WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

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Program Guidebook

MBA, IT Management

The Master of Business Administration-Information Technology Management is specifically designed for experienced business professionals and managers seeking upward career mobility in the information technology arena. The program prepares you for a mid-level to upper-level information technology management position in business, industry, and non-profit organizations.

Understanding the Competency-Based Approach

Practically speaking, what does it mean when we say that WGU's programs are competency-based? Unlike traditional universities, WGU does not award degrees based on credit hours or on a certain set of required courses. Instead, you will earn your degree by demonstrating your skills, knowledge, and understanding of important concepts through a series of carefully designed courses.

Progress through your degree program is governed not by classes but by satisfactory completion of the required courses that demonstrate your mastery of the competencies. Of course, you will need to engage in learning experiences as you brush up on competencies or develop knowledge and skills in areas in which you may be weak. For this learning and development, WGU has a rich array of learning resources in which you may engage under the direction of your student mentor. You will work closely with your mentor to schedule your program for completing the courses. You will also work closely with additional faculty members as you proceed through courses of study that are designed to lead you through the content you must master in order to pass the assessment(s) for each course.

The benefit of this competency-based system is that it makes it possible for people who are knowledgeable about a particular subject to make accelerated progress toward completing a WGU 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, indeed, 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). The WGU Teachers College is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The Health Informatics program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM).

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.

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Students will 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 may need to take an online class or participate in a study module to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to pass the 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, you will complete preassessments to help your mentor form a profile of your prior knowledge and experience for use in creating your personalized Degree Plan.

WGU's Mentoring Approach

The mentoring approach is a powerful component of the WGU educational experience. When you enroll at WGU, you will begin interacting with your student mentor, course mentors, and other support staff. Your student mentor will meet with you on a regular basis and take an active role and a personal interest in your success. Your student mentor will be your point of contact throughout your program and will be available to communicate with you via e-mail or phone. Your mentor will help you set weekly study goals, guide you to learning materials, help you understand what to expect in courses, and motivate you to work hard to complete your program. When you have questions or concerns, your mentor will help you resolve them.

As you work on each course, you will also be assigned course mentors. These course mentors are content experts who can discuss your learning for the course, help you find answers to content questions, and help you navigate the course successfully. Your course mentors are available to meet with you individually to provide personal support. You can also communicate with them by posting in the online learning community and participating in live discussion sessions such as webinars and cohorts.

Working closely with your own personal mentoring team will help you engage in the learning process and be a successful student while at WGU.

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 have interactions with faculty and other students.

The resources in each course are specifically designed to support you as you develop competencies in preparation for your assessments through the utilization of reading materials, videos, tutorials, cohort opportunities, community discussions, and live discussions that are guided by content experts. 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 mentor solve any special problems that may arise.

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Orientation

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

Transferability of Prior College Coursework

WGU offers to review coursework for possible transfer credit for all of our undergraduate programs. 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 student 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 eight (8) competency units each term, and undergraduate students must enroll in at least twelve (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

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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 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

You will work with your mentor to select the various learning resources needed to prepare for the assessments in each course. In most cases, the learning materials you will use are independent learning resources such as textbooks, e-learning modules, study guides, simulations, virtual labs, and tutorials. WGU works with dozens of educational providers, including enterprises, publishers, training companies, and higher educational institutions to give you high-quality and effective instruction that matches the competencies that you are developing. The cost of most learning resources is included in your tuition, and you can enroll directly in those through your Degree Plan as your mentor has scheduled them. Some resources are not covered by your tuition, and you will need to cover those costs separately. WGU has excellent bookstore and library arrangements to help you obtain the needed 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* MBA, IT Management

Course Description	CUs	Term
Managing Organizations and Leading People	3	1
IT Project Management	3	1
Managing Human Capital	3	1
Marketing	3	2
Global Economics for Managers	3	2
Accounting for Decision Makers	3	2
Ethical Leadership	3	3
Financial Management	3	3
Data-Driven Decision Making	3	3
IT Strategic Solutions	4	4
MBA, Information Technology Management Capstone	4	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. As these changes are implemented, WGU will ensure that the length of the student's degree program (i.e., total competency unit requirements) will not increase and that competency units already earned will be applied to the updated program version. When program requirements are updated, students returning from term break or returning after withdrawal from the university will be expected to re-enter the updated version of the program.

