ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

February 20, 2026

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

REQUEST: Approval of a Master of Science offered through the School of Teacher Education in the College of Education and Behavior Science

FACTS: The applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Master of Science program is a 40-to-46-hour graduate program designed to prepare students for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's (BACB) current test content outline to prepare them for the Board-Certified Behavior Analysis (BCBA) examination. This program includes supervised clinical fieldwork in alignment with BACB requirements. This program prepares students to work with individuals with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, or developmental disabilities in schools, communities, or local settings.

Current projections indicate a strong demand for BCBA professionals. The job outlook for the state indicated a 67% increase by 2025, with even greater demand nationally. Despite this demand, ABA training programs in Kentucky are limited, and workforce gaps are especially evident in rural and other underserved areas. This program is designed to both meet the workforce demands for these professionals, as well as position WKU graduates to be highly competitive in this field. This program is designed to be aligned with Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) and BACB requirements and is directly aligned to task list items and criteria from the behavior analyst certification exam, meaning graduates of this program will be especially well suited to pass the BCBA examination and meet these workforce needs.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 40-46 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This program will require the addition of two faculty lines. CEBS will evaluate opportunities to reallocate existing resources, such as open faculty lines, to support the ABA program, in addition to collaborating with the Provost's Office for additional support.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Master of Science in Applied Behavioral Analysis** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Master of Science in Applied Behavioral Analysis** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

In Workflow

1. TCH Approval (susan.keesey@wku.edu; josiah.super@wku.edu)
2. ED Dean (corinne.murphy@wku.edu; jennifer.klemm@wku.edu)
3. ED Curriculum Committee (corinne.murphy@wku.edu; josiah.super@wku.edu; jennifer.klemm@wku.edu)
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee (erin.warfel@wku.edu)
5. Graduate Council (kirk.atkinson@wku.edu; whitley.stone@wku.edu)
6. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
7. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
8. Board of Regents (all)
9. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Wed, 17 Sep 2025 20:03:53 GMT
   Josiah Super (josiah.super): Approved for TCH Approval
2. Fri, 19 Sep 2025 20:26:20 GMT
   Jennifer Klemm (jennifer.klemm): Approved for ED Dean
3. Wed, 01 Oct 2025 19:51:28 GMT
   Josiah Super (josiah.super): Approved for ED Curriculum Committee
4. Thu, 06 Nov 2025 21:54:09 GMT
   Erin Warfel (erin.warfel): Approved for Graduate Curriculum Committee
5. Thu, 13 Nov 2025 21:24:47 GMT
   John Atkinson (kirk.atkinson): Approved for Graduate Council
6. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 19:59:11 GMT
   Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
7. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 21:02:46 GMT
   Robert Fischer (robert.fischer): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Wed, 17 Sep 2025 00:11:38 GMT

Viewing: : Applied Behavior Analysis
Last edit: Thu, 06 Nov 2025 21:00:26 GMT

Changes proposed by: ell06551

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Ellen casale	ellen.casale@wku.edu	270-745-4118
Christina Noel	christina.noel@wku.edu	270-745-2183

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Graduate

Program Type

Master's Degree

Degree Types

Master of Science

Department

Teacher Education, School of

College
Education & Behavioral Science

Was your Notification of Intent (submitted to CPE by the Provost's Office) approved?
Yes

Program Name (eg. Biology)
Applied Behavior Analysis

Will this program have concentrations?
No

CIP Code
42.2814 - Applied Behavior Analysis.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?
No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements
Yes

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)
The Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Master of Arts Program is a 40 to 46 hour graduate program designed to prepare students for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's (BACB) current test content outline to prepare them for the board-certified behavior analysis (BCBA) examination. This program includes supervised clinical fieldwork in alignment with the BACB requirements. This program prepares students to work with individuals with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, or developmental disabilities in schools, communities, or clinical settings.

Admission Requirements (Catalog field: Program Admission)
Program Admission
Program admission is based upon a faculty examination of an application file and interview. Applicants must include:
1. Official undergraduate transcripts indicating successful completion of undergraduate degree from an accredited university
2. A minimum of 12 hours in education, psychology, or related field is preferred
3. Minimum cumulative GPA for 3.0
4. Three letters of recommendation speaking to the applicant's professional demeanor, ethical practice, and alignment with this program
5. Personal statement outlining applicant's professional interests, career goals, and expectations from participation in the program if selected
6. Resume or curriculum vita
7. Criminal background check
8. ABA program application

Graduate Studies Admission
Please refer to the admission section (http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission/) of this catalog for Graduate Studies admission requirements.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)
Program Requirements (40-46 hours)
The applied behavior analysis program prepares candidates as practitioners in the field of applied behavior analysis with a specific training emphasis on individuals with autism and intellectual or developmental disabilities. Clinical placements are required through the program. Students must successfully complete a final semester-long clinical placement and capstone at the end of their program. Criminal background checks are required as are any placement-specific requirements to work in clinical placements (e.g., background checks, vaccinations, or health screenings). Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in the ABA coursework sequence. Graduates will have met the required coursework requirements for the Behavior Certified Behavior Analyst certification examination. This program includes Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI)-aligned clinical supervised fieldwork. Graduates who successfully complete the program, earn a passing score on the BCBA certification examination, and complete ABAI-approved supervised fieldwork are eligible to apply as a board-certified behavior analyst.

{placeholder for courses grid as courses are not yet loaded}

ABA 501 Basic Principles of Behavior Analysis 3 hr

ABA 502 Assessment in ABA 3 hr

ABA 503 ABA Seminar I 3 hr

ABA 504 Experimental Analysis of Behavior 3 hr

ABA 505 Intervention in ABA 3 hr

ABA 506 ABA Seminar II 3 hr

ABA 507 Organizational Behavior Management 3 hr

ABA 508 ABA Seminar III 3 hr

ABA 509 Ethics in Applied Behavior Analysis 3 hr

ABA 510 Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis 3 hr

ABA 511 ABA Seminar IV 3 hr

ABA 512 Applied Behavior Analysis Capstone 1-3 hr (repeatable)

or ABA 514 Independent Study in ABA (3hr, repeatable)

ABA 513 ABA Clinical Practicum 6 hr

or ABA 514 Independent Study in ABA (3 hr, repeatable)

Code	Title	Hours
ABA 501	Course ABA 501 Not Found	3
ABA 502	Course ABA 502 Not Found	3
ABA 503	Course ABA 503 Not Found	3
ABA 504	Experimental Analysis of Behavior	3
ABA 505	Intervention in ABA	3
ABA 506	ABA Seminar 2	3
ABA 507	Organizational Behavior Management in Applied Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 508	ABA Seminar 3	1
ABA 509	Course ABA 509 Not Found	3
ABA 510	Course ABA 510 Not Found	3
ABA 511	Course ABA 511 Not Found	3
ABA 512	Course ABA 512 Not Found	1-3
or ABA 514	Course ABA 514 Not Found	
ABA 513	ABA Clinical Practicum	6
or ABA 514	Course ABA 514 Not Found	
Total Hours		**40**

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?

No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?

No

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The Applied Behavior Analysis Program aligns with WKU's mission to prepare productive citizen-leaders by training professionals to work with individuals with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, and developmental disabilities. This 40 to 46 hour graduate program is designed against BACB requirements and includes supervised clinical fieldwork to prepare students for the BCBA examination, reflecting WKU's commitment to quality education and applied solutions. Aligned with WKU's mission to "enrich the quality of life for those within its reach," our ABA program combines scholarly research with hands-on clinical fieldwork, preparing graduates to serve vulnerable populations across schools, communities, and clinical settings. Students engage in meaningful partnerships with faculty, supervisors, and clients, embodying our spirit of cooperation and mutual respect while developing the expertise needed to pass the BCBA examination and apply for licensure.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

There is a shortage of BCBAs both nationally and state-wide. Providing a quality in-state training program to prepare practitioners to serve across the state will help to address this deficit – specifically those trained to serve individuals with autism and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities. This ABA program will provide a new pathway in our region that produces graduates prepared to sit for the behavior analyst certification exam and then apply for certification and state licensure. As an ongoing support to certified behavior analysts, we aim to provide quality continuing education opportunities.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Demonstrate mastery of applied behavior analysis concepts and skills.	Measurement Instrument: The Board Certified Behavior Analyst Certification exam Mastery Criteria: At least 90% of students meet the Behavior Analyst Certification Board cut score
SLO 2	Demonstrate professional and ethical conduct in classroom, clinical, and community settings.	Measurement Instrument: 4.0 Point Program Formative and Final Disposition Rubric based on BCBA Test Content Outline (i.e., Task List 6th ed.) and Ethics Code Mastery Criteria: An average of 3.0 or higher across all data collection points of the ABA Program Formative and 3.5 or higher on Final.
SLO 3	Demonstrate mastery of applied ABA skills including behavior assessment, behavior behavior-change procedures, selecting and implementing intervention, and personnel supervision and management.	Measurement Instrument: 4.0 Point ABA Program Formative and Final Rubric based on applied learning outcomes and objectives from the BCBA Test Content Outline (i.e., Task List 6th ed.) and Ethics Code Mastery Criteria: An average of 3.0 or higher across all data collection points of the ABA Program Formative and 3.5 or higher on Final.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan

curriculum_map_template-2.xlsx
ABAProgram_ASLtemplate_Fall2025-2.docx

Change in Discipline (If the program is being proposed to meet changes in the academic discipline, please outline those changes and explain why they necessitate development of a new program.)

N/A

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.

The proposed ABA program is designed specifically against Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) with direct alignment to the task list items (BCBA Test Content Outline) and criteria from the behavior analyst certification exam. ABAI is the national credentialling board for accredited ABA programs. Aligned with the ABAI and BACB requirements, this program provides clinical supervisory fieldwork with calculated group and individual components. Students engage in rigorous coursework in addition to targeted clinical placements and applied seminars.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?

Yes

Please explain

This program specifically aligns to the BCBA Test Content Outline with the purpose of preparing practicing licensed BCBAs in the field of applied behavior analysis. Currently no other program exists within WKU that meets ABAI requirements.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

No

Is access to existing programs limited?

Yes

Please explain

The demand for a masters degree in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) at Western Kentucky University reflects the growing need for professionals equipped to address behavioral and developmental challenges, particularly for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities. With only a limited number of M.S. in ABA programs in Kentucky—currently offered at the University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Northern Kentucky University, Murray State University, and Eastern Kentucky University—there is a clear

gap in educational opportunities outside of central Kentucky. These programs offer Verified Course Sequences (VCS) to meet BACB requirements for BCBA certification, but the VCS system will no longer accept new applications after January 1, 2025, and will be phased out by December 31, 2025.

The proposed WKU program will attract students from related fields such as psychology, education, and health sciences, addressing both state and regional workforce needs while preparing graduates for BCBA certification and state licensure. Currently, Kentucky's existing programs provide coursework, practicum experiences, and field-based training to support BCBA eligibility, yet geographic limitations and program capacity leave many areas underserved. The WKU M.S. in ABA will expand statewide access to high-quality graduate training, equipping students to deliver evidence-based behavioral services, meet workforce demands, and strengthen professional pipelines in schools, healthcare settings, and community agencies.

WKU's proposed program will follow Pathway 1 outlined by the BACB, providing a graduate degree that integrates the required coursework and supervised experience necessary for BCBA eligibility. This pathway ensures that students completing the program are fully prepared to sit for the BCBA examination and meet state licensure requirements. By January 1, 2032, this will be the only eligible program pathway that leads to licensure by ABAI.

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

This program is not designed to replace existing offerings but to expand statewide capacity and address the workforce shortage. By cultivating partnerships with schools, healthcare providers, and behavioral agencies, it creates practicum and employment pathways while equipping graduates to deliver evidence-based services.

Describe student demand data for this program.

As of 2022, the Kentucky Applied Behavior Analysis Licensing Board reported 532 Licensed Behavior Analysts and 16 Assistant Behavior Analysts actively practicing in the state. Despite this presence, demand for BCBAs continues to rise, with the Behavior Analyst Certification Board projecting a 58% national increase in job openings from 2023 to 2024 (>26,576 openings) and a 67% increase statewide by 2025. In 2022 alone, Kentucky reported more than 532 job openings, underscoring the critical workforce shortage in this field (BACB, 2025).

Current ABA training programs in Kentucky are limited in number, leaving gaps in workforce development that are especially evident in rural and underserved regions. The on-campus program at WKU directly addresses this need by providing high-quality graduate education focused on autism and intellectual disabilities across the lifespan. Students receive rigorous training in coursework, supervised practicum, and field experiences that prepare them for BCBA certification and licensure.

Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) are in high demand at the local, regional, state, and national levels. Locally, average wages are estimated at $87,319 in 2024 with more than 15 projected job openings by 2025. Regionally, the average wage is projected at $75,000 in 2025 with over 30 openings. At the state level, Kentucky reported an average salary of $77,364 in 2024 with more than 532 openings as of 2022. The job outlook for the state indicates a 67% increase by 2025, with demand estimated at 420 openings in 2024. Nationally, the need for BCBAs is even more pronounced, with an average wage of $89,075 in 2024, over 26,576 projected job openings in 2025, and a job outlook predicting a 58% increase between 2023 and 2024. National demand in 2024 was estimated at 103,150 positions. These data highlight the urgent and growing workforce needs across all levels, underscoring the importance of expanding training opportunities to prepare qualified professionals.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?

No

Program Demand Data and Support Documents

WKU_master's_42-2814_state (1).pdf
WKU_master's_42-2814_region.pdf

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?

No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?

No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?

No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.

0%

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
Yes

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Library Resources

Library Resources Form:
https://www.wku.edu/library/services/access/faculty/resourcesform.php

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
Given the regional, state, and national need and market demand for BCBA services for individuals with behavioral and socially significant needs, WKU will be preparing students to be eligible for the BCBA Certification Exam and receive their BCBA license.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

CPE Proposal
cpe-notification-of-intent-program-summary-2022-23 (1).docx
Letter_of_Support_WKU_ABA.pdf

Additional Attachments
BCBA-6th-Edition-Test-Content-Outline-240903-a-2.pdf
2027-BCBA-Requirements_250423-a.pdf

Additional information or attachments
This program is designed to align with the BCBA Requirements effective 2027 and each course is aligned with the BCBA test content outline in accordance with the BCAB's and ABAI's requirements.

Key: 418

DIGITAL HEALTH AND DATA MANAGEMENT
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

REQUEST: Approval of a Graduate Certificate in Digital Health and Data Management through the Department of Public Health in the College of Health and Human Services.

FACTS: The graduate certificate in Digital Health and Data Management introduces health administration as it relates to current and future use of emerging technology for the provision of health services, to include the ethical and risk management implications with acquisition, sharing and governance of patient data. This program is designed to complement other programs at WKU, such as the Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree. Additionally, this program will integrate elective options from the Gordon Ford College of Business, as well as the Department of Public Health, in order to allow students to tailor the certificate to their individual areas of study. Additionally, this program can serve as an accessible on-ramp for students who may be interested in continuing with the MHA degree program, as some of the credit hours from this certificate program can apply toward the MHA degree.

