



Program Guidebook

Bachelor of Arts, Special Education, Mild to Moderate

The Bachelor of Arts, Special Education, Mild-to-Moderate (BASPMM), is a competency-based degree program that prepares teacher candidates to apply for a license in Special Education (K-12). The Special Education, Mild to Moderate Exceptionalities program is specifically designed for the preparation of prospective teachers to work with students with mild to moderate disabilities in a variety of educational settings, including inclusion K-12 classrooms and resource classrooms. This program consists of online courses which take the

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

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

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

Accreditation

Western Governors University is the only university in the history of American higher education to have (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 Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and (4) the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The university's accreditation status is now managed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), which reaffirmed WGU's accreditation in March 2024. The WGU School of Education is accredited at the initial-licensure level by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and by the Association of Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). The nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The Health Information Management program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health

'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

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

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-

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.

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
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Areas of Study for Bachelor of Arts, Special Education, Mild to Moderate

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

The Professional Educator

The Professional Educator prepares WGU students to excel in the exciting and impactful profession of being an educator. Additionally, the course addresses the importance of continuous professional development and ethical considerations in teaching through the School of Education (SOE) Professional Dispositions and Ethics. Upon completion of the course, WGU students will be equipped with the tools and insights needed to continue their professional journey of becoming effective, inspiring, and adaptive educators, capable of making a significant impact in the lives of their students and the broader educational community. (This is not a transferable course.)

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 reflects on professional dispositions and ethics in their own education and career.
- " The learner analyzes the impact of professional dispositions and ethics in engaging with others and making decisions.
- " The learner examines program requirements, regulations, and the utilization of tools to navigate through the program.

Learners and Learning Science

Learners and Learning Science provides WGU students with a deep understanding of the science behind learning processes. This course covers a broad spectrum of topics pertaining to the science of learning, including cognitive development, learning theories, neuroscience in education, and the impact of developmental milestones on learning. Students will explore how these concepts apply to diverse learning environments and educational levels, from early childhood through adolescence. The course emphasizes evidence-based practices and the practical application of learning science principles, equipping students with strategies to enhance learning outcomes and learner engagement. This course aims to empower educators to create more effective, inclusive, and engaging learning experiences for all learners.

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 examines how principles of neuroscience are applied in instructional practices.
- " The learner examines how theories of learning science and learner growth and development influence educational practices.
- " The learner recommends instructional techniques based on principles of learning science that will positively impact learning.

Personalized Learning for Inclusive Classrooms

Personalized Learning for Inclusive Classrooms empowers educators to create more inclusive and effective learning environments. This course focuses on the principles and strategies of personalized learning, emphasizing the need to value and support the unique needs, interests, and abilities of each learner. The course provides a foundation for learner characteristics of learners with exceptionalities and other unique learning needs. This course helps candidates develop skills for partnering with parents and families to advocate for all students with exceptionalities, including those impacted by provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Multitiered systems of support are addressed to prepare candidates for their future classrooms as they seek to select appropriate instructional practices and interventions to best serve their learners. These factors are also addressed in relation to online and hybrid learning environments.

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 applies MTSS to address the needs of all students.
- " The learner examines policies, practices, and legal requirements to inform educator practice.
- " The learner identifies characteristics of students with various learning needs.

Creating Positive Learning Environments

Creating Positive Learning Environments delves into the key elements that contribute to creating and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere for educators focused on fostering supportive and productive classroom climates. The course teaches effective communication, classroom norms and routines, and positive behavior supports. Emphasizing the importance of a safe and inclusive environment, the course also explores methods to promote student engagement, collaboration, and mutual respect among all learners. It also addresses the role of mental well-being in learning, exploring trauma-informed and restorative practices, which are addressed in relation to online and hybrid learning environments. Through a blend of theoretical frameworks and practical applications including case studies, Creating Positive Learning Environments teaches

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 applies various assessment types to monitor progress and actively engage students in their own learning.
- " The learner aligns standards, objectives, and assessments within their instructional practices.
- " The learner analyzes assessment results to determine student learning and inform instructional decisions for a classroom.
- " The learner provides appropriate feedback to increase student learning.

