



## **Program Guidebook**

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### **Master of Arts Science Education (Secondary Biological Science)**

*The Master of Arts in Science Education (Secondary Biological Science) is a competency-based degree program that prepares already licensed teachers for an endorsement in secondary biology and provides the opportunity to develop skills in science curriculum development, design, and evaluation. All work in this degree program is online and includes General Science Content, Biology Content, and Science Education courses. All students complete a culminating Teacher Performance Assessment.*

## 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 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 accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

## 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 plan to devote each week to study.

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 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

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

## Transferability of Prior College Coursework

Because WGU is a competency-based institution, it does not award degrees based on credits but rather on demonstration of competency. WGU undergraduate programs may accept transfer credits or apply a

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

## **Courses**

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

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

## 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 found in the WGU Student Handbook. In many cases, it is the candidates' responsibility to register and pay for the required exams and submit their official passing score reports to WGU.

## State Licensure Requirements

This program does not lead to state licensure.

## Learning Resources

WGU works with many different educational partners, including enterprises, publishers, training companies, and higher educational institutions, to provide high-quality and effective learning resources that match the competencies you are developing. These vary in type, and may be combined to create the best learning experience for your course. A learning resource can be an e-textbook, online module, study guide, simulation, virtual lab, tutorial, or a combination of these. The cost of most learning resources are included in your tuition and Learning Resource Fee. They can be accessed or enrolled for through your courses. Some degree-specific resources are not covered by your tuition, and you will need to cover those costs separately. WGU also provides a robust library to help you obtain additional learning resources, as needed.

Mobile Compatibility:

The following article provides additional details about the current state of mobile compatibility for learning resources at WGU.

[Student Handbook article: Can I use my mobile device for learning resources?](#)

## Standard Path

As previously mentioned, competency units (CUs) have been assigned to each course in order to measure your academic progress. If you are an undergraduate student, you will be expected to enroll in a minimum of 12 competency units each term. Graduate students are expected to enroll in a minimum of 8 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 *for* Master of Arts Science Education (Secondary Biological Science)

| Course Description                                   | CUs | Term |
|--|-----|------|
| Concepts in Science                                  | 1   | 1    |
| Introduction to Biology                              | 2   | 1    |
| Human Anatomy and Physiology                         | 3   | 1    |
| Chemistry with Lab                                   | 3   | 1    |
| Molecular and Cellular Biology                       | 3   | 2    |
| Heredity and Genetics                                | 2   | 2    |
| Science, Technology, and Society                     | 2   | 2    |
| Zoology  | 2   | 2    |
| Ecology and Environmental Science                    | 2   | 3    |
| Evolution  | 3   | 3    |
| Biology: Content Knowledge                           | 1   | 3    |
| Science Methods—Secondary Biology                    | 3   | 3    |
| MA, Science Education Teacher Performance Assessment | 6   | 4    |

### 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.

# Areas of Study for Master of Arts Science Education (Secondary Biological Science)

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.

## Science

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### Concepts in Science

Concepts in Science for graduates provides already-licensed teachers seeking an additional license or endorsement in science education with an introduction to essential science themes present within and across all science disciplines, including chemistry, physics, biology, and the geosciences. These themes include comprehending the magnitude of the physical and natural world, analyzing and converting measurements, understanding the basic nature and behavior of matter and energy, examining atomic structure, identifying and naming basic types of chemical bonds, and analyzing and interpreting scientific data. Concepts in Science provides a solid foundation for future, in-depth, scientific studies and should be taken prior to any other science content course. There are no prerequisites for this 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 graduate analyzes a variety of measurements to solve scientific problems.*
- *The graduate analyzes interactions between matter and energy to explain how they flow within, into, and out of systems.*
- *The graduate analyzes the composition of atoms and compounds to explain the properties of matter.*
- *The graduate evaluates experimental data to determine their validity.*

## General Education

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### Introduction to Biology

This course is a foundational introduction to the biological sciences. This course explores the overarching theories of life from biological research as well as the fundamental concepts and principles of the study of living organisms and their interaction with the environment. Key concepts include how living organisms use and produce energy; how life grows, develops, and reproduces; how life responds to the environment to maintain internal stability; and how life evolves and adapts to the environment.