Graduates of this program will cultivate marketable skills related to health, business, and technology, as well as health administration. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows growth among occupations that could be supported by this degree to be above average. This program can equip graduates to better meet the evolving demands of data management within the healthcare industry.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 9 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This graduate certificate uses existing faculty members.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Graduate Certificate in Digital Health and Data Management** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Graduate Certificate in Digital Health and Data Management** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: DIGITAL HEALTH AND DATA MANAGEMENT

In Workflow
1. PUBH Approval (grace.lartey@wku.edu)
2. HH Dean (tania.basta@wku.edu; danita.kelley@wku.edu)
3. HH Curriculum Committee (danita.kelley@wku.edu)
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee (erin.warfel@wku.edu)
5. Graduate Council (kirk.atkinson@wku.edu; whitley.stone@wku.edu)
6. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
7. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
8. Board of Regents (all)
9. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path
1. Fri, 14 Mar 2025 15:11:44 GMT
   William Mkanta (william.mkanta): Approved for PUBH Approval
2. Wed, 26 Mar 2025 04:38:00 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Rollback to PUBH Approval for HH Dean
3. Thu, 27 Mar 2025 18:43:34 GMT
   William Mkanta (william.mkanta): Rollback to Initiator
4. Tue, 08 Apr 2025 19:30:55 GMT
   William Mkanta (william.mkanta): Approved for PUBH Approval
5. Thu, 04 Sep 2025 18:26:50 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Rollback to PUBH Approval for HH Dean
6. Thu, 04 Sep 2025 21:55:30 GMT
   Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Rollback to Initiator
7. Thu, 16 Oct 2025 22:01:55 GMT
   Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Approved for PUBH Approval
8. Mon, 20 Oct 2025 21:30:32 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Dean
9. Thu, 30 Oct 2025 17:00:33 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Curriculum Committee
10. Thu, 06 Nov 2025 21:54:18 GMT
    Erin Warfel (erin.warfel): Approved for Graduate Curriculum Committee
11. Thu, 13 Nov 2025 21:24:51 GMT
    John Atkinson (kirk.atkinson): Approved for Graduate Council
12. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 19:58:46 GMT
    Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
13. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 21:03:29 GMT
    Robert Fischer (robert.fischer): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal
Date Submitted: Wed, 15 Oct 2025 21:04:46 GMT

Viewing: : Digital Health and Data Management
Last edit: Mon, 03 Nov 2025 16:24:29 GMT
Changes proposed by: mln43600

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Dr. Gregory Ellis-Griffith	gregory.ellis-griffith@wku.edu	2707453076

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Graduate

Program Type
Certificate - Graduate

Department
Public Health

College
Health and Human Services

Program Name (eg. Biology)
Digital Health and Data Management

CIP Code
51.0701 - Health/Health Care Administration/Management.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?
No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements
No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)
The graduate certificate in Digital Health and Data Management provides an introduction to health administration as it relates to current and future use of emerging technology for the provision of health services, to include the ethical and risk management implications with acquisition, sharing and governance of patient data.

Students who complete the *Digital Health and Data Management Graduate Certificate* can apply credit hours toward the Master of Health Administration degree.

Admission Requirements (Catalog field: Program Admission)
Program Admission
• Admission to WKU Graduate Studies.
• A baccalaureate degree in a related field or a baccalaureate degree and related experience in health administration.

Graduate Studies Admission
Please refer to the admission section (http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission/) of this catalog for Graduate Studies admission requirements.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (9 Hours)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses (6 hours)		
HCA 564	Health Systems Informatics	3
HCA 574	Decision Making in Health Care	3
Elective (3 hours)		**3**
*Any HCA 500+ course		
PH 582	Epidemiology	
BA 540	Applied Statistical Methods	
BDAN 513	Contemporary Business Analytics	
BDAN 515	Data Management	
CYSA 520	Principles of Cybersecurity for Data Analytics	
CYSA 522	Cybersecurity Risk and Compliance	
*Other elective courses may be chosen with advisor approval		
Total Hours		**9**

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
Yes

Outside Courses Details

Who approved including these courses?	When were they approved?
Xiuhua Ding, xiuhua.ding@wku.edu, (270) 745-3618	03/10/25
Mark D. Ciampa, mark.ciampa@wku.edu, (270) 745-3509	03/11/25
Kathryn A. Nicewicz Scott, kate.nicewicz@wku.edu	03/12/25

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The proposed program relates to WKU's institutional mission by promoting a marketable skill, complementing multiple programs, being accessible to students of all backgrounds and supporting the core value "Dedication to the importance of achieving excellence in all programs and for adding value to the degrees and credentials of our student."
The program relates to the academic strategic plan by addressing WKU Campus Plan: Talent, 9a., Align relevant academic programs with employment needs.
• Identify programs that specifically address these needs and create new ones to supplement ongoing ones where warranted.
• Enhance employment preparedness for graduates by strengthening the programs and career-focused opportunities in WKU's Graduate School.
• Provide continuing education in these high-growth/demand/wage areas.
*Supports WKU Key Performance Indicator: growth of graduate degrees from 796 to 825.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

This certificate addresses the Council's statewide strategic agenda for 2022-30, "Higher Education Matters," Priority: Talent:
*Kentucky must expand postsecondary access to undereducated, working-age adults to fill critical work shortages in healthcare
Objective 8: Improve the career outcomes of post-secondary graduates.
This graduate certificate offering is relevant to both current and emerging trends for health care management professionals while targeting the Kentucky CPE essential skills, to include:
*Apply quantitative reasoning skills to analyze and solve numerical problems, as evidenced by providing solutions guided by data.
*Demonstrate evidence of applied and integrated learning, as evidenced by academic preparation with relevant knowledge and abilities essential to their chosen career.
*Use information for decision making, as evidenced by identifying, evaluating and responsibly using information needed for decision making.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Students will explain the characteristics and components of health care information systems within the United States healthcare system.	Students will be given questions related to health informatics on the comprehensive final exam HCA 564. 75% of students to achieve 75% on assessment.
SLO 2	Students will apply effective incorporation of data and evidence into decision making in both clinical and non-clinical decision processes.	All students will be assessed for data driven decision making on the to term paper/project HCA 574. 75% of students to achieve 75% on assessment.
SLO 3	Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the impact information technology has on health care delivery.	All students will be given questions related to health tech's impact on patient health on the comprehensive final exam HCA 564. 75% of students to achieve 75% on assessment.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan
Digital Health _program_asl_template.docx

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.

The graduate certificate in Digital Health and Data Management provides an introductory understanding of health administration as it relates to current and future use of emerging information technology for the provision of health services, to include the ethical and risk management implications with acquisition, sharing and governance of patient data. This certificate program provides a marketable skill and complements multiple programs, to include the Master of Health Administration (MHA). At present, no other similar certificate is know to exist in Kentucky, as of Spring 2025.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?

Yes

Please explain

Yes, this program will combine core courses of the MHA degree with a variety of approved elective options from both the Gordon Ford College of Business (GFCB) and Department of Public Health. This allows the student to tailor the certificate to his/her area of study. The certificate will also help attract graduate, transfer, non-degree seeking students to the MHA program with a certificate option of nine (9) hours versus a 30+ hour graduate degree.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

No

Is access to existing programs limited?

No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

While no specific articulations have been explored, the proposed graduate certificate will provide an accessible pathway for past and future graduate students, as well as transfer and non-degree seeking students, to be credentialed with a valuable certificate that promotes a marketable skill and complements multiple programs linked to health, business, or technology, in addition to health administration.

Describe student demand data for this program.

Healthcare technology continues to evolve rapidly, thus creating a need for individuals with an understanding of not only health operations/science but also information technology and data management.

Students who complete the undergraduate degree in health administration, health sciences and other majors currently do not have a graduate certificate option that advances their competencies in digital health and data management specific to health systems management without requiring the completion of a Master of Health Administration program. The proposed certificate will also serve as a recruitment tool for the MHA program.

Effective for U.S. hospitals on January 1, 2024, the "Responsible Use of Health Data" certification is one of the newest priorities for the Joint Commission, an accrediting organization which evaluates health care organizations for the highest standards of healthcare quality and patient safety. A key focus of this new priority is to provide certification to hospitals that follow best practices for the combined use of data and information technology to improve patient care, quality initiatives and research.

In June 2023, the International Hospital Federation Leadership Model 2023, part of the Global Consortium for Healthcare Management Professionalization, was released to provide a standard competency model for healthcare leaders and managers. This model is a healthcare leadership tool listed by the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the professional society for healthcare leaders committed to improving health, to assess globally applicable professional competencies for future-focused healthcare leaders at all levels. Within this model, there has been the addition of information technology skills specific to health operations and includes understanding both the potential and limitations of these health technologies.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Outlook Handbook states the average growth rate for all occupations is 4 percent per year and the median pay $23.10/hour for all workers (May 2023). The career growth outlook for a few occupations and promotability opportunities that could be supported by this graduate certificate are listed below:
• Health administration/managers: 29% (much faster than average), 2023 median pay $53.21/hour
• Health information managers: 16% (much faster than average), 2023 median pay $30.28/hour
• Data scientists: 36% (much faster than average), 2023 median pay $51.93/hour
Example career paths that combine expertise (supported by both academic preparation and professional experience) of health tech/ informatics, health administration and data management include Health IT Project Manager, Telemedicine Coordinator, Medical Informatics Specialist, Healthcare Tech Consultant, Clinical Data Analyst, Clinical Informatics Manager, Nurse Informaticist, etc.

The Digital Health and Data Management graduate certificate serves as a tool to enhance an individual's experience and/or education specific to information technology related to the rapid innovation of healthcare and fulfillment of delivery gaps in the US (and globally). In addition, with the requirement of electronic medical records, there is an increasing need for ethical and secure management of patient and operational data.

https://www.jointcommission.org/
https://www.ache.org/about-ache
https://ihf-fih.org/what-we-do/ihf-leadership-model/
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.htm

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?
No

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?
No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?
No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?
Yes

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
0

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
Provide a program that reflects a changing industry, allowing graduate students to access the health care delivery model specific to combining digital health and data to improve patient care.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Additional Attachments
Digital Health WKU Certificate Development.docx

Reviewer Comments
Danita Kelley (danita.kelley) (Wed, 26 Mar 2025 04:38:00 GMT): Rollback: Per proponent request.
William Mkanta (william.mkanta) (Thu, 27 Mar 2025 18:43:34 GMT): Rollback: For review
Danita Kelley (danita.kelley) (Thu, 04 Sep 2025 18:26:50 GMT): Rollback: Per department request.
Grace Lartey (grace.lartey) (Thu, 04 Sep 2025 21:55:30 GMT): Rollback: For program review.

Key: 411

HEALTH POLICY AND SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

REQUEST: Approval of a Graduate Certificate in Health Policy and Systems Management offered through the Department of Public Health in the College of Health and Human Services.

FACTS: The graduate certificate program in Health Policy and Systems Management will help prepare students and professionals for administrative and managerial positions in different types of healthcare facilities and agencies with a system-based perspective of health care environments. Students completing the Health Policy and Systems Management Graduate Certificate can apply credit hours toward the Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree.

Graduates of this program will have a broad understanding of health administration and leadership and will be well-equipped to transition to the MHA degree program. In addition to helping drive interest in the MHA program, the Health Policy and Systems Management certificate will complement a variety of other programs offered at WKU, such as the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), leadership, business, and social work degree programs. BLS data shows strong occupational growth for careers related to healthcare administration, meaning that graduates of this program will be well equipped to enter administrative and managerial roles within healthcare settings, as well as leverage this credential to advance within their careers.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 9 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This graduate certificate uses existing faculty members; no additional faculty lines are required.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Graduate Certificate in Health Policy and Systems Management** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Graduate Certificate in Health Policy and Systems Management** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: HEALTH POLICY AND SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

In Workflow
1. PUBH Approval (grace.lartey@wku.edu)
2. HH Dean (tania.basta@wku.edu; danita.kelley@wku.edu)
3. HH Curriculum Committee (danita.kelley@wku.edu)
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee (erin.warfel@wku.edu)
5. Graduate Council (kirk.atkinson@wku.edu; whitley.stone@wku.edu)
6. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
7. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
8. Board of Regents (all)
9. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path
1. Fri, 14 Mar 2025 15:11:50 GMT
   William Mkanta (william.mkanta): Approved for PUBH Approval
2. Wed, 26 Mar 2025 04:38:12 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Rollback to PUBH Approval for HH Dean
3. Thu, 27 Mar 2025 18:44:04 GMT
   William Mkanta (william.mkanta): Rollback to Initiator
4. Tue, 08 Apr 2025 19:30:36 GMT
   William Mkanta (william.mkanta): Approved for PUBH Approval
5. Thu, 04 Sep 2025 18:27:09 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Rollback to PUBH Approval for HH Dean
6. Thu, 04 Sep 2025 21:55:46 GMT
   Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Rollback to Initiator
7. Thu, 16 Oct 2025 22:03:33 GMT
   Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Approved for PUBH Approval
8. Mon, 20 Oct 2025 21:30:35 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Dean
9. Tue, 21 Oct 2025 21:07:24 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Rollback to Initiator
10. Fri, 24 Oct 2025 19:00:35 GMT
    Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Approved for PUBH Approval
11. Fri, 24 Oct 2025 19:11:45 GMT
    Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Dean
12. Thu, 30 Oct 2025 17:00:40 GMT
    Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Curriculum Committee
13. Thu, 06 Nov 2025 21:54:22 GMT
    Erin Warfel (erin.warfel): Approved for Graduate Curriculum Committee
14. Thu, 13 Nov 2025 21:24:55 GMT
    John Atkinson (kirk.atkinson): Approved for Graduate Council
15. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 19:58:30 GMT
    Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
16. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 21:04:18 GMT
    Robert Fischer (robert.fischer): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal
Date Submitted: Wed, 22 Oct 2025 14:56:09 GMT

Viewing: : Health Policy and Systems Management
Last edit: Mon, 03 Nov 2025 16:25:02 GMT
Changes proposed by: mln43600

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Gregory Ellis-Griffith	gregory.ellis-griffith@wku.edu	2707453076

Term of Implementation
2026-2027

Academic Level
Graduate

Program Type
Certificate - Graduate

Department
Public Health

College
Health and Human Services

Program Name (eg. Biology)
Health Policy and Systems Management

CIP Code
51.0701 - Health/Health Care Administration/Management.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?
No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)

The graduate certificate program in Health Policy and Systems Management will help prepare students and professionals for administrative and managerial positions in different types of healthcare facilities and agencies with a system-based perspective of health care environments. Students completing the Health Policy and Systems Management Graduate Certificate can apply credit hours toward the Master of Health Administration degree.

Admission Requirements (Catalog field: Program Admission)

Please refer to the admission section (http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission/) of this catalog for Graduate Studies admission requirements.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (9 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses (9 hours)		
HCA 540	Health Care Organization and Management	3
HCA 555	Healthcare Leadership and Change Management	3
HCA 586	Health Economics & Policy	3
Total Hours		**9**

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
No

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The proposed program relates to WKU's institutional mission by promoting a marketable skill, complementing multiple programs, being accessible to students of all backgrounds and supporting the core value "Dedication to the importance of achieving excellence in all programs' and 'adding value to the degrees and credentials of our student."