Instructional Technology and Online Pedagogy

Technology for Instruction and Online Pedagogy is an innovative course designed to equip educators with the skills to effectively integrate technology in their teaching practices. The course also covers best practices for online pedagogy, assessment and feedback, collaborative learning, and the use of multimedia and interactive elements to enhance learning experiences. With a focus on practical application, educators will leave the course ready to create and facilitate compelling, high-quality online learning experiences that meet the needs of today's learners. This course also provides a foundation for supporting digital literacy in K-12 education. In addition, this course prepares candidates to use technology to improve professional productivity and effectiveness in areas like data analysis and data representations. Candidates will apply evidence-based practices to adapt instruction to meet student needs.

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 implements technology solutions to support teacher productivity.
- " The learner applies online pedagogy to facilitate student learning experiences.
- " The learner plans instruction focused on building students' digital literacy skills.
- " The learner applies instructional technologies to facilitate mastery of standards and objectives for all learners.

General Education

Composition: Writing with a Strategy

Welcome to Composition: Writing with a Strategy! In this course, you will focus on three main topics: understanding purpose, context, and audience, writing strategies and techniques, and editing and revising. In addition, the first section, will

are invaluable to strengthening a multitude of aspects of life. Specifically, this course will focus on communication in the professional setting, and present material from multiple vantage points, including communicating with others in a variety of contexts, across situations, and with diverse populations. Upon completion, you will have a deeper understanding of both your own and others' communication behaviors, and a toolbox of effective behaviors to enhance your experience in the workplace.

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 implements appropriate communication styles based on audience and setting.
- " The learner uses communication strategies for managing conflict.
- " The learner uses communication strategies to influence others.

Composition: Successful Self-Expression

Welcome to Composition: Successful Self-Expression! In this course, you will focus on four main topics: professional writing for a cross-cultural audience, narrowing research topics and questions, researching for content to support a topic, and referencing research sources. Each section includes learning opportunities through readings, videos, audio, and other relevant resources. Assessment activities with feedback also provide opportunities to check your learning, practice, and show how well you understand course content. Because the course is self-paced, you may move through the material as quickly or as slowly as you need to gain proficiency in the seven competencies that will be covered in the final assessment. If you have no prior knowledge or experience, you can expect to spend 30-40 hours on the course content. You will demonstrate competency through a performance assessment. There is no prerequisite for this course and there is no specific technical knowledge needed. demonstrate/MCID 0 cy ine2p.II FCvitieW59IMC Q1r implements appropriate communication styles bas demonstrate e_]oSwilencies:

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- " The graduate analyzes the basic chemical composition of cells and the basic processes that happen at the cellular level.
- " The graduate analyzes different types of cells based on their structures and biological functions.
- " The graduate analyzes the biological basis for and patterns of heredity and gene expression.
- " The graduate analyzes inter-dependencies of organisms and their environments.

American Politics and the US Constitution

American Politics and the U.S. Constitution examines the evolution of representative government in the United States and the changing interpretations of the civil rights and civil liberties protected by the Constitution. This course will give candidates an understanding of the powers of the branches of the federal government, the continual tensions inherent in a federal system, the shifting relationship between state and federal governments, and the interactions between elected officials and the ever-changing electorate. This course will focus on such topics as the role of a free press in a democracy, the impact of changing demographics on American politics, and the debates over and expansion of civil rights. Upon completion of the course, candidates should be able to explain the basic functions of the federal government, describe the forces that shape American policy and politics, and be better prepared to participate in America's civic institutions. This course has no prerequisite.

