Program Guidebook

Master of Science in Marketing, Marketing Analytics Specialization

The Master of Science in Marketing with a specialization in Marketing Analytics is a competency-based degree program that develops digital marketing analytical skills that can be applied to a variety of sectors, such as corporations, small businesses, government agencies, non-profits, and healthcare and education institutions. The competencies in this program measure in-demand skills using industry-standard techniques to gather, analyze, and report digital marketing data for decision-making purposes. You will demonstrate competencies using technical and analytical skills in digital marketing analysis, search engine optimization, and e-commerce. The program concludes with an experiential learning capstone course where you will deliver a digital marketing analytics project to a business client to culminate the skills learned throughout the program. Industry certifications are also included in the program.

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 for 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. Your program mentor and course instructors will help you assess your strengths and development needs to establish a study plan.

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

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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.

You will also be assigned to a course instructor for each course. Course instructors are doctoral-level subject matter experts who will assist your learning in each individual course. When you begin a new course, your assigned course instructor will actively monitor your progress and will be in touch to offer one-on-one instruction and to provide you with information about webinars, cohort sessions, and other learning opportunities available to help you acquire the competencies you need to master the course. Your course instructor can discuss your learning for the course, help you find answers to content questions, and give you the tools to navigate the course successfully. In addition, you will communicate with course instructors by posting in the online learning community and participating in live discussion sessions such as webinars and cohorts.

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

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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. However, if you have completed college coursework at another accredited institution, or if you have completed industry certifications, you may have your transcripts and certifications evaluated to determine if you are eligible to receive some transfer credit. The guidelines for determining what credits will be granted varies based on the degree program. Students entering graduate programs must have their undergraduate degree verified before being admitted to WGU. To review more information in regards to transfer guidelines based on the different degree programs, you may visit the Student Handbook found at the link below and search for "Transfer Credit Evaluation."

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 onthe 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

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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.

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.

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Standard Path *for* Master of Science in Marketing, Marketing Analytics Specialization

Course Description	CUs	Term
Managing Organizations and Leading People	3	1
Frameworks for Strategic Decision-Making	3	1
Marketing in the Digital Era	3	1
Market Research	3	2
Marketing Communications and Storytelling	3	2
Product, Price, and Customer Experience	3	2
Digital Marketing Science	4	3
E-Commerce and Marketing Analytics	3	3
Digital Marketing Analytics	3	3
Search Engine Optimization	3	4
Marketing Experiential Capstone	3	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.

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Areas of Study for Master of Science in Marketing, Marketing Analytics Specialization

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.

Management

Managing Organizations and Leading People

This course covers principles of effective management and leadership that maximize organizational performance. The following topics are included: the role and functions of a manager, analysis of personal leadership styles, approaches to self-awareness and self-assessment, and application of foundational leadership and management skills.

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 explains the theoretical bases, current knowledge, best practices, and trends related to the practice of management.*
- *The graduate uses contemporary theories of leadership to develop personal leadership skills based on a personal leadership philosophy.*
- *The graduate applies management and leadership theories for long-term global-business success.*
- *The graduate analyzes appropriate methods to improve organizational performance.*

Frameworks for Strategic Decision-Making

Frameworks for Strategic Decision-Making challenges students to use logistical reasoning, root cause analysis, and various problem-solving skills to drive improvement, develop relationships, influence others, and make decisions. This course addresses how to evaluate business problems, develop stakeholder-oriented solutions, and influence key stakeholders. It also promotes strategic-level thinking and connection between business disciplines to drive outcomes. There are 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 learner applies critical thinking processes to identify, analyze, and address internal and external business problems and opportunities.*
- *The learner applies strategic thinking processes to evaluate and plan for internal and external opportunities.*
- *The learner demonstrates emotional intelligence (i.e., behaviors, attitudes, and mindsets) to influence key stakeholders.*

Marketing

Marketing in the Digital Era

Marketing in the Digital Era examines the marketing skills needed to be an effective marketer in the 21st century. This course provides a company and consumer perspective to learn how consumer value is created while achieving organizational goals. Learners will gain knowledge in the core areas of marketing, including branding and products, consumers, communications, and technology. This course introduces learners to strategic marketing tools used to develop effective strategies for a relevant target market. Marketing in the Digital Era teaches learners about emerging topics, such as marketing automation, artificial intelligence, and data-driven communications, as well as skills needed to continue evolving as a successful marketing professional in the dynamic, ever-changing marketing environment.