The program relates to the academic strategic plan by addressing WKU Campus Plan:
Transitions, 4, Increase enrollment in postsecondary education, to include students who abandoned their degree program prior to completion.
Success, 5d, Create appropriate online offerings for degree/certificates/micro-credentials to fit the needs of adults currently in or planning to enter the workfoce.
Talent, 9a., Align relevant academic programs with employment needs.
• Identify programs that specifically address these needs and create new ones to supplement ongoing ones where warranted.
• Enhance employment preparedness for graduates by strengthening the programs and career-focused opportunities in WKU's Graduate School.
• Provide continuing education in these high-growth/demand/wage areas.
*Supports WKU Key Performance Indicator: growth of graduate degrees from 796 to 825.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

This certificate supports Kentucky's state goal to raise the percentage of Kentuckians with a high-quality postsecondary degree or certificate to 60% by year 2030. It also addresses the Council's statewide strategic agenda for 2022-30, "Higher Education Matters,"
Priority: Success:
Objective 5d. Work with education providers to limit barriers to enrollment and completion for adult learners and other students balancing the competing demands of work, life, family school.
Priority: Talent:
*Kentucky must expand postsecondary access to undereducated, working-age adults to fill critical work shortages in healthcare."
Objective 8: Improve the career outcomes of postsecondary graduates.
This graduate certificate offering is relevant to both current and emerging trends for health care management professionals while targeting the Kentucky CPE essential skills, to include:
*Apply quantitative reasoning skills to analyze and solve numerical problems, as evidenced by providing solutions guided by data.
*Adapt to changing circumstances while leading and supporting others.
*Demonstrate evidence of applied and integrated learning, as evidenced by academic preparation with relevant knowledge and abilities essential to their chosen career.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	**Measurement Plan**
SLO 1	Students will demonstrate an understanding of important health care reform strategies and describe their effectiveness in addressing healthcare challenges.	Students will be assessed with systems approach project HCA 540, 75% of students to achieve 75% on assessment instrument.
SLO 2	Students will apply effective incorporation of data and evidence into decision making in both clinical and non-clinical decision processes.	Students will be assessed related to data driven decision making on the term paper/project for HCA 586, 75% of students to achieve 75% on assessment instrument.
SLO 3	Students will demonstrate an understanding of individual and organizational responses to changes in health operations.	Students will be assessed related to change management on the knowledge assessment for HCA 555, 75% of students to achieve 75% on assessment instrument.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan
Health Policy and Systems Management Grad Cert new_program_asl_template(1).docx

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.

The graduate certificate program in Health Policy and Systems Management will help prepare students and professionals for administrative and managerial positions in different types of healthcare facilities and agencies with a system-based perspective of health care environments. This certificate provides a broad understanding of health administration and leadership for both current and future provision of health services.
This certificate program provides a marketable skill and complements multiple programs, to include the Master of Health Administration (MHA). At present, other than completion of the MHA degree, there is not a similar option for students. This program will help graduate, transfer and non-degree seeking students discover the MHA program and/or add this certificate as a complement to their degree such as MSN, leadership, business, social work. Working professionals could utilize this certificate for focused knowledge development specific to health systems. It is also a tool that will allow students that do not finish their MHA to have a credential (graduate certificate) to reflect their coursework.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?

Yes

Please explain

Yes, this program will combine core courses of the MHA degree with a certificate option of nine (9) hours versus a 30+ hour graduate degree. The program will complement multiple programs and provide the foundation for a marketable skill. As health administration is often a "discovery" major, this fundamental certificate will also help attract and bring awareness to undergraduate, transfer, non-degree seeking and potential graduate students to the MHA program that would not otherwise consider this option. It is also an option for working professionals looking for a focused area without degree completion.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

No

Is access to existing programs limited?

No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

While no specific articulations have been explored, the proposed graduate certificate will provide an accessible pathway for past and future graduate students, as well as transfer and non-degree seeking students, to be credentialed with a valuable certificate that promotes a marketable skill and complements multiple programs, such as leadership, nursing, and business, in addition to health administration.

Describe student demand data for this program.

Students completing an undergraduate degree in health administration, health sciences, leadership, nursing and other majors currently do not have a graduate certificate option that advances their competencies in health policy and systems management without requiring the completion of a graduate degree.
Data in SAS Visual Analytics reflects MHA enrollment has declined steadily since 2020 by approximately 50%: enrollment 2020 - 33, enrollment March 2025 - 16. Undergraduate enrollment for both Health Care Administration (HCA) and Health Sciences have remained mostly stable and support MHA enrollment post degree obtainment. The proposed certificate will also serve as a recruitment and discovery tool for the MHA program. The addition of this online graduate certificate in health administration and leadership fundamentals will cater to student populations that are interested in exploring the field without committing to a graduate degree completion.

This certificate serves as a tool to enhance an individual's experience and/or education in health administration and also serves to fill a gap of administration/leadership preparation for clinical-based positions such as nursing, social work, dietetics, therapy, etc. There is a great demand for promotability and advanced leadership roles in a multitude of health services across the continuum of health, from outpatient to long-term care settings and other related agencies.
The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the professional society for healthcare leaders committed to improving health and excellent leadership in health organizations, provides a list of core competencies for health administration and leadership positions. This program supports these needed skills with a focus on leadership, change management, evidence-based decision making and policy management for effective operations.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Outlook Handbook states the average growth rate for all occupations is 4 percent per year and the median pay is $23.10/hour for all workers (May 2023). The career growth outlook for occupations and promotability opportunities supported by this graduate certificate is health administration/managers: 29% (much faster than average), 2023 median pay $53.21/hour. In addition, approximately 20% of employment distribution for the rapid job growth in health is related to management, administrative and business/operations.

Example career paths (supported by both academic preparation and professional experience) include health services manager, practice manager, long-term care administrator, chief nursing officer, chief operating officer, department manager and rehabilitation services manager.

The Health Policy and Systems Management graduate certificate serves as a tool to enhance an individual's experience and/or education that will help fulfill gaps in the US (and globally).

https://www.ache.org/about-ache
https://ihf-fih.org/what-we-do/ihf-leadership-model/
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.htm

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?

No

Program Demand Data and Support Documents
Health Policy and Systems Management WKU Certificate Development(6).docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?
No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?
No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?
Yes

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
0

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
No

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
No

Does this program lead to professional licensure (excluding teaching certification)?
No

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
Provide a program that supports the rapidly growing industry of health administration, supporting marketable skills needed for graduate students and fulfilling a need for both non-degree and degree-seeking students.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Reviewer Comments
Danita Kelley (danita.kelley) (Wed, 26 Mar 2025 04:38:12 GMT): Rollback: Per proponent request.
William Mkanta (william.mkanta) (Thu, 27 Mar 2025 18:44:04 GMT): Rollback: For review
Danita Kelley (danita.kelley) (Thu, 04 Sep 2025 18:27:09 GMT): Rollback: Per department request.
Grace Lartey (grace.lartey) (Thu, 04 Sep 2025 21:55:46 GMT): Rollback: For program review.
Danita Kelley (danita.kelley) (Tue, 21 Oct 2025 21:07:24 GMT): Rollback: Per proponent request

Key: 410

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES IN HEALTH LEADERSHIP GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

REQUEST: Approval of a Graduate Certificate in Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership offered through the Department of Public Health in the College of Health and Human Services.

FACTS: An effort to provide continued study for students who wish to focus on sustainability within healthcare settings, the Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership Graduate Certificate will prepare students to lead meaningful sustainability initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for both staff and patients within a medical setting. This program will help students learn to integrate evidence-based practices and green technologies so that they will be equipped to meet industry needs while safeguarding the health of future generations.

Graduates of this program will be uniquely equipped to meet the sustainability challenges present in the modern healthcare industry. In recent years, a particular emphasis has been placed on sustainability within healthcare settings, and this program will prepare graduates to enter a career landscape with a new focus on minimizing impact on the community, environment, and future generations. Additionally, this program will provide pathways for students to transition into the Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree, thus serving as a valuable recruitment tool.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 9 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This graduate certificate uses existing faculty members; no new faculty lines are required.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Graduate Certificate in Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Graduate Certificate in Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES IN HEALTH LEADERSHIP

In Workflow

1. PUBH Approval (grace.lartey@wku.edu)
2. HH Dean (tania.basta@wku.edu; danita.kelley@wku.edu)
3. HH Curriculum Committee (danita.kelley@wku.edu)
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee (erin.warfel@wku.edu)
5. Graduate Council (kirk.atkinson@wku.edu; whitley.stone@wku.edu)
6. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
7. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
8. Board of Regents (all)
9. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Tue, 21 Oct 2025 23:17:29 GMT
   Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Approved for PUBH Approval
2. Wed, 22 Oct 2025 18:01:13 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Rollback to Initiator
3. Fri, 24 Oct 2025 19:00:43 GMT
   Grace Lartey (grace.lartey): Approved for PUBH Approval
4. Tue, 11 Nov 2025 17:21:44 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Dean
5. Mon, 17 Nov 2025 21:17:24 GMT
   Danita Kelley (danita.kelley): Approved for HH Curriculum Committee
6. Thu, 04 Dec 2025 20:55:37 GMT
   Erin Warfel (erin.warfel): Approved for Graduate Curriculum Committee
7. Thu, 11 Dec 2025 21:36:47 GMT
   John Atkinson (kirk.atkinson): Approved for Graduate Council

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Wed, 22 Oct 2025 19:18:53 GMT

Viewing: : Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership
Last edit: Thu, 04 Dec 2025 15:55:40 GMT

Changes proposed by: mln43600

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Melanie D. Eaton	melanie.eaton@wku.edu	2707455854

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Graduate

Program Type

Certificate - Graduate

Department

Public Health

College

Health and Human Services

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership

CIP Code

51.0701 - Health/Health Care Administration/Management.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?

No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)

Where healthcare meets environmental sustainability. This graduate certificate prepares you to lead meaningful sustainability initiatives that impact quality of work environment for staff and quality of life for patients and their communities worldwide. From facility design to daily operations, learn to integrate evidence-based practices, strategic planning, and green technologies that meet healthcare industry needs while safeguarding the health of future generations.

Students who complete the *Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership Graduate Certificate* can apply credit hours toward the Master of Health Administration degree.

Admission Requirements (Catalog field: Program Admission)

Admission Requirements

- Application to the WKU Graduate Studies
- Baccalaureate degree in a related field.

Graduate Studies Admission

Please refer to the admission section (http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission/) of this catalog for Graduate Studies admission requirements.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (9 Hours)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses (6 hours)		
HCA 544	Health Systems Design for Sustainable Practices	3
EOHS 560	Environmental Management	3
or PH 584	Principles of Environmental Health	
Elective (select 3 hours)		**3**
HCA 551	Healthcare Jurisprudence and Quality	
EOHS 504	Principles of Total Worker Health and Worker Well Being	
PH 548	Community Organizing in Public Health	
LEAD 505	Framing Organizations	
LEAD 515	Leading an Adaptive Organization	
GEOS 555	Global Climate Change	
GEOS 580	Seminar in Sustainable Cities	
ECON 430G	Environmental and Resource Economics	
EMDS 501	Understanding Natural and Technological Disaster Risks	
MGT 546	Sustainable Business Operations Management	
MGT 555	Strategic Leadership	
*Other elective courses may be chosen with advisor approval		
Total Hours		**9**

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?

No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?

Yes

Outside Courses Details

Who approved including these courses?	When were they approved?
Joshua Durkee	10/03/2025
Jason Polk	10/08/2025
Michael Reece	08/29/2025

Tanja N. Bibbs	10/14/2025
Edrisa Sanyang	08/29/2025
Kathryn A. Nicewicz Scott	10/08/2025
Dr. Christopher Biolsi - ECON	10/03/2025

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The proposed program relates to WKU's institutional mission by promoting a marketable skill, complementing multiple programs, being accessible to students of all backgrounds and supporting the core value "Dedication to the importance of achieving excellence in all programs and for adding value to the degrees and credentials of our student."
The program relates to the academic strategic plan by addressing WKU Campus Plan: Talent, 9a., Align relevant academic programs with employment needs.
• Identify programs that specifically address these needs and create new ones to supplement ongoing ones where warranted.
• Enhance employment preparedness for graduates by strengthening the programs and career-focused opportunities in WKU's Graduate School.
*Supports WKU Key Performance Indicator: growth of graduate degrees from 796 to 825.
It also specifically addresses Toppers R.I.S.E. - Adaptability and Leadership: Graduates will thrive in changing environments, lead others, and motivate teams toward common goals.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

This certificate addresses the Council's statewide strategic agenda for 2022-30, "Higher Education Matters," Priority: Talent:
*Kentucky must expand postsecondary access to undereducated, working-age adults to fill critical work shortages in healthcare, and Objective 8: Improve the career outcomes of postsecondary graduates.
This graduate certificate offering is relevant to both current and emerging trends for health care management professionals while targeting the Kentucky CPE essential skills, to include:
*Demonstrate evidence of applied and integrated learning, as evidenced by academic preparation with relevant knowledge and abilities essential to their chosen career.
*Use information for decision making, as evidenced by identifying, evaluating and responsibly using information needed for decision making.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Students will assess a health system's baseline performance for sustainability measures, identifying opportunities to minimize environmental impact with practical solutions that maximize strategic goal outcomes.	Sustainability simulation.
SLO 2	Students will describe how the alignment of strategic planning and organizational goals impact decision-making and outcomes.	Project assessment.
SLO 3	Students will collect, analyze and apply data to solve problems and make recommendations.	Decision-making analysis assignment.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan
Sustainability Practices Health Leadership Assurance of Student Learning Assessment Plan .docx

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.
The graduate certificate program in Sustainability Practices in Health Leadership will prepare students and professionals by exploring how operation and design of healthcare facilities can impact quality of life for patients, staff and community through succession planning and environmental responsibility. Economics, continuous improvements, technology and evidence-based sustainability practices align to meet the health needs of a population without compromising the health of future generations.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?
Yes

Please explain
This program will combine core courses of the MHA degree with a variety of approved elective options from the Department of Public Health and other programs. This allows the student to tailor the certificate to his/her area of study. The certificate will also help attract undergraduate, transfer, non-degree seeking and potential graduate students to the MHA and other graduate degree programs with a certificate option of nine (9) hours versus a 30+ hour graduate degree, offering students focused curriculum in a short-term, focused format manageable for the working professional.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?
Yes

Please explain
This program expands current targets to non-traditional students with career progression and/or career change needs.

Is access to existing programs limited?
No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.
While no specific articulations have been explored, the proposed graduate certificate will provide an accessible pathway for past and future graduate students, as well as transfer and non-degree seeking students, to be credentialed with a valuable certificate that promotes a marketable skill and complements multiple programs.