*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 analyzes the characteristics and classifications of living organisms.*
- *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.*

## Biology Content

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### Human Anatomy and Physiology

This course examines the structures and functions of the human body and covers anatomical terminology, cells and tissues, and organ systems. Students will study the healthy state of the organ systems of the human body, including the digestive,

skeletal, sensory, respiratory, reproductive, nervous, muscular, cardiovascular, lymphatic, integumentary, endocrine, and renal systems. There are no prerequisites for this 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 graduate applies appropriate terminology to communicate about body position and human anatomical features and relationships.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structures and functions of the human cardiovascular and respiratory systems.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human renal and reproductive systems.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human nervous system.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human digestive system.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structures and functions of the human muscular, skeletal, and integumentary systems.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human lymphatic and endocrine systems.*

## **Molecular and Cellular Biology**

Molecular and Cellular Biology provides graduate students seeking initial licensure or endorsement and/or to earn their MA degree in secondary science education with an introduction to the area of molecular and cellular biology. This course examines the cell as an organism emphasizing molecular basis of cell structure and functions of biological macromolecules, subcellular organelles, intracellular transport, cell division, and biological reactions. A prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Biology.

*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 examines cells, organelles, viruses, and vaccines to analyze their structure and function in biological systems.*
- *The graduate examines the processes within the cell cycle in order to recognize their impact on growth and development.*
- *The graduate examines chemical principles, enzymes, biochemical pathways, energy flow, and cellular environments to analyze cellular metabolism.*
- *The graduate analyzes the structure of biological macromolecules to determine their function within a cell.*
- *The graduate distinguishes the steps involved in the synthesis and processing of mRNA and protein to analyze their purpose in cell function.*
- *The graduate applies basic laboratory techniques to examine biological processes and reactions.*

## **Heredity and Genetics**

Heredity and Genetics is an introductory course for graduate students seeking initial licensure or endorsement and/or students earning their MA degree in secondary or middle grade science education. This course addresses the basic principles of heredity and the function of molecular genetics. Topics include Mendelian and non-Mendelian inheritance and population genetics. This course has no prerequisites.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The graduate researches the biological basis of inheritance to analyze patterns of heredity.*
- *The graduate researches applications of molecular genetics to analyze chromosomal disorders and mutations.*
- *The graduate examines the structure and expression of genes to explain resulting phenotypes.*
- *The graduate applies the principles of population genetics to determine characteristics of a population.*

## **Zoology**

Zoology provides graduate students seeking licensure or endorsement and/or their MA degree in secondary science

education with an introduction to the field of zoology. Zoology includes the study of major animal phyla emphasizing characteristics, variations in anatomy, life cycles, adaptations, and relationships among the animal kingdom. A prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Biology.

*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 distinguishes the characteristics of animals to organize them into phyla.*
- *The graduate analyzes the anatomies of animals to distinguish the relationships among organisms.*
- *The graduate analyzes adaptations to recognize the impact on the evolution of phyla.*
- *The graduate analyzes the life cycles of animals to determine the relationships within and between phyla.*

## **Evolution**

This course addresses why evolution is the fundamental concept that underlies all life sciences and how it contributes to advances in medicine, public health, and conservation. This course helps participants gain a firm understanding of the basic mechanisms of evolution including the process of speciation and how these systems have given rise to the great diversity of life in the world today. This course also explore how new ideas, discoveries, and technologies are modifying prior evolutionary concepts. Ultimately, the course will explain how evolution works and how we know what we know.

