# Program Guidebook

## Master of Arts in Teaching, Science Education (Secondary Physics)

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*The Master of Arts in Teaching, Science Education (Secondary Physics) is a competency-based degree program that prepares students with the competencies at the graduate level needed to apply for licensure as a secondary educator. This program consists of online courses which take the learner from educational professional core coursework to Physics content, through methods of secondary instruction and assessment continuing through methods of secondary instruction and assessment, including inclusive practices for all students within the classroom. Candidates develop and refine their teaching skills through a series of sequential experiences beginning with video-based observations and simulations of classroom instruction to prepare candidates for authentic, collaborative, clinical teaching experiences in elementary settings. Clinical experiences include teaching in face-to-face environments and culminate with supervised student teaching in a real classroom. With the successful completion of degree requirements for graduation, including required assessments in the major area of teaching, the student can receive institutional recommendation for licensure in secondary Physics education.*

## 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 accreditor. 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.

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 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 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.

## 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.

## 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

Some states have specific licensure requirements that are not part of WGU programs that you will have to fulfill in addition to the degree requirements of your program. These state licensure requirements might include, but are not limited to: subject-specific licensure exams, state-specific teacher performance assessments, course work related to state history, basic skills exams, and background clearances. The WGU Student Handbook outlines the credentialing requirements of each state. Teacher candidates should consult the applicable section to become familiar with their state's expectations regarding 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.

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 Arts in Teaching, Science Education (Secondary Physics)

| Course Description | CUs |
|---|---|
| The Education Professional | 2 |
| Learner Development and the Science of Learning | 2 |
| Practices for Inclusive Classrooms | 2 |
| Establishing Positive and Engaging Learning Environments | 2 |
| Technology and Ethics: A Look at Emerging Trends and Society | 2 |
| Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Meaningful Learning | 2 |
| Monitoring Student Learning Through Assessment | 2 |
| Technology for Instruction and Online Pedagogy | 2 |
| General Secondary Methods | 2 |
| Secondary Physics Curriculum | 2 |
| Three Dimensional Science and Engineering | 2 |
| Early Clinical in Secondary Education | 2 |
| Secondary Literacy Methods and Interventions | 2 |
| Secondary Science Teaching Methods | 2 |
| Laboratory Safety | 1 |
| Secondary Disciplinary Literacy | 2 |
| Advanced Clinical in Secondary Education | 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Student Teaching I in Secondary Education | 4 |
| Student Teaching II in Secondary Education | 4 |
| Education Portfolio | 1 |
| Total CUs | 42 |

## 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 in Teaching, Science Education (Secondary Physics)

The following section includes the areas of study in the program, with their associated courses. Your specific learning resources and level of instructional support will vary based on the individual competencies you bring to the program and your confidence in developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in each area of the degree. The Degree Plan and learning resources are dynamic, so you need to review your Degree Plan and seek the advice of your mentor regarding the resources before you purchase them.

## Professional Core

### The Education Professional

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

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The learner analyzes the impact of professional dispositions and ethics in engaging with others and making decisions.*
- *The learner examines program requirements, regulations, and the utilization of tools to navigate through the program.*
- *The learner reflects on professional dispositions and ethics in their own education and career.*
- *The learner reflects on their educational journey and their future goals as an educator.*

### Learner Development and the Science of Learning

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

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The learner evaluates the impact of learning science theories on a classroom scenario.*
- *The learner examines how principles of neuroscience are applied in instructional practices.*
- *The learner examines how theories of learning science and learner growth and development influence educational practices.*
- *The learner recommends instructional techniques based on principles of learning science that will positively impact learning.*

### Practices for Inclusive Classrooms

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

environments.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The learner applies MTSS to address the needs of all students.*
- *The learner examines activities to connect with students.*
- *The learner examines policies, practices, and legal requirements to inform educator practice.*
- *The learner identifies characteristics of students with various learning needs.*

## Establishing Positive and Engaging Learning Environments

Establishing Positive and Engaging Learning Environments teaches educators how to foster supportive and productive classroom climates. This course delves into the key elements that contribute to creating and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere, such as effective communication, classroom norms and routines, and positive behavior supports. Emphasizing the importance of a safe and inclusive environment, the course explores methods to promote student engagement, collaboration, and mutual respect among learners. It also addresses the role of mental well-being in learning, exploring trauma-informed and restorative practices. These factors are also addressed in relation to online and hybrid learning environments. Through a blend of theoretical frameworks and practical applications including case studies, Establishing Positive and Engaging Learning Environments teaches learners how to develop and sustain environments that not only enhance academic performance but also support the holistic development of students. Candidates will apply theoretical concepts to analyze a classroom 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 learner analyzes a classroom environment for opportunities to foster a healthy classroom climate.*
- *The learner analyzes the role of the community of care in creating a learning environment that is sensitive to experiences and backgrounds.*
- *The learner applies classroom engagement strategies to enhance a positive classroom climate.*
- *The learner plans norms, routines, and classroom expectations to promote a safe, equitable, and productive learning environment.*

## Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Meaningful Learning

Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Meaningful Learning is a dynamic course designed for educators seeking to deepen their understanding of instructional planning and the execution of educational strategies that foster meaningful learning experiences. This course provides candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to create engaging and standards-aligned lessons that meet the needs of all learners. This course also covers a range of high-leverage instructional practices to increase student learning, engagement, and achievement. Participants will learn to utilize assessments to inform instruction, adapt teaching to accommodate all learners, and incorporate technology to enhance learning. Candidates will reflect on research-based instructional practices.

*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 application of instructional practices to facilitate mastery of standards and objectives for all students.*
- *The learner analyzes the role of formative and summative assessment in evaluating student learning and planning future instruction.*
- *The learner applies differentiated instructional strategies to address the needs of all students.*
- *The learner plans standards-based instruction for a diverse classroom.*
- *The learner reflects on instructional practice.*

## Monitoring Student Learning Through Assessment

Monitoring Student Learning Through Assessment enhances students' skills in evaluating learner progress and educational outcomes. This course provides an in-depth exploration of various assessment techniques, including formative and summative assessments, standardized tests, benchmark assessments, progress monitoring, and alternative assessment strategies. This course teaches students to design effective assessment tools, interpret data to inform instruction, and provide meaningful feedback to learners. This course also provides a foundation of data analysis that supports educators' need to understand data and present data to stakeholders. It also explores online and digital assessment tools. This course requires students to design an assessment based on evidence-based practices.

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

### Technology for Instruction and Online Pedagogy

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

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The learner adapts instruction to meet student needs in a blended environment.*
- *The learner applies instructional technologies to facilitate mastery of standards and objectives for all learners.*
- *The learner applies online pedagogy to facilitate student learning experiences.*
- *The learner implements technology solutions to support teacher productivity.*
- *The learner plans instruction focused on building students' digital literacy skills.*

## General Education

### Technology and Ethics: A Look at Emerging Trends and Society

D842 Technology and Ethics: A Look at Emerging Trends and Society explores the intersection of ethical thinking and technological innovations. A foundational introduction to ethical frameworks is applied to emerging trends in technology including artificial intelligence, social media, and other forms of digital media. This course examines the impact of technology on our understanding of self as well as the individual's role in interacting with others in a globalized society. Through careful analysis and application, students gain the ability to recognize ethical actions within the context of current and newly evolving technological landscapes. Through the application of ethical frameworks, students gain the ability to evaluate actions taken within the context of current and newly evolving technological landscapes. 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 learner analyzes privacy ethics and identity as related to emerging technologies.*
- *The learner applies ethical concepts to emerging technology as it relates to society.*
- *The learner describes ethical decision-making frameworks as applied to technology.*
- *The learner evaluates a contemporary technological case study using multiple ethical theories and frameworks to provide an*

*ethical analysis.*

# Secondary Education

## General Secondary Methods

General Secondary Methods prepares students for secondary teaching by equipping them with essential instructional skills and knowledge tailored to adolescent learners. Students will explore how adolescent development influences learning, how secondary school settings influence instructional choices, and how to implement effective teaching strategies in these environments. Through a blend of theory and practical application, students will create and assess lesson plans, focusing on differentiated instruction, formative and summative assessments, and the integration of technology, including AI tools, to promote affective learning in diverse secondary education settings.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *Begin your course by discussing your course planning tool report with your instructor and creating your personalized course plan together.*
- *The learner implements instruction that considers features of secondary learners and characteristics of secondary education to promote impactful learning.*
- *The learner relates characteristics of secondary education settings to instructional and pedagogical choices.*
- *The learner relates key characteristics of adolescents to their implications for learning.*
- *The learner writes a philosophy of teaching secondary students that draws on educational theory and evidence-based practices.*

## Laboratory Safety

The course "Laboratory Safety" aims at equipping learners with essential safety knowledge and skills for various learning environments, including laboratories, classrooms, and field settings. Learners in this course will deeply understand safety protocols, legal responsibilities, and effective teaching strategies for safety in educational settings.