Describe student demand data for this program.
Undergraduate students in health administration, health sciences, public health and other majors currently do not have a graduate certificate option that advances their competencies in sustainability practices in health administration and leadership without requiring the completion of a full graduate degree program. The proposed certificate will also serve as a recruitment tool for the MHA and other graduate programs. The undergraduate Health Care Administration degree is accessible to students across the university and is considered a discovery major; this graduate certificate increases exposure and supports discovery of the MHA degree with all courses being applicable to completion of the MHA degree.

The International Hospital Federation Leadership Model 2023, part of the Global Consortium for Healthcare Management Professionalization, provides professional competencies for future-focused healthcare leaders at all levels. Within this model, there has been the inclusion of social responsibility and sustainability leadership as part of organizational strategy and quality improvement programs. In addition, the Joint Commission evaluates health care organizations for the highest standards of healthcare quality and patient safety, with a list of priorities that includes sustainability. The Joint Commission's "Sustainable Healthcare Certification" was implemented January 2024 to recognize and support health care organizations for their sustainable healthcare practices. In addition, the American Hospital Association hosted the inaugural Sustainability Summit summer of 2025. In 2024, the CAHME/Joint Commission Fellowship Award for Advancing Sustainable Health Care was created and requires candidates have completed a sustainability related course, project or volunteer effort. This emerging focus areas, both in the US and globally, has created a niche opportunity for healthcare leaders at all levels that are prepared academically regarding operations that aim to minimize environmental impact while improving quality of life for patients and quality of work environment for staff.
Quick Facts: Medical and Health Services Managers
2024 Median Pay $117,960 per year, $56.71 per hour
Work Experience in a Related Occupation, Less than 5 years
On-the-job Training, None
Number of Jobs, 2023, 562,700
Job Outlook, 2023–33, 29% (Much faster than average)

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 08/22/2025, https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.html
https://www.jointcommission.org/
https://www.ache.org/about-ache
https://ihf-fih.org/what-we-do/ihf-leadership-model/

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?
No

Program Demand Data and Support Documents
Sustainability WKU Certificate Development Document including Student Demand information.docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?
No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?
No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?
Yes

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
0

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
No

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
No

Does this program lead to professional licensure (excluding teaching certification)?
No

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
Prepare graduate students for an emerging need and increasing focus on health care delivery models that have minimal impact on future generations, community and the environment.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Reviewer Comments
Danita Kelley (danita.kelley) (Wed, 22 Oct 2025 18:01:13 GMT): Rollback: Per proponent request.

Key: 412

GLOBAL ECONOMIC ISSUES UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

REQUEST: Approval of an undergraduate certificate in Global Economic Issues offered through the Department of Economics in the Gordon Ford College of Business.

FACTS: The certificate in Global Economic Issues will prepare students to learn about the field of global economics, particularly the international macroeconomic elements of that area. This program will provide valuable insight about economic principles and concepts to students from programs other than Economics. This program will provide graduates with a broad base of knowledge relating to the field of economics and will better prepare them for careers in areas related to social sciences.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 9 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This undergraduate certificate encompasses courses that are already included in the Colonnade Program; no new faculty lines will be required.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of an **Undergraduate Certificate in Global Economic Issues** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish an **Undergraduate Certificate in Global Economic Issues** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: GLOBAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

In Workflow

1. ECON Approval (david.zimmer@wku.edu)
2. BU Dean (evelyn.thrasher@wku.edu; alex.lebedinsky@wku.edu; leanne.coder@wku.edu)
3. BU Curriculum Committee (evelyn.thrasher@wku.edu; alex.lebedinsky@wku.edu; leanne.coder@wku.edu)
4. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (ashley.fox@wku.edu; kimberly.pharris@wku.edu)
5. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
6. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
7. Board of Regents (all)
8. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Thu, 30 Oct 2025 19:35:23 GMT
   David Zimmer (david.zimmer): Approved for ECON Approval
2. Thu, 30 Oct 2025 19:41:59 GMT
   Evelyn Thrasher (evelyn.thrasher): Approved for BU Dean
3. Tue, 02 Dec 2025 14:26:22 GMT
   Alexander Lebedinsky (alex.lebedinsky): Approved for BU Curriculum Committee
4. Mon, 05 Jan 2026 13:25:12 GMT
   Ashley Fox (ashley.fox): Approved for Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Mon, 20 Oct 2025 18:05:48 GMT

Viewing: : Global Economic Issues

Last edit: Tue, 16 Dec 2025 21:41:11 GMT

Changes proposed by: dvd19984

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
david zimmer	david.zimmer@wku.edu	270-745-2880

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Certificate - Undergraduate

Department

Economics

College

Business

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Global Economic Issues

Will this program have concentrations?

No

CIP Code

45.0605 - International Economics.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?
No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements
No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)
The certificate in Global Economic Issues will prepare students to learn about the field of global economics, particularly the international macroeconomic elements of that area.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)
Program Requirements (12 credits)

Code	Title	Hours
ECON 202	Principles of Economics (Micro)	3
or ECON 150	Introduction to Economics	
ECON 203	Principles of Economics (Macro)	3
ECON 380	International Economics	3
or ECON 385	Economic Development	
Economics Elective		
Any 300 level or higher course from the Gordon Ford College of Business (ACCT, ACTU, BA, BDAN, CIS, ECON, ENT, FIN, MGT, MKT or the following areas: CRIM, IA, LEAD, MIL, PS, SOCL, or SWRK.		3

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
No

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.
The university emphasizes its aim to achieve "international reach" in its vision statement. This certificate fits within that strategic plan in its focus on global narratives.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda
The state's strategic agenda emphasizes education as a means to achieve "economic growth." The proposes certificate explicitly covers the global elements of that point of emphasis, The strategic agenda also seek to increase the state's "productive workforce," which this certificate aims to do by increasing students' fluency in global business climates.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Demonstrate knowledge of central concepts of macroeconomics.	ECON 380 and ECON 385 both require students to write research style essays. Some of those essays require students to demonstrate knowledge in a specific area of macroeconomics. We will draw a random sample of those essays and assess them internally in order to determine whether, on average, students were capable of demonstrating such knowledge. We expect that, on average, students can score "3" using the attached LEAP critical thinking rubric.

SLO 2	Demonstrate knowledge of how central concepts of macroeconomic concepts extend to global settings.	The same essays used to assess SLO1 can also be used here. Those essays, in addition to requiring knowledge of macroeconomic concepts, also require students to extend those elements to global settings. We will draw a random sample of essays and assess those internally in order to determine whether, on average, students were capable of demonstrating such knowledge. We expect that, on average, students can score "3" using the attached LEAP critical thinking rubric.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan
asl.docx

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.
See below.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?
Yes

Please explain
While economics majors are exposed to these topics, the university does not have a certificate accessible to non-econ majors that focuses on these topics.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?
No

Is access to existing programs limited?
No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.
Two of the certificates courses, ECON 202 and ECON 203, are offered at all other state institutions, and therefore easily transferable into or out of WKU. The same is mostly true of ECON 380, although a closer examination of syllabi would need to be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

Describe student demand data for this program.
While we have no formal analyses, recent events in the business world have brought these topics (e.g., inflation and tariffs) to the forefront of business and political considerations. Therefore, students, being mostly aware of those developments, appear to want to pursue these topics.

(The attached file includes links to market data.) Almost all businesses, especially larger ones, have to consider the macroeconomic environment in which they operate. And nearly all must also consider international implications of their operations, including tariffs. Therefore, we believe that these skills should prove attractive from a career standpoint.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?
No

Program Demand Data and Support Documents
careers.docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?
No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?
No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.
50

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
Yes

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
No

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
No

Does this program lead to professional licensure (excluding teaching certification)?
No

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
Recent years have brought to the forefront macroeconomic topics, especially as they relate to international considerations (e.g., inflation and tariffs). This certificate will allow students to gain expertise on those topics without having to major in economics.

Budgetary Implications

What are the potential budget implications for this proposal (including faculty, resources, equipment, space, etc.)?
See attached spreadsheet. No additional faculty or resources are needed.

Will any additional staffing be required?
No

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Budget Spreadsheet
certificate-budget-spreadsheet-082025.xlsx

Key: 419

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN DISASTER SCIENCE

REQUEST: Approval of a Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science offered through the Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences in the Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

FACTS: The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science builds upon traditional emergency management practices to include a better understanding of the complex causal relationships that yield the destructive outcomes trending in modern catastrophic events. This program prepares students to function effectively in all phases of the disaster cycle, with particular focus on preparedness, prevention, and mitigation efforts to lessen the potential for loss of life, property, and environmental impacts.

This program focuses on an interdisciplinary approach, combining elements of environmental science, engineering, public health, social sciences, and emergency management in order to promote the development of career-oriented skills and competencies that will help prepare graduates for careers in areas such as emergency management, disaster risk reduction, environmental policy, humanitarian aid, and urban planning. BLS projections indicate steady growth of approximately 3% in roles related to this program nationally, with higher growth expected locally. The BS in Disaster Science will prepare graduates to fill these roles through its distinctive scientific and technical focus—building off courses in GIS (Geographic Information Systems), remote sensing, and weather and climate modeling already present at WKU—as well as through an emphasis on fieldwork and practical applications. Opportunities to engage in fieldwork, internships, simulations, and direct work with local and state agencies will position graduates of this program to enter careers related to Disaster Science with practical knowledge and experience.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 52 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This program will leverage existing tenure-track faculty, coupled with a temporary faculty hire and existing part-time faculty, all of whom will be covered under the first-year projected tuition revenue. An additional faculty line will be needed after the first year, but that is projected to be covered by tuition revenue.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: DISASTER SCIENCE

In Workflow

1. GEO Approval (leslie.north@wku.edu)
2. SC Dean (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
3. SC Curriculum Committee (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
4. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (ashley.fox@wku.edu; kimberly.pharris@wku.edu)
5. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
6. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
7. Board of Regents (all)
8. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Wed, 22 Oct 2025 03:36:59 GMT
   Leslie North (leslie.north): Approved for GEO Approval
2. Mon, 03 Nov 2025 14:29:27 GMT
   Stuart Burris (stuart.burris): Approved for SC Dean
3. Thu, 06 Nov 2025 23:42:26 GMT
   Stuart Burris (stuart.burris): Approved for SC Curriculum Committee
4. Tue, 02 Dec 2025 16:00:08 GMT
   Ashley Fox (ashley.fox): Approved for Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
5. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 19:40:18 GMT
   Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
6. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 21:03:50 GMT
   Robert Fischer (robert.fischer): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Mon, 06 Oct 2025 18:52:41 GMT

Viewing: : Disaster Science

Last edit: Tue, 18 Nov 2025 22:46:03 GMT

Changes proposed by: dvd62010

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Leslie North	leslie.north@wku.edu	270-745-4555
David Oliver	david.oliver@wku.edu	270-745-4181
Joshua Durkee	joshua.durkee@wku.edu	270-745-8777

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Major

Degree Types

Bachelor of Science

Department

Geography & Geology

College

Science and Engineering

Was your Notification of Intent (submitted to CPE by the Provost's Office) approved?
Yes

Program Name (eg. Biology)
Disaster Science

Will this program have concentrations?
No

CIP Code
43.0302 - Crisis/Emergency/Disaster Management.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?
No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements
No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science builds upon traditional emergency management practices to include a better understanding of the complex causal relationships that yield the destructive outcomes trending in modern catastrophic events. This program prepares students to function effectively in all phases of the disaster cycle, with particular focus on preparedness, prevention, and mitigation efforts to lessen the potential for loss of life, property, and environmental impacts.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (52 hours)

A baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 unduplicated semester hours. More information can be found at www.wku.edu/registrar/degree_certification.php. (https://www.wku.edu/registrar/degree_certification.php)

Code	Title	Hours
Core Requirements		
DISC 101	Course DISC 101 Not Found	3
DISC 200	Course DISC 200 Not Found	3
METR 121	Meteorology	3
GEOG 226	Our Dangerous Planet	3
GEOG 300	Writing in the Geosciences	3
GISC 316	Geographic Information Systems I	4
GISC 317	Geographic Information Systems II	4
METR 324	Weather Analysis and Forecasting	3
METR 326	Applied Meteorology / Climatology	3
EMDS 400	Emergency Management Policy and Practices	3
EMDS 401	Natural and Technological Disaster Risks	3
EMDS 402	Resiliency in Response to Terrorism and Violence	3
EMDS 403	Advanced Disaster Planning, Management, and Preparedness	3
GEOG 499	Professional Preparation	1
Complete a minimum of 3 hours from these courses:		**3**
EMDS 404	Trends in Disaster Preparedness and Management	
GEOG 495	Applied Research, Independent Study, or Internship	
Additional Required Courses:		
MATH 136	Calculus I	4
MATH 183	Introductory Statistics	3
or STAT 301	Introductory Probability and Applied Statistics	
or GEOG 391	Geoscience Data Analysis	
Total Hours		**52**

Students will complete the requirements for a certificate in Emergency Management Disaster Science in the course of degree completion.

4-Year Plan

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	
DISC 101	3	COMM 145		3
ENG 100	3	HIST 101		3
MATH 117	3	ENG 200		3
Colonnade	3	EMDS 400		3
		Colonnade		3
	12			**15**

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	
DISC 200	3	GEOG 300		3
GEOG 226	3	METR 121		3
Colonnade	3	EMDS 401		3
Elective	3	MATH 136		4
Elective	3	Colonnade		3
	15			**16**

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	
MATH 183 or STAT 301 OR GISC 316	3	GISC 317		4
GISC 316	4	Colonnade		3
EMDS 402	3	Elective		3
Colonnade	3	Elective		3
Colonnade	3	Elective		3
	16			**16**

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	
EMDS 403	3	GEOG 495 or EMDS 404		3
GEOG 499	1	Elective		3
METR 324	3	Elective		3
Elective	3	Elective		3
Elective	3	Elective		3
Elective	3			
	16			**15**

Total Hours 121

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
No

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

1. Institutional Mission of WKU:

WKU's mission focuses on providing accessible, high-quality education, fostering intellectual growth, and preparing students to become responsible, engaged citizens. The mission also emphasizes the importance of community involvement and leadership in addressing regional and global challenges.

The B.S. in Disaster Science directly contributes to WKU's mission by preparing students to tackle complex global challenges, particularly those related to disasters and crisis management. By providing students with the skills to assess, manage, and respond to natural and man-made disasters, this program ensures that graduates are equipped to serve their communities and beyond. This supports WKU's aim to produce graduates who are prepared to engage with societal issues in meaningful ways.

2. Academic Strategic Plan of WKU:

WKU's academic strategic plan focuses on innovation in teaching, the enhancement of interdisciplinary learning, and fostering student engagement through experiential learning. The plan also emphasizes the importance of preparing students for global citizenship and addressing issues that have broad societal impacts.

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science fits well within the academic strategic plan by providing a multidisciplinary approach to learning, integrating science, policy, and crisis management. The program offers practical, hands-on experiences through internships, field exercises, and collaborations with emergency management agencies, which are key components of WKU's focus on experiential

learning. Additionally, disaster management is a critical field in both global and local contexts, providing opportunities for students to engage with real-world issues and take leadership roles in crisis situations, aligning with WKU's commitment to developing responsible global citizens.

