Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Prelicensure)

The prelicensure BSN degree focuses on contemporary nursing practices to build nursing skills and competencies using technology-based learning. It is structured to develop competent, BSN nurses in a program that is sustainable, scalable, and nationally relevant. The prelicensure BSN program includes a strategic partnership between the Western Governors University Nursing Program and healthcare employers who provide practice sites and clinical coaches. Graduates are prepared to function in new roles as members of healthcare teams in many settings.

The prelicensure BSN program includes the study of medical-surgical (including critical care), psychiatric/mental health, pediatrics, obstetrics, and community health nursing and includes courses on evidence-based practice, research, leadership, nursing informatics, and professional nursing roles and values. Graduates are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN exam for state licensure and be prepared to seek nursing positions for military, U.S. Public Health, and VA appointments as well as assume roles in school, community, and occupational health, and other acute and non-acute care settings. BSN graduates are also prepared to enter MS, Nursing programs. This degree program includes online and distance learning plus high fidelity simulation labs and hands on clinical experiences.

The WGU prelicensure BS, Nursing program is evidence-based and developed according to The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Practice from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008) (click here to view). In addition, it incorporates competencies and standards from professional organizations and state regulations.
Mission of the WGU Department of Nursing

The mission the Department of Nursing is to make a positive difference in the lives of our students and the practice of nursing through a professionally supported, competency-based and student-focused learning model for working adults that promotes success in educational goals and sustained professional commitment. The Department of Nursing is committed to the formation of confident, caring, and competent professional nurses prepared to meet emerging healthcare needs of diverse populations.

Departmental Promise

WGU Department of Nursing promises to help our students develop the cognitive knowledge, ethical comportment and clinical reasoning skills required of a professional nurse so that they may become safe, competent practitioners. We will:

- Embrace diversity
- Commit to individual student success
- Support on-time progression and graduation
- Treat students in a fair and equitable manner
- Ensure individualized response to student needs
- Communicate respectfully and in a timely manner
- Advocate for the students through all aspects of the learning experience
- Collaborate with national and community leaders in academia and industry
- Be accountable for the quality and integrity of the nursing education programs
- Provide relevant and innovative educational resources delivered when and where needed

Nursing Programs Philosophy

We envision nursing as a caring interaction between the nurse, who is a member of an interdisciplinary team, and the patient who is a member of a family and community. This caring interaction occurs across the lifespan, from infancy through old age. Nurses identify and strengthen clients’ potential to move toward health and help clients shape their environment to promote well-being. We believe that healthcare begins in the community, prior to diagnosis of illness, by promoting health and wellness through advocacy, community assessment, and preventative care. Nurses use appropriate technologies and current evidence to develop their plans of care, whether in the community, the clinic, an acute care facility, or an extended care facility. Nurses assume leadership for clinical and ethical decision-making.

We believe that the global nature of communities and healthcare delivery necessitates that nurses be able to engage with patients, families, and communities who have diverse ways of responding to their healthcare needs. We recognize that the definition of family has expanded to include a variety of different compositions and roles and is the fundamental vehicle for how clients are supported, interact with the world around them, access resources, and engage in healthcare.

We recognize that students, particularly adult learners, have preferred learning styles, bring previous experience to the learning environment, and develop competency at different paces. Learners seek to make sense of new educational experiences in light of their past and existing knowledge and then apply their new findings to real situations. Therefore, nursing education
should provide opportunities where students engage in real world application to demonstrate competency in cognitive knowledge, clinical reasoning, and ethical comportment.

BSN Program Goals

At the completion of the BSN program, graduates will be able to:

- Provide compassionate, patient-centered care to individuals, families, and communities from a variety of cultures across the lifespan.
- Apply leadership skills to engage others in creating, promoting and managing a healing environment.
- Use clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality nursing care based on the best available evidence and ethical principles.
- Use information technology to communicate, mitigate error, and make decisions related to the provision of patient care. Support incorporation of nursing knowledge in the development of patient care technology.
- Assume accountability for providing and ensuring safe, efficient, quality care congruent with ethical, professional and legal standards.
- Engage in interprofessional collaboration to improve safety and quality of health care.
- Incorporate knowledge of genetics and genomics into the care of patients, families and communities
- Assume accountability for providing and ensuring safe, efficient, quality care congruent with ethical, professional and legal standards
- Apply leadership skills to engage others in creating, promoting and managing a healing environment.

Understanding the Competency-Based Approach

Practically speaking, what does it mean when we say that WGU programs are competency-based? Unlike traditional universities, WGU does not award degrees based on credit hours. Instead, students earn their degrees by demonstrating their skills, knowledge, and understanding of important concepts through a series of carefully designed assessments.

Progress through a degree program is governed, not by classes, but by satisfactory completion of the required assessments that demonstrate mastery of the competencies. Students engage in learning experiences as they develop competencies and have opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills in areas where more support is needed. WGU has a rich array of learning resources in which students engage under the direction of their mentors. Students work closely with their mentors as they proceed through courses of study that are designed to lead them through the content that must be mastered in order to pass individual assessments (we discuss assessments in more detail later in this guide).

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).

**WGU’s Mentoring Approach**

Our mentoring approach is a powerful component of the WGU educational experience. When you enroll at WGU, you will begin interacting with the mentors assigned to provide guidance through the terms and courses. Mentors take an active role and a personal interest in student success and progress. Whether by e-mail or phone, mentors are the essential “point person” for communication throughout the program. The mentor will help motivate you to work hard to complete your program. When a student has questions or concerns, the mentor team will help to resolve them.

You and your mentor work together to help determine which areas the student should focus on to develop a personalized Degree Plan. The prelicensure program has a strictly defined set of courses, schedule and a progression plan which students must follow. This plan has been established through the requirements of and approval by state boards of nursing. Students are assigned to a cohort and must stay on time and on track to remain in their cohort and graduate with their cohort. Each clinical course has co-requisites. This means that the theory course, clinical lab (learning labs and clinical simulation labs) and clinical course all must be taken together. If a student is not able to fulfill the passing requirements for one of the three for a given course, they must repeat all three.

**Admission Requirements**

**Pre-nursing Enrollment**

The WGU prelicensure BSN program contains the equivalent of two years of upper division nursing courses. Prior to being enrolled into the pre-nursing curriculum, students must have completed all prerequisite science and general education courses required for a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Students may transfer the credits from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning. Students must submit official, sealed transcripts of all academic work to WGU on or before the first of the month prior to the start date of the program. Generally, science prerequisites must have been completed within the past five years. State Directors of Nursing may in some cases approve courses completed longer than five years ago.

