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 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, Nursing - Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Standing for RN License</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations of College Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Composition I</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology I</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of United States Constitution and Government</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Effective Communication</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Microbiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Psychology</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Probability and Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care of the Older Adult</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Assessment</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition for Contemporary Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Systems and Quality Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing Field Experience</td>
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<td>Advanced Information Management and the Application of Technology</td>
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<td>Advanced Professional Roles and Values</td>
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<td>Professional Presence and Influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Translational Research for Practice and Populations</td>
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<td>Pathopharmacological Foundations for Advanced Nursing Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contemporary Pharmacotherapeutics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Health Assessment for Patients and Populations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essentials of Advanced Nursing Practice Field Experience</td>
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<td>Organizational Leadership and Interprofessional Team Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy, Politics, and Global Health Trends</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Nursing Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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

General Education

Foundations of College Mathematics

Foundations of College Mathematics addresses the sequence of learning activities necessary to build competence in foundational concepts of College Mathematics, which include whole numbers, fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions and percents, geometry, statistics, the real number system, equations, inequalities, applications, and graphs of linear equations.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate evaluates quantitative data by interpreting statistical and graphic representations and solves basic probability problems.
- The graduate applies the operations, processes, and procedures of basic algebra to solve quantitative problems.
- The graduate utilizes the operations, processes, and procedures of basic geometry and measurement to solve problems in mathematics.
- The graduate utilizes the operations, processes, and procedures of basic numeracy and calculation skills to solve quantitative problems in arithmetic and basic algebra.

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 composes an appropriate argumentative essay for a given context.
- The graduate integrates credible and relevant sources into written arguments.
- The graduate composes an appropriate narrative for a given context.
- The graduate uses appropriate writing and revision strategies
- The graduate applies appropriate grammatical rules, sentence structure, and writing conventions.
- The graduate appropriately uses a given writing style.
- The graduate selects appropriate rhetorical strategies that improve writing and argumentation.
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 division of power between national and state governments.
- The graduate analyzes the development and protection of individual civil liberties and civil rights.
- The graduate analyzes the central themes and founding principles of the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. government.
- The graduate analyzes the formation of personal and collective political opinions and the influence of the media.
- The graduate analyzes the dilemmas and principles of government.
- The graduate analyzes the powers of each branch of government and the relationships among them.

Elements of Effective Communication

Elements of Effective Communication introduces learners to elements of communication that are valued in college and beyond. Materials are based on five principles: being aware of your communication with yourself and others; using and interpreting verbal messages effectively; using and interpreting nonverbal messages effectively; listening and responding thoughtfully to others, and adapting messages to others appropriately.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate applies foundational elements of effective communication.
- The graduate demonstrates effective presentational communication strategies in a given context.
- The graduate applies appropriate communication strategies in interpersonal and group contexts.

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

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

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 assesses where one resides within the broader context of a stratified society.
The graduate analyzes the impact of conformity and resistance to society’s norms.

The graduate analyzes the impact of major social institutions on society.

The graduate explains the approach of those who observed society in the past including European and American thinkers.

The graduate evaluates the social forces that produce one’s identity.

**Introduction to Probability and Statistics**

In this course, students demonstrate competency in the basic concepts, logic, and issues involved in statistical reasoning. Topics include summarizing and analyzing data, sampling and study design, and probability.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- The graduate determines the probability of events using simulations, diagrams, and probability rules.
- The graduate evaluates categorical and quantitative data using appropriate numerical measures and graphical displays.
- The graduate designs and conducts observational studies, controlled experiments, and surveys to explore population characteristics.
- The graduate evaluates the sampling methods used in studies including the effect they have on conclusions that can be made.
- The graduate evaluates the relationship between two variables through the creation and interpretation of numerical summaries and visual displays.
- The graduate applies theoretical or empirical probability to a situation to quantify uncertainty.

**Health Sciences**

**Anatomy and Physiology I**

This course introduces basic concepts of human anatomy and physiology through a survey 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 basic knowledge of the course. For nursing students this is the first of two anatomy and physiology courses within the program of study.

*This course covers the following competencies:*

- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human nervous system based on an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human skeletal systems through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human sensory systems based on an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human male and female reproductive system through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human cardiovascular system based on the understanding of structure, regulation, and function of heart and blood vessels.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human muscular systems through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate explains the normal operation of the human integumentary systems through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human lymphatic and immune systems through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
of structure, regulation, and function.

- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human respiratory system based on the understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human digestive systems through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human urinary renal system through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human endocrine system through an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate utilizes appropriate terminology to communicate about human anatomical features, body position, and chemical physiology.

