



Program Guidebook

Master of Science, Integrated Healthcare Management

The Master of Science, Integrated Healthcare Management degree requires completion of project-based courses and a capstone culminating in 5 core competencies: healthcare strategist, transformational leader, value innovator, tactical manager, and analyst. The program also embeds themes of person-focused care, professionalism, technology, and ethics, and fosters innovation and sustainability in healthcare systems. Projects become progressively more complex as you advance through the curriculum, integrating core competencies to provide key skill sets and a knowledge base that will foster career development.

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.

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.

Orientation

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

Transferability of Prior College Coursework

Because WGU is a competency-based institution, it does not award degrees based on credits but rather on demonstration of competency. 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 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.

Standard Path *for* Master of Science, Integrated Healthcare Management

Course Description	CUs	Term
Innovation Project	3	1
Collaborative Leadership Project	2	1
Healthcare Systems Project	3	1
Healthcare Quality Project	3	2
Healthcare Financial Management Project	3	2
Analytical Methods of Healthcare Professionals	2	2
Enterprise Risk Management Project	3	3
Health Information Technology Project	2	3
Population Health and Care Coordination Project	3	3
Challenges in Community Health Project	2	4
Integrated Healthcare Project	3	4
Integrated Healthcare Management Capstone Project	3	4

Changes to Curriculum

WGU publishes an Institutional Catalog, which describes the academic requirements of each degree program. Although students are required to complete the program version current at the time of their enrollment, WGU may modify requirements and course offerings within that version of the program to maintain the currency and relevance of WGU's competencies and programs. 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.

Areas of Study for Master of Science, Integrated Healthcare 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.

Leadership and Innovation

Innovation Project

This course explores healthcare innovation by having you compare examples, apply concepts, perform research and analysis, and create original work. You will complete and submit an Innovation proposal form describing a new technology to decrease clinic wait times.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate evaluates innovation and disruption in healthcare.*
- *The graduate constructs innovative solutions and assesses the impact on healthcare.*

Collaborative Leadership Project

The purpose of this course is to practice applying collaborative leadership skills in an innovative environment while engaging with a community. You will combine innovation with leadership to serve patients. You will also identify an innovation process that will serve the Navajo Area Indian Health Services (NAIHS) facility in the Navajo Nation. The main task will be to collaborate with stakeholders on the proposed process to address obesity.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate utilizes effective methods for organizational communication to increase effectiveness, collaboration, and problem-solving among stakeholders.*
- *The graduate assesses a variety of analytical methods for advancing healthcare.*
- *The graduate evaluates attributes of effective leadership and discerns appropriate actions and strategies consistent with the organizational mission, values, and needs.*
- *The graduate proposes solutions using effective strategies and processes to lead change.*
- *The graduate evaluates the value, source, and appropriate application of the data (risk, compliance, quality, policy, populations, finance, economic factors).*
- *The graduate constructs innovative solutions and assesses the impact on healthcare.*

Healthcare Systems

Healthcare Systems Project

You will explore healthcare systems by evaluating the needs of a group medical center to expand care to a growing population of underserved and underinsured patients. You will assess the value of affiliation with other providers and potential payers, analyze several healthcare organizations as potential partners for affiliation, and determine what type of affiliation structure will best meet the needs of the medical center. This project culminates in the creation of a proposed "affiliation recommendation" that summarizes the assessment of three candidate organizations.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate develops innovative solutions using various models to address future challenges and emerging*

opportunities in healthcare.

- *The graduate analyzes the evolution of the U.S. healthcare system and its impact on stakeholder interactions.*
- *The graduate proposes solutions using effective strategies and processes to lead change.*

Healthcare Quality

Healthcare Quality Project

You will use Six Sigma principles and strategies, as well as other quality concepts (DMAIC), to address problems of high patient wait times and poor physician communication at a highly functioning level 1 trauma center. You will develop a healthcare quality improvement process that implements the five phases of a Six Sigma approach. You will also analyze challenges executives face in identifying, synthesizing, and acting upon healthcare data to improve operations and patient-centered care.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate applies quality management principles and strategies in healthcare settings that promote organizational sustainability and improved healthcare outcomes.*

Financial Management

Healthcare Financial Management Project

You will develop a value-based payment model and strategic implementation plan to provide high-quality, most cost-effective care to a high-risk patient population. The organization is currently not equipped to take on the risks inherent in the population of Southern Florida. To create a successful plan, you will analyze and interpret data to determine the population's need and justify that their organization can financially support and sustain the new system.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate applies fiscal management principles and strategies in healthcare using a variety of tools to promote organizational sustainability and productivity.*
- *The graduate proposes solutions using effective strategies and processes to lead change.*
- *The graduate evaluates the value, source, and appropriate application of the data (risk, compliance, quality, policy, populations, finance, economic factors).*

Healthcare Analysis

Analytical Methods of Healthcare Professionals

This course explores the significance of research and statistics in care management. You will start by examining the role of evidence-based decisions in care management and how to evaluate the quality of research used to make those decisions. You will examine the role of statistics in making evidence-based decisions about care management. Finally, you will learn how statistics are used in healthcare and how to test the validity of statistics in order to make informed care management decisions.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate assesses how data analytics is used by healthcare organizations for evidence-based decisions and process improvement.*
- *The graduate examines how analytics is applied to inform decisions for public health initiatives and population health management.*
- *The graduate examines how future trends in healthcare delivery are anticipated through predictive analytics and other types of forecasting techniques.*