*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 demonstrates knowledge of laboratory safety, potential hazards and educator responsibilities to ensure a safe learning environment.*
- *The learner leverages technology to plan virtual laboratory experiences.*

# Science Education

## Secondary Physics Curriculum

MAT Secondary Physics Curriculum This course offers a comprehensive review for high school physics teachers preparing for the Praxis exam. Explore major scientific discoveries, key engineering innovations, and their societal impacts. Understand ethical issues in scientific research and the principles of effective science communication. Delve into different forms of energy, laws of thermodynamics, and the role of energy and matter in the universe. Study Coulomb's Law, electric circuits, and electromagnetism. Learn how to integrate wave properties, sound waves, and the electromagnetic spectrum into your teaching practice. As this course is focused on Praxis prep, content is conceptual and algebra-based.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The learner analyzes the impact of science and engineering on society, including investigation methods, technological advancements, and environmental and societal problems.*
- *The learner analyzes the relationship between energy and matter using principles of forces and motion.*
- *The learner analyzes waves, electromagnetic phenomena, and their interactions.*
- *The learner evaluates physics curriculum resources for alignment to secondary standards and individual student needs.*

## Three Dimensional Science and Engineering

Three Dimensional Science and Engineering focuses on developing a comprehensive understanding of science and engineering pedagogical knowledge. This course is the first of three science teaching methods courses and provides a robust foundation in integrating disciplinary core ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science and engineering practices in phenomena-based curriculum and instruction. Candidates will delve into planning learning experiences, designing instructional strategies, and utilizing phenomena-based teaching to promote engagement and understanding. Reflective practices, such as evaluating observed teaching, analyzing personal teaching methods, and reviewing course content, are emphasized to foster continuous improvement.

The course will be assessed via an integrated performance assessment task, requiring candidates to demonstrate their instructional 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 learner analyzes science instruction for applications to their teaching practice.*
- *The learner designs learning experiences that target student development of science and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts.*
- *The learner plans learning experiences that integrate core ideas in engineering, technology, and science.*
- *The learner uses phenomena-based teaching pedagogy to promote engagement in science learning.*

# Clinical Experiences

## Early Clinical in Secondary Education

Early Clinical Experiences is a pivotal course designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching skills. This course offers aspiring educators an immersive experience in real classroom settings under the mentorship of experienced teachers. Candidates engage in a range of activities, including observation, to develop a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics, student engagement, and effective instructional strategies. Emphasizing reflective practice, the course encourages participants to analyze their experiences, integrate feedback, and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. This experiential learning approach equips future teachers with the confidence and competence necessary to foster a positive and impactful learning environment for their students.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The learner applies instructional strategies that draw upon knowledge of content and pedagogy.*
- *The learner reflects on professional dispositions and ethics in their chosen education profession.*
- *The learner reflects on the Early Clinical teaching experience.*

## Advanced Clinical in Secondary Education

Advanced Clinical provides aspiring educators with real-world classroom experience. This course emphasizes the importance of hands-on learning, offering candidates the unique opportunity to observe and participate in classroom environments under the guidance of experienced mentors. The curriculum includes demonstrating reflective practice, classroom engagement techniques, instructional strategies, and effective communication skills with students and colleagues through a pedagogical performance assessment. Through this immersive experience, candidates not only observe the daily responsibilities of a teacher, but also start to develop their own teaching style and philosophy, laying a solid foundation for their future careers in education.
This course is taken immediately prior to Student Teaching I as part of an engaging and intensive clinical experience.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The learner applies knowledge of their students' learning and developmental patterns in their instructional practices.*
- *The learner demonstrates application of content in the planning, learning, and assessment cycle in a pedagogical performance assessment.*
- *The learner reflects on growth in professional dispositions and ethics in their chosen education profession.*
- *The learner reflects on the Advanced Clinical teaching experience.*

## Education Portfolio

Education Portfolio is an innovative course designed to guide candidates in the creation and development of a comprehensive professional portfolio, specifically tailored for educators. This course emphasizes the importance of documenting and reflecting upon one's educational philosophy, teaching experiences, and professional achievements. Candidates learn how to effectively showcase their skills in curriculum design, classroom management, student assessment, and educational technology. The course also covers strategies for integrating evidence of student learning and feedback into the portfolio. Candidates create a polished and dynamic portfolio that not only highlights their unique educational journey, but also serves as a powerful tool for career advancement and lifelong learning in the field of education.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The learner justifies how their graduate portfolio aligns to education theory and research.*

# Pedagogy and Teaching Methods

### Secondary Literacy Methods and Interventions

Secondary Literacy Methods & Interventions utilizes MTSS to equip educators with evidence-based strategies to address adolescents' reading challenges through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports Model. Candidates learn to identify, monitor, and provide differentiated instruction, integrating screening tools and progress monitoring to enhance comprehension. The course emphasizes the development of personalized intervention plans while utilizing reading assessments for informed instructional decisions. By completion, candidates compile intervention strategies supporting learners across MTSS tiers, fostering inclusive environments for academic success.

