific research to reach conclusions about the natural world. You will design and carry out an experiment to investigate a hypothesis by gathering quantitative data.

Pedagogy

Secondary Reading Instruction and Interventions

Secondary Reading Instruction and Interventions explores the comprehensive, student-centered response to intervention (RTI) model used to identify and address the needs of learners in middle school and high school who struggle with reading comprehension and/or information retention. Course content provides educators with effective strategies designed to scaffold instruction and help learners develop increased skill in the following areas: reading, vocabulary, text structures and genres, and logical reasoning related to the academic disciplines. This course is designed to be taken after successful completion of the Introduction to Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment course OR Introduction to Instructional Planning and Presentation AND Instructional Planning and Presentation in Special Education.

Secondary Disciplinary Literacy

Secondary Disciplinary Literacy examines teaching strategies designed to help learners in middle and high school improve upon the literacy skills required to read, write, and think critically while engaging content in different academic disciplines. Themes include exploring how language structures, text features, vocabulary, and context influence reading comprehension across the curriculum. The course highlights strategies and tools designed to help teachers assess the reading comprehension and writing proficiency of learners and provides strategies to support students' reading and writing success in all curriculum areas. This course has no prerequisites.

Mathematics Education

Mathematics Learning and Teaching

Mathematics Learning and Teaching will help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become prospective and practicing educators. Students will be able to use a variety of instructional strategies to effectively facilitate the learning of mathematics. This course focuses on selecting appropriate resources, using multiple strategies, and planning instruction, with methods based on research and problem solving. A deep understanding of the knowledge, skills, and disposition of mathematics pedagogy is necessary to become an effective secondary mathematics educator. There are no prerequisites for this course.

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. 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.