- *The graduate explains how principles of research are applied when analyzing data to improve healthcare outcomes.*

Risk Management

Enterprise Risk Management Project

You will take on the role of a consulting risk manager for the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS) to address the Office of Inspector General's report. You begin by identifying and analyzing risk issues embedded within a real-world scenario. You will use enterprise risk management (ERM) concepts to create and define implementation strategies for an ERM plan to mitigate and manage the risks identified. Finally, you will recommend a new system model.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate assesses operational, ethical, regulatory, legal, and financial factors in healthcare that manage, mitigate, exacerbate, and shift risk.*

Health Information Technology

Health Information Technology Project

A medical group has decided to move forward with the organizational initiative of reducing health disparities, increasing access, and improving outcomes by leading a cooperative of local healthcare organizations in a Community Health Information Exchange System (CHIES) expansion plan founded on the governor's vision to advance HIEs. You will complete an assessment of a CHIE, propose an updated Electronic Health Records System (EHRS), and complete a CHIE feasibility assessment.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate evaluates the challenges and opportunities in healthcare technology.*
- *The graduate assesses a variety of analytical methods for advancing healthcare.*
- *The graduate evaluates the value, source, and appropriate application of the data (risk, compliance, quality, policy, populations, finance, economic factors).*

Community Health

Population Health and Care Coordination Project

You will design a chronic care population management plan and change a health system's model to one that focuses on patient and family. You will review a model from Mississippi that has expanded Medicaid where the opportunities to develop partnerships are ideal. To help control costs, you will develop a wellness and prevention program alongside the disease management model already being used in a system of their choice.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate assesses a variety of analytical methods for advancing healthcare.*
- *The graduate applies fiscal management principles and strategies in healthcare using a variety of tools to promote organizational sustainability and productivity.*
- *The graduate evaluates the value, source, and appropriate application of the data (risk, compliance, quality, policy, populations, finance, economic factors).*

Challenges in Community Health Project

Community-based integrated healthcare requires skills in communication, management, and resource utilization among healthcare personnel, healthcare organizations, and community and state entities. You will apply appropriate actions and strategies consistent with the organizational mission, values, and needs in interactions with community leaders and members of the community. You will learn and demonstrate utilization of communication and collaboration skills and the

evaluation and application of data in problem-solving skills at both the organizational and community level.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate utilizes effective methods for organizational communication to increase effectiveness, collaboration, and problem-solving among stakeholders.*
- *The graduate evaluates attributes of effective leadership and discerns appropriate actions and strategies consistent with the organizational mission, values, and needs.*
- *The graduate evaluates the value, source, and appropriate application of the data (risk, compliance, quality, policy, populations, finance, economic factors).*

Integrated Healthcare

Integrated Healthcare Project

You will develop and present a comprehensive case study and business plan that proposes an integrated system that includes, at a minimum, a health plan, hospitals, skilled nursing homes, and home health organizations to meet the rising health demands of the baby-boomer population. You will choose an area of the U.S. with existing healthcare organizations, and present a model of an “open delivery system” that serves as a financial hedge, enables experimentation, integrates culture (patient population demographics and regional healthcare values and principles), incentives wellness and preventative care), and is value-based and consumer driven.

This course covers the following competencies:

- *The graduate utilizes effective methods for organizational communication to increase effectiveness, collaboration, and problem-solving among stakeholders.*
- *The graduate applies quality management principles and strategies in healthcare settings that promote organizational sustainability and improved healthcare outcomes.*
- *The graduate evaluates the challenges and opportunities in healthcare technology.*
- *The graduate evaluates innovation and disruption in healthcare.*
- *The graduate develops innovative solutions using various models to address future challenges and emerging opportunities in healthcare.*
- *The graduate analyzes the evolution of the U.S. healthcare system and its impact on stakeholder interactions.*
- *The graduate applies fiscal management principles and strategies in healthcare using a variety of tools to promote organizational sustainability and productivity.*
- *The graduate applies methods and techniques to facilitate effective human relations in healthcare organizations.*
- *The graduate evaluates the value, source, and appropriate application of the data (risk, compliance, quality, policy, populations, finance, economic factors).*
- *The graduate compares U.S. healthcare models with international healthcare models.*
- *The graduate assesses operational, ethical, regulatory, legal, and financial factors in healthcare that manage, mitigate, exacerbate, and shift risk.*
- *The graduate evaluates the catalysts driving healthcare integration.*

Capstone

Integrated Healthcare Management Capstone Project

The capstone project is a student-designed project intended to illustrate your ability to effect change in the industry and demonstrate competence in all five core competencies of the curriculum. You are required to collaborate with leaders in the healthcare industry to identify opportunities for improvement in healthcare, propose a solution, and perform a business analysis to evaluate its feasibility. In addition, the capstone project encourages work in the healthcare industry that will be

showcased in your collection of work and help solidify professional relationships in the industry.

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.*

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>.