**Anatomy and Physiology II**

This course introduces advanced concepts of human anatomy and physiology, through 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 of the 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 structures, functions, and integration of the reproductive 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 muscular system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the nervous system.
- 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 renal system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the digestive system.
- The graduate analyzes the structures, functions, and integration of the hematologic system, including immunity.
- The graduate analyzes the relationship between basic human metabolic functions and human cell and tissue structures.

**Clinical Microbiology**

Clinical Microbiology focuses on microbes--both constructive and destructive--that are among the smallest living entities on earth. Students will examine how they live, reproduce, carry diseases, and develop resistance to antibiotics. This course has a clinical focus.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate recognizes how the growth of microorganisms can be controlled.
- The graduate recognizes how the structure, function, and transmission of protozoa and parasites can be detrimental to humans; and solves cases involving how protozoa and parasites spread in humans.
- The graduate identifies characteristics, structures, and functions of common molds, yeasts, and fungi; recognizes how the structure, function, and transmission of fungi affect humans; and solves cases involving how fungi spread in humans.
- The graduate recognizes how the structure, function, and transmission of viruses affect humans; applies knowledge of
how viruses spread in humans; and solves cases involving viral infections.

- The graduate recognizes the origin and transmission of organisms in the environment and the adaptability of microbes; describes growth patterns of microbes and the elements necessary for the spread of infection; and determines possible hosts for given pathogens.

- The graduate recognizes types and characteristics of microorganisms, performs biochemical tests, and recognizes principles of osmosis.

- The graduate identifies the structure, function, and transmission of bacteria and their role in pathogenesis; recognizes how bacteria can be beneficial or detrimental (or both) to humans; and solves cases involving how bacteria spread in humans.

- The graduate recognizes basic principles of antimicrobial therapy, antibiotic resistance, and selective toxicity; recognizes the use of different types of antimicrobials; and conducts the antibiotic sensitivity test and the Kirby-Bauer test.

- The graduate uses appropriate techniques or procedures for interacting with microorganisms in a clinic, laboratory, or community setting; utilizes basic laboratory techniques for identifying microorganisms; demonstrates proper laboratory techniques in microbiology, including sterile technique, staining techniques, aseptic technique, and chemical indicators; and recognizes types of culture media and when to use each.

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 demonstrates how nucleic acid polymers can transform cells and transmit information within the cell.

- The graduate constructs models of various states of hemoglobin, demonstrates how changes in the usual configuration of hemoglobin can lead to molecular disease, and distinguishes between the chemical structure and function of hemoglobin and myoglobin.

- The graduate constructs models of fatty acids and demonstrates why lipids are essential to the functioning of cells.

- The graduate constructs models of carbohydrates, demonstrates metabolism of carbohydrates, and demonstrates how adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is essential to energy transfer in the cell and how irregularities in ATP synthesis in the cell can cause cytopathologies.

- The graduate constructs models of enzymes, demonstrates how enzymes act as a catalyst in a reaction, including factors that influence this reaction, and solves enzyme and pathway problems.

- The graduate constructs models of the structure and function of amino acids and peptide bonds, predicts ionization of an amino acid, demonstrates peptide bond breaking, and demonstrates how protein structure affects susceptibility or resistance to disease.

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 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 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 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 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.
- 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 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 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 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 selects appropriate evidence-based standards of health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention in older adult populations.

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 one objective assessment and 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 context and influences that inform the processes and interpretations of a health assessment.
- 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 head-to-toe physical assessments.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the mental status.
The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the respiratory system.

The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the gastrointestinal and renal systems.

The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the integumentary system.

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 musculoskeletal and nervous systems.

**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 plans for the preparation, response, and recovery of communities from natural and human-caused emergencies and disasters.
- 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 plans and coordinates community care in collaboration with community partners.
- The graduate develops culturally sensitive and relevant strategies to advocate for populations, based on knowledge of community health systems.
- The graduate analyzes social and cultural factors that affect the care of diverse populations.
- The graduate analyzes past and present initiatives meant to improve the health of the global community.
- The graduate assesses the impact of the environment on the health of the community.

**Nutrition for Contemporary Society**

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 differentiates among the functions, sources, and definitions of simple and complex carbohydrates and their role in disease states.
- The graduate integrates national nutrition guidelines into the design of healthy diet plans.
• The graduate analyzes the sources, digestion, and specific roles of fats in the human diet and their role in disease states.

• The graduate analyzes the role of genetic control and influence in body weight and methods of treatment for body weight imbalances.

• The graduate analyzes the sources, digestions, and role of proteins in the human diet, including the physical properties and sources of proteins.

• The graduate analyzes the role of food safety in nutrition and the factors contributing to world hunger.

• The graduate analyzes the physiology of gastrointestinal tract.

