



Program Guidebook

Master of Science, Nursing - Education

The Masters of Science in Nursing (RN to MSN option) degree is a competency-based program that builds on the foundation of previous nursing education at the associate degree or diploma levels. The BSN portion of the degree focuses on contemporary nursing practice in the developing of skills and competencies using technology-based learning. It is structured to develop high quality, highly educated BSN nurses preparing graduates who are equipped to function in new roles as members of health care teams in many settings by expanding nurses knowledge in areas of research, theory, community concepts, healthcare policy, therapeutic interventions, and current trends in healthcare. Graduates will be eligible for military, U.S. Public Health, and VA appointments as well as assume roles in school health, community, occupational, and other nonacute care settings. The Master of Science portion of the degree further prepares graduates to be leaders and managers in diverse settings: hospitals, long-term care facilities, community service agencies, governmental agencies and facilities, and corporations. They use their organizational, analytic, strategic planning, financial, human resources, and evaluation skills to services in diverse nursing and healthcare settings.

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 sixmonth 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 videobased items. Certifications verified through third parties may also be included in your program. More detailed information about each assessment is provided in each course of study.

Learning Resources

WGU works with many different educational partners, including enterprises, publishers, training companies, and higher educational institutions, to provide high-quality and effective learning resources that match the competencies you're 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. It includes a list that can be referenced to determine the mobile friendliness of all core course materials used in a program.

[Student Handbook article: Can I use my mobile device for learning resources?](#)

Standard Path

As previously mentioned, competency units (CUs) have been assigned to each course in order to measure your academic progress. If you are an undergraduate student, you will be expected to enroll in a minimum of 12 competency units each term. Graduate students are expected to enroll in a minimum of 8 competency units each term. A standard plan for a student for this program who entered WGU without any transfer units would look similar to the one on the following page. Your personal progress can be faster, but your pace will be determined by the extent of your transfer units, your time commitment, and your determination to proceed at a faster rate.

Standard Path for Master of Science, Nursing - Education

Course Description	CU's	Term
Advanced Standing for RN License	50	TR
Professional Leadership and Communication for Healthcare	2	1
English Composition I	3	1
Anatomy and Physiology I	4	1
Anatomy and Physiology II	4	2
Survey of United States Constitution and Government	3	2
Introduction to Communication	3	2
Introduction to Humanities	3	3
Clinical Microbiology	4	3
Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan	3	3
Introduction to Psychology	3	4
Introduction to Sociology	3	4
Biochemistry	3	4
Applied Healthcare Statistics	4	5
Care of the Older Adult	3	5
Health Assessment	3	5
Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing	3	6
Evidence Based Practice and Applied Nursing Research	3	6
Health and Wellness Through Nutritional Science	3	6
Organizational Systems and Quality Leadership	3	7
Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing Field Experience	2	7
Advanced Information Management and the Application of Technology	3	7
Advanced Professional Roles and Values	2	8
Professional Presence and Influence	2	8
Translational Research for Practice and Populations	2	8
Organizational Leadership and Interprofessional Team Development	3	8
Pathopharmacological Foundations for Advanced Nursing Practice	3	9
Contemporary Pharmacotherapeutics	2	9
Comprehensive Health Assessment for Patients and Populations	3	9

Essentials of Advanced Nursing Practice Field Experience	2	10
Policy, Politics, and Global Health Trends	3	10
Foundations of Nursing Education	3	10
Facilitating Learning in the 21st Century	2	11
Future Directions in Contemporary Learning and Education	2	11
Nursing Education Field Experience	4	11
Nurse Educator Capstone	2	12

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, Nursing - Education

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. **Nursing Core**

Advanced Standing for RN License

Foundations of Success

Professional Leadership and Communication for Healthcare

The Leadership and Communication course is designed to help students prepare for success in the online environment at Western Governors University and beyond. Student success starts with the social support and self-reflective awareness that will prepare students to weather the challenges of academic programs. In this course students will participate in group activities and complete a number of individual assignments. The group activities are aimed at finding support and insight from other students. The assignments are intended to give the student an opportunity to reflect about where they are and where they would like to be. The activities in each group meeting are designed to give students several tools they can use to achieve success. This course is designed as a eight-part intensive learning experience. Students will attend eight group meetings during the term. At each meeting students will engage in activities that help them understand their own educational journey and find support and inspiration in the journey of others.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate evaluates and displays behaviors consistent with the process of self-discovery and mindfulness • The graduate demonstrates appropriate patterns of effective communication.
- The graduate identifies and applies appropriate communication strategies to develop a supportive community of peers.
- The graduate demonstrates the ability to apply the concept of working styles to leadership skills.