**Prerequisite courses include:**

- Anatomy and Physiology I
- Anatomy and Physiology II
- Clinical Microbiology
- Biochemistry - This is the sole science prerequisite that may be taken at WGU. All others must be met by providing transcripts with transfer credits equivalent to WGU requirements.
Prenursing Enrollment Requirements
Applicants must have a minimum of a 2.5 GPA in the required nursing sciences to be considered for enrollment into the pre-nursing program. Successful completion of a nursing program admission exam is required prior to enrollment.

Students enrolled into the pre-nursing curriculum must also successfully pass the foundations in nursing skills performance exam (click here to view) in order to be considered for admission. Enrollment in the University does not guarantee acceptance into the nursing program. In order to be considered for enrollment into the prenursing term, applicants are required to submit and/or complete the following items:

1. Transcripts from all previously attended colleges and universities;
2. Letter of intent – Student Statement;
3. Professional resume;
4. Letters of professional recommendation: It is strongly recommended that one letter of recommendation come from a current or former employer either on the form provided or in a letter; the second letter must come from a professional colleague and be completed on the form provided. Applicants who are current employees of clinical partners must include a letter of recommendation from the clinical partner.

Applicants who are not native speakers of English are required to take appropriate tests of language proficiency.

Prelicensure Enrollment Requirements
Students seeking admission into nursing are required to submit and/or complete the following items after passing the prenursing skills exam and before admission:

1. Drug and background screening results which have been completed not more than 90 days prior to the term when the nursing courses begin;
2. Proof of health insurance;
3. Evidence of recent physical examination and attestation of ability to meet the essential performance standards of the prelicensure nursing program;
4. Required immunizations;
5. Interview with admissions committee comprised of two or three committee members including State Director of Nursing or designee;
6. WGU 1st term mentor recommendation; and

Application and acceptance into the program is based on numerical ranking of the above items and available clinical space.

Essential Performance Standards
**Background:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 was instituted by Congress to prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. The ADA defines a qualified individual with a disability as an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires. In addition, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination in admissions of a qualified person with disabilities.
ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 eligibility requirements vary depending on the type of services, activities, and functions needed in particular areas. Because the practice of nursing is an applied discipline with cognitive, sensory, affective, and motor components, students must be able to perform the functions which are necessary for the safe practice of nursing and essential to the licensing requirements for nursing. Students must be capable of meeting the following essential performance standards with or without reasonable accommodations in order to be admitted to the WGU Prelicensure nursing program:

The Performance Standards

• Ability to think critically and focus on patient care priorities in order to make clinical decisions, identify cause-and-effect relationships with clinical data, and develop nursing care plans.
• Ability to demonstrate interpersonal abilities in order to interact appropriately with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.
• Ability to clearly communicate in English (both verbal and written forms) in order to communicate nursing actions, interpret client responses, initiate health teaching, document and understand nursing activities, and interact with clients, staff and faculty supervisors.
• Ability to maneuver in small spaces and move from one place to another in order to move around in clients’ rooms and bathrooms, into and out of work spaces, access treatment areas, and procure needed emergency materials when indicated. While health care agencies must meet ADA physical access standards, potential clients and equipment may limit the amount of available space in which to move.
• Ability to demonstrate gross and fine motor skills sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care in order to move and position clients in and out of bed, calibrate and use equipment, and perform patient care procedures such as IV insertion and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
• Ability to successfully perform the following physical activities:
  o Walk 5 miles per day
  o Lift 50 pounds
  o Reach above shoulder level
  o Bend and stoop/squat
  o Grasp/grip
  o Ascend and descend stairs
• Ability to hear well enough to monitor and assess client’s health needs in order to hear cries for help, alarms on equipment, emergency signals, breath and heart sounds on auscultation, and various overhead announcements and cues.
• Ability to distinguish colors and see well enough to observe and assess clients’ health status and changes in condition in order to see grimacing, movement, changes in skin color, rashes, and other observed client changes or responses.
• Ability to have tactile capabilities sufficient for physical assessment such that the student can successfully perform palpation, note changes in skin temperature, perform skills related to therapeutic activities and identify by touch other changes in client condition.
• Physical and mental stamina necessary to adapt to requirements of 12-hour shift work, including:
  o Rotations on the 24-hour clock.
The procedure for requesting ADA accommodations is located on the University portal here.

Connecting with Other Mentors and Fellow Students
As you proceed through your Degree Plan, you may also have direct contact with other faculty members. These communications can take a variety of forms, including participation in learning communities, office hours via the courses of study, and webinars. As a WGU student, you will have access to your own personal MyWGU Student Portal that will provide a gateway to courses of study, learning communities, and program communities where you will have interactions with faculty and other students. Courses of study and communities are specifically designed to support you as you develop competencies in preparation for your assessments through the utilization of threaded discussions, blogs, and chats that are guided by content experts. You will access your program community during the Orientation 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 a Student Services Associate to help you and your mentor solve any special problems that may arise.

Orientation
The Orientation focuses on acquainting the student with WGU's competency-based model, distance education, technology, and other resources and tools available for students. You will also utilize tutorials, message boards, online chats, and other activities to connect with other students in your program. This orientation is completed before you 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 on demonstration of competency. However, if you have completed college coursework at another accredited institution, you may have your transcripts evaluated and may be able to have some lower-division or co-requisite assessments cleared. The guidelines for determining what will “clear” through transfer vary based on the degree program.

The following transfer guidelines generally apply to undergraduate programs: Requirements in the domains that can be considered the degree major cannot be cleared through transfer. Furthermore, WGU does not clear any requirements based on the student's professional experience and does not perform a "resume review" or "portfolio review" that will automatically clear any degree requirements. Degree requirements and transferability rules are subject to change in order to keep the degree content relevant and current.

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. Your terms are six months long. Longer terms and continuous enrollment allow you to focus on your studies without the hassle of unnatural breaks between the shorter terms that you would experience in a more traditional environment.
At the end of every six-month term, you and your 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 assessments you are able to pass, not on your accumulation of credit hours or course grades. Every time you pass an assessment, you are demonstrating that you have mastered skills and knowledge in your degree program. For comparison to traditional grading systems, passing an assessment means you have demonstrated competency equivalent to a “B” grade or better.

WGU has assigned competency units to each assessment so that we can track your progress through the program. A competency unit is equivalent to one semester credit of learning. Some assessments may be assigned three competency units while other assessments may be as large as six competency units.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is particularly important for financial aid students because you must make 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. As full-time students, WGU graduate students must enroll in at least eight competency units each term, and undergraduate students must enroll in at least 12 competency units each term. In order to remain in good academic standing, you must complete at least 66.67% of the units you attempt – including any assessments you add to your term to accelerate your progress. Additionally, during your first term at WGU you must pass at least three 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.