3. Community and Regional Impact:

Disaster science addresses issues such as climate change, natural hazards, public health crises, and human-made disasters—topics that are globally relevant and have significant local implications. WKU, located in Kentucky, a region susceptible to natural disasters (like tornadoes and floods), can benefit from producing graduates who are ready to manage and mitigate these risks, directly impacting regional safety and preparedness. At the same time, the global scope of the program equips students with knowledge and skills that have international applications.

4. Career Readiness and Workforce Development:

WKU emphasizes the development of career-ready graduates. The disaster science program offers students a direct pathway into various careers in emergency management, public safety, humanitarian response, and disaster recovery.

The program's focus on practical, applied skills means graduates are prepared for immediate employment in fields like government agencies, non-profits, private sector emergency services, and international organizations, meeting the workforce demands in disaster management and crisis response. This aligns with WKU's strategic goal of producing graduates who are ready to contribute to the workforce and society.

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science at WKU supports the university's institutional mission and academic strategic plan by preparing students to address critical global and local challenges, fostering leadership and community engagement, and providing experiential learning opportunities that align with WKU's broader goals of preparing responsible, well-rounded citizens ready to contribute to the world.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports in 2024, there were 27 individual weather and climate disasters with at least $1 billion in damages, trailing only the record-setting 28 events analyzed in 2023. These disasters caused at least 568 direct or indirect fatalities, which is the eighth-highest for these billion-dollar disasters over the last 45 years (1980-2024). The cost was approximately $182.7 billion. With this noted increase in the number and total impacts of disasters on the US and world, graduates of this program will be ready to serve key disaster preparedness, response, and recovery roles immediately.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

A Bachelor of Science degree in Disaster Science aligns with and addresses key components of the state's post-secondary education Strategic Agenda by directly supporting goals related to workforce development, regional and global impact, innovation, and access to quality education. Here's how the program ties into the agenda:

1. Increasing Post secondary Credential Attainment:

Kentucky post secondary education agendas often prioritize increasing the number of individuals who earn degrees and credentials that contribute to workforce readiness and economic mobility.

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science supports this agenda by providing students with a specialized, relevant degree that directly prepares them for critical roles in disaster management, emergency services, and related fields. The program ensures that graduates earn a credential that is in high demand by employers in public safety, emergency management, and humanitarian sectors, directly supporting state goals of increasing degree attainment in fields that align with workforce needs.

2. Workforce Alignment and Economic Development:

A core element of many state post secondary education agendas is ensuring that higher education institutions produce graduates who meet the needs of the workforce and contribute to regional and state-level economic development.

The program addresses workforce needs by preparing students for careers in disaster management, emergency response, and crisis intervention, areas that are increasingly relevant due to the rise in natural and human-made disasters. As regions continue to face challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and other crises, disaster science graduates are essential to building a resilient workforce capable of addressing these challenges. This aligns with the commonwealth's goal to ensure that higher education programs produce graduates who are workforce-ready and able to contribute to state economic resilience.

3. Promoting Equity and Access to Higher Education:

Kentucky's strategic agendas often focus on improving access to education for under served populations, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have opportunities to succeed in higher education and beyond.

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science can promote equity by offering a program that prepares students from all backgrounds to enter an important and growing field. This program is designed to offer flexibility delivery modalities allowing students to complete the requirements without physically being present on campus for some or a totality of the required coursework.

The focus on applied, interdisciplinary learning means students can engage in real-world experiences through internships, practicums, and collaborations with community-based disaster agencies.

This accessibility can open or expand existing career pathways for students, ensuring that the field of disaster science is positioned to support the bredth of the populations it serves, both locally and globally.

4. Addressing State and National Needs in Disaster Preparedness.

Kentucky's post secondary education agendas often include goals related to solving real-world problems, particularly those with state, regional, and national significance.

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science program addresses crucial needs within the Commonwealth by preparing professionals who can respond to disasters, improve public safety, and enhance emergency management infrastructure. Regions face numerous challenges, including natural disasters (e.g., floods, tornadoes, earthquakes) and man-made disasters (e.g., industrial accidents, terrorist threats), and disaster science professionals are critical in improving preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. The program aligns with the commoonwealth's strategic goals by ensuring that graduates have the skills needed to manage these issues and contribute to the state's safety and resilience.

5. Expanding Research and Innovation:

Disaster Science programs encourage research and innovation in areas such as risk analysis, disaster recovery, and crisis management. The program can promote interdisciplinary research that integrates science, technology, and policy, contributing to the development of new solutions for disaster preparedness and response. This innovative approach aligns with state goals of encouraging research that addresses complex issues and promotes advancements in fields that have broad societal impacts.

Examples of current and planned research activities include:

Improving the quality and applicability of risk assessment processes in the Commonwealth
Assessing public emergency warning systems across the Commonwealth
Documenting critical natural hazard events and their impacts
Developing improved methods of measuring and predicting heat impacts for workers and athletes

6. Building Global Competency and Citizenship:

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science prepares students to engage not only with local and state-level disasters but also with global challenges. Graduates of the program will be ready to contribute to international disaster response efforts and humanitarian work, gaining the skills necessary to work in cross-cultural and global settings. This enhances the state's education agenda by preparing graduates who are capable of addressing global issues like climate change, pandemics, and international humanitarian crises.

Conclusion:

The Bachelor of Science in Disaster Science supports several key elements of the state's Post secondary Education Strategic Agenda by contributing to workforce development, increasing credential attainment in high-demand fields, fostering innovation, promoting equity and access to education, and addressing both state and global needs related to disaster preparedness and response. By providing a comprehensive, applied education in disaster management, this program helps students gain the skills needed to meet urgent societal challenges, align with state workforce goals, and contribute to both local and global resiliency.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Apply key concepts related to all phases of disasters, including Prevention, Preparedness, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.	Measured on a variety of criteria including exam performance, quality of submitted assignments, interaction with group projects and discussions. etc
SLO 2	Develop and test mitigation and response plans by applying a variety of tools including planning and response frameworks, geographic information systems, risk assessments, etc.	Application elements will be measured through a combination of criteria including exam scores, successful completion of GIS coursework, and quality of projects submitted including sample plans, risk assessment findings, etc.
SLO 3	Gather, synthesize, and analyze data relative to the impacts of disasters on both people and the planet.	Evaluating the quality of analytical components of the program will include evaluation of the effectiveness of development and application of sampling criteria, evaluation methods selected and appropriately utilized, and relevance of findings.
SLO 4	Create comprehensive emergency operations plans, multi-hazard mitigation plans, exercises, training programs, and communication plans and outputs designed to improve outcomes of future disasters.	Evaluation of plans, exercises, training programs and communications tools and models will be based on established guidance including FEMA Comprehensive Planning Guide CP-101

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan
new_program_2024-2025 ASLO_ BS_DS_Final.docx

Change in Discipline (If the program is being proposed to meet changes in the academic discipline, please outline those changes and explain why they necessitate development of a new program.)
N-A

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.
This proposed degree is a specialized degree focused on understanding, managing, and mitigating disasters. Some distinctive qualities of this degree include:

1. Interdisciplinary Approach - Combines elements of environmental science, engineering, public health, social sciences, and emergency management. Involves studying both natural (hurricanes, earthquakes) and human-made disasters (chemical spills, terrorist attacks), from a construct of science and practical analytical evaluation vs the traditional approach to emergency management programs based on policy and procedure.

2. Emphasis on Risk and Resilience - Focuses on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience-building strategies.
Covers hazard assessment, vulnerability analysis, and mitigation techniques.

3. Scientific and Technical Focus - Includes courses in GIS (Geographic Information Systems), remote sensing, data analysis, weather and climate modeling, with interdisciplinary task force structure for projects. Uses scientific methods to study hazards, early warning systems, and infrastructure resilience.

4. Emergency Response and Management Training - Involves crisis management, first responder coordination, and disaster communication strategies.Prepares students to develop and implement disaster response plans while operating within the parameters of the Incident Command and National Incident Management Systems.

5. Fieldwork and Practical Applications - Often includes hands-on training through simulations, fieldwork, internships, and case studies. Will involve practical applications working with emergency response agencies, NGOs, or state and local government disaster management organizations.

6. Global and Community Impact - Examines the social, economic, and political impacts of disasters. Encourages community engagement, preparedness education, and policy development.

7. Career-Oriented Skill Development - Prepares students for careers in emergency management, disaster risk reduction, environmental policy, humanitarian aid, and urban planning. Potential employers include government agencies (FEMA, UN, Red Cross), private sector (insurance, consulting), and nonprofits.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?
Yes

Please explain

This program is developed with a scientific and technical focus with the core of curriculum residing in Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences, coupled with strong rigor in Mathematics, Geographic Information Systems, etc.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

Yes

Please explain

This program will have a strong appeal to non-traditional students such as career professionals and the military as all areas of disaster management are needing personnel with advanced technical acumen and analytic skill sets to solve increasingly more complex disaster inpacts.

Is access to existing programs limited?

No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

This program will have a multi-faceted feeder network for students that include:

1) Traditional incoming students looking for a challenging career with ready job opportunities.

2) Students who have completed Associate Degrees in Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Para medicine, Nursing, Geographic Information Systems, Environment Sciences, Occupations Safety, etc. who wish to pursue a Bachelors Degree in a related area.

3) Students who begin in a related discipline including Engineering, Meteorology, Earth Sciences, and want to pursue a degree that includes their original interest area but may afford a wider career trajectory.

Describe student demand data for this program.

Projected Enrollment
:
Year 1- 15 Year 2- 25 Year 3- 30 Year 4- 40 Year 5- 50

There is a strong demand for STEM degree programs focused on disaster science. This is evidenced in the success of two WKU certificate programs launched in 2018 in Emergency Management Disaster Science (EMDS) at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These programs were launched, but due to several circumstances were not advertised or promoted by the normal marketing avenues.

Despite not being actively promoted through traditional marketing avenues, both certificate programs rapidly reached full or maximum class sizes and have continued to grow. Following the early success of the certificates, Dr. Cheryl Stevens, then dean of the WKU Ogden College of Science and Engineering, recommended that as part of the ongoing Comprehensive Academic Program Evaluation (CAPE) initiative, that the EMDS concept be merged into the existing Masters of Homeland Security Science (HSS) as an optional track. The HSS-EMDS option was launched in 2021 and rapidly grew to have the largest enrollment of the three options that comprise the current HSS program.

Graduates of both the EMDS certificate programs and HSS Masters have indicated very good success in securing employment or promotion to a higher position across a wide variety of business sectors.

Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, graduates with a bachelor's in Disaster Science from WKU face moderate local and state demand (good prospects in county/city EM, campus roles, healthcare preparedness, NGOs and recovery contractors) and steady but modest national growth (BLS projects ~3% growth for emergency management directors and roughly 1,000 openings/year nationally).

Graduates of a B.S. in Disaster Science can pursue various careers in government, private sector, and nonprofit organizations:

Emergency Management Specialist – Works with government agencies (FEMA, DHS) to support disaster planning and response..

Disaster Recovery Coordinator – Helps communities rebuild after disasters, ensuring long-term resilience.

Crisis Communication Specialist – Develops messaging strategies for disaster response.

Hazard Mitigation Planner – Works on reducing disaster risks through urban planning and policy implementation.

Climate Risk Analyst – Assesses climate-related risks for businesses and governments.

GIS Analyst for Disaster Management – Uses mapping technology to predict and track disasters.

Public Health Emergency Coordinator – Works with hospitals and health departments to prepare for pandemics and biohazards.

Humanitarian Logistics Officer – Manages disaster relief supply chains for organizations like the Red Cross or UN.

Disaster Resilience – Designs infrastructure that can withstand extreme weather and earthquakes.

Flood & Stormwater Management Consultant – Helps cities prepare for flooding and storm surges.

Research Scientist in Disaster Studies – Conducts academic research on disaster trends and mitigation strategies.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?
No

Program Demand Data and Support Documents
cpe-notification-of-intent-program-summary-BS Disaster Science WKU 9_27_2025 Final.docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?
Yes

Enter Location(s) and Percentage of Program Offered at Location(s)

Location	Percentage
WKU Regional Campuses	15
WKU Online and OnDemand	30

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?
Yes

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.
78

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
72

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
No

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
Yes

If YES, how is a student required to complete the experience?
In-Person
On-Campus
Virtually

Does this program lead to professional licensure (excluding teaching certification)?
No

Library Resources

Library Resources Form:
https://www.wku.edu/library/services/access/faculty/resourcesform.php

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?

Delivery Mode: The Bachelors Disaster Science will be a hybrid program with courses ranging from hybrid classroom to online. Students may complete all program requirements online or remotely in the case of the hybrid classroom offerings.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Additional Attachments

cpe_course_spreadsheet_BS_Disaster Science_DRAFT_10_03_2025_Final.xlsx

Key: 416

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DISASTER SCIENCE

REQUEST: Approval of Master of Science offered through the Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences in the Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

FACTS: The Master of Science in Disaster Science builds upon traditional emergency management practices to include a better understanding of the complex causal relationships that yield the destructive outcomes trending in modern catastrophic events. This program integrates science-based principles from emergency management; earth, environmental, and atmospheric sciences; public health; engineering; and social sciences to prepare graduates for leadership roles in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, and research.

This program will build on the successes of and replace the Emergency Management Disaster Science (EMDS) track within the Homeland Security Science (HSS) MS program in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. In doing so, the new MS in Disaster Science program will focus more on the mechanics of disasters, as well as emphasize how to improve preparedness, response, and recovery from disasters. Graduates of the existing EMDS track have reported success in obtaining employment and promotion, and this new focused approach of the MS in Disaster Science will be well positioned to build on those successes.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 30 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This program will require one new faculty line but will otherwise utilize existing faculty members. It is projected that tuition revenue will be able to sustain the cost of this faculty line by year two.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Master of Science in Disaster Science** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Master of Science in Disaster Science** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: DISASTER SCIENCE MS

In Workflow

1. GEO Approval (leslie.north@wku.edu)
2. SC Dean (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
3. SC Curriculum Committee (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee (erin.warfel@wku.edu)
5. Graduate Council (kirk.atkinson@wku.edu; whitley.stone@wku.edu)
6. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
7. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
8. Board of Regents (all)
9. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Mon, 27 Oct 2025 16:40:32 GMT
   Leslie North (leslie.north): Approved for GEO Approval
2. Fri, 31 Oct 2025 20:11:18 GMT
   Cathleen Webb (cathleen.webb): Rollback to GEO Approval for SC Dean
3. Mon, 03 Nov 2025 18:51:22 GMT
   Leslie North (leslie.north): Approved for GEO Approval
4. Wed, 19 Nov 2025 23:40:57 GMT
   Cathleen Webb (cathleen.webb): Approved for SC Dean
5. Thu, 20 Nov 2025 21:56:10 GMT
   Cathleen Webb (cathleen.webb): Approved for SC Curriculum Committee
6. Thu, 04 Dec 2025 20:55:29 GMT
   Erin Warfel (erin.warfel): Approved for Graduate Curriculum Committee
7. Thu, 11 Dec 2025 21:36:43 GMT
   John Atkinson (kirk.atkinson): Approved for Graduate Council

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Mon, 06 Oct 2025 19:22:28 GMT

Viewing: : Disaster Science MS
Last edit: Thu, 04 Dec 2025 15:56:51 GMT

Changes proposed by: dvd62010

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
David Oliver	david.oliver@wku.edu	270-745-4181
Leslie North	leslie.north@wku.edu	270-745-4555
Josh Durkee	joshua.durkee@wku.edu	270-745-8777

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Graduate

Program Type

Master's Degree

Degree Types

Master of Science

Department

Geography & Geology

College
Science and Engineering

Was your Notification of Intent (submitted to CPE by the Provost's Office) approved?
No

Program Name (eg. Biology)
Disaster Science MS

Will this program have concentrations?
Yes

Concentrations
- Thesis (DSTH)
- Non-thesis (DSNT)

CIP Code
43.0302 - Crisis/Emergency/Disaster Management.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?
No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements
No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)
The Master of Science in Disaster Science builds upon traditional emergency management practices to include a better understanding of the complex causal relationships that yield the destructive outcomes trending in modern catastrophic events. This program integrates science-based principles from emergency management; earth, environmental, and atmospheric sciences; public health; engineering; and social sciences to prepare graduates for leadership roles in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, and research.