This course covers the following competencies:

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- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The learner explains marketing concepts as part of a strategic, interdependent system.*
- *The learner applies strategic marketing tools and methodologies to inform decision-making.*
- *The learner explains how emerging technology and trends impact the marketing industry.*

Market Research

Market Research provides learners with a knowledge of the role of marketing research in strategic decision-making. Marketers need to systematically collect and analyze data to develop insights and make decisions. Learners demonstrate proficiency in the fundamentals of market research by practicing statistical methods for analyzing and acting on market data. This course teaches sampling techniques, survey development, data analysis, ethical considerations, and hypothesis testing. Learners will apply their knowledge using a market research simulation. Emphasis is placed on the interpretation and use of results to demonstrate how to communicate information. In this course, learners will also develop awareness for continually monitoring emerging and competitive trends given the dynamic digital marketing landscape.

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 designs the market research process to achieve specific organizational objectives.*
- *The learner implements appropriate market research methodologies.*
- *The learner analyzes market data.*
- *The learner communicates data-informed market research insights.*

Marketing Communications and Storytelling

Marketing Communications and Storytelling introduces learners to the principles of integrative marketing communications with an emphasis on storytelling and creativity. Storytelling skills enable marketers to build relationships by making connections with their intended audience. Digital storytelling integrates the use of technology to create a cohesive narrative across various platforms that evokes emotions and feelings about a brand. These efforts can lead to customer acquisition or conversion outcomes. In this course, the creative storytelling process begins with a clear SMART objective that drives strategy development, the creative direction, and the execution of an integrative marketing communication campaign. Campaign types, media channels, messages, timelines, and market development considerations are taught within the context of both digital and traditional application. Learners will also have the opportunity to complete the HubSpot Inbound Marketing certification to learn industry best practices and to enhance marketability within the marketing profession.

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 explains how integrated marketing communication (IMC) concepts and various channels are used to develop and nurture consumer relationships.*
- *The learner develops a cross-channel integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaign to build consumer relationships.*
- *The learner constructs engaging stories for a target audience that influences consumer behaviors and builds consumer relationships.*

Product, Price, and Customer Experience

Product, Price, & Customer Experience teaches core marketing concepts used to create integrative marketing strategies that meet the needs of an organization and its customers. This course teaches topics of new product development, product management, value proposition, and customer experience management. The voice of the customer is taught to ensure marketers create a customer-centric culture within their organization to meet the needs, wants, and preference of their target market. Customer experience management practices are key focal points of this course to ensure meaningful customer interactions across the entire customer journey.

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.*

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- *The learner explains how various products and services are developed and managed to meet customer needs and wants, as well as organizational goals.*
- *The learner develops pricing strategies and tactics that address the customer experience, enhance customer value, promote ethical pricing, and meet organizational goals.*
- *The learner develops a customer experience strategy to create meaningful customer interactions across the entire customer journey that align with organizational goals.*

Digital Marketing Science

Digital Marketing Science provides learners with knowledge in the dynamic and evolving field of marketing that uses the internet and digital technologies to reach customers. This course provides foundational knowledge in digital marketing disciplines, including social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, marketing automation, search engine optimization (SEO), paid search (PPC), conversion rate optimization (CRO), mobile marketing, and web analytics. Learners explore how a digital marketing strategy is developed and executed, along with how digital marketing is integrated within an organization's overall strategy. This course provides learners with the opportunity to complete the HubSpot Marketing Software certification to learn marketing automation software that is used in industry to assist marketers in their digital marketing execution. Emphasis throughout the course is placed on industry best practices, and the course content aligns with the Online Marketing Certified Associate (OMCA) certification to prepare students for this third-party certification.