Assessments

Your Degree Plan will include the assessments needed to complete your program. To obtain your degree you will be required to demonstrate your skills and knowledge by completing the following assessments:

Performance Assessments contain, in most cases, multiple scored tasks such as projects, essays, and research papers. Performance assessments contain detailed instructions and rubrics for completing each task and are submitted in TaskStream, an online project management and grading tool.

Objective Assessments are designed to evaluate your knowledge and skills in a domain of knowledge. Most 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.

Learning Lab and Simulations are designed to evaluate your knowledge and skills related to patient care in simulated clinical environments. Lab and simulation assessments are conducted by learning lab instructors.
Clinical Intensives are designed to evaluate clinical performance in actual clinical settings according to nine key behaviors. Clinical Instructors complete clinical assessments.

As previously mentioned, we have assigned competency units (CUs) to each assessment in order to measure your academic progress. A standard plan for the program for a student who has no transfer units would look similar to the one below.

The prelicensure nursing program is a sequential program, meaning you must complete the clinical courses in a specific order. For example, you cannot work on Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II (known as CASAL II) until you have successfully completed the requirements of CASAL I, which includes required assignments, assessments, clinical learning labs and a clinical intensive.

The standard path below lists the required competencies. Prelicensure students must have completed all liberal arts and science prerequisites prior to being considered for admission into the nursing program.

**STANDARD PATH for BACHELOR OF SCIENCE in NURSING (PRELICENSURE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of College Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Composition I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of United States Constitution and Government</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elements of Effective Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Humanities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Microbiology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Nursing Arts and Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition for Contemporary Society</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Systems: Safety and Regulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Dosage Calculations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Probability and Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Management and the Application of Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I Clinical Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Assessment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II Clinical Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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The nursing program (after completion of one term of prenursing course) is designed to be completed in four terms. Program completion may take longer depending upon on time progression through the clinical degree requirements. The Degree Plan will include greater detail about the courses of study, including the assessments and their associated standard learning resources. The last term, particularly the last three months of the term, requires almost a full-time commitment since it includes 180 hours of clinical time plus a comprehensive NCLEX review for the licensing exam. Students are advised to begin preparing and saving for the last term from the beginning of the program.

General Expectations

The study of nursing is a very challenging endeavor requiring competencies in cognitive knowledge related to nursing practices and clinical reasoning in the delivery of patient care. We are committed to assisting you to achieve these competencies in your journey toward becoming a professional nurse dedicated to providing safe, high quality nursing care.

Your mentors, directors, and staff at WGU expect that you will demonstrate professional conduct and behaviors in both clinical and non-clinical settings. You are therefore expected to learn and adhere to professional standards of practice; be aware of your own personal values and show respect for others regardless of differing values and opinions.

We also hold for ourselves, a parallel expectation that you will be provided the resources necessary for the achievement of the nursing program competencies. You can expect us to treat you with respect and dignity. We know when the dignity of the student is affirmed, the learning environment will be conducive for the best learning outcomes, and students in return, are more likely to affirm the dignity of patients entrusted to your care, and colleagues with whom you practice.

Clear, effective, and appropriate communication with patients and families as well as peers, mentors, professional health care members and others is an important component of
professional demeanor and behaviors. Students are expected to demonstrate integrity, honesty, a caring attitude and respectful approach in interactions with others. Students must embrace the values essential to the profession of nursing, work in collaboration with others and commit to being prepared physically, emotionally and academically in the clinical setting.

Your *WGU Nursing Student Handbook* provides specific guidance on policies related to professional nursing behaviors in addition to policies and procedures about admission and progression. You are expected to read and understand policies relevant to the University and the nursing program. You will be held responsible and accountable for the information in the handbook.

You are expected to be self-directed and take an active role in your learning. Expect to spend a minimum of 25 –30 hours per week completing assignments and activities related to your course of study; the weekly time requirements will increase to 35-40 hours during Term 4 and may require adjustment to your work schedule. This requirement is described in further details below.

**TIP FOR SUCCESS: Practice professions like teaching and nursing require extensive practice hours and this is more intensive during the last term. Students should prepare to take a leave from their employment during the last term of the program. This requires early planning, saving and financial aid considerations. Mentors can help students to plan and access other resources. This additional time investment during the last term is critical for students to successfully pass the RN licensing exam.**

The program schedule is very specific and while your time for study and preparation is completely flexible, the dates for labs and clinicals are fixed and not changeable. Therefore it is essential that you stay on task and on time with all required assignments so you can progress with your cohort to labs and on to clinicals. If you do not meet the required timeframes, you will not be able to progress with your group, you will fall out of your assigned cohort and will have to wait until the next time that particular lab and clinical is offered in your area. If there is space available at that time and you are in good academic standing, you may be allowed to join a later cohort to complete labs and clinicals where you left off. Re-entry is not guaranteed.

**TIP FOR SUCCESS: Students who have completed required assignments have been successful in advancing to clinical learning labs and clinical intensives; students who miss important deadlines ‘fall off’ their cohort and have had their progression modified which means completion of the program may be delayed a year or longer depending on available clinical space.**

You are expected to attend and participate in required webinars designed to assist you with challenging concepts in the COS. Ample advanced notice of these webinars will be provided to help you plan accordingly.

**TIP FOR SUCCESS: Our profile of the most successful students has shown that students who routinely attend webinars are more likely to stay on track**
with program requirements and more likely to pass competency exams the first time.

Learning Resources
You will work with your mentor to select the various learning resources needed to prepare for the required assessments. 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 many 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 (e.g. the WGU approved hand-held device and associated software and an occasional textbook) are not covered by your tuition, and you will need to cover those costs separately. WGU offers most textbooks as e-texts and the costs are covered in the per term resource fee. This minimizes additional costs students must assume for textbooks. For the occasional text not available electronically, WGU has excellent bookstore and library arrangements to help you obtain the needed learning resources.

Changes to Curriculum
WGU publishes an Institutional Catalogue, 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 Within the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program (Prelicensure)
The WGU Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Prelicensure) program is based on best practices for effective learning, and national standards. Graduates are encouraged to expand their knowledge and skills in areas of research, theory, community concepts, healthcare policy, therapeutic interventions, and current trends.

The following section includes the areas of study in the program, which are then followed by their associated courses, and the sample learning resources that have recently been used to help students gain the competencies needed to pass the assessments in the course. 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. Please note that the learning resources included in the following sections are sample resources that will vary based on your own Degree
Plan and the resources current at the time you enroll in the program. 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.

General Education Prerequisites
Prelicensure Nursing Students must have completed the following General Education courses prior to enrollment in the prenursing curriculum.