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Areas of Study for MBA, IT 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.

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:

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

Managing Human Capital

This course focuses on strategies and tools that managers use to maximize employee contribution and create organizational excellence. You will learn talent management strategies to motivate and develop employees as well as best practices to manage performance for added value.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate manages diverse human resources by applying motivational concepts to enhance organizational performance.*
- *The graduate evaluates strategies, policies, and procedures for effective human resource management within an organization.*
- *The graduate analyzes applicable legal and regulatory requirements to determine whether organizations meet legal responsibilities.*
- *The graduate determines the strategic impact of human resource management on the organization.*

Project Management

IT Project Management

IT Project Management provides an overview of the Project Management Institute's project management methodology. Topics cover various process groups and knowledge areas and application of knowledge in case studies for planning a project that has not started yet and monitoring/controlling a project that is already underway.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate creates project schedules that ensure timely project completion.*
- *The graduate applies standard problem-solving techniques and strategies that facilitate resolution of problems that*

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arise within a project.

- *The graduate effectively allocates team members in an appropriate organizational structure for current projects.*
- *The graduate develops presentation documents for internal and external stakeholders that communicate project assessment and recommendations for improvement.*
- *The graduate analyzes project data using appropriate metrics to forecast project outcome.*
- *The graduate evaluates potential project management tools for alignment with specified project activities.*
- *The graduate develops mitigation plans that address internal and external risks within a project.*
- *The graduate creates project communication plans that ensure ongoing project information is appropriately disseminated to project stakeholders.*

Marketing and Communication

Marketing

This course will focus on the marketing function and its impact on the overall success of an organization. Topics include consumer behavior, marketing theories and strategies, product positioning, the competitive environment, and effectiveness of the marketing function. A key element of the course will include the relationship of the "marketing mix" to strategic planning.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate analyzes the global market to identify opportunities to gain competitive advantage through marketing activities.*
- *The graduate evaluates the feasibility and profitability of new products and services within the organization.*
- *The graduate identifies risks and opportunities for an entrepreneurial enterprise.*
- *The graduate recommends customer relationship management practices for maximizing customer satisfaction and loyalty.*
- *The graduate designs a strategic marketing plan for a new product or service.*

Economics

Global Economics for Managers

This course examines how economic tools, techniques, and indicators can be used for solving organizational problems related to competitiveness, productivity, and growth. You will explore the management implications of a variety of economic concepts and effective strategies to make decisions within a global context.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate explains fundamental economic principles, including supply and demand, scarcity, opportunity cost, price, income and cross-price elasticities, role of government, inflation, and monetary and fiscal policy.*
- *The graduate applies economic concepts to managerial decision making.*
- *The graduate analyzes contemporary economic and political forces; their interrelationship; and their impact on the global business environment.*
- *The graduate analyzes economic forces and operations of global markets in order to improve decision making.*
- *The graduate describes global economic forces influencing production, consumption, investments, and related policy challenges.*

Accounting

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Accounting for Decision Makers

This course provides you with the accounting knowledge and skills to assess and manage a business. Topics include the accounting cycle, financial statements, taxes, and budgeting. You will improve your ability to understand reports and use accounting information to plan and make sound business decisions.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate analyzes internal corporate controls to determine their adequacy and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.*
- *The graduate uses budgeting tools for planning and control purposes, including analyzing cash flows to ensure adequacy of funds.*
- *The graduate uses cost-volume-profit concepts and applies various analytical tools to improve company profit potential.*
- *The graduate analyzes financial statements to evaluate company performance and makes recommendations.*
- *The graduate uses economic cost concepts and activity-based costing (ABC) data to make cost-based decisions.*