*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 has a practical understanding of Darwin and the evidence that led him to propose his theory of evolution.*
- *The graduate can explain the basic theory of evolution and how evolutionary mechanisms have driven diversification among organisms.*
- *The graduate has an in-depth understanding of how coevolution, genetic drift, natural selection, and sexual selection contribute to the organization of the Earth's biodiversity.*
- *The graduate appreciates the different opinions about how species are defined based on using molecular data to understand evolutionary processes.*
- *The graduate recognizes the complexities of human evolution, where humans fit with respect to other organisms on the Tree of Life, and what sets humans apart from other animals.*
- *The graduate recognizes how evolutionary theory impacts our lives through modern medicine, agriculture, and conservation efforts.*

## **Biology: Content Knowledge**

This comprehensive course examines a student's conceptual understanding of a broad range of biology topics. High school biology teachers must help students make connections between isolated topics. This course starts with macromolecules that make up cellular components and continues with understanding the many cellular processes that allow life to exist. Connections are then made between genetics and evolution. Classification of organisms leads into plant and animal development that study the organ systems and their role in maintaining homeostasis. The course finishes by studying ecology and the effect humans have on the environment.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *This competency exists to assess the readiness of students.*
- *The graduate synthesizes concepts and processes from across biology to generate a comprehensive understanding of the field.*
- *The graduate verifies that they possess the requisite biology knowledge and skills by passing the biology content knowledge test required to become a beginning teacher of secondary school biology.*

## **Chemistry Content**

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### **Chemistry with Lab**

Chemistry with Lab for graduates provides already licensed teachers seeking an additional license or endorsement in middle grades science or secondary physics, biological science, or earth science with an introduction to the field of chemistry. Designed for those not majoring in chemistry education, this course highlights how the topics covered can be applied within

various branches of science. This course provides students with opportunities to examine the electronic structure of atoms, study periodic trends, name chemical compounds, write chemical formulas, determine the structure of molecules, balance chemical reactions, and discover the changing states of matter. Laboratory experiences facilitate the study of matter and the application of laboratory safety and maintenance procedures. Concepts in Science for graduates is a prerequisite for this 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 graduate evaluates how chemistry is related to other sciences to understand its relevance within the physical and natural world.*
- *The graduate conducts safe and effective investigations to test hypotheses and draw conclusions.*
- *The graduate analyzes the electronic structure of atoms and periodic trends to distinguish properties of various substances.*
- *The graduate explains how to use the periodic table and IUPAC rules to name chemical compounds.*
- *The graduate explains how chemical bonds and electron orientation impact the structures and behavior of molecules to understand the composition of matter.*
- *The graduate balances chemical equations to determine what happens during a chemical reaction.*
- *The graduate analyzes the relationship between heat and other forms of energy to examine the behavior of heat under various circumstances.*
- *The graduate examines the physical states of matter to explain their properties and the process by which matter changes state.*

## Science Education

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### Science, Technology, and Society

Science, Technology, and Society explores the ways in which science influences and is influenced by society and technology. A humanistic and social endeavor, science serves the needs of ever-changing societies by providing methods for observing, questioning, discovering, and communicating information about the physical and natural world. This course prepares educators to explain the nature and history of science, the various applications of science, and the scientific and engineering processes used to conduct investigations, make decisions, and solve problems. There are no prerequisites for this 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 graduate analyzes the relationships among themes that appear across multiple scientific ideas.*
- *The graduate analyzes the nature of science, including how science distinguishes itself from other ways of knowing.*
- *The graduate analyzes the historical development of science, including how scientific knowledge evolves.*
- *The graduate analyzes the various ways in which science, technology, and society are interrelated.*
- *The graduate analyzes socially relevant scientific issues to make informed decisions based on data and context.*
- *The graduate analyzes the principles, processes, and assumptions of investigations in science to engage students in the nature of inquiry.*
- *The graduate uses technology tools and mathematics to improve investigations and the communication of results.*
- *The graduate formulates testable hypotheses for scientific investigations.*
- *The graduate conducts investigations in science to solve open-ended problems using appropriate scientific methods.*