General Education

English Composition I

This course introduces learners to the types of writing and thinking that is valued in college and beyond. Students will practice writing in several genres and several media, with emphasis placed on writing and revising academic arguments. The course contains supporting media, articles, and excerpts to support a focus on one of five disciplinary threads (covering the topics of nursing, business, information technology, teaching, and literature, art, and culture) designed to engage students and welcome them into discussion about contemporary issues. The course supports peer review activities, though it may be completed asynchronously as well. Instruction and exercises in grammar, mechanics, research documentation, and style are paired with each module so that writers can practice these skills as necessary. This course includes full access to the MindEdge Writing Pad to support student writing and coaching sessions.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate integrates credible and relevant sources into written arguments.
- The graduate uses appropriate writing and revision strategies
- The graduate composes an appropriate argumentative essay for a given context.
- The graduate composes an appropriate narrative for a given context.
- The graduate appropriately uses a given writing style.

- The graduate selects appropriate rhetorical strategies that improve writing and argumentation.
- The graduate applies appropriate grammatical rules, sentence structure, and writing conventions.

Survey of United States Constitution and Government

In Survey of United States Constitution and Government, you will examine the structure, institutions and principles of the American political system. The foundation of the United States government is the U.S. Constitution, and this course will introduce the concepts of (a) separation of powers, (b) checks and balances, (c) civil liberties and civil rights, and (d) federalism and republicanism. By completing this course, you will have proven competency in the structures of government, your own role in the policy-making process, and the ways in which the Constitution and government has changed over time.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the role of individuals, interest groups, and political parties in the U.S. electoral system.
- The graduate analyzes the powers of each branch of government and the relationships among them.
- The graduate analyzes the division of power between national and state governments.
- The graduate analyzes the formation of personal and collective political opinions and the influence of the media.
- The graduate analyzes the development and protection of individual civil liberties and civil rights.
- The graduate analyzes the dilemmas and principles of government.
- The graduate analyzes the central themes and founding principles of the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. government.

Introduction to Communication

This introductory communication course allows students to become familiar with the fundamental communication theories and practices necessary to engage in healthy professional and personal relationships. Students will survey human communication on multiple levels and critically apply the theoretical grounding of the course to interpersonal, intercultural, small group, and public presentational contexts. The course also encourages students to consider the influence of language, perception, culture, and media on their daily communicative interactions. In addition to theory, students will engage in the application of effective communication skills through systematically preparing and delivering an oral presentation. By practicing these fundamental skills in human communication, students become more competent communicators as they develop more flexible, useful, and discriminatory communicative practices in a variety of contexts.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate applies foundational elements of effective communication.
- The graduate applies appropriate communication strategies in interpersonal and group contexts
- The graduate utilizes appropriate presentational communication strategies in personal and professional settings.

Introduction to Humanities

This introductory humanities course allows students to practice essential writing, communication, and critical thinking skills necessary to engage in civic and professional interactions as mature, informed adults. Whether through studying literature, visual and performing arts, or philosophy, all humanities courses stress the need to form reasoned, analytical, and articulate responses to cultural and creative works. Studying a wide variety of creative works allows students to more effectively enter the global community with a broad and enlightened perspective.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Classical period.
- The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Romantic period.
- The graduate assesses the development of humans through the study of key concepts, disciplines, and primary influences of the humanities.
- The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Renaissance.
- The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities within the Neoclassical and Enlightenment period.

- The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Realist movement.

Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan

This course introduces students to human development across the lifespan. This will include an introductory survey of cognitive, psychological, and physical growth. Students will gain an understanding in regards to the emergence of personality, identity, gender and sexuality, social relationships, emotion, language, and moral development through life.

This will include milestones such as education, achievement, work, dying, and death.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes human physical development from conception through birth.
- The graduate examines the processes of death, dying, and grieving.
- The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during infancy.
- The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during early childhood.
- The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during middle childhood.
- The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during middle adulthood.
- The graduate explains the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during early adulthood.
- The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during adolescence.
- The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during late adulthood.
- The graduate explains guiding perspectives, theories, and influences on physical, cognitive, and social development across the lifespan.

Introduction to Psychology

In this course, students will develop an understanding of psychology and how it helps them better understand others and themselves.

Students will learn general theories about psychological development, the structure of the brain, and how psychologists study behavior.

They will gain an understanding of both normal and disordered psychological behaviors, as well as general applications of the science of psychology in society (such as personality typing and counseling).

