



ONLINE ACCREDITED MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION



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 February 2020. The WGU Teachers College 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 Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). The College of Business programs are

The Degree Plan

The focus of your program is your personalized Degree Plan. The Degree Plan is a detailed blueprint of the courses you will need to complete in order to earn your degree. The Degree Plan also lays out the accompanying learning resources and assessments that compose your program. The list of courses in the Degree Plan is often referred to as the standard path. The amount of time it takes to complete your program depends on both the amount of new information you need to learn and the amount of time you

Students vary widely in the specific skills and information they need to learn. For example, some students may be highly knowledgeable in a particular subject matter and would not need to engage in new learning opportunities. Other students may find that portions of the program require them to learn new information and that they need to take an online class or participate in a study module to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill program competencies in that area. Some individuals may be able to devote as little 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

'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. 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

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

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

Courses

Your Degree Plan includes courses needed to complete your program. To obtain your degree, you will be

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

Standard Path Master of Arts in Teaching, Science Education (Secondary) - WA

Course Description	CUs	Term
Schools as Communities of Care	2	1
Foundations of Education	2	1
Educational Psychology and Human Development of Children and Adolescents	4	1
Essential Practices for Supporting Diverse Learners	3	2
Creating and Managing Engaging Learning Environments	2	2
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2
Assessing Student Learning	2	2
Using Educational Technology for Teaching and Learning	2	3
Native Histories of the Pacific Northwest	1	3
Pacific Northwest K-12 Integrated Methods and Curriculum	1	3
Science, Technology, and Society	2	3
Science Methods	3	3
Secondary Reading Instruction and Interventions	2	4
Secondary Disciplinary Literacy	2	4
Preclinical Experiences in Science	2	4
Student Teaching I in Secondary Education	4	4
Teacher Performance Assessment in Science	1	5
Professional Portfolio	1	5
Cohort Seminar	1	5
Student Teaching II in Secondary Education	4	5

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

The graduate explains the historical, cultural or legal influences on specific situations within the current school context.

Essential Practices for Supporting Diverse Learners

Fundamentals of Diverse Learners is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. This course prepares candidates to consider and address the wide range of learning needs in the classrooms of today. This course teaches candidates to identify and support the needs of diverse populations of learners, including, for example, students with disabilities (Including Dyslexia), students who are English language learners, and students who are gifted and talented. Practical strategies for differentiating instruction while creating a safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environment are explored. This course helps candidates develop skills for partnering with parents and advocating for all students, particularly those impacted by provisions of 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 students. Candidates will engage in four hours of preclinical experiences that include a simulated teaching experience in which skills learned can be applied. Cross-cutting themes of technology and diversity are interwoven for further development.

Creating and Managing Engaging Learning Environments

Creating and Managing Engaging Learning Environments is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all Master of Arts in Teaching candidates. This course provides candidates with research-based strategies and approaches to establishing and maintaining a safe and productive learning environment that supports the success and well-being of all P-12 learners. Topics addressed include consistent routines and expectations, student engagement, positive behavior support, motivation and its effect on student achievement, active learning and self-direction, and fostering a sense of community through collaboration. Candidates will design a classroom management plan for their future classroom based on theory and high-leverage practices for meeting the diverse needs of learners in a productive and collaborative learning environment. The course will culminate in evidence-based, practical application of current strategies to motivate and engage students in specific content areas. 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.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all Master of Arts in Teaching candidates. This course provides candidates with theoretical foundations and strategies for creating engaging and standards-aligned lessons that meet the needs of all learners in the P-12 classroom. This course focuses on the interrelationship between curriculum, instruction, and assessment, with emphasis on the role of assessment and student data in planning, designing, delivering, and modifying instruction in accordance with diverse learner needs. This course will culminate in the application of evidence-based strategies related to the interdependence of and alignment among curriculum, instruction, and assessment in student-centered P-12 teaching and learning. Candidates will engage in three hours of preclinical experiences, which include conducting virtual classroom observations and recording a short teaching segment. Cross-cutting themes of technology and diversity are interwoven for continued development.

Assessing Student Learning

Assessing Student Learning is a key component of WGU's Professional Core and is a required course for all Master of Arts in Teaching candidates. This course provides candidates with methods and best practices for using assessment to monitor student progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. This course focuses on implementing a balanced approach to assessment using multiple assessment types such as formative, summative, standardized, and common assessments. Also covered are data literacy skills for interpreting and analyzing individual learner and classroom data to improve instruction and support academic success for all learners. The course will culminate in evidence-based, practical application of strategies for assessment practices in P-12 schools. 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.

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Using Educational Technology for Teaching and Learning is a key component of WGU's professional core and is a required course for all Master of Arts in Teaching candidates. This course presents strategies for integrating technology into classroom practices to improve instruction and student learning according to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. Candidates will evaluate digital tools and their potential classroom applications such as enhancing curriculum, enabling communication with students and families, and increasing student engagement. Topics covered include ethics, equity and access to technology, and appropriate use of technology by P-12 students. Assistive

apply best practices in integrating curriculum. This course will help learners design content-specific instruction that

Student Teaching II in Secondary Education

Student Teaching II in Secondary Education is the second of two culminating experiences and is a required course for all initial licensure candidates. Student Teaching II is a supervised classroom-based activity in an authentic setting, which enables the candidate to demonstrate professional dispositions and ethics while collaborating with a practicing teacher and applying instructional strategies using co-teaching models. The candidate assumes increasing responsibilities while developing the skills and confidence necessary to be an effective teacher. Each candidate receives formative feedback through observations and a final evaluation on the relevance of required activities, how culturally engaging the activities are, and how successful each candidate is in teaching each student. Each candidate is also evaluated on the ability to think about, analyze, and modify classroom actions as needed, and on a willingness to take risks and experiment with materials and methods that may be new or that may challenge your cultural knowledge. The final evaluation in Student Teaching II is the determining factor in applying for licensure as a professional educator.

Cohort Seminar

Cohort Seminar provides mentoring and supports teacher candidates during their demonstration teaching period by

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., mountain standard time.

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 during extended hours.

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