• The graduate analyzes the role of minerals in the diet and their relationship to overall physiological functioning and bodily systems, including sources, application, over dosage, and regulation of vitamins in the human diet.

• The graduate analyzes fluid balance in the human body and its relationship to overall physiological functioning and bodily systems, including sources, application, imbalance, and regulation of fluid in the human diet.

• The graduate analyzes the balance of nutrition and physical activity in the human body and its relationship to overall physiological functioning and bodily systems.

• The graduate analyzes the role of vitamins in the diet and their relationship to overall physiological functioning and bodily systems, including sources, application, over dosage, and regulation of vitamins in the human diet.

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 conc

This course covers the following competencies:

• The graduate proposes health promotion initiatives and services to promote disease and injury prevention.

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

• The graduate plans and coordinates community care in collaboration with community partners.

• The graduate develops culturally sensitive and relevant strategies to advocate for populations, based on knowledge of community health systems.

• The graduate assesses the impact of the environment on the health of the community.

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 analyzes the advanced responsibilities and accountability of nurses from professional and regulatory perspectives.

• The graduate evaluates how the vision, values, mission, and philosophy of an organization align with an individual’s professional values and beliefs.

• 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 advanced professional standards of practice and codes of ethics to concepts of situational ethics.

• The graduate integrates knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the nursing profession into personal and professional interactions and decision making.

• The graduate analyzes the roles of the nurse as a scientist, a detective, and a manager of the healing environment.

• The graduate evaluates professional roles for advanced nursing practice.

• The graduate analyzes the impact of new and diverse advanced nursing and care provider roles on interprofessional practice.

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 quality improvement processes intended to achieve optimal healthcare outcomes, contributing to and supporting a culture of safety.

• 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 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 the complementary roles of the 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 integrates knowledge of nursing initiatives, professional organizations, and leadership into strategies for enhancing nursing informatics.

• The graduate evaluates information management systems that support timely, high-quality, patient-centered care.

• The graduate evaluates the privacy and security of data within healthcare organizations.

• The graduate evaluates the implications of current and emerging technologies for practice, research, education, and administration.

• The graduate analyzes the effectiveness and appropriateness of technology designed to ensure quality patient outcomes.

• The graduate evaluates patient data and electronic health records to inform practice.
• The graduate evaluates features and functions of health information systems necessary to meet the needs of healthcare delivery.

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 uses principles of self-knowledge, active listening, authentic leadership, and mentoring in transforming and creating a healing environment.
• 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.

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.

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 evaluates salient pharmacological issues in managing patient care transitions.
• The graduate evaluates high volume-high impact disease processes including associated pharmacological interventions and implications for advanced practice.
• 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 analyzes pharmaceutical impacts, including physiological, psychological, financial, and lifestyle factors on the selected disease processes.

• The graduate integrates relevant patient and population data to develop pathopharmacological management strategies for populations.

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 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.

• The graduate develops strategies for assessment of health maintenance and risk reduction activities of individuals and populations.

Essentials of Advanced Nursing Practice Field Experience
This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate evaluates an organizational change or innovation as measured against the master's level nursing and inter-professional standards.
- The graduate applies the master’s level nursing and inter-professional standards to an organizational change or innovation to improve quality care outcomes.

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 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 healthcare.
- The graduate evaluates leadership practices that support accountability and integrity within an organization.

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 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 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 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 evaluates nursing curricula for relevance and effectiveness within the setting in which they will be used.
- The graduate analyzes evolutionary trends in higher education and nursing education.
- 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 assesses the various needs of adult learners in nursing education and clinical education programs.
- The graduate analyzes contemporary methods for evaluating program efficacy.
- The graduate analyzes the essential elements for designing nursing program curricula.
- The graduate evaluates contemporary methods for assessing learning.
- 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 applies knowledge of adult education and traditional and alternative teaching methodology to use technology in educational experiences.
- The graduate analyzes the roles and responsibilities of a nurse educator.
- The graduate analyzes emerging trends in education.
- 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 works to promote a practice change, quality improvement, or innovation that is based on the existing
This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate creates a plan and an ongoing commitment to maintain competence in the multidimensional role of the nurse educator.
- The graduate demonstrates the ability to deliver educational content using a variety of teaching methodologies.
- 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 functions as a change agent and leader to create a preferred future for nursing education and nursing practice.
- 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.
- The graduate demonstrates personal responsibility for learner development through the integration of professional values and behaviors.
- The graduate designs learning objectives and curricula based on programmatic outcomes and utilization of evidence for best practice.

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., and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., mountain standard time.

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.

For the most current information regarding WGU support services, please visit “Student Support” on the Student Portal at http://my.wgu.edu.