**Foundations of College Mathematics**
*This course focuses on basic numeracy and calculation skills, basic algebra skills, basic geometry principles, and basic data and probability skills. It covers the following competencies:*

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

**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. It covers the following competencies:*

- The graduate applies appropriate grammatical rules, sentence structure, and writing conventions.
- The graduate selects appropriate rhetorical strategies that improve writing and argumentation.
- The graduate appropriately uses a given writing style.
- The graduate uses appropriate writing and revision strategies
- The graduate integrates credible and relevant sources into written arguments.
- The graduate composes an appropriate narrative for a given context.
- The graduate composes an appropriate argumentative essay for a given context.

**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 dilemmas and principles of government.
- The graduate analyzes the central themes and founding principles of the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. government.
- 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 powers of each branch of government and the relationships among them.
- The graduate analyzes the formation of personal and collective political opinions and the influence of the media.
- The graduate analyzes the role of individuals, interest groups, and political parties in the U.S. electoral system.
- The graduate analyzes the institutional pressures involved in making domestic and foreign policy.

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

**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 Middle Ages.

The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Renaissance.

The graduate analyzes the primary contributions and characteristics of humanities during the Baroque 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 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 key developmental milestones across the lifespan.
- The graduate examines the processes of social cognition and their effects on social interactions.
- The graduate examines the relationships among classical, operant, and observational learning theories.
- 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 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 explains guiding perspectives, theories, and influences on physical, cognitive, and social development across the lifespan.

The graduate analyzes human physical development from conception through birth.

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 adolescence.

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 middle adulthood.

The graduate analyzes the physical, cognitive, and social development of humans during late adulthood.

The graduate examines the processes of death, dying, and grieving.

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 evaluates the social forces that produce one’s identity.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of conformity and resistance to society’s norms.
- 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 evaluates the role of population dynamics, settlement patterns, and social movements on society.

Science Prerequisites

Prelicensure Nursing Students must have completed the following Science courses prior to enrollment in the prenursing curriculum.
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 utilizes appropriate terminology to communicate about human anatomical features, body position, and chemical physiology.
- 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 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 respiratory system based on the 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 nervous system based on an understanding of structure, regulation, and function.
- The graduate evaluates the normal operation of the human muscular systems 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 lymphatic and immune 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 endocrine system 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.

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

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. It covers the following competencies:

• The graduate recognizes types and characteristics of microorganisms, performs biochemical tests, and recognizes principles of osmosis.
• 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 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 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.
• 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 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 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 how the growth of microorganisms can be controlled.

**Biochemistry**

This course covers the structure and function of the four major polymers produced by living organisms, which are nucleic acids, proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids. There is a heavy focus on application in this course of study. Students will gain an introductory understanding of the chemicals and reactions that sustain life. This course covers the following competencies:

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

• The graduate can construct models of the structure and function of amino acids and peptide bonds, predict ionization of an amino acid, demonstrate peptide bond breaking, and demonstrate how protein structure affects susceptibility or resistance to disease.

• 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 enzymes, demonstrates how enzymes act as a catalyst in a reaction and factors that influence this reaction, and solves enzyme and catalysis problems.

• 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 fatty acids and demonstrates why lipids are essential to the functioning of cells.

**BSRN Content Domains and Term requirements**

Term specific expectations are provided below in more detail. Use this information to assist in the organization and effective management of your time and resources as you complete the nursing program. Each Course of Study (COS) carries a number of assignments organized in such a way as to build your knowledge base regarding the content areas. Your mentor will meet with you on a regular basis and will hold weekly webinars to assist you with understanding your
remaining tasks and keep you on track with the course timeline. In addition, your mentor will be available by phone and email to answer any questions you may have.

**Prenursing Curriculum Term Expectations**
Courses of Study (COS) expected to be completed in the prenursing term include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Approx. Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Nursing Arts and Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition for Contemporary Society</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Systems: Safety and Regulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Dosage Calculations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Probability and Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Management and the Application of Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction to Nursing Arts and Science**
*Caring and compassion are the cornerstones of nursing. Nursing focuses not only on the person receiving care, but on the family and the community. Professional nursing practice is based on scientific knowledge skillfully applied in the provision of safe and effective care to individuals, families, and communities. Throughout this course of study, students will be introduced to concepts that are the foundations of nursing practice and have helped nurses attain high regard in the minds and hearts of patients and the public. Clinical reasoning skills and interpersonal skills are essential to compassionate, patient-centered care. Students will learn about the core values in nursing and how the nursing process is applied to nursing care. This course covers the following competencies:**

The graduate plans patient care using all the concepts identified in the nursing process.

- The graduate demonstrates therapeutic communication skills necessary to promote patient safety and positive patient outcomes.
- The graduate plans a safe care environment to promote safety and quality care for patients, the providers, the immediate environment, and the community.
- The graduate creates patient care plans that demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity and respect for cultural differences, beliefs, and values.
- The graduate uses the nursing process to plan patient care that incorporates the theories of human growth and development into the care process.
- The graduate determines the impact of the health perceptions of individuals and communities on the promotion of health and health management strategies.
- The graduate uses accurate medical terminology, symbols, and abbreviations in communicating medication information verbally, technologically, and in writing.
- The graduate demonstrates decision-making skills that reflect a professional and ethical framework and adhere to the guidelines and regulations set by professional and state regulatory bodies.
Nutrition for Contemporary Society
This course prepares students to understand the basics of nutrition, as well as how nutrition is impacted by societal factors like misinformation, dietary fads, eating habits, and the emotional connection that humans have to food. The course covers the topics like macronutrients, micronutrients, vitamins and minerals, basic nutrition assessment tools, and how certain diseases can affect digestion and nutrition. It covers the following competencies:

- The graduate integrates national nutrition guidelines into the design of healthy diet plans.
- The graduate analyzes the physiology of gastrointestinal tract.
- The graduate differentiates among the functions, sources, and definitions of simple and complex carbohydrates and their role in disease states.
- 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 sources, digestions, and role of proteins in the human diet, including the physical properties and sources of proteins.
- 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.
- 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 minerals 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 role of genetic control and influence in body weight and methods of treatment for body weight imbalances.
- 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 nutrition in an average human life-cycle from conception and pregnancy to older adulthood.
- The graduate analyzes the role of food safety in nutrition and the factors contributing to world hunger.

Organizational Systems: Safety and Regulation
This course presents the required sequence of learning activities developed to assist prelicensure nursing students in achieving competency in the safety and regulatory requirements mandated by the Joint Commission and Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) Competency will be evaluated by completion of four modules in HealthStream. This course represents one competency unit and should be completed in one week. Learning activities are presented in a sequential order and often build upon prior activities and skills. This course covers the following competencies:
The graduate recognizes why it is important to analyze the system rather than blame the individual when an error or near-miss occurs; participates in the design of system improvements based on error or near-miss analysis; communicates observations and concerns related to hazards; reports errors to patients, families, surrogates, and the healthcare team as applicable; and encourages active involvement by patients in their own care as a patient safety strategy.

