



Program Guidebook

Master of Science, Information Technology - Product Management

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The Master of Science in Information Technology, Product Management degree serves those with a technical background seeking to advance their careers in information technology and product management roles. The program begins with courses on communication, project management, financial planning, risk management, and agile processes before taking the student through the product lifecycle including strategy, design, and launch. The degree assesses students through authentic, integrated, project-based work that reflects professional deliverables and tasks. Assessments incorporate cutting-edge technology issues and tools.

Understanding the Competency-Based Approach

How do competency-based programs like those offered at Western Governors University (WGU) work? Unlike traditional universities, WGU does not award degrees based on completing a certain number of credit hours or a specific set of required courses. Instead, you will earn your degree by demonstrating your skills, knowledge, and understanding of essential concepts.

Progress through a degree program is measured not by the amount of time you spend in class but by your ability to demonstrate competency as you complete required courses along a Standard Path. To help you acquire the knowledge and skills you need to demonstrate competency and 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 your program's requirements and help you create a plan for completing your courses. You will also work closely with course instructors as you engage in each course. As subject matter experts, course instructors will guide you through the content you must learn to demonstrate competency through 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 you possess and can demonstrate—not the number of hours spent in a classroom.

Accreditation

Western Governors University is the only university in the history of American higher education to have earned initial accreditation from multiple regional accrediting commissions at once—earning simultaneous accreditation from ACCJC, HLC, NWCCU, and WASC. The university's accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) was reaffirmed in March of 2024. In addition to institution-level accreditation, each school has at least one program that is accredited by a programmatic accreditation. All programmatic accreditations are managed by the Academic Engagement department. Contact compliance@wgu.edu for additional information.

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 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 will introduce you to the fundamentals of WGU’s competency-based education (CBE) and the expectations, policies, and protocols for students enrolled in a WGU degree program. Orientation will introduce you to WGU’s wide range of support resources and success centers. It also will provide you with study strategies recommended by current students and faculty that will help you succeed as a WGU student. Orientation ends with your first assessment at WGU, providing an opportunity to experience WGU’s performance assessment process before you begin your degree-focused coursework. 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. 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 must demonstrate your skills and knowledge by completing each course's assessment(s). You may be asked to demonstrate competency in a course in several different ways, including proctored exams, projects, essays, research papers, and simulations, among others. Certifications verified through third parties may also be included in your program as a way to demonstrate competency. More detailed information about each assessment is provided in the 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 Resource Fee. They can be accessed or enrolled for through your courses. Some degree-specific resources may not be 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 Student Handbook article provides additional details about the current state of mobile compatibility for learning resources at WGU.

[Mobile Access 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 Science, Information Technology - Product Management

Course Title	CU	Term
Technical Communication	3	1
Information Technology Management and Leadership	3	1
Financial Planning for IT Professionals	3	1
Problem Solving for Technology Business Problems	2	2
Project Management	4	2
Risk Management and Information Technology	3	2
Agile Processes and Culture in Technology	3	3
Product Strategy	3	3
Product Design	3	3
Product Launch	3	4
Total CUs	30	

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 Science, Information Technology - Product Management

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.

Information Technology Management

Technical Communication

Technical Communication teaches IT managers how to convey complex information clearly and effectively to diverse audiences, whether technical or nontechnical. The course covers skills in writing, presentation, and visual communication, enabling managers to create documentation, reports, and presentations that are precise and accessible. Additionally, it emphasizes audience analysis, which helps managers tailor their messages to stakeholders, enhancing project understanding and decision-making across teams. 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 learner conducts an audience analysis to plan communication strategies.*
- *The learner creates written communication to inform audiences of an IT issue.*
- *The learner delivers a presentation regarding information technology issues.*
- *The learner visualizes data and information to meet audience needs.*

Information Technology Management and Leadership

Information Technology Management and Leadership addresses the technical and human elements of managing technology within an organization. A technology leader must be able to identify the components of a technology infrastructure, including all of the technologies used within an organization and how they relate to one another. This is crucial for building effective technology solutions, improving efficiency and processes, and knowing how to identify and resolve technical problems. Equipped with this fundamental skill, students in the course will analyze a scenario to create a technology management strategy for an organization. This course considers the ethical responsibilities of leadership and management and the appropriate use of technological solutions within an organization. The course also provides opportunities for students to develop their own leadership strategy, an essential element of effectively influencing and organizing the people who will carry out technology strategies at the ground level. 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 learner analyzes the technology infrastructure of an organization.*
- *The learner develops an ethical IT management strategy.*
- *The learner develops an ethical leadership style and approach to managing human resources.*

Project Management

Project Management introduces students to the essential concepts of project management and the role of the project manager. Students learn to develop a project management plan across all project management standardized phases. Although the course takes into consideration the content areas of the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) exam, this revised version of the course asks students to deliver performance assessments; it does not directly ask students to practice in the same modality as the objective CAPM exam. 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 learner analyzes the scope, schedule, and cost management portions of a project management plan.*

- The learner applies the essential concepts, processes, and roles of project management and project integration.
- The learner develops a project management plan according to best practices.