*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 science of reading research methods to literacy instruction to further academic success.*
- *The learner develops a collection of intervention strategies that support secondary learners at all tiers of the MTSS process.*
- *The learner integrates evidence-based MTSS strategies and assessment tools to improve academic success in literacy.*

## Science

### Secondary Science Teaching Methods

This course focuses on equipping secondary science educators with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively teach science through a three-dimensional approach, integrating science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. Participants will explore general considerations for science instruction, including inquiry-based learning, hands-on activities, and assessment strategies. By building on foundational knowledge in Three-Dimensional Science and Engineering, educators will enhance their ability to engage students in meaningful and authentic scientific learning experiences.

*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 instruction for alignment to science disciplinary standards.*
- *The learner designs a learning experience that incorporates instructional materials and strategies to support learners in constructing meaning from scientific experiences.*
- *The learner implements intentional instructional strategies to develop knowledge in a science discipline.*
- *The learner plans accessible and meaningful science instruction that aligns to standards and that reflects the dispositions of a science educator.*

## Education

### Secondary Disciplinary Literacy

Secondary Disciplinary Literacy is a cutting-edge course designed for candidates seeking to enhance their literacy skills within specific secondary academic disciplines. The course examines the distinct literacy needs of various secondary content areas, focusing on how reading, writing, speaking, and listening function differently in each discipline. Candidates will explore specialized language structures and text features relevant to each field and develop strategies to help students master these complexities. The curriculum integrates the science of reading to support critical engagement with and production of disciplinary texts, while also incorporating technology and digital literacy to aid students in accessing and interpreting discipline-specific information. The course combines research-based evidence with practical, structured literacy activities to equip educators with the skills necessary to improve student achievement and understanding across all subjects. This course is a required component in SCED programs and will be assessed through a performance assessment task for both undergraduate and graduate versions.

*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 assesses the use of literacy strategies for a discipline.*
- *The learner designs learning activities that incorporate literacy to increase learning for a discipline.*
- *The learner plans authentic writing activities to develop an understanding of discipline-specific content.*
- *The learner proposes opportunities to improve a lesson plan using feedback and connections to educational research.*

# Student Teaching

## Student Teaching I in Secondary Education

Student Teaching I is the first part of a two-part series and is a mandatory course for all candidates seeking initial licensure. This course provides a supervised classroom experience in a real-world setting, allowing candidates to demonstrate and reflect upon professional ethics and dispositions, collaborate with experienced teachers, and implement instructional strategies rooted in students' learning and developmental patterns. Building on the responsibilities and skills developed in Advanced Clinical, candidates will receive ongoing feedback through observations and evaluations. Feedback will encourage candidates to reflect on their commitment to professional practices as educators, analyze and adjust teaching methods, and explore new teaching materials and methods that are culturally relevant. Additionally, the course features synchronous learning sessions that delve into communication and collaboration, accepting feedback, creating positive learning environments, and technology and online learning. Candidates must attend the required synchronous learning sessions in addition to their classroom placement.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The learner demonstrates effective instructional strategies and assessments that draw upon knowledge of content and pedagogy.*
- *The learner demonstrates effective practices that support professional and instructional improvement through reflection and collaboration.*
- *The learner demonstrates knowledge of their students' learning and developmental patterns in their instructional practices.*
- *The learner demonstrates professional dispositions and ethics.*
- *The learner reflects on their instructional practice.*

## Student Teaching II in Secondary Education

Student Teaching II is the final part of a two-part series and is a mandatory course for all candidates seeking initial licensure. The course offers a supervised classroom experience in a real-world setting, allowing candidates to demonstrate professional ethics and dispositions, collaborate with experienced teachers, and implement instructional strategies. Building on the responsibilities and skills developed in Student Teaching I, candidates receive ongoing feedback through observations and a final evaluation. This evaluation assesses activities' relevance and cultural engagement, the effectiveness of teaching each student, the ability to analyze and adjust teaching methods, and the willingness to explore new materials and methods. Successful completion of Student Teaching II is a crucial step in the licensure process, as it determines eligibility for licensure as a professional educator. Additionally, the course features synchronous learning sessions that delve into professional development topics such as professional growth opportunities, ethical decision making, and self-care. Candidates must attend the required synchronous learning sessions in addition to their classroom placement.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- *The learner demonstrates an ongoing commitment to effective practices that support professional and instructional improvement through reflection and collaboration.*
- *The learner implements effective instructional strategies and assessments that draw upon knowledge of content and pedagogy.*
- *The learner implements knowledge of their students' learning and developmental patterns in their instructional practices.*
- *The learner implements professional dispositions.*

## 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. Prospective and Enrolled Students may initiate the accommodation process at any time during their enrollment at WGU. 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*. The Student Disability Services team can be reached 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.

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