Medical Dosage Calculations
In Medication Dosage Calculations, students learn about individualized drug dosing concepts, including: different measurement systems, solid and liquid medications, calculating dosages based on body weight or body surface area, interpreting drug labels and abbreviations, and common medication errors. This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate integrates the metric and household measurement systems in medication calculations.
- The graduate demonstrates accurate dosage calculations.
- The graduate applies various standard methods to dosage calculations.
- The graduate accurately calculates individual doses based on weight and body surface area (BSA) including weight conversions and dosages of drugs for all routes.

Pharmacology
Pharmacology covers concepts in Pharmacology including drug classification and effects, the role of the nurse in drug therapy, preparation and administration of drugs, and ethical and legal issues surrounding medication administration. This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate identifies nursing regulations related to drug preparation and administration and identifies federal and state legislative standards and policies regulating the development, preparation, and administration of drugs.
- The graduate recognizes common concepts in pharmacology and correctly uses common terms and abbreviations in pharmacology; applies basic concepts of pharmacology to demonstrate how to appropriately follow a drug order and obtain informed consent, and explains ethical use of medications.
- The graduate recognizes the general actions and characteristics of major drug classes; identifies how different classes of drugs affect the body; and, distinguishes between the different drug names.
- The graduate recognizes nursing responsibilities related to safe administration of medications; educates the patient and/or family/caretaker in appropriate medication usage, side effects, contraindications, and expected therapeutic effects; recognizes ethical and legal issues surrounding medication administration; and applies the steps of the nursing process in planning the care of patients receiving drug therapy.
- The graduate employs accurate dosage calculations and appropriate use of technology to effectively, appropriately, and safely administer drugs and maintain the quality of medication therapy.
Introduction to Probability and Statistics
This course covers the following competencies:

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

Information Management and the Application of Technology
Information Management and the Application of Technology helps the student learn how to identify and implement the unique responsibilities of nurses related to the application of technology and the management of patient information. This includes: understanding the evolving role of nurse informaticists; demonstrating the skills needed to use electronic health records; identifying nurse-sensitive outcomes that lead to quality improvement measures; supporting the contributions of nurses to patient care; examining workflow changes related to the implementation of computerized management systems; and learning to analyze the implications of new technology on security, practice, and research. This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the role of information management in the delivery of timely, high quality, patient-centered care.
- The graduate analyzes the relationships among nursing initiatives, professional organizations, and leadership as they influence nursing informatics.
- The graduate determines appropriate features and functions of health information systems necessary to meet the needs of healthcare delivery.
- The graduate appropriately uses electronic health records to enter, retrieve, and analyze patient data.
- The graduate analyzes privacy and security measures designed to protect electronically stored information.
- The graduate analyzes the importance of technology in supporting quality patient outcomes.
- The graduate analyzes the implications of current and emerging technologies for practice, research, education, and administration.
Successful completion of a Foundations Skills Assessment is one requirement for admission. Immediately after enrollment, you will attend a two-day, learning lab to prepare you for the assessment. During the lab, you will learn basic, foundational nursing skills, such as patient hygiene, vital signs and patient transfer. You will be tested on these skills the following week. You must pass this assessment in order to be considered for admission. Additional admission requirements include a formal interview with the nursing admissions committee, and a recommendation for admission from your first term mentor. It is critical that you work closely with your mentor to assure that all admission requirements are met and/or submitted in a timely fashion. In an effort to create a successful first term, you will speak weekly with your mentor at mutually agreed upon times and days. During those conversations, you can ask questions and get one-on-one assistance from your mentor. Your mentor, in turn, will determine your progress throughout the course, and document that progress in your Degree Plan. Weekly webinars will also be available to you so that you can keep in touch with other students and ask questions related to course content.

Approximately eight weeks prior to the end of the prenursing term, you will need to make application to be accepted into the nursing program. Materials and requirements, including deadlines, for the application process will be provided during the term. You will be notified of acceptance into the nursing program during the prenursing curriculum term.

First Term Expectations
Courses of Study (COS) expected to be completed in the first term include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Approx. Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I Clinical Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Assessment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II Clinical Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I (CASAL I)

*Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I introduces nursing fundamentals which speak to the core of all nursing care by assessing the needs of patients with compassion and respect; advocating patients and their families; providing education and comfort; and integrating patient needs into a plan of care that embraces individuality, diversity, and belief.*

The set of CASAL courses are co-requisites, meaning students must pass both the didactic and the clinical learning courses in consecutive order to obtain the six competency units and progress. Each of the clinical courses in the program has co-requisites that include clinical learning lab and clinical intensive or both.

Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part I Clinical Learning (CASAL I Clinical Lab)

*This course includes all aspects of clinical learning related to the fundamentals of nursing practice. Learning labs will teach and assess task skill knowledge including physical assessment, safe medication administration, oxygenation; nutrition, metabolism, & elimination; skin integrity, activity, & mobility; and cognition. Students who are successful in lab*
assessments will progress to live patient clinicals and will be assessed for their mastery of basic levels of the key behaviors for clinical practice of a novice nursing student.

For this course the student typically actively engages in five, 12-hour shifts in addition to the required simulation lab experiences and assessments and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. A shift extension of up to two shifts may be required if competencies are not met within the first five shifts. The shifts must be completed within the designated two-week window. Demonstrated competency in the clinical key behaviors is required to pass this course.

These courses covers the following competencies:

- The graduate obtains a health history and performs a general head to toe physical assessment on the adult patient.
- The graduate administers medications to the adult patient using safe, patient-centered practices based upon principles of medication error prevention.
- The graduate integrates principles of oxygenation in assessing and responding to needs and changes in patients.
- The graduate integrates principles of nutrition, metabolism and elimination in assessing and responding to needs and changes in the patient.
- The graduate integrates principles of skin integrity, activity, and mobility in assessing and responding to needs and changes in the patient.
- The graduate integrates principles of cognition, self-concept, spirituality, and sexuality in assessing and responding to needs and changes in adult patients.
- The graduate integrates principles of comfort in assessing and responding to physical and emotional needs and changes in adult patients.
- The graduate integrates principles of patient education in assessing and responding to learning needs of patients and families.