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate examines the significant characteristics of major theories of emotion, motivation, and personality.
- The graduate examines the relationships between intelligence and memory.
- The graduate examines key developmental milestones across the lifespan.
- The graduate examines the processes of social cognition and their effects on social interactions.
- The graduate analyzes how the scientific method is used in psychology.
- The graduate analyzes the role and function of the brain, nervous system, and endocrine system in human psychology.
- The graduate examines the principle causes, prevalence, and basic treatments of psychological disorders.
- The graduate examines the relationships among classical, operant, and observational learning theories.

Introduction to Sociology

This course teaches students to think like sociologists, in other words, to see and understand the hidden rules, or norms, by which people live, and how they free or restrain behavior. Students will learn about socializing institutions, such as schools and families, as well as workplace organizations and governments. Participants will also learn how people deviate from the rules by challenging norms, and how such behavior may result in social change, either on a large scale or within small groups.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate explains the approach of those who observed society in the past including European and American thinkers.
- The graduate assesses where one resides within the broader context of a stratified society.

- The graduate analyzes the impact of major social institutions on society.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of conformity and resistance to society's norms.
- The graduate evaluates the social forces that produce one's identity.

Applied Healthcare Statistics

Applied Healthcare Probability and Statistics is designed to help you develop competence in the fundamental concepts of basic mathematics, introductory algebra, and statistics and probability. These concepts include: basic arithmetic with fractions and signed numbers; introductory algebra and graphing; descriptive statistics; regression and correlation; and probability. Statistical data and probability are now commonplace in the healthcare field. You need to be able to make informed decisions about which studies and results are valid, which are not, and how those results affect your decisions. This course will give you background in what constitutes sound research design and how to appropriately model phenomena using statistical data. Additionally, you will be able to calculate simple probabilities, especially based on events which occur in the healthcare profession. This course will prepare you for your studies at WGU, as well as in the healthcare profession.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate applies principles and methods of probability-based mathematics to explain and solve problems.
- The graduate applies the operations, processes, and procedures of fractions, decimals, and percentages to evaluate quantitative expressions.
- The graduate evaluates the relationship between two quantitative variables through correlation and regression.
- The graduate applies the operations, processes, and procedures of basic arithmetic to solve expressions.
- The graduate evaluates the relationship between two variables through interpretation of visual displays and numerical measures.
- The graduate evaluates categorical and quantitative data pertaining to a single variable using appropriate graphical displays and numerical measures.
- The graduate applies the operations, processes, and procedures of basic algebra to evaluate quantitative expressions, and to solve equations and inequalities.

Health Sciences

Anatomy and Physiology I

Anatomy and Physiology I examines the structures and functions of the human body. The course is designed to provide students with a thorough understanding of human anatomy and physiology, including the interdependent operational relationships among them. Students will use a dissection lab to study organ systems of the human body in their healthy state including the digestive, skeletal, sensory, respiratory, reproductive, nervous, muscular, cardiovascular, lymphatic, integumentary, endocrine and renal systems. By examining these organ systems in a healthy state, healthcare professionals are more adept to recognize when something is functioning abnormally, which is a key component to providing effective care to patients. For nursing students this is the first of two anatomy and physiology courses within the program of study. This course has no pre-requisites.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the structures and functions of the human cardiovascular and respiratory systems.
- The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human nervous system.
- The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human digestive system.
- The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human renal and reproductive systems.
- The graduate analyzes the structure and function of the human lymphatic and endocrine systems.
- The graduate applies appropriate terminology to communicate about body position and human anatomical features and relationships.
- The graduate analyzes the structures and functions of the human muscular, skeletal, and integumentary systems.

Anatomy and Physiology II

This course introduces advanced concepts of human anatomy and physiology, through the investigation of the structures and functions of the body's organ systems. Students will have the opportunity to explore the body through laboratory experience and apply the concepts covered in this course. For nursing students this is the second of two anatomy and physiology courses within the program of study.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the relationship between basic human metabolic functions and human cell and tissue structures.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the endocrine system, including principles of thermoregulation.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the digestive system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the muscular system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the cardiovascular system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the respiratory system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the reproductive system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the hematologic system, including immunity.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the nervous system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the renal system.