Admission Requirements (Catalog field: Program Admission)
Prospective students must meet the WKU general admission requirements for graduate programs.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (30 hours)
The M.S. in Disaster Science offers thesis and non-thesis tracks. Thesis students enroll in three hours of DISC 598 and three hours of DISC 599 as part of their degree program. Non-thesis students enroll in six hours of DISC 595 as part of their degree program.

Thesis Track

Code	Title	Hours
REQUIRED COURSES		
EMDS 500	Emergency Management Policy and Practices	3
EMDS 501	Understanding Natural and Technological Disaster Risks	3
EMDS 502	Terrorism, Violence, Resiliency, and Response	3
DISC 598 RESEARCH METHODS FOR DISASTER SCIENCE	Course DISC 598 RESEARCH METHODS FOR DISASTER SCIENCE Not Found	3
DISC 599 THESIS RESEARCH AND WRITING	Course DISC 599 THESIS RESEARCH AND WRITING Not Found	6
ELECTIVES		
Any 12 hours from the following: EMDS 503, EMDS 504, EMDS 505, EMDS 506, EMDS 510, GEOS 510, GEOS 522, GEOS 526, GEOS 543, GEOS 577, EOHS 550, EOHS 572, EOHS 577, EOHS 595, PH 581, PH 582, PH 584, PH 586, LEAD 500, LEAD 505, LEAD 525, LEAD 530, RSA 515, RSA 534, RSA 536, RSA 538		12
Total Hours		**30**

Non-Thesis Track

Code	Title	Hours
REQUIRED COURSES		
EMDS 500	Emergency Management Policy and Practices	3

EMDS 501	Understanding Natural and Technological Disaster Risks	3
EMDS 502	Terrorism, Violence, Resiliency, and Response	3
DISC 595	Course DISC 595 Not Found (Disaster Science Capstone)	6
ELECTIVES		
Any 15 hours from the following: EMDS 503, EMDS 504, EMDS 505, EMDS 506, EMDS 510, GEOS 510, GEOS 522, GEOS 526, GEOS 543, GEOS 577, EOHS 550, EOHS 572, EOHS 577, EOHS 595, PH 581, PH 582, PH 584, PH 586, LEAD 500, LEAD 505, LEAD 525, LEAD 530, RSA 515, RSA 534, RSA 536, RSA 538		15
Total Hours		**30**

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
Yes

Outside Courses Details

Who approved including these courses?	When were they approved?
Dr. Tania Basta	2025
Dr. Margerita Desander	2025
Dr. Paula Upright	2025
Dr. Tanja Bibbs	2025

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.
Western Kentucky University (WKU) emphasizes applied research, community engagement, and workforce development, all of which align closely with the objectives of a Master of Science in Disaster Science. The university's mission focuses on preparing students for real-world challenges, fostering innovation, and contributing to regional and global resilience.

A Disaster Science degree directly supports WKU's mission in the following ways:

Applied Learning & Research – WKU prioritizes hands-on education, and disaster science integrates fieldwork, simulations, and data-driven research to prepare students for careers in emergency management, risk assessment, and disaster mitigation.

Community Engagement & Resilience – As a university deeply connected to Kentucky and the broader region, WKU aims to enhance public safety and preparedness. Disaster Science contributes by training professionals who can develop policies and strategies for disaster risk reduction, benefiting local communities and beyond.

Interdisciplinary & Global Impact – WKU encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and international perspectives. Disaster Science draws from multiple fields, such as environmental science, public health, and emergency management, preparing graduates to address disasters at local, national, and global levels.

Workforce Development & Leadership – WKU's mission includes equipping students with the skills necessary for professional success. A Disaster Science degree develops leadership in crisis management, emergency response, and resilience planning—fields with growing job opportunities in government, private industry, and non-profits.

By offering a Master of Science in Disaster Science, WKU can further its commitment to applied research, community service, and professional development while addressing the increasing need for disaster preparedness and response experts in today's world.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda
A Master of Science in Disaster Science aligns closely with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Post secondary Education Strategic Agenda, which focuses on increasing workforce readiness, promoting economic development, fostering research and innovation, and improving quality of life for Kentuckians. This degree supports the agenda in the following ways:

1. Workforce Readiness & Economic Development
Kentucky faces increasing risks from natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, and landslides. A Disaster Science degree prepares professionals to work in emergency management, public safety, environmental protection, and infrastructure resilience. Graduates gain practical skills in crisis response, risk assessment, and disaster planning, making them highly employable in government agencies, non-profits, healthcare, and the private sector. By training specialists in disaster preparedness, the program helps reduce the financial burden of disasters on the state, supporting long-term economic stability.

2. Research, Innovation, and Community Impact
Disaster Science promotes interdisciplinary research in climate change adaptation, emergency response technology, and disaster mitigation—advancing Kentucky's role in national and global resilience efforts. The program can support community-based initiatives by improving local and regional preparedness plans, helping protect lives and property in vulnerable areas. WKU's applied research focus ensures that students contribute to real-world solutions that directly benefit Kentucky's rural and urban communities.

3. Post secondary Access & Success
The program creates pathways for students interested in public service, environmental science, engineering, and emergency management, helping increase degree attainment in fields critical to Kentucky's future. By offering flexible learning options such as online courses, field-based training, and professional partnerships, the degree supports working professionals seeking career advancement.

4. Quality of Life & State Resilience
Disasters disproportionately impact lower-income and rural communities in Kentucky. A Disaster Science degree trains experts to develop policies and response strategies that reduce vulnerability and improve recovery efforts. The program fosters leadership in disaster response and community planning, ensuring that Kentucky is better equipped to handle crises, thereby improving overall public health, safety, and economic well-being. By addressing these key areas, a Master's in Disaster Science directly supports Kentucky's Strategic Agenda for Post secondary Education, helping to build a more resilient, prepared, and economically secure Commonwealth.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	**Measurement Plan**
SLO 1	Identify, analyze, and evaluate natural and human-made hazards using scientific and data-driven approaches.	Student learning outcomes will be measured by: Depth and quality of engagement and contribution to individual assignments and group projects Academic grading across the various quiz's, exams, and project assignments Successful completion of capstone project or defense of thesis
SLO 2	Conduct risk and vulnerability assessments to inform disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies.	Student learning outcomes will be measured by: Depth and quality of engagement and contribution to individual assignments and group projects Academic grading across the various quiz's, exams, and project assignments Successful completion of capstone project or defense of thesis
SLO 3	Assess post-disaster impacts and recommend recovery strategies that promote long-term resilience.	Student learning outcomes will be measured by: Depth and quality of engagement and contribution to individual assignments and group projects Academic grading across the various quiz's, exams, and project assignments Successful completion of capstone project or defense of thesis

SLO 4	Utilize Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, forecasting techniques, and other emerging technologies for disaster risk reduction, response ,and mitigation planning.	Student learning outcomes will be measured by: Depth and quality of engagement and contribution to individual assignments and group projects Academic grading across the various quiz's, exams, and project assignments Successful completion of capstone project or defense of thesis

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan
new_program_2024-2025 ASLO_ MS_DS 4_25_2025.docx

Change in Discipline (If the program is being proposed to meet changes in the academic discipline, please outline those changes and explain why they necessitate development of a new program.)
This Master of Science degree will replace the current EMDS option within the Homeland Security Sciences degree housed in the Physics & Astronomy Department. The proposed modification is inline with the development of a Disaster Science consortium sanctioned by a TOPS Grant proposal in 2024. This modification aligns this and other proposed programs including a bachelors and practical doctorate in disaster science with the existing Emergency Management Disaster Science undergraduate and graduate certificate programs.

This transformation for the Masters degree is in line with a current curriculum proposal to reshape the current program in Physics, and better focuses both program areas for success.

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.
The proposed Masters in Disaster Science will be focused on development of leaders across the broader practice of disaster science. It is based on an "all hazards" approach across natural, technological, and human caused disasters. Additional emphasis is placed on the application of scientific inquiry aimed at improving all phases of the disaster cycle: Prevention, Preparedness, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.

The program will be presented in a virtual format with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

The proposed program requires the creation of three new courses to provide both thesis and non-thesis options:

DISC 595: Disaster Science Graduate Capstone (Non-Thesis Option)
DSIC 598: Research Methods for Disaster Science (Thesis Option)
DSIC 599: Thesis Research and Writing (Thesis Option)

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?
Yes

Please explain
It is transitioning from Homeland Security Sciences (Physics) to Disaster Science (EEAS) the curriculum within the program will change with the elimination of Physics, Chemistry, and Computer Information Systems courses. These courses will be replaced with existing EMDS courses.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?
Yes

Please explain
This program will have a broader audience reach than the existing HSS/EMDS program due to the increased curriculum focus on Disaster Science.

Is access to existing programs limited?
No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.
The proposed program is unique in its science focused structure. Students in the EKU Security, Safety, and Emergency Management Masters program could transfer some graduate credits to WKU to complete this program.

This Masters program will be attractive to potential students both traditional and non-traditional that wish to pursue a career in any area of emergency preparedness and response, by building on previous experience and/or a related bachelors degree.

The nature of Disaster Science, and the broad skill sets required open the door for persons holding degrees in Agriculture, Engineering, Public Health, Sports and Recreation, Physical Sciences, Safety, Environmental, Earth Sciences, Business, Finance, Sociology, Mental Health, etc.

Describe student demand data for this program.

As demonstrated in our Graduate Certificate Program in Emergency Management Disaster Science and in the EMDS option within the current Homeland Security Science program, there is a continuous stream of students focused on disaster preparedness and response.

There is a strong demand for STEM degree programs focused on disaster science. This is evidenced in the success of two WKU certificate programs launched in 2018 in Emergency Management Disaster Science (EMDS) at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These programs were launched, but due to several circumstances were not advertised or promoted by the normal marketing avenues.

Despite not being actively promoted through traditional marketing avenues, both certificate programs rapidly reached full or maximum class sizes and have continued to grow. Following the early success of the certificates, Dr. Cheryl Stevens, then dean of the WKU Ogden College of Science and Engineering, recommended that as part of the ongoing Comprehensive Academic Program Evaluation (CAPE) initiative, that the EMDS concept be merged into the existing Masters of Homeland Security Science (HSS) as an optional track. The HSS-EMDS option was launched in 2021 and rapidly grew to have the largest enrollment of the three options that comprise the current HSS program.

This degree will transform the current HSS-EMDS Masters into a more focused experience that centers on the mechanics of disasters, how they occur, what makes them more deadly and more costly, as recent governmental data has indicated. More importantly, there will be emphasis placed on solutions to improve preparedness, response, and recovery aspects.
Graduates of both the EMDS certificate programs and HSS Masters have indicated very good success in securing employment or promotion to a higher position across a wide variety of business sectors.

Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, graduates with a masters degree in Disaster Science from WKU face moderate local and state demand (good prospects in county/city EM, campus roles, healthcare preparedness, NGOs and recovery contractors) and steady but modest national growth (BLS projects ~3% growth for emergency management directors and roughly 1,000 openings/year nationally).

With disasters increasing in both number and severity the need for leaders with advanced skills focused on Disaster Science will only increase. With the potential to apply cutting edge technologies including artificial intelligence, machine learning, advanced remote sensing, etc, future practitioners of Disaster Science will need the additional acumen from programs such as the one proposed.

The Masters of Disaster Science is designed to prepare students for immediate placement in positions upon graduation, or advancement within their current or other organizations.

Review of relevant literature yields the following data and observations from recent research:

"NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) has updated its 2024 Billion-dollar disaster analysis. In 2024, there were 27 individual weather and climate disasters with at least $1 billion in damages, trailing only the record-setting 28 events analyzed in 2023. These disasters caused at least 568 direct or indirect fatalities, which is the eighth highest for these billion-dollar disasters over the last 45 years (1980-2024). The cost was approximately $182.7 billion" (Smith).

"As an ancient and deeply intersecting discipline, disaster science is facing new opportunities and challenges. The cultivation of compound talents meets the needs of the country and the new era." (Enliang and Yongfang).

'This study yielded three main goals as a means of improving the quality of disaster planning and response: 1) increased accessibility to scientific evidence, 2) improved communication among stakeholders, and 3) engagement of multiple beneficiaries to facilitate the development of evidence-based 'best practices' for disaster planning and response (Jillson et al.).

The success of current EMDS and HSS offerings can be attributed to several factors. First is the curriculum modern and innovative, relevant and continually vetted by practitioners and academic partners. Secondly is the integrated multi-disciplinary approach, which encourages students from a variety of programs including leadership, sports management, communications, and business to actively apply elements of their discipline to solve problems in disaster preparedness and response.

The content includes a strong emphasis on both theoretical and practical aspects of the Incident Command System, natural, technological, and human caused incidents, coupled with concepts of planning and exercise design. At the graduate level we employ a unique approach of integrating our EMDS students virtually with our annual Meteorology Field Methods in Severe Weather Analysis

and Forecasting course. Where meteorology students must prepare forecasts and outcomes and communicate useful information in real time to the EMDS students via virtual platforms. We are planning to enhance these cross-functional filed experiences with the transition to this degree program.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?
Yes

Please specify the existing program

Program(s)
Applied Physics and Homeland Security Sciences

Program Demand Data and Support Documents
cpe-notification-of-intent-program-summary-WKU Masters Disaster Science 9_27_2025_Final.docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?
Yes

Enter Location(s) and Percentage of Program Offered at Location(s)

Location	Percentage
Online/On Demand	50%

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?
Yes

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?
Yes

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
0

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
No

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
No

Does this program lead to professional licensure (excluding teaching certification)?
No

Library Resources

Library Resources Form:
https://www.wku.edu/library/services/access/faculty/resourcesform.php

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
Based on the rapidly changing landscape of disaster preparedness and response, and the demonstrated demand for the related programs at WKU, this program is the logical next step in building capacity to improve the quality of preparedness and response to disasters.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Reviewer Comments
Cathleen Webb (cathleen.webb) (Fri, 31 Oct 2025 20:11:18 GMT): Rollback: At request of GEO.