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 applies a range of preventative and responsive evidence-based practices in an ongoing collaboration to support the social, emotional, and educational well-being of students with emotional and behavioral exceptionalities.
- " The learner interprets data from a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) that assists in the development of a Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP) for the behavioral support of students with various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Special Education Law, Policies and Procedures

Special Education Law, Policies, and Procedures prepares special education teachers to practice within legal and ethical guidelines as they navigate the Special Education processes, stakeholder interactions, and other complex situations. This course provides an overview of the professional ethics and professional practice standards of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), which guides candidates to act in a professionally conscientious manner. Candidates will explore special education legal foundations and case laws to apply legal foundations and ethical practices in special education process compliance.

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 applies laws, key special education cases, and policies to comply with federal level Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for individuals with exceptionalities.
- " The learner applies ethical principles and professional practice standards to manage legal responsibilities when working with individuals with exceptionalities.

Assessment for Special Education

Assessment for Special Education prepares special education teachers to use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions concerning the student and their learning environment. This course is designed to help provide an understanding of how assessment data is used during screening in multitiered systems of support (MTSS), the eligibility process, the evaluation process, progress monitoring, and data-based instructional decision making.

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 analyzes a variety of data sources to inform the selection and development of formal, informal, and standardized measures that assess and monitor individuals with possible exceptionalities.
- " The learner interprets assessment results to inform educational decisions for individuals with exceptionalities.
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- " The learner coordinates with other professionals and families of students with exceptionalities to foster advocacy, facilitate connection with available resources, and promote culturally responsive communication.
- " The learner collaborates with other staff, communities, and parents to create an individualized education Plan (IEP), including the Individual Transition Plan (ITP), for students with exceptionalities.

Special Education Curriculum

Special Education Curriculum is designed for candidates who plan to teach in a special education program at any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. This course reviews the basic principles of special education and their application in realistic situations. Its focus is on five major content areas: Development and Characteristics of Learners, Planning and the Learning Environment, Instruction, Assessment, and Foundations and Professional Responsibilities which align to CEC Standards.

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 analyzes characteristics of learners and the factors that impact student development to promote better instruction and success through effective lesson plans, behavior management strategies, and a safe classroom environment.
- " The learner analyzes and interprets curriculum-based assessments and results to communicate learner needs and how to address those needs using individualized instructional strategies and techniques to further student success, including assistive technology, support of transition goals, and intervention strategies for at-risk learners.
- " The learner applies federal regulations in special education, including referral processes, rights safeguards, and legislation regulating Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS), and the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Considerations for Instructional Planning for Learners

Considerations for Instructional Planning for Learners is designed to introduce special education teachers to a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance the learning of students with exceptionalities. The course focuses specifically on strategies for intensifying and individualizing instructional interventions; making instructional decisions based on progress-monitoring data; collaborating with general education teachers and paraprofessionals; teaching to mastery; promoting generalization of learning; and teaching students with exceptionalities how to use self-assessment, problem

exceptionalities to measure progress toward individualized education plan (IEP) goals and adjust instruction as needed.

- " The learner implements mathematics strategies and interventions for elementary students with mild to moderate exceptionalities to measure progress toward individualized education plan (IEP) goals and adjust instruction as needed.
- " The learner integrates assistive technologies for student needs in an elementary setting by researching and selecting a technology, demonstrating how the technology is used, and teaching students how to use the technology.

Secondary Literacy and Mathematics Strategies and Assistive Technologies

Secondary Literacy and Mathematics Strategies and Assistive Technologies prepares special education teachers to use progress monitoring and evidence-based instructional practices appropriate for use with secondary students with exceptionalities. This course focuses on intensive instruction and accommodation that includes assistive technology to secondary lesson plans. Learners will apply strategies to develop student critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Learners will assess and measure student progress towards the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and transition goals for post-secondary and career preparation.