Product Strategy

Product Strategy prepares students to plan a new product's development. Students will strategize the needs, requirements, costs, and metrics to determine a successful design. The course covers skills in new product development, product knowledge, new product development, product management, user research, product planning, business requirements, and team leadership.

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 learner creates a product requirements document to address the business case and customer needs for a technology-based product.
- The learner develops a product strategy that anticipates and mitigates problems or changes.
- The learner develops metrics to determine the effectiveness of the product strategy.

Product Design

Product Design teaches students how to design a technical solution to a business problem, create a low-fidelity prototype of the technical solution, and then conduct a very limited user test using a created prototype. The course covers skills in functional knowledge contribution, product design, user needs analysis, and software feasibility and usability studies. The following course is a prerequisite and should be completed prior to beginning Product Design: ..

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 conducts usability testing for an application's design prototype.
- The learner designs a solution to a technology business problem.
- The learner designs low-fidelity prototypes using industry standard tools and techniques.

Product Launch

Product Launch has the student role-playing as a Product Manager, overseeing the launch of a technical product. The student will develop a plan for the launch, simulate a solution to an urgent problem that threatens the success of the launch, and evaluate a marketing plan for a technical product. The course covers skills in strategic communications and planning, marketing planning and strategies, new product development, product knowledge, and problem-solving... prerequisites, but the following courses are recommended to be completed prior to beginning Product Launch: ..

Strategy ..

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 develops a technology product launch plan.
- The learner evaluates a marketing plan for a technology product.
- The learner solves a problem occurring during a product launch.

IT Management

Financial Planning for IT Professionals

Financial Planning for Information Technology (IT) Professionals provides a foundational basis for technology leaders to determine the value and cost of an organization's technology. Through this course, students will learn the essentials of financial literacy, as it relates to their role in the technology branch of an organization. Students will read and interpret key indicators such as budgets and tracking tools, benchmark the value of technologies within an organization, and predict the return on investment for a technological change. These are highly valuable skills to determine practical solutions to business problems, while reducing unnecessary costs. 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 learner analyzes the key financial indicators that drive IT performance.
- The learner benchmarks the current financial value of an organizational technology.
- The learner determines the return on investment (ROI) and financial value to the business of a technology change.

Problem Solving for Technology Business Problems

Problem Solving for Technology Business Problems invites students to use frameworks for resolving a range of issues that can emerge within an organization. Problem-solving frameworks offer a reliable, step-by-step process for pinpointing causes of difficulties and then methodically developing solutions. This course addresses business problems such as technology inefficiencies, process improvement and future innovation challenges, and incidents requiring immediate resolution and communication. 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 learner applies problem-solving frameworks to address a technology business problem.
- The learner performs a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) on a technology business problem.

Risk Management and Information Technology

The Risk Management course approaches an organization's risk needs from a management perspective. This course will enable the student to understand how risk management protects their organization's sensitive data, intellectual property, and digital assets from threats and breaches. This knowledge includes understanding governance structures, developing a mitigation strategy that includes risks, and creating an incident response plan. 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 learner designs a security incident response plan to maintain business continuity.
- The learner designs an organization's information security governance to establish a high-level of information assurance.
- The learner develops a risk mitigation strategy that complies with all relevant regulations.

Agile Processes and Culture in Technology

Agile Processes and Culture in Technology provides technology leaders with a framework for adapting to changing business needs and environments. Agile approaches enable teams and individuals to reduce the impact of change on projects and strategies, maintaining top velocity despite uncertainty, unexpected contingencies, or change in client requests. Students will learn how agile process can improve efficiencies; they will apply an agile framework to a business scenario; and they will strategize how to promote an agile culture within an organization, improving resilience to the constant changes they will encounter as technology leaders. 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 learner applies a leadership framework within an agile environment.
- The learner evaluates how agile leadership, agile teams, and agile processes improve an organization's results and efficiency.
- The learner strategizes how to foster an agile culture in an organization through leadership.

Accessibility and Accommodations

Western Governors University (WGU) is committed to providing equal access to its academic programs to all qualified students. WGU's Student Disability Services department supports this mission by providing support, resources, advocacy, collaboration, and academic accommodations in accordance with federal and state statutes and regulations to WGU students and prospective students. Potential and current students needing to request accommodation(s) are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services to initiate the request. To initiate the accommodation process, all potential and current WGU students must complete the secure online Accommodation Request Form located at' https://www.wgu.edu/wgu/ada_form. Potential and current students can reach the Student Disability Services team Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MT at 1-877- 435-7948 x5922 or at sds@wgu.edu. Additional information on accommodations can be found in the student handbook Accommodations for Students with Disabilities policy.

Need More Information? WGU Student Services

Student Support Services team members also assist with unresolved concerns to find equitable resolutions. To contact the Student Support 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., and Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. mountain standard time.