Clinical Microbiology

Clinical Microbiology introduces general concepts, methods, and applications of microbiology from a health sciences perspective. The course is designed to provide healthcare professionals with a basic understanding of how various diseases are transmitted and controlled. Students will examine the structure and function of microorganisms, including the roles that they play in causing major diseases. The course also explores immunological, pathological and epidemiological factors associated with disease. To assist students in developing an applied, patient-focused understanding of microbiology, this course is complimented by several lab experiments which allow students to: practice aseptic techniques, grow bacteria and fungi, identify characteristics of bacteria and yeast based on biochemical and environmental tests, determine antibiotic susceptibility, discover the microorganisms growing on objects and surfaces, and determine the Gram characteristic of bacteria. This course has no pre-requisites.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the function of the immune system.
- The graduate evaluates methods of microbial control in preventing the spread of infection.
- The graduate explains disease transmission and progression and the disease state.
- The graduate describes structures and characteristics of microorganisms.
- The graduate evaluates antimicrobial therapy and resistance mechanisms.
- The graduate applies techniques and procedures to propagate and characterize microorganisms.
- The graduate explains causes, signs, symptoms, prevention, and treatment of major infectious diseases.

Chemistry Content

Biochemistry

Biochemistry covers the structure and function of the four major polymers produced by living organisms. These include nucleic acids, proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids. This course focuses on application! Be sure to understand the underlying biochemistry in order to grasp how it is applied. By successfully completing this course, you will gain an introductory understanding of the chemicals and reactions that sustain life. You will also begin to see the importance of this subject matter to health.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate explains how the structure and composition of amino acids and proteins impact the human body.
- The graduate analyzes the role of ATP in carbohydrate metabolism and the impact of irregular ATP synthesis on the human body.
- The graduate demonstrates how nucleic acid polymers can transform cells and transmit information within the cell.
- The graduate explains how lipids are essential to the normal function of cells and the impact of abnormal lipid metabolism on the human body.
- The graduate explains how the structure and function of myoglobin and hemoglobin impact the human body.
- The graduate explains how the structure and function of enzymes and inhibitors in reactions impact the human body.

Nursing Theory and Practice

Care of the Older Adult

Care of the Older Adult adapts the concepts from prior coursework to the care of older adults. An understanding of the effects that policy and legislation have on how healthcare systems treat aging patients sets a foundation for improving their care. Students will apply health assessment skills and evidence-based standards in such a way to account for the specific needs of older adults. Emphasis is placed on the importance of maintaining the dignity of older adults by focusing on cultural, religious, spiritual, and communication needs and by collaborating on care with older adults, families, and caregivers.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate selects appropriate evidence-based standards of health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention in older adult populations.
- The graduate determines the needs of older adults and their families and caregivers to coordinating patient-centered, safe transitions of care that aim to assure the least restrictive care environment relative to strengths and vulnerabilities, and reduce unnecessary hospitalizations.
- The graduate collaborates with patients, families and the inter-professional team to select the appropriate application of technology to enhance older adults' safety and independence.
- The graduate recommends techniques to co-create health and illness management practices with older adults and their families (caregivers) that ensure safety and optimal maintenance of functional ability, taking into account patient characteristics and needs and patient and caregiver vulnerabilities as well as strengths.
- The graduate integrates principles of compassion and respect for patients and their families into the planning and delivery of care to a diverse population of older adults and into advocacy for vulnerable older adults.
- The graduate plans and provides patient care that incorporates genomic influences and risks and provides patient education that recognizes individual attitudes and values.
- The graduate collaborates with patients and families to support palliative care needs in order to reduce symptom burden and treatment fatigue and enhance quality of life, as well as end-of-life care that is compassionate, respectful, patient centered, and family supported.
- The graduate evaluates the effectiveness of the healthcare environment and the influence of health policy in providing care that maximizes the function and independence of older adults in accordance with individual patient characteristics and patient and family needs.
- The graduate evaluates the older adults' lifeworld with special awareness of the diversity among the health status of older adults, individualizing care according to the physical, mental/cognitive, functional, and psycho-social well-being of an elder patient, along with support systems in place.
- The graduate effectively collaborates with patients, families and inter-professional team members in planning primary, secondary, tertiary and end-of-life care that addresses older adults' physical, mental, psychosocial and spiritual needs and preferences and responses to changes in health status and related treatments.

Health Assessment

The Health Assessment course is designed to enhance students' knowledge and skills in health promotion, the early detection of illness and prevention of disease. To that end the course provides relevant content and skills necessary to perform a comprehensive physical assessment of patients throughout the lifespan. Students are engaged in these processes through interviewing, history taking and demonstration of an advanced-level physical examination. Dominant models, theories and perspectives related to evidence-based wellness practices and health education strategies also are included in this challenging course. Competency is measured through successful completion of two performance tasks. It is recommended that students plan to complete C349 in four to six weeks.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the reproductive systems, breasts, and axillae.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the cardiovascular, peripheral vascular, and lymphatic systems.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the head and neck, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and throat.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems.
- The graduate analyzes the context and influences that inform the processes and interpretations of a health assessment.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the integumentary system.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the mental status.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the gastrointestinal and renal systems.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of head-to-toe physical assessments.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the respiratory system.

Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing

Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing will assist students in becoming familiar with foundational theories and models of health promotion applicable to the community health nursing environment. Students will develop an understanding of how policies and resources influence the health of populations. Focus is concentrated on learning the importance of a community assessment to improve or resolve a community health issue. Students will be introduced to the relationships between cultures and communities and the steps necessary to create community collaboration with the goal to improve or resolve community health issues in a variety of settings. Students will gain a greater understanding of health systems in the United States, global health issues, quality-of-life issues, cultural influences, community collaboration, and emergency preparedness.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate proposes health promotion initiatives and services to promote disease and injury prevention.
- The graduate develops culturally sensitive and relevant strategies to advocate for populations, based on knowledge of community health systems.
- The graduate analyzes past and present initiatives meant to improve the health of the global community.
- The graduate plans and coordinates community care in collaboration with community partners.
- The graduate assesses the impact of the environment on the health of the community.
- The graduate applies principles of epidemiology to the assessment of the healthcare needs of communities.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of communicable diseases on the health of individuals, families, and communities in a global environment.
- The graduate analyzes social and cultural factors that affect the care of diverse populations
- The graduate plans for the preparation, response, and recovery of communities from natural and human-caused emergencies and disasters.

Evidence Based Practice and Applied Nursing Research

The Evidence Based Practice and Applied Nursing Research course will help you to learn how to design and conduct research to answer important questions about improving nursing practice and patient care delivery outcomes. After you are introduced to the basics of

evidence-based practice, you will continue to implement the principles throughout your clinical experience. This will allow you to graduate with more competence and confidence to become a leader in the healing environment.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate differentiates between quality improvement processes, evidence based practice and research.
- The graduate describes the process of data collection, analysis and implementation of evidence that can improve clinical practice from an interprofessional perspective.
- The graduate discriminates between identified standards and practices that do not provide improvements in patient outcomes utilizing relevant sources of evidence and the application of nursing theory.
- The graduate demonstrates knowledge of the process and outcomes of conducting a literature review.
- The graduate demonstrates understanding of the ethics of nursing research particularly human subjects' protections, informed consent and alignment with patient and family values and preferences.

Health and Wellness Through Nutritional Science

Nutritional ignorance or misunderstandings are at the root of the health problems that most Americans face today. Nurses need to be armed with the most current information available about nutrition science including how to understand nutritional content of food, implications of exercise and activity on food consumption and weight management, and management of community or population specific nutritional challenges. The Nutrition for Contemporary Society course should prepare nurses to provide support, guidance and teaching about incorporation of sound nutritional principles into daily life for health promotion. This course covers the following concepts: nutrition to support wellness; healthy nutritional choices; nutrition and physical activity; nutrition through the lifecycle; safety and security of food; and nutrition and global health environments.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the role of nutrition in an average human life cycle from conception and pregnancy to older adulthood.
- The graduate analyzes the balance of nutrition and physical activity in the human body and its relationship to overall physiological functioning and body systems.
- The graduate discusses the various myths and truths about nutrition today, including dietary supplements and nutritional fads.
- The graduate discusses components of a healthy diet plan, guided by national guidelines and sound nutritional principles.
- The graduate analyzes the role of food safety in nutrition and the factors contributing to world hunger.
- The graduate recognizes the role of health diet choices in relation to body weight, genetic control, healing and body weight imbalances.

Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing Field Experience

Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing Field Experience will introduce and familiarize students with clinical aspects of health promotion and disease prevention in the community health nursing environment. Students will practice skills based on clinical priorities, methodology, and resources that positively influence the health of populations by assessing a primary prevention topic in the community. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills by applying principals of community health nursing in a variety of community settings aligning with the selected primary prevention topic. As part of this process, students will be required to complete a minimum of 90 practice hours in order to meet the requirements of the course. Practice hours include direct and indirect hours of activity engaged with the community or population chosen as your focus. Students will describe the completed Field Experience in a written assessment that will also outline recommendations to improve the community health concern using the nursing process. Students will develop and recommend health promotion and disease prevention strategies for population groups.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate proposes health promotion initiatives and services to promote disease and injury prevention.
- The graduate develops culturally sensitive and relevant strategies to advocate for populations, based on knowledge of community health systems.
- The graduate plans and coordinates community care in collaboration with community partners.
- The graduate assesses the impact of the environment on the health of the community.