### Science Methods—Secondary Biology

Science Methods—Secondary Biology focuses on teaching methods specific to science for graduate students seeking an endorsement in secondary biology. This course focuses on the design and teaching of standards-based lessons using the three dimensions of science (science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas) and the appropriate integration of technology into those lessons. Students in this course work within their content areas to evaluate, enhance, and plan appropriate science instruction. This course includes laboratory safety training and certification, which

includes safe laboratory practices and procedures for science classrooms and the proper use of personal protective equipment. Previous coursework in curriculum, instruction, and assessment is a prerequisite for this 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 graduate analyzes connections among the three dimensions of science instruction—disciplinary core ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science and engineering practices—to prepare and plan for instruction.*
- *The graduate integrates technology into science activities to support student engagement and content mastery.*
- *The graduate develops assessment strategies that measure three-dimensional science learning to determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning experiences.*
- *The graduate develops lessons that integrate the three dimensions of science with applicable technologies to connect scientific concepts and phenomena.*
- *The graduate develops plans for the use, storage, and maintenance of science materials and protective equipment and for the care of living organisms to comply with district, state, and federal safety, ethical, and legal standards for science teachers.*
- *The graduate establishes an emergency response plan to prepare for potential emergency situations in the science learning environment.*

## General Science Content

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### Ecology and Environmental Science

Ecology and Environmental Science is an introductory course for graduate students seeking initial licensure or endorsement and/or to earn their MA degree in secondary or middle grade science education. The course explores the relationships between organisms and their environment, including population ecology, communities, adaptations, distributions, interactions, and the environmental factors controlling these relationships. This course has no prerequisites.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The graduate examines ecosystems to analyze the relationship between populations and the environment.*
- *The graduate examines the flow of energy in an ecosystem to assess how changes in that flow affect biodiversity.*
- *The graduate analyzes biogeochemical cycles to explain the importance of these cycles to global processes.*
- *The graduate researches environmental challenges to discuss potential solutions.*
- *The graduate assesses the challenges associated with resource management in order to compare potential sustainable solutions.*

## Teacher Performance Assessment

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### MA, Science Education Teacher Performance Assessment

MA, Science Education Teacher Performance Assessment contains a comprehensive, original, research-based curriculum unit designed to meet an identified educational need. It provides direct evidence of the candidate's ability to design and implement a multi-week, standards-based unit of instruction, assess student learning, and then reflect on the learning process. The WGU Teacher Performance Assessment requires students to plan and teach a multi-week standards-based instructional unit consisting of seven components: 1) contextual factors, 2) learning goals, 3) assessment, 4) design for instruction, 5) instructional decision-making, 6) analysis of student learning, and 7) self-evaluation and reflection.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The graduate evaluates the teaching context to accommodate student differences to plan for instruction and assessment.*
- *The graduate recommends improvements for instruction and professional practice through personal reflection.*
- *The graduate plans learning environments that support individual learning, collaboration, and positive social interaction.*
- *The graduate demonstrates ethical responsibilities and appropriate teaching dispositions, including those outlined in the Western Governors University Teachers College Code of Ethics.*

- *The graduate plans comprehensive learning segments of instruction and assessment that align with standards and the needs of students.*
- *The graduate applies instructional strategies that promote learning, engage students, and provide differentiated instruction.*
- *The graduate recommends strategies that support the development of academic language for all students.*
- *The graduate integrates strategies to develop academic language that facilitates effective student participation and engagement in learning.*
- *The graduate utilizes assessment data to profile student learning, communicate information about student progress and achievement, and guide and modify instruction.*
- *The graduate integrates a variety of strategies and resources to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of diverse learners.*
- *The graduate evaluates teaching experiences including the planning and implementing of curriculum and instruction through ongoing reflection.*
- *The graduate develops appropriate plans for professional growth in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, including habits and skills of continual inquiry and learning.*

## Accessibility and Accommodations

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

## Need More Information? WGU Student Services

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

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

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

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