Key: 413

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL, EARTH, AND SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCES

REQUEST: Approval of a Bachelor of Science in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences offered through the Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences in the Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

FACTS: The BS in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences (EESS) equips students to understand and solve environmental challenges through an integrated study of environmental sciences, geosciences, sustainability, and environmental management. Graduates pursue careers in environmental consulting and compliance, geoscience, GIS/remote sensing, sustainability planning, natural resource and environmental management, geotechnical and engineering support, climate and conservation, government agencies, or continue to graduate study and Professional Geologist (PG) licensure pathways.

Through immersive fieldwork, laboratory analysis, and geospatial/data-science training, students learn to analyze complex environmental and geoscience problems while building strong foundations in scientific writing, quantitative reasoning, and professional communication. Students choose between two concentrations: Environmental & Sustainability Sciences, which focuses on global sustainability, environmental processes and resource management, and geospatial applications; and Environmental & Geological Sciences, which focuses on earth materials and environmental processes, energy and critical minerals, and hydrology, and aligns with PG licensure preparation.

The BS in EESS will consolidate existing BS programs in Environmental, Sustainability, and Geographic Studies, as well as Geological Sciences. By consolidating these under a single degree with two tracks, all of these topics will be united into a single, coherent program, which will reduce duplication while preserving existing workforce and licensure pathways.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 48-53 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: By consolidating existing programs, this degree program will utilize existing faculty members and require no new faculty lines, although enrollment growth may require new positions in the future.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Bachelor of Science in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Bachelor of Science in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: ENVIRONMENTAL, EARTH, AND SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCES

In Workflow

1. GEO Approval (leslie.north@wku.edu)
2. SC Dean (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
3. SC Curriculum Committee (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
4. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (ashley.fox@wku.edu; kimberly.pharris@wku.edu)
5. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
6. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
7. Board of Regents (all)
8. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Fri, 31 Oct 2025 14:12:18 GMT
   Leslie North (leslie.north): Approved for GEO Approval
2. Mon, 03 Nov 2025 14:29:29 GMT
   Stuart Burris (stuart.burris): Approved for SC Dean
3. Thu, 06 Nov 2025 23:42:39 GMT
   Stuart Burris (stuart.burris): Approved for SC Curriculum Committee
4. Tue, 02 Dec 2025 16:03:10 GMT
   Ashley Fox (ashley.fox): Approved for Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
5. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 19:37:52 GMT
   Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
6. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 21:03:54 GMT
   Robert Fischer (robert.fischer): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Thu, 23 Oct 2025 22:18:24 GMT

Viewing: : Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences

Last edit: Sun, 26 Oct 2025 21:59:11 GMT

Changes proposed by: ryh84947

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Royhan Gani	royhan.gani@wku.edu	270-745-5977

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Major

Degree Types

Bachelor of Science

Department

Geography & Geology

College

Science and Engineering

Was your Notification of Intent (submitted to CPE by the Provost's Office) approved?

No

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences

Will this program have concentrations?

Yes

Concentrations

Concentrations

- Environmental and Sustainability Sciences (ENSS)
- Environmental and Geological Sciences (ENGS)

CIP Code

03.0104 - Environmental Science.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?

No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements

No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)

The B.S. in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences (EESS) equips students to understand and solve environmental challenges through an integrated study of environmental sciences, geosciences, sustainability, and environmental management. Graduates pursue careers in environmental consulting and compliance, geoscience, GIS/remote sensing, sustainability planning, natural resource and environmental management, geotechnical and engineering support, climate and conservation, government agencies, or continue to graduate study and Professional Geologist (PG) licensure pathways.

Through immersive fieldwork, laboratory analysis, and geospatial/data-science training, students learn to analyze complex environmental and geoscience problems while building strong foundations in scientific writing, quantitative reasoning, and professional communication. Students choose between two concentrations: **Environmental & Sustainability Sciences**, which focuses on global sustainability, environmental processes and resource management, and geospatial applications; and **Environmental & Geological Sciences**, which focuses on earth materials and environmental processes, energy and critical minerals, and hydrology, and aligns with PG licensure preparation.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (48-53 hours)

The major in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences (EESS) requires a minimum of 48-53 hours and leads to a Bachelor of Science degree. Other required math and science cognate courses total an additional 6-9 hours. No minor is required.

A baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 unduplicated semester hours. More information can be found at: www.wku.edu/registrar/degree_certification.php. (https://www.wku.edu/registrar/degree_certification.php)

Students who began WKU in the Fall 2014 and thereafter should review the Colonnade requirements located at: https://www.wku.edu/colonnade/colonnaderequirements.php. (https://www.wku.edu/colonnade/colonnaderequirements.php)

Code	Title	Hours
Common Core: 21-24 hours		
GEOG/GEOL 103	Our Dynamic Planet	3-4
or GEOL 111	The Earth	
& GEOL 113	and The Earth Laboratory	
GEOG 280	Environmental Science and Sustainability	3-4
or GEOL 250	Environmental Geology	
GEOG 295	Introduction to Research Techniques	3
or GEOL 380	Introductory Field Techniques	
GISC 316	Geographic Information Systems I	4
GEOG 300	Writing in the Geosciences	3
GEOG 391	Geoscience Data Analysis	4
GEOG 499	Professional Preparation	1-2
or GEOL 499	Professional Preparation in Geology	
Total Hours		**21-24**

Code	Title	Hours
Environmental and Sustainability Sciences Concentration (31 hours)		
GEOG 110	World Regional Geography	3
GISC 317	Geographic Information Systems II	4
GEOG 380	Global Sustainability	3
or GEOG 480	Sustainable Cities	
GEOG 495	Applied Research, Independent Study, or Internship	3
or GEOG 452	Applied Geoscience Field Experiences	
Electives		
Elective coursework selected from any GEOG, GISC, METR, EMDS, or GEOL 200-400 level course with advisor approval. Up to six hours may be taken outside of the department with advisor approval.		18
Total Hours		**31**

Code	Title	Hours
Environmental and Geological Sciences Concentration (25 hours)		
GEOL 112	Earth's Past and Future	3
GEOL 114	Earth's Past and Future Lab	1
GEOL 350	Mineralogy and Petrology	4
GEOL 360	Sedimentology and Stratigraphy	4
GEOL 408	Structural Geology	4
GEOL 301	Earth's Climate in Time	3
GEOL 310	Global Hydrology	3
or GEOL 440	Hydrogeology	
or GEOL 311	General Oceanography	
GEOL 420	Geomorphology	3
or GEOL 399	Research Problems in Geology	
Total Hours		**25**

Code	Title	Hours
Additional requirements for both concentrations (Select two from the following) (6-9 hours)		
BIOL 120 & BIOL 121	Biological Concepts: Cells Metabolism and Genetics and Biological Concepts: Cells, Metabolism, and Genetics Lab	4
or BIOL 122 & BIOL 123	Biological Concepts: Evolution, Diversity, and Ecology and Biological Concepts: Evolution, Diversity, and Ecology Lab	
BIOL 226 & BIOL 227	Microbial Biology and Diversity and Microbial Biology and Diversity Lab	3-4
or BIOL 315	Ecology	
CHEM 105 & CHEM 106	Fundamentals of General Chemistry and Fundamentals of General Chemistry Laboratory	4-5
or CHEM 120 & CHEM 121	College Chemistry I and College Chemistry I Laboratory	
AGRO 350	Soils	3
CS 170	Problem Solving and Programming	3-4
or CS 180	Computer Science I	
or GISC 414	Remote Sensing Fundamentals	
or GISC 417	GIS Analysis & Modeling	
or GISC 419	GIS Programming	
DATA 301	Big Data with its Applications	3
or STAT 330	Introduction to Statistical Software	
MATH 136	Calculus I	4
PHYS 180 & PHYS 181	Introductory Modern Physics and Introductory Modern Physics Laboratory	4
or PHYS 231 & PHYS 232	Introduction to Physics and Biophysics I and Laboratory for Physics and Biophysics I	

4-Year Plan

EESS - Environmental and Geological Sciences (ENGS) concentration

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEOL 111	3	GEOL 112	3
GEOL 113	1	GEOL 114	1
ENG 100	3	ENG 200	3
GEOG 175	2	GEOL 250	3
COMM 145	3	Colonnade - Quantitative Reasoning	3
HIST 101 or HIST 102	3		
	15		13

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEOL 380	3	GEOL 350	4
GISC 316	4	GEOL 360	4
GEOL 301	3	Additional Science Requirement - 1	4
Colonnade Explorations - Arts & Humanities	3	Colonnade Connections - Social & Behavioral	3
Independent Research (GEOL 399)	3		
	16		15

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEOL 408	4	GEOL 420	3
GEOG 300	3	GEOG 391	4
GEOL 399	2	GEOL 310 or GEOL 311	3
Colonnade Connections - Local to Global	3	General Elective	3
Additional Science Requirement-2 (CS 170)	3		3
	15		16

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEOL 499	2	Field Study/Internship	3
Independent Research (GEOL 399)	3	Independent Research (GEOL 399)	3
General Elective	4	General Elective	3
General Elective	3	General Elective	3
General Elective	3	General Elective	3
	15		15

Total Hours 120

EESS - Environmental and Sustainability Sciences (ENSS) concentration

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEOG 103 or GEOL 111	3	GEOG 110	3
ENG 100	3	GEOG 280	4
COMM 145	3	ENG 200	3
HIST 101 or HIST 102	3	ENSS Concentration Elective	3
GEOG 175	2	Colonnade - Quantitative Reasoning	3
	14		16

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GISC 316	4	GEOG 300	3
GEOG 295	3	GISC 317	4
ENSS Concentration Elective	3	Colonnade Connections - Local to Global	3
Colonnade Explorations - Arts & Humanities	3	ENSS Concentration Elective	3
Colonnade Connections - Systems	3	Additional Science Requirements - 1	3
	16		16

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
GEOG 452 or GEOG 495	3	GEOG 380 or GEOG 480	3
Additional Science Requirement - 2	3	GEOG 391	4
ENSS Concentration Elective	3	ENSS Concentration Elective	3
ENSS Concentration Elective	3	Independent Research	3
Colonnade Connections - Social & Cultural	3	General Elective	3
	15		16

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
Independent Research		3 GEOG 499	1
General Elective		3 Independent Research	3
General Elective		3 Field Study/Internship	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	2
		15	12

Total Hours 120

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
Yes

Outside Courses Details

Who approved including these courses?	When were they approved?
Paul Woosley	October 2025
Matt New	October 2025
Kanita DuCloux	October 2025
Mike Carini	October 2025
Doug McElroy	October 2025
Mark Cambron	October 2025

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences program supports WKU's mission to prepare students to be productive, engaged citizens and leaders. By preparing graduates to analyze and solve environmental and geoscience problems through field and lab experiences, geospatial/data-science training, internships, and a capstone-learning, the program fosters critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving skills that align with the university's commitment to applied research and serving as a regional lighthouse.

The concentrations address pressing environmental challenges affecting Kentucky and beyond, including climate variability, water resources, land-use change and sustainable development. Through partnerships with local industries, agencies and community organizations, students gain hands-on experience and contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of the region. The program thus advances the strategic goals of academic excellence, student success, and stewardship.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

The program advances Kentucky's postsecondary education strategic agenda by aligning with state goals for talent development, economic innovation, and community well-being. By preparing graduates with expertise in environmental science, geoscience, and sustainability, the program addresses critical workforce needs in environmental consulting, resource management, infrastructure planning, and public health. It supports statewide priorities in water quality, climate resilience and sustainable development, and strengthens regional capacity to attract employers.

The merger of two existing degrees increases efficiency and broadens access to high-quality STEM education for students from south-central Kentucky and beyond, contributing to the Commonwealth's objective of increasing educational attainment and creating a competitive, skilled workforce.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Apply fundamental environmental and Earth science principles to analyze interactions among Earth's physical, chemical, and biological systems and the interdependence of natural and human processes.	Direct measurement: In their senior year, all graduating students must complete the capstone course, GEOG 499/GEOL 499: Professional Preparation. As part of this course, students take a comprehensive Assurance of Student Learning (ASL) exit exam that includes several essay questions designed to assess SLO 1.
SLO 2	Apply appropriate field and laboratory techniques to collect, analyze, and interpret environmental/Earth/sustainability datasets, demonstrating awareness of data quality and uncertainty.	Direct measurement: In their senior year, all graduating students must complete the capstone course, GEOG 499/GEOL 499: Professional Preparation. As part of this course, students take a comprehensive Assurance of Student Learning (ASL) exit exam that includes several essay questions designed to assess SLO 2.
SLO 3	Evaluate contemporary earth- and environment-related challenges through social, cultural, and ethical lenses; develop evidence-based, sustainable solutions; and communicate findings effectively to technical and public audiences.	Direct measurement: In GEOG 300: Writing in the Geosciences, students complete a capstone research proposal and presentation. In the written proposal, students must demonstrate the ability to design an original research project addressing a contemporary Earth- and environment-related challenge. They are expected to situate their work within an appropriate methodological and/or technological framework and support their arguments with a complete, comprehensive literature review. Students must also prepare and deliver a presentation of the proposed research to their peers and a panel of department faculty, including the course instructor.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan

ASL_EESS_new_program_2026-27.docx

Change in Discipline (If the program is being proposed to meet changes in the academic discipline, please outline those changes and explain why they necessitate development of a new program.)

Over the past decade, the environmental sciences and geosciences have converged into an integrated, data-rich, problem-solving discipline. This program results from merging the B.S. in Environmental, Sustainability, and Geographic Studies (ESGS) and the B.S. in Geological Sciences to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of modern environmental science and to eliminate duplication. Advances in GIS technology, climate science and sustainability have blurred disciplinary boundaries, and employers increasingly seek graduates with integrated expertise. The combined curriculum meets these changes by offering a strong common core and flexible concentrations while streamlining administration and ensuring efficient use of faculty and resources.

The legacy split between ESGS and Geological Sciences created overlapping cores and fragmented student pathways; a single, integrated degree aligns with how the discipline is now organized and taught. Contemporary Earth problems, climate impacts, groundwater stress, geohazards, critical-mineral supply, require a single curriculum that links Earth systems, human-environment dynamics, and sustainability practice rather than siloed degrees.

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.

Distinctive features of the program include its integration of environmental sustainability and geoscience within a single degree; a strong common core combined with two concentrations to customize student pathways; extensive hands-on learning through field courses, labs, and research projects; and advanced training in GIS and geospatial analysis. WKU's strengths in hydrology and karst science, Crawford Hydrology Lab, CHNGES, Geospatial Technologies Lab, Kentucky Mesonet and numerous regional partnerships provide students with unique experiential opportunities. The program also emphasizes professional preparation through internships, capstone seminars and engagement with community and industry partners.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?