Physical Assessment
The Physical Assessment course develops novice nursing student understanding, skill and ability to apply those skills to conduct physical assessments for patients across the lifespan. The course emphasizes patient interviewing and advanced history taking as well as primary physical assessment techniques and skills. Students will master assessment competencies through the use of virtual reality experiences as well as by demonstrating competency in all aspects of physical assessment. This course covers the following competencies:

- 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 head and neck, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and throat.
- The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the respiratory 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 gastrointestinal and renal systems.
• The graduate analyzes the findings of basic physical assessments of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems.
• 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 mental status.
• The graduate analyzes the findings of head-to-toe physical assessments.

Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II (CASAL II)
Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II topics include genomics in adult care; management of the perioperative care continuum; patient centered care of the adult; care of the adult with alterations in circulation; care of the adult with alterations in oxygenation; care of the adult with alterations in neurosensory function; fundamental patient self determination & advocacy; and end-of-life care.

The set of CASAL II courses are co-requisites, meaning students must pass both the didactic and the clinical learning courses in consecutive order to obtain the six competency units and progress. Each of the clinical courses in the program has co-requisites that include clinical learning lab and clinical intensive or both.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Students who view the skills videos, review the skills checklist and complete the simulation preparation questions prior to attending lab have demonstrated success in passing the lab assessment for this course the first time.

Caring Arts and Science Across the Lifespan Part II Clinical Learning (CASAL II Clinical Lab)
This course includes all aspects of clinical learning related to medical surgical nursing practice. Learning labs will teach and assess task skill knowledge progressing to high fidelity simulation scenarios to develop mastery of situated use of knowledge and synthesis of knowledge in clinical scenarios. Students who are successful in lab assessments will progress to live patient clinicals and will be assessed for their mastery of basic levels of the key behaviors for clinical practice of Medical Surgical nursing.

For this course the student typically actively engages in five, 12-hour shifts in addition to required simulation lab experiences and assessments and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. A shift extension of up to two shifts may be required if competencies are not met within the first five shifts. The shifts must be completed within the designated two-week window. Demonstrated competency in the clinical key behaviors is required to pass this course.

These courses covers the following competencies:
• The graduate plans and provides perioperative nursing care that ensures safety, quality, and continuity of care during the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative periods.
• The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to incorporate the principles of patient-centered care when planning and providing care to adults impacted by common injuries and/or diseases.
• The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults experiencing alterations in circulatory function.
• The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults experiencing alterations in oxygenation.
• The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults experiencing alterations in neurosensory function.
• The graduate engages patients in clarifying their health values and beliefs leading to informed self-determination decisions and advocates for patient choices.
• The graduate uses cognitive knowledge, clinical reasoning, and cultural competence to collaborate with patients, family/caretaker, and the healthcare team to provide compassionate, patient-centered end-of-life care.

Your mentor will meet with you on a weekly basis at a designated time, provide weekly webinars to assist you through the courses, and be available by telephone and email. You should also check your WGU email on a daily basis so that you do not miss important announcements related to clinical learning labs and clinical intensives that are sent to your WGU e-mail.

**TIP FOR SUCCESS: Students who maintain their regular meeting schedule with their mentor have proven success in this program.**

**Second Term Expectations**

Courses of Study (COS) expected to be completed in the second term include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Approx. Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care of Adults with Complex Illnesses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Learning for Complex Illnesses in Adults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Roles and Values</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of the Older Adult</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psych/Mental Health Clinical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Care of Adults with Complex Illnesses (CACI)**

*This course builds on prior knowledge of Medical Surgical nursing care and common conditions. The course focuses on diseases conditions that affect the neuromuscular system, the musculoskeletal system, the kidneys, the pancreas, and diseases such as cancer and impaired immunity, which affect every part of the body. Students will develop mastery of competencies related to advanced medical surgical nursing practice.*
The set of CACI courses are co-requisites meaning students must pass both the didactic and the clinical learning courses in consecutive order to obtain the six competency units and progress. Each of the clinical courses in the program has co-requisites that include clinical learning lab and clinical intensive or both.

Clinical Learning for Complex Illnesses in Adults (CACI Clinical Lab)
This course includes all aspects of clinical learning related to advanced medical surgical nursing practice. Learning labs will teach and assess advanced clinical competencies through the use of high fidelity simulation and advanced clinical debriefing for clinical scenarios. Students who are successful in simulation assessments will progress to live patient clinicals and will be assessed for their mastery of advanced levels of the key behaviors for clinical practice of Medical Surgical nursing.

For this course the student typically actively engages in six, 12-hour shifts in addition to required simulation lab experiences and assessments and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. A shift extension of up to two shifts may be required if competencies are not met within the first six shifts. The shifts must be completed within the designated two-week window. Demonstrated competency in the clinical key behaviors is required to pass this course.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Students who complete all pre-lab activities have demonstrated success in passing the lab assessment the first time.

These courses cover the following competencies:

- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality nursing care to adults impacted by common injuries and/or diseases that result in a chronic condition with a focus on health perception/ health management.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults experiencing alterations in physiologic defense mechanisms.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults experiencing alterations in nutrition, metabolism, and elimination.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults as they transition within a care environment or from one environment to another.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to adults experiencing alterations in functional ability.

Professional Roles and Values
This course explores the unique role nurses play in healthcare, beginning with the history and evolution of the nursing profession. The responsibilities and accountability of professional nurses are covered, including cultural competency, advocacy for patient rights, and the legal and ethical issues related to supervision and delegation. Professional conduct, leadership, the
public image of nursing, the work environment, and issues of social justice are also addressed. This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes the historical and contemporary context of nursing practice.
- The graduate analyzes leading nursing theories and models as they apply to contemporary nursing practice.
- The graduate analyzes nursing practice situations to promote ethical comportment and integrity using professional standards of practice and the code of ethics.
- The graduate analyzes the responsibilities and accountability of the professional nurse.
- 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 roles of the nurse as a scientist, a detective, and a manager of the healing environment.
- The graduate analyzes the impact of evolutions in the field of nursing and in the roles of other care providers 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.

Although you have the entire term to work through this non-clinical course, it is crucial that you use an effective time management plan to ensure that the assignments, lab, and clinical responsibilities for both clinical and non-clinical courses are met on a timely basis.

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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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.

Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing
In Psych/Mental Health, students will discover the many faces of mental illness and the role that the nursing profession plays in managing care of patients and families struggling with a mental illness. Caring for patients with mental illness requires patience and true compassion, a commitment to patient advocacy, and an in-depth understanding of psychopharmacology.

The set of Psychiatric Nursing courses are co-requisites, meaning students must pass both the didactic and the clinical learning courses in consecutive order to obtain the six competency units and progress. Each of the clinical course in the program has co-requisites that include clinical learning lab and clinical intensive or both.