- The graduate applies principles of epidemiology to the assessment of the healthcare needs of communities.

Advanced Professional Roles and Values

The Advanced Professional Roles and Values course bridges the undergraduate nurse to higher level knowledge and accountability by examining roles of advanced professional practice. Current issues, professional and personal values, and ethical issues are examined along with scholarship and advanced practice roles.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate evaluates leading theories and models as they apply to contemporary nursing practice.
- The graduate integrates strategies of self-awareness and self-care into professional practice to ensure personal health and well-being.
- The graduate integrates knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the nursing profession into personal and professional interactions and decision making.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of new and diverse advanced nursing and care provider roles on interprofessional practice.
- The graduate evaluates how the vision, values, mission, and philosophy of an organization align with an individual's professional values and beliefs.
- The graduate analyzes the advanced responsibilities and accountability of nurses from professional and regulatory perspectives.
- The graduate evaluates professional roles for advanced nursing practice.
- The graduate analyzes the roles of the nurse as a scientist, a detective, and a manager of the healing environment.
- The graduate integrates advanced professional standards of practice and codes of ethics to concepts of situational ethics.

Nursing Science

Organizational Systems and Quality Leadership

Nurses serve as clinicians, managers, and mentors to shape the future of healthcare and impact patient care outcomes in positive ways. This course will help students to be more confident and better prepared to assume leadership roles regardless of their position in the healthcare delivery system. This advanced leadership course focuses on the concepts of Patient Safety, Improvement science, balancing cost, quality and access through the triple aim, leadership and patient/family centered care. Students will develop mastery of advanced competencies particularly in patient safety in quality improvement science.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate applies principles of leadership to promote high-quality healthcare in a variety of settings through the application of sound leadership principles.
- The graduate applies quality improvement processes intended to achieve optimal healthcare outcomes, contributing to and supporting a culture of safety.
- The graduate analyzes financial implications related to healthcare delivery, reimbursement, access, and national initiatives.
- The graduate applies theoretical principles necessary for effective participation in an interdisciplinary team.

Advanced Information Management and the Application of Technology

In this course you will examine complementary roles of master's level-prepared nursing information technology professionals, including informaticists and quality officers. You will analyze current and emerging technologies; data management; ethical legal and regulatory best-practice evidence; and bio-health informatics using decision-making support systems at the point of care.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate distinguishes between the critical and useful electronic data needed for effective decision support (clinical, financial, and administrative outcomes) to provide high-quality and efficient care.

- The graduate evaluates the essential elements of safety, security, and privacy in an information management system or informatics project.
- The graduate evaluates information management systems that support timely, high-quality, patient-centered care.
- The graduate evaluates the implications of current and emerging technologies for practice, research, education, and administration.
- The graduate integrates knowledge of nursing initiatives, professional organizations, and leadership into strategies for enhancing nursing informatics.

MSN Professional Nursing Core

Professional Presence and Influence

Who we are and how we behave affects others. Our professional presence in therapeutic settings can support or inhibit well-being not only in patients, but also in the rest of the health care team, in the family and support system of the patients, and in the health care organization as a whole. This course will help registered nurses manage this impact by recognizing situations and practices that support a positive environment and cultivating actions and responses to achieve and maintain this environment. The growth of self-knowledge will expand nurses' ability to direct influence in ways that are intended rather than in random or destructive ways.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate utilizes personality tools to identify his/her own personality type and incorporate self-awareness practices to increase mindful presence into his/her own life, practice of health care, and interactions with patients and colleagues.
- The graduate uses principles of self-knowledge, active listening, authentic leadership, and mentoring in transforming and creating a healing environment.

Translational Research for Practice and Populations

This graduate-level course builds on your baccalaureate-level statistical knowledge to help you develop skills in analyzing, interpreting, and translating research into nursing practice using principles of patient-centered care and applications to individuals and populations

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate interprets evidence and evaluates its applicability to nursing practice.
- The graduate evaluates comprehensive literature reviews for historical context, completeness, applicability, reliability, organization, and quality of information sources.