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 explains how digital marketing fits within an organization’s marketing strategy.*
- *The learner explains the digital marketing specializations and how they are used within digital marketing strategy.*
- *The learner explains marketing automation and the use of marketing automation software to support a digital marketing campaign.*

E-Commerce and Marketing Analytics

E-Commerce and Marketing Analytics teaches learners how to sell online, how to reach customers online, and how to measure campaign and website performance. Businesses and consumers actively engage in buying and selling products over the internet. Learners gain skills through the practical application of building and optimizing a Shopify website designed to promote and sell products to customers. The course explores the latest technology platforms with an emphasis on Google applications for hands-on experience. Learners have the opportunity to complete the Google Search Ads certification to gain skills used in practice and to enhance marketability within the marketing profession.

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 evaluates campaign performance goals using web analytics.*
- *The learner analyzes how to implement an e-commerce strategy through the design, development, and optimization of an e-commerce store.*
- *The learner analyzes how digital marketing tools are used to reach and retain customers to e-commerce stores.*

Digital Marketing Analytics

Digital Marketing Analytics teaches learners how to identify data sources, collect and analyze data, and manage marketing performance. Marketing requires an understanding of analytics and application of data to inform strategic decision-making. Through the use of a digital marketing analytics framework, measurement models, and various digital marketing technology tools, learners will analyze marketing performance across digital paid, owned, and earned channels. The latest marketing technology tools are explored to measure and optimize results using data-driven decisions. In this course, learners will have the opportunity to complete the Google Analytics certification to gain technical skills used in practice and to enhance marketability within the marketing profession.

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 explains the dynamic between digital consumers and business using the digital marketing analytics framework for producing insights and recommendations.*

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- *The learner applies measurement models to analyze digital marketing performance and support data-driven decision-making.*
- *The learner analyzes data from paid, earned, and owned media using marketing technology (MarTech) stacks to deliver actionable insights for marketing strategies.*

Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization, otherwise known as SEO, teaches on-page, off-page, and technical aspects of SEO for organically improving ranking and awareness. Digital marketing requires marketers to understand online consumer search behaviors; search engine optimization (SEO) is a key part of an organization's digital marketing strategy. This includes processes and best practices used to increase their visibility in search engines. Learners will discover SEO strategies focusing on website structure, search engines, keyword research and mapping, and page-level optimization. Learners will gain practical experience using a simulation in which they will optimize ranking and visibility to consumers. In this course, learners will have the opportunity to complete HubSpot's SEO certification to learn industry best practices and to enhance marketability within the marketing profession.

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 describes the core elements of an SEO strategy that considers fundamental principles of how users search and what search engines value.*
- *The learner explains how the key technical components for optimizing a website ensure crawlability and a positive user experience.*
- *The learner determines how to optimize a web page including content, visible page elements, and metadata in order to rank well and obtain backlinks.*
- *The learner explains approaches to developing a comprehensive SEO strategy using current and emerging technology.*

Marketing Experiential Capstone

Marketing Experiential Capstone is the capstone course for the program that provides learners with real-world applications to prepare them for the marketing industry. In this course, learners will integrate and apply marketing skills gained throughout the program by working with an organization on a marketing project. Marketers must effectively manage many relationships throughout their career with clients and team members in an organization, an agency, or their own marketing firm. This course allows students to apply their technical knowledge while also developing competencies in effective communication, collaboration, conflict management, project management, and time management power skills. Learners will explore their professional goals and develop a personal branding strategy to enhance their marketability and to strategically plan for their marketing career.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The learner integrates the competencies and skills from across the marketing program by executing a project that aligns with their professional career path.*
- *The learner develops their personal brand to help them succeed as a marketing professional.*

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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.

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 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.

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