Psych/Mental Health Clinical Learning
Clinical learning in the Psychiatric Mental Health nursing course focuses entirely on live patient clinicals in acute psychiatric units, community-based mental health centers and community resource and support groups. Students will apply knowledge learned in the didactic course to demonstrate mastery of psychiatric and mental health nursing competencies including therapeutic communication, management of psychobiological conditions and how to maintain a therapeutic milieu.

90 clinical hours are required for this course. They must be completed in either inpatient or outpatient settings or both and may involve 8-hour or 12-hour shifts. Student may complete some outpatient hours independently (with approval) by attending support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or other community-based care-focused activities.
These courses cover the following competencies:

- The graduate provides patient-centered care integrating theories and concepts relevant to mental health across the lifespan.
- The graduate demonstrates effective communication skills and therapeutic use of self to manage individuals experiencing mental health disorders.
- The graduate implements safe, quality care integrating knowledge of neurological functioning and psychopharmacology.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to implement evidence-based interventions with patients experiencing psychobiological disorders.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to implement evidence-based interventions with patients experiencing severe mental health disorders.
- The graduate establishes appropriate professional boundaries while promoting safe and therapeutic environments.

**Third Term Expectations**

Courses of Study (COS) expected to be completed in the third term include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Approx. Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care of the Developing Family</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Care of Children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing Clinical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence Based Practice and Applied Nursing Research</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Care of the Developing Family**

Learner competency will be assessed through performance in the clinical intensive for Care of the Developing Family. Topics include care of the family during the prenatal period; care of the family during the intrapartum period; care of the postpartum family; and health promotion of the family. This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to a woman and her family between conception and labor.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to a woman and her family during labor and birth.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to a woman, newborn, and family after birth.
- The graduate uses age-appropriate health promotion and health maintenance activities and interventions to assist women and their families in safeguarding health, safety, and wellness.

For this course the student typically actively engages in three, 12-hour shifts in addition to required simulation lab experiences and assessments and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. Some agencies and settings may only offer 8-hour shifts so
additional days may be required to complete the requirement in such cases. The shifts must be completed within the designated two-week window. Demonstrated competency in the clinical key behaviors is required to pass this course.

Nursing Care of Children

In Nursing Care of Children you will be introduced to nursing care of children. While a great deal of pediatrics is well-child care such as assessing normal growth and development, educating parents about ways to cope with the challenges of parenting, and promoting child safety, there are many serious issues affecting children’s health. Childhood obesity, an increase in Type II diabetes, a high suicide rate among teenagers, and substance abuse are examples of serious problems. The number of children diagnosed with autism has increased dramatically, as have the number of parents believing that immunizations are the cause of autism despite research findings to the contrary.

For this course the student typically actively engages in three, 12-hour shifts in addition to required simulation lab experiences and assessments and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. Some agencies and setting may only offer 8-hour shifts so additional days may be required to complete the requirement in such cases. The shifts must be completed within the two-week window. Demonstrated competency in the clinical key behaviors is required to pass this course.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate collaborates with members of the interdisciplinary team, the family, and the community, to deliver safe, culturally competent, and quality care to pediatric patients and their families.
- The graduate integrates principles of physical, emotional, and psychological growth and development into the assessment and care of the pediatric client and the developing of a holistic care plan.
- The graduate uses age-appropriate health promotion and health maintenance activities and interventions to assist the child, family, and community in safeguarding health, safety, and wellness for children and families.
- The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care in all settings to the child who is ill, injured, or disabled.

Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing

This course will assist students to become familiar with foundational theories and models of health promotion and disease prevention, applicable to the community health nursing environment. Students will develop understanding of how policies and resources influence the health of populations. Students will engage in learning the importance of 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 to improve or resolve community health issues in a variety of settings. Students will analyze health systems in the United States, global health issues, quality-of-life issues, and emergency preparedness. This course covers the following competencies:
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 proposes health promotion initiatives and services to promote disease and injury prevention.

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

The graduate analyzes past and present initiatives meant to improve the health of the global community.

The graduate plans for the preparation, response, and recovery of communities from natural and human-caused emergencies and disasters.

The graduate analyzes social and cultural factors that affect the care of diverse populations.

The graduate analyzes the impact of communicable diseases on the health of individuals, families, and communities in a global environment.

Community Health and Population-Focused Nursing Clinical
This course will assist students to become familiar with clinical aspects of health promotion and disease prevention, applicable to the community health nursing environment. Students will practice skills based on clinical priorities, methodology, and resources that positively influence the health of populations. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills by applying principals of community health nursing in a variety of settings. Students will design, implement and evaluate a project in community health. Students will develop health promotion and disease prevention strategies for population groups.

90 clinical hours are required in approved clinical agencies and in the community. Students are assessed on the mastery of clinical competencies. A comprehensive community assessment field project is an essential part of the clinical experience.

This course covers the following competencies:

- 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 proposes health promotion initiatives and services to promote disease and injury prevention.
- The graduate assesses the impact of the environment on the health of the community.
Evidence Based Practice and Applied Nursing Research

Nursing research can significantly contribute to safe, quality nursing practice. More and more nurses are being asked to gather data to learn the answers to questions that affect nursing practice. This use of nursing research and the evidence gained is being utilized to shape and guide nursing practice. This course will help the student learn how to design and conduct research to answer questions important about improving nursing practice and patient care delivery outcomes. After being introduced to the basics of evidence-based practice, students will continue to implement the principles throughout their academic experiences. In this course students will learn about evidence based practice, how it is evaluated and how it can be implemented to improve patient outcomes in clinical practice. Students will master the definitions and be able to differentiate between evidence based practice, quality improvement and primary research and will be able to apply that knowledge to show mastery of the concepts that will enable them to translate evidence into practice. This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate recognizes basic scientific research concepts and techniques, recognizes the ethics of nursing research, recognizes researchable questions, uses evaluative skills to critique current nursing research, and identifies statistical types.

- The graduate applies concepts of nursing research to clinical practice situations, conducts reviews of the literature in relation to therapeutic approaches, and recognizes the importance of theoretical models in nursing practice or research.

- The graduate recognizes the significance of applying research in evidence-based practice, recognizes sources of evidence, and applies ethical principles to evidence-based practice research.

- The graduate recognizes barriers to evidence-based practice and applies an evidence-based framework to promote safe and reliable healthcare.

Although you have the entire term to work through this non-clinical course, it is crucial that you use an effective time management plan to ensure that the assignments, lab, and clinical responsibilities for both clinical and non-clinical courses are met on a timely basis.