Organizational Leadership and Interprofessional Team Development

This graduate-level course builds on baccalaureate-level leadership knowledge to develop application skills in complex healthcare environments with diverse teams. Graduates will develop knowledge and competencies in the following areas:

- leadership theory
- systems and complexity theory
- advanced communication
- building consensus

Knowledge, skills, and abilities related to creating cultures of safety and leading quality improvement are key parts of this course and of contemporary leadership. Most importantly, students will develop and establish deep understanding of leadership roles within organizations, a central theme in the course. Upon successful completion of this course, Students will demonstrate:

- critical decision making, critical analysis, and visionary thinking to lead and affect positive healthcare environments;
- the ability to build consensus and communicate a compelling vision that facilitates teamwork.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes effective leadership strategies within the context of the interprofessional team.
- The graduate evaluates leadership practices that support accountability and integrity within an organization.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of contemporary healthcare trends and practices on the delivery of healthcare.

- The graduate identifies the impact of business and economic principles and practices, and regulatory requirements on the provision of healthcare.
- The graduate relates systems theory and change theory to the design, delivery, and evaluation of health care.

Pathopharmacological Foundations for Advanced Nursing Practice

In Pathopharmacological Foundations for Advanced Nursing Practice, students will gain application skills by examining syndromes rather than looking at body systems independently. The course includes pathophysiologies, the associated pharmacological treatments, and social and environmental impacts. Pathopharmacological Foundations for Advanced Nursing Practice is an integrated examination of five common and important disease processes:

- asthma
- heart failure
- obesity
- traumatic brain injury
- depression

These processes are relevant to advanced nursing practice because of their prevalence and impact on the healthcare system and the health of the nation.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate distinguishes between general information and relevant assessment findings to manage and minimize pathologies and risk factors to promote optimal patient outcomes.
- The graduate integrates relevant patient and population data to develop pathopharmacological management strategies for populations.
- The graduate evaluates salient pharmacological issues in managing patient care transitions.
- The graduate analyzes pharmaceutical impacts, including physiological, psychological, financial, and lifestyle factors on the selected disease processes.
- The graduate evaluates high volume-high impact disease processes including associated pharmacological interventions and implications for advanced practice.

Contemporary Pharmacotherapeutics

This course provides the opportunity to acquire advanced knowledge and skills in the therapeutic use of pharmacologic agents, herbals, and supplements. Students will explore the pharmacologic treatment of major health problems and examine the principles of pharmacogenomics. The effects of culture, ethnicity, age, pregnancy, gender, healthcare setting, and funding of pharmacologic therapy will be emphasized. Legal aspects of prescribing will be fully addressed. Case studies will be utilized to present some of these concepts.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate identifies the role of regulatory agencies and their impact in drug therapy from development to delivery.
- The graduate applies comprehensive principles of pharmacotherapeutics to nursing care with individuals, families and communities.
- The graduate makes recommendations to address issues affecting adherence, safety, and compliance with prescribed, over the counter (OTC), and complementary drug regimens among patients and families.
- The graduate identifies social ramifications to health based on patterns of prescription and non-prescription medication use from an individual, community and global perspective.
- The graduate incorporates scientific and ethical principles to make decisions regarding drug distribution and availability.

Comprehensive Health Assessment for Patients and Populations

In this course, students will learn about the principles of health assessment from the individual to the global level. Students will learn to perform a comprehensive functional health assessment that includes social structures, family history, and environmental situations, from the individual patient to the population. This course builds on prior knowledge gained in previous courses and in nursing practice, in areas such as pathophysiology, pharmacology, and epidemiology, and focus on applying this knowledge in various populations with common disorders.

This course is roughly divided into three parts:

- Advanced health assessment focusing on abnormal findings for common disease.
- Integrating health assessment findings into a population, considering such issue as culture, spirituality, and continuum.
- Functionality of clients based upon the problems and populations.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate develops strategies for assessment of health maintenance and risk reduction activities of individuals and populations.
- The graduate identifies integrative strategies for promoting physical and functional health, and preventing disease for individuals and selected populations.
- The graduate develops outcome goals for individuals and selected populations based on assessment findings.
- The graduate develops a comprehensive assessment approach for the assessment of individuals and populations.

Essentials of Advanced Nursing Practice Field Experience

The Essentials of Advanced Nursing Practice Field Experience course gives you an opportunity to apply leadership knowledge to evaluate a healthcare facility and then recommend an organizational change to improve population health. In this course you will integrate and apply your learning in a clinical experience working with a nurse leader. You will demonstrate and document the following skills:

- lead change to improve quality health in populations
- advance a culture of excellence through lifelong learning
- build and lead collaborative interprofessional care teams
- navigate and integrate care services across the healthcare system
- design innovative nursing practices • translate evidence into practice

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate evaluates an organizational change or innovation as measured against the master's level nursing and interprofessional standards.
- The graduate adapts an organizational change or innovation to improve quality care outcomes while meeting the master's level nursing and interprofessional standards.