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 implements reading and writing strategies and interventions for secondary students with mild to moderate exceptionalities to address targeted deficits and regularly assesses those learned skills to measure progress toward individualized education plan (IEP) goals, including the individual transition plan (ITP) for moving to post-secondary education, and adjust instruction as needed.
- " The learner implements math strategies and interventions for secondary students with mild to moderate exceptionalities to address targeted deficits and regularly assesses those learned skills to measure progress toward individualized education plan (IEP) goals, including the individual transition plan (ITP) for moving to post-secondary education, and adjust instruction as needed.
- " The learner integrates assistive technologies for student needs in a secondary setting by researching and selecting a technology, demonstrating how the technology is used, and teaching students how to use the technology.

Elementary Education

Elementary Literacy Curriculum

Elementary Literacy Curriculum is a comprehensive course that deepens an educator's knowledge of language acquisition and progressively complex concepts and skills surrounding literacy. This course explores critical elements of the science of reading and writing, including applying key theories and research used to support the development of literacy, evaluating diverse resources, and utilizing purposeful oral, written, and digital communication in elementary curriculum. Candidates delve into the foundational aspects of literacy, including phonological awareness, phonics, word analysis, fluency, and comprehension, while also gaining insights into how these elements shape and influence literacy development. This dynamic course empowers educators to create a solid foundation for students' literacy skills and a lifelong love of reading and writing within various learning environments.

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 analyzes elementary content standards and resources in literacy.
- " The learner analyzes the role of phonological awareness, phonics, word analysis, fluency, and comprehension in literacy development.
- " The learner analyzes elements of literacy critical for communication.
- " The learner describes key features of texts across genres.
- " The learner analyzes the central concepts and structures in writing and the development of effective writing skills.

Early Literacy Methods

Early Literacy Methods is a specialized course designed for educators and professionals passionate about nurturing literacy skills in young children. This course offers an in-depth exploration of the foundational concepts and practices essential for promoting literacy development in early childhood through the science of reading. Emphasizing the critical development in

grades PK to third grade, the curriculum covers topics such as phonemic awareness, language acquisition, and emergent reading and writing skills. Candidates learn how to create stimulating and inclusive literacy environments, use developmentally appropriate materials, and engage with a variety of high-quality core instruction as part of Tier 1 multi-tiered systems of support and assessment (MTSS) suited to the various needs of young learners, including learners with dyslexia. Additionally, the course incorporates the latest research in early childhood literacy focusing on the science of reading and best practices for how children learn to read and write. Through a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical application, this course aims to prepare candidates with the tools to effectively guide and inspire early literacy development in their classrooms.

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 analyzes components of literacy acquisition and the development progression of those components for grades PK-3.
- ” The learner applies theories and research related to the science of reading to instructional decisions.
- ” The learner analyzes literacy instructional practices at the PK-3 level by designing experiences to meet rigorous learning goals for all learners.

Elementary Literacy Methods

Elementary Literacy Methods” is an engaging and comprehensive course designed for aspiring educators, focusing on the development of effective literacy teaching strategies for elementary-level students. This course reviews the fundamental principles of literacy education through science of reading, but takes a more specialized focus on vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and the deeply complex literacy skills developed in grades 4 to 6. Candidates explore a variety of instructional approaches and materials tailored to support all learners in the elementary classroom, including learners with dyslexia. This exposure will assist candidates in using Tier 1 multi-tiered systems of support and assessment (MTSS) for planning and implementing literacy lessons, selecting appropriate resources, and assessing student progress.

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.

multi-tiered systems of support and assessment (MTSS). This course reviews the science of reading associated with a wide

and implement effective interventions for diverse learner needs. Emphasis is placed on constructing a classroom

Accessibility and Accommodations

Western Governors University is committed to providing equal access to its academic programs to all qualified students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. We encourage 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 provide support and resources to help you succeed.

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. We are also available on weekends and holidays.

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. The support teams are generally available to assist you with your technical needs.

For the most current information regarding WGU support services, please visit "Student Support" on the