Fourth Term Expectations

Following successful completion of your third term coursework, you will then progress to the final term COS as noted below. During the last 3 months of the term, you will be deeply involved with Professional Nursing Role Transition, in which you will complete a thorough preparatory review the NCLEX-RN examination. Two webinars covering each body system will be offered each week. These webinars are critically important in your preparation and review for NCLEX.

Courses of Study (COS) expected to be completed in the fourth term include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>CUs</th>
<th>Approx. Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Care Nursing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Care Nursing Clinical Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Systems and Quality Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Nursing Role Transition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Clinical Practicum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Critical Care Nursing
Caring for critically ill patients requires organization and sharp critical thinking skills. Intensive care does not only happen in intensive care units, but can occur in emergency rooms, in surgery, in transport, and sometimes on the battlefield or during a disaster. It can also occur on the medical-surgical unit when a patient suddenly has a cardiac arrest or becomes unstable, or when a newly delivered baby is in serious distress. Intensive care begins the moment an unstable patient requires continual monitoring and vigilance, the moment when every piece of patient data is scrutinized and analyzed, and the moment when the nurse’s decisions can make the difference between life and death.

The set of Critical Care Nursing courses are co-requisites meaning students must pass both the didactic and the clinical learning courses in consecutive order to obtain the six competency units and progress. Each of the clinical courses in the program has co-requisites that include clinical learning lab and clinical intensive or both.

Critical Care Nursing Clinical Learning
This course includes all aspects of clinical learning related to critical care nursing practice. Learning labs will teach and assess advanced clinical competencies through the use of high fidelity simulation and advanced clinical debriefing for clinical scenarios. Students who are successful in simulation assessments will progress to live patient clinicals and will be assessed for their mastery of advanced levels of the key behaviors for clinical practice of Critical Care nursing.

For this course the student typically actively engages in six, 12-hour shifts in addition to required simulation lab experiences and assessments and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. A shift extension of up to two shifts may be required if competencies are not met within the first six shifts. The shifts must be completed within the designated two-week window. Demonstrated competency in the clinical key behaviors is required to pass this course.

These courses cover the following competencies:

- The graduate analyzes influences on the nurse, the patient, and the family in the critical environment.
- The graduate performs both a general and a focused physical assessment appropriate to the needs of the critically-ill patient.
- The graduate provides appropriate instruction for the critically-ill patient and their family based on standard educational principles and effective assessment of patient learning needs.
- The graduate integrates cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning into the planning and provision of safe, quality, patient-centered care to meet the physiological needs of the critically-ill patient.
- The graduate integrates cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning into the planning and provision of safe, quality, patient-centered care to meet the psychosocial needs of the critically-ill patient.
- The graduate incorporates legal and ethical principles into the planning and provision of care to critically-ill patients and their families.
• The graduate collaborates with the critical care interdisciplinary team and communicates in a manner that supports a positive work environment.
• The graduate performs both a general and focused physical assessment appropriate to the needs of the critically ill patient.
• The graduate integrates principles of patient education in assessing and responding to the learning needs of critically ill patients and their families.
• The graduate uses cognitive knowledge and clinical reasoning to plan and provide safe, quality, patient-centered care to the critically ill patient.
• The graduate provides compassionate, patient-centered care to patients and families to support their psychosocial needs.
• The graduate plans and provides care to critically ill patients and their families incorporating knowledge of legal standards and ethical principles.

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 theoretical principles necessary for effective participation in an interdisciplinary team.
• 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.

Although you have the entire term to work through this non-clinical course, it is crucial that you use an effective time management plan to ensure that the assignments, lab, and clinical responsibilities for both clinical and non-clinical courses are met on a timely basis.

Nursing Clinical Practicum
Before graduating, nursing students need to experience clinical as an independent member of the nursing team who manages a standard patient load. Working under the supervision of a preceptor, the student will have an opportunity to test clinical reasoning, patient care management, delegation and organizational skills in caring for a group of patients to complete 180 hours of supervised clinical practice.
For this course the student typically actively engages in fifteen, 12-hour shifts and are assessed on mastery of the clinical competencies. A shift extension of up to two shifts may be required if competencies are not met within the fifteen shifts.

This course covers the following competencies:

- The graduate integrates delineated knowledge and skills to coordinate and advocate a respectful interdisciplinary environment that promotes optimal well-being.
- The graduate responds with appropriate flexibility and creativity to the type of unpredictable situations and events common in the healthcare environment.
- The graduate correctly interprets and applies scientific evidence when planning and providing safe, quality and culturally sensitive care for patients and families.
- The graduate demonstrates clinical imagination and professional insight to detect subtle changes and deviations from expected health patterns when managing a beginning practitioner's workload with minimal supervision.
- The graduate synthesizes the requisite knowledge and skills necessary to function as a novice baccalaureate prepared nurse.

Coursework and clinicals during the fourth term are extremely intense, and if at all possible, you are encouraged NOT to work during the Professional Nursing Role Transition and Nursing Clinical Practicum portion of this term (last three months) and to reduce your work hours during the entire term.

If you are employed full-time, consider taking vacation time or a leave-of-absense (LOA) during the Professional Nursing Role Transition and Nursing Clinical Practicum. Professional Nursing Role Transition requires 25-30 hours of study per week, as well as two (2) NCLEX review webinars each week for 12 weeks. The final Nursing Clinical Practicum requires that you complete fifteen 12-hour shifts during a five-week period. This practicum focuses on preparing students transition to the role of professional nursing and eventually assuming a full workload under the guidance of a preceptor.

You should plan to talk with your mentor every 1 to 2 weeks during this time. It will be important to maintain good communication so that you stay on top of final semester assignments and requirements in order to meet graduation and NCLEX application deadlines. Missing telephone appointments places you at increased risk of missing important information that may delay completion of your nursing program.

Important announcements are sent to your WGU e-mail, so checking your email every day is a good habit to incorporate into your schedule.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Students who establish a routine, comprehensive NCLEX study plan and schedule have proven to be more successful in passing the national licensing exam.
Need More Information? WGU Student Services

WGU has a Student Services team dedicated exclusively to helping students achieve their academic goals. The Student Services Office is available during extended hours to assist students with general questions and administrative or accessibility issues. The Student Services team members help students 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 students can express their views, and those views in turn inform the decisions we make. Student Services team members also assist students with unresolved concerns to find equitable resolutions. To contact the Student Services team, please feel free to call (866) 903-0110 or email studentservices@wgu.edu. We are available Monday through Friday, 6 AM to 12 AM and Saturday and Sunday, 10 AM to 7 PM, MT.

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 AM to 12 AM and Saturday and Sunday, 10 AM to 7 PM, MT. To contact the IT Service Desk, please call 1-877-HELP-WGU (877-435-7948) and select option 2 or email servicedesk@wgu.edu.

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