Policy, Politics, and Global Health Trends

Social, political, and economic factors influence policies that impact health outcomes in acute care settings in communities, nationally and globally. Nurse leaders need to understand the determinants of health as well as how legal and regulatory processes, healthcare finances, research, the role of professional organizations, and special interest groups/lobbyists impact health outcomes. This course provides a framework for understanding the organization of healthcare delivery and financing systems in the U.S. and other nations. It addresses how policies are made and factors that influence policies at local, national, and global levels that impact health/wellness and the nursing profession. The roles of values, ethical theories, stakeholder interests, research, and recent legislation related to health policy and health outcomes will be explored. The nurse leader will gain expertise in effecting change through active participation in influencing or developing policies that impact health.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes strategies that healthcare advocates use to affect policies with the goal of improving the public health and the profession of nursing
- The graduate analyzes the organization of healthcare delivery and financing systems in the U.S. and other nations.
- The graduate analyzes the effect of major legal and regulatory policies on nursing practice, health care delivery, and health outcomes for individual, families, and communities.
- The graduate analyzes the historical, economic, and political, factors that affect health care policy development and the impact of those policies on healthcare cost, quality and access.
- The graduate analyzes the values that drive policies.

Foundations of Nursing Education

This graduate level course in the education specialty core examines the contemporary issues of nursing education. While traditional contexts for learning are included, students will also focus on modern technology and trends in nursing education. Students will explore curriculum development, educational philosophy, theories and models, instruction and evaluation, as well as e-learning, simulations, and current technology in nursing education.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate evaluates various ethical, legal, and accreditation issues related to nursing education.
- The graduate describes the essential concepts of assessing student learning.
- The graduate analyzes evolutionary trends in higher education and nursing education.
- The graduate evaluates nursing curricula for relevance and effectiveness within the setting in which they will be used.
- The graduate examines theoretical foundations of education that affect nursing education.

Facilitating Learning in the 21st Century

This course applies traditional learning theories in contemporary nursing practice, using 21st-century educational paradigms. Students will examine and experiment with various educational ideas including: nursing curricula development, facilitated learner development and diversity, assessment and evaluation strategies of learners, and evaluation of course and program outcomes.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes contemporary methods for evaluating program efficacy.
- The graduate evaluates contemporary methods for assessing learning.
- The graduate analyzes the essential elements for designing nursing program curricula.
- The graduate assesses the various needs of adult learners in nursing education and clinical education programs.
- The graduate describes the strategies for implementing a nursing education curriculum.

Future Directions in Contemporary Learning and Education

This course builds on previously developed concepts acquired in Foundations of Nursing Education and Facilitating Learning in the 21st Century. This course will explore how changes in the economy, advancements in science, and the explosion of technology have created a paradigm shift in nursing education. Graduates will further explore the role of the educator and the application of innovative education strategies.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes emerging trends in education.
- The graduate analyzes the roles and responsibilities of a nurse educator.
- The graduate applies knowledge of adult education and traditional and alternative teaching methodology to use technology in educational experiences.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of science and technology on nursing education.

Nursing Education Field Experience

Nurse educators teach the next generation of nurses, in academic and clinical settings. They must be licensed to practice nursing and have considerable hands-on nursing experience, as well as advanced training and education. The Nursing Education Field Experience provides the graduate student with an opportunity to work collaboratively within the organization where he/she is employed to address an identified nursing problem, need, or gap in current practices. Students then work to promote a practice change, quality improvement, or innovation that is based on the existing evidence and best practices.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate designs learning objectives and curricula based on programmatic outcomes and utilization of evidence for best practice.
- The graduate demonstrates personal responsibility for learner development through the integration of professional values and behaviors.
- The graduate creates an environment in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings that facilitates student learning and the achievement of desired cognitive, affective, and psychomotor outcomes.
- The graduate demonstrates the ability to deliver educational content using a variety of teaching methodologies.
- The graduate creates a plan and an ongoing commitment to maintain competence in the multidimensional role of the nurse educator.
- The graduate creates a preferred future for nursing education and nursing practice by functioning as a change agent and leader.
- The graduate uses a variety of strategies to assess and evaluate student learning in classroom, laboratory and clinical settings, as well as in all domains of learning.

Nurse Educator Capstone

The capstone is a scholarly project that addresses an issue, need, gap or opportunity resulting from an identified in nursing education or healthcare need. The capstone project provides the opportunity for the graduate nursing student to demonstrate competency through design, application and evaluation of advanced nursing knowledge and higher level leadership skills for ultimately improving health outcomes

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>.