Leadership

Ethical Leadership

This course examines the ethical issues and dilemmas managers face. This course provides a framework for analysis of management-related ethical issues and decision-making action required for satisfactory resolution of these issues.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate develops policies, practices, procedures, and programs that foster organizational ethics and socially responsible behavior.*
- *The graduate assesses the practical relevance of leading ethical theories and concepts.*
- *The graduate analyzes applicable legal and regulatory requirements to determine whether organizations meet legal responsibilities.*
- *The graduate identifies influences on ethical leadership and analyzes a code of ethics.*

Finance

Financial Management

This course covers practical approaches to analysis and decision making in the administration of corporate funds, including capital budgeting, working capital management, and cost of capital. Topics include financial planning, management of working capital, analysis of investment opportunities, sources of long-term financing, government regulations, and global influences. You will improve your ability to interpret financial statements and manage corporate finances.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate applies capital market theory in financial decision making.*
- *The graduate evaluates company performance based on financial statements and other measures in order to provide recommendations.*
- *The graduate applies long-term investment management concepts to capital budgeting decision making.*
- *The graduate demonstrates the management of working capital to achieve the appropriate value for the firm.*
- *The graduate examines the primary risk/return criteria regarding financial management in domestic and global environments.*
- *The graduate analyzes applicable legal and regulatory requirements to determine whether organizations meet legal*

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responsibilities and act with social responsibility.

- *The graduate applies valuation skills to evaluate capital investment projects and the overall value of a firm.*

Strategy

Data-Driven Decision Making

This course presents critical problem-solving methodologies, including field research and data collection methods that enhance organizational performance. Topics include quantitative analysis, statistical and quality tools. You will improve your ability to use data to make informed decisions.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate uses a variety of decision-analysis tools to evaluate alternatives during the decision-making processes.*
- *The graduate analyzes how work is accomplished and applies quality metrics and tools to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and quality.*
- *The graduate uses appropriate data to improve organizational performance.*
- *The graduate uses decision-making methods to develop strategies for organizational decision processes.*
- *The graduate analyzes data from business intelligence and knowledge management systems to make appropriate decisions.*
- *The graduate uses quantitative techniques and statistical tools to identify the most appropriate decision alternatives.*

Strategic Solutions

IT Strategic Solutions

In IT Strategic Solutions the learner will have the opportunity to identify strategic opportunities and emerging technologies as they research and decide on a system to support a growing company. Topics will include technology strategy; gap analysis; researching new technology; strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats; ethics; risk mitigation; data security, communication plans; and globalization.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate formulates personal research strategies for maintaining awareness of current and emerging technology.*
- *The graduate develops strategic technology plans that include vision, standards, and direction of technology in line with organizational strategy.*
- *The graduate conducts industry standard gap analyses of organizations' current technology and future needs.*
- *The graduate develops security precautions that protect organizational data.*
- *The graduate develops risk mitigation plans that effectively address possible security threats.*
- *The graduate evaluates potential technology solutions for alignment with organizational global strategy.*
- *The graduate develops technology policies that ensure ethical actions regarding technology and data.*
- *The graduate develops communication plans that effectively convey business justification for technology initiatives.*
- *The graduate evaluates new technology opportunities for alignment with given organizations' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.*

Capstone and Portfolio

MBA, Information Technology Management Capstone

This course is the culminating assessment of the MBA, IT Management curriculum and focuses on strategic management

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while allowing for the synthesis of previous assessment topics. You will work in teams of three or four students to simulate running a business. One unique aspect of the simulation is that there are scheduled dates each week for simulation decisions. Since all teams are required to meet the deadlines and work at the same pace this aspect of the assessment cannot be accelerated.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate integrates and synthesizes competencies from across the degree program and thereby demonstrates the ability to participate in and contribute value to the chosen professional field.*

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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 administrative or accessibility issues. 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. The Student Services team provides a formal means by which you can express your views, which in turn will inform the decisions we make.

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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