Yes

Please explain

The Bachelor of Science in Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences (EESS) consolidates WKU's existing B.S. in Environmental, Sustainability, and Geographic Studies (CIP 03.0103) and B.S. in Geological Sciences (CIP 40.0601) into a single degree under CIP 03.0104 (Environmental Science). Integrated curriculum (single degree, two tracks) unites sustainability,

environmental science, and geology in one coherent program, reducing duplication while preserving clear workforce and PG licensure pathways.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

No

Is access to existing programs limited?

No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

The program (EESS) will articulate with related programs through established transfer pathways with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and other regional institutions. Lower-division coursework in environmental science, geology, geography, chemistry, and biology taken at two-year colleges will transfer seamlessly into the EESS program. Faculty will work with partner institutions to develop advising materials to ensure that transfer students can complete the degree in a timely manner. The concentrations mirror existing pre-major tracks offered at partner institutions, ensuring that transfer students can progress without loss of credit.

Describe student demand data for this program.

Enrollment trends in the existing Environmental, Sustainability and Geographic Studies and Geological Sciences programs have been stable to growing, and demand for courses in GIS, sustainability and earth systems consistently exceeds available sections. WKU's open house and recruitment data show strong interest from prospective students in environmental and sustainability majors, with many seeking flexible interdisciplinary programs. The proposed program offers two clear concentrations, which align with student interest areas identified through surveys and advising sessions. Consolidation is expected to maintain or increase overall enrollment by providing a more comprehensive and marketable degree.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of environmental scientists and specialists is projected to grow by about 5% and geoscientists by about 6% from 2022 to 2032. The program responds to regional workforce needs for professionals trained in GIS, hydrology, environmental compliance, geosciences, sustainability planning and natural resource management. Graduates will be competitive for positions in environmental consulting firms, engineering companies, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and industry. Many will also pursue advanced degrees in environmental science, geology, geography or allied fields or work toward professional geologist licensure. The integration of sustainability and geoscience, combined with strong quantitative and communication skills, will produce versatile professionals who can address complex environmental challenges.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?

Yes

Please specify the existing program

Program(s)
Environmental, Sustainability, and Geographic Studies, Bachelor of Science
Geological Sciences, Bachelor of Science

Program Demand Data and Support Documents

EESS_cpe-notification-of-intent-program-summary-2026-27_FINAL.docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?

No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?

No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?

No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.

20%

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?

No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
80%

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
Yes

If YES, please explain:
This program requires in#person field courses, laboratory sessions, and internships/research that cannot be completed remotely.

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
Yes

If YES, how is a student required to complete the experience?
In-Person
On-Campus

Does this program lead to professional licensure (excluding teaching certification)?
Yes

If YES, please identify the organization that grants licensure and any states WKU students will be licensed in when the degree is earned.
National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG). Students in the Environmental & Geological Sciences concentration can receive the Professional Geologist (PG) license after passing the ASBOG exams and completing 4–5 years of professional experience.

Library Resources

Library Resources Form:
https://www.wku.edu/library/services/access/faculty/resourcesform.php

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
This program consolidates two existing degrees - Environmental, Sustainability & Geographic Studies and Geological Sciences - into a single interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science that better reflects the interconnectedness of Earth, environmental, and sustainability sciences. By combining the core strengths of both programs, it eliminates duplication, streamlines course offerings, and provides students with a coherent pathway that integrates geoscience, environmental policy, hydrology, and geographic information science.

The Western Kentucky region, siting atop extensive karst terrain, faces pressing challenges related to climate resilience, water resources, land-use change, and environmental justice; employers need graduates with cross#disciplinary training who can collect and analyze data, apply geospatial tools, and communicate science to diverse audiences. This reimagined program responds to workforce demand for environmental scientists, geoscientists, GIS analysts, and sustainability professionals, while maintaining pathways to professional geologist licensure. The program advances WKU's mission to support applied research and community engagement in addressing regional and global environmental challenges.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Additional Attachments
WKU_EESS_CPE_CourseSpreadsheet.xlsx

Additional information or attachments
Please see attached CPE Notice of Intent, Full Proposal, Curriculum Deck (Course Spreadsheet), and Assessment Plan. Current library resources are adequate, and Library Resources attachment will be provided by the university library.

Key: 422

STATISTICAL DATA SCIENCE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

REQUEST: Approval of a Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science offered through the Department of Mathematics in the Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

FACTS: With the explosion of large data sets in recent years, the fields of data analytics, data science, and applied statistics have seen commensurate growth. The Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science will provide students with knowledge pertaining to statistics, data science, and numerical linear algebra, which form the basis of many of these in-demand fields. Graduates of this program will develop skills and knowledge that will equip them to enter the workforce in data science roles, as well as provide a strong foundation for additional academic study.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 12 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This graduate certificate uses existing faculty members; no additional faculty lines are required.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: STATISTICAL DATA SCIENCE

In Workflow

1. MATH Approval (kanita.ducloux@wku.edu)
2. SC Dean (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
3. SC Curriculum Committee (cathleen.webb@wku.edu; stuart.burris@wku.edu; jennifer.anderson@wku.edu)
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee (erin.warfel@wku.edu)
5. Graduate Council (kirk.atkinson@wku.edu; whitley.stone@wku.edu)
6. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
7. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
8. Board of Regents (all)
9. CPE (rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
10. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Mon, 22 Sep 2025 17:55:09 GMT
   Kanita DuCloux (kanita.ducloux): Approved for MATH Approval
2. Tue, 23 Sep 2025 16:08:22 GMT
   Cathleen Webb (cathleen.webb): Approved for SC Dean
3. Thu, 30 Oct 2025 21:03:02 GMT
   Cathleen Webb (cathleen.webb): Approved for SC Curriculum Committee
4. Thu, 06 Nov 2025 21:54:25 GMT
   Erin Warfel (erin.warfel): Approved for Graduate Curriculum Committee
5. Thu, 13 Nov 2025 21:24:59 GMT
   John Atkinson (kirk.atkinson): Approved for Graduate Council
6. Tue, 06 Jan 2026 19:58:16 GMT
   Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
7. Tue, 03 Feb 2026 19:14:25 GMT
   Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Wed, 17 Sep 2025 21:12:58 GMT

Viewing: : Statistical Data Science

Last edit: Wed, 17 Sep 2025 21:12:57 GMT

Changes proposed by: rch75904

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Mikhail Khenner	mikhail.khenner@wku.edu	270-745-2797

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Graduate

Program Type

Certificate - Graduate

Department

Mathematics

College

Science and Engineering

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Statistical Data Science

CIP Code

27.0503 - Mathematics and Statistics.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?

No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements

Yes

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)

The Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science offers a 12-hour program that covers statistics, data science, and some of the underlying statistics and numerical linear algebra in data science with select applications.

Admission Requirements (Catalog field: Program Admission)

Program Admission

1. A 2.75 cumulative GPA.
2. Completion of the following undergraduate courses:
    a. two-semester single-variable calculus sequence;
    b. linear algebra;
    c. discrete mathematics;
    d. statistics or probability course;
    e. one-year sequence of programming courses;
    f. B.A. degree with a major in either Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematics, Statistics, or Physics.
3. A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in at least one of the following:
    a. all mathematics and computer science courses that are listed in (a) through (e) of Item 2 above; or
    b. all courses in the major listed in (f) of Item 2 above. Students cannot enter the program if they have a deficiency in the courses listed in Item 2 above.

All applicants must submit the following documents for consideration:

1. Transcripts
2. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Program Requirements (12 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
MATH 406G	Numerical Analysis II (Numerical Linear Algebra with Applications in Data Science)	3
STAT 480G	Course STAT 480G Not Found	3
STAT 549	Statistical Methods I	3
CS 555	Data Science	3
or CS 456G	Artificial Intelligence	
Total Hours		**12**

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?

No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?

Yes

Outside Courses Details

Who approved including these courses?	When were they approved?
CS course was chosen after consulting with computer science in 2024.	2024

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science could become a building block for the interdisciplinary Masters and PhD programs in Data Science. It offers students and professionals an opportunity to expand a skill set that is needed in the Bowling Green area and the state of Kentucky.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

A Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science provides a high-quality certificate that provides the state of Kentucky a more skilled, productive workforce, which can accelerate job creation within the state.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	**Measurement Plan**
SLO 1	Read, analyze, and solve problems in statistics commensurate with that of students in a statistics graduate program.	The instructor of record for STAT 549, Statistical Methods I, a required course for the certificate, will designate a portion of the final exam or project to be evaluated by a 2-3 person committee appointed by the graduate director of the Certificate in Statistical Data Science program. We expect 75% of the students to score 75% or higher on that portion of the final exam or project to meet this student learning outcome.
SLO 2	Apply techniques in statistics to applications in data science commensurate with that of students in a statistics graduate program.	The instructor of record for STAT 480G, Advanced Statistical Data Analysis, a required course for the certificate, will designate a portion of the final exam or project to be evaluated by a 2-3 person committee appointed by the graduate director of the Certificate in Statistical Data Science program. We expect 75% of the students to score 75% or higher on that portion of the final exam or project to meet this student learning outcome.
SLO 3	Apply techniques in numerical linear algebra to applications in data science commensurate with that of students in a mathematics graduate program.	The instructor of record for MATH 406G, Numerical Linear Algebra with Applications in Data Science, a required course for the certificate, will designate a portion of the final exam or project to be evaluated by a 2-3 person committee appointed by the graduate director of the Certificate in Statistical Data Science program. We expect 75% of the students to score 75% or higher on that portion of the final exam or project to meet this student learning outcome.

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan

Statistical_Data_Science_2026-27_asl.docx
Statistical_Data_Science_2026-27_curriculum_map.xlsx

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?

Yes

Please explain

The program emphasizes some of the statistical and numerical linear algebra underpinnings of data science.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

Yes

Please explain

The program can potentially serve working professionals in the Bowling Green area.

Is access to existing programs limited?

No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

The program is intended to support recent WKU graduates and professionals in the extended Bowling Green area.

Describe student demand data for this program.

A student survey shows that new programs for students with a strong mathematical and/or statistical program that improve data literacy and better prepare them for the workforce are attractive.

With the explosion of data and large data sets over the last 15 years, the program better prepares students for the high-demand jobs in data analytics and data science.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?

No

Program Demand Data and Support Documents

MSProgram_DataScience_Poll_Results.docx

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?

No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?

No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?

No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.

0

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?

Yes

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?

No

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?

Data analytics, data science, and applied statistics are high-demand jobs. The Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science emphasizes some of the underpinnings of data science in statistics and numerical linear algebra while simultaneously better preparing students in the program for industrial jobs. Additionally, the Graduate Certificate in Statistical Data Science may serve as a building block for the interdisciplinary Masters and proposed PhD programs in Data Science.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

Additional Attachments

Statistical_Data_Science_certificate_budget_spreadsheet_2026-27.xlsx

Key: 408

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN INTEGRATED ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

REQUEST: Approval of a Bachelor of Arts in Integrated Advertising & Public Relations offered through the School of Media & Communication in the Potter College of Arts and Letters.

FACTS: The AB in Integrated Advertising & Public Relations will combine the existing Advertising and Public Relations AB degree programs into a single, streamlined program. This new program will prepare students to thrive in a professional workplace that has increasingly shifted to an integrated approach to advertising and public relations. Skills in cross-platform content creation, integrated campaign analytics, and unified messaging provide students with a well-rounded and adaptable knowledge base desired by advertising and public relations organizations. Additionally, this new streamlined major will allow students the flexibility to further expand their skills with the addition of another major, minor, or certificate, providing additional depth to their educational experience.

Graduates of this program will have a broad base of knowledge across both the advertising and public relations landscapes and will be well positioned for success on an increasingly integrated, global job market. BLS data shows healthy growth, nationally, for advertising and public relations careers, and data from the Kentucky Center for Statistics show similar growth locally. By streamlining the efforts of the existing Advertising and Public Relations, Integrated Advertising & Public Relations will build on the strengths of these in-demand programs to offer additional depth and cross-training for students.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: 39 HOURS*
*Complete curriculum and program requirements are in the Curriculum Program Proposal attached.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: This graduate certificate uses existing faculty members; no new faculty lines are required.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of a **Bachelor of Arts in Integrated Advertising & Public Relations** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to establish a **Bachelor of Arts in Integrated Advertising & Public Relations** with implementation in Fall 2026.

: INTEGRATED ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

In Workflow

1. SOMC Approval (ron.demarse@wku.edu; angela.jerome@wku.edu)
2. AR Dean (merrall.price@wku.edu)
3. AR Curriculum Committee (merrall.price@wku.edu)
4. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (ashley.fox@wku.edu; kimberly.pharris@wku.edu)
5. University Senate (daniel.clark@wku.edu)
6. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
7. Board of Regents (all)
8. CPE (rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
9. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Fri, 17 Oct 2025 19:25:18 GMT
   Angela Jerome (angela.jerome): Approved for SOMC Approval
2. Mon, 20 Oct 2025 19:35:59 GMT
   Merrall Price (merrall.price): Approved for AR Dean
3. Tue, 04 Nov 2025 22:23:25 GMT
   Merrall Price (merrall.price): Approved for AR Curriculum Committee
4. Tue, 02 Dec 2025 15:59:35 GMT
   Ashley Fox (ashley.fox): Approved for Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
5. Tue, 02 Dec 2025 17:07:54 GMT
   Jessica Dorris (jessica.dorris): Rollback to Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for University Senate
6. Mon, 05 Jan 2026 13:25:24 GMT
   Ashley Fox (ashley.fox): Approved for Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
7. Wed, 04 Feb 2026 10:30:03 GMT
   Daniel Clark (daniel.clark): Approved for University Senate
8. Wed, 04 Feb 2026 16:16:32 GMT
   Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons): Approved for Provost

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: Sun, 12 Oct 2025 17:23:06 GMT

Viewing: : Integrated Advertising & Public Relations

Last edit: Tue, 04 Nov 2025 22:23:11 GMT

Changes proposed by: ang16236

Proposed Action

Active

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Angela Jerome	angela.jerome@wku.edu	270-745-2881
Cliff Shaluta	cliff.shaluta@wku.edu	270-745-4881

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Major

Degree Types

Bachelor of Arts

Department

Media & Communication, School of

College

Arts & Letters

Was your Notification of Intent (submitted to CPE by the Provost's Office) approved?

Yes

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Integrated Advertising & Public Relations

Will this program have concentrations?

Yes

Concentrations

Concentrations:
- Advertising (AD)
- Public Relations (PR)

CIP Code

09.0900 - Public Relations, Advertising, and Applied Communication.

Will this program lead to teacher certification?

No

Does the proposed program contain 25% or more new content not previously taught in another course at WKU? If yes, contact the Office of the Provost for additional SACSCOC proposal requirements

No

Catalog Content

Program Overview (Catalog field: Overview tab)

This program will prepare students to thrive in a professional workplace that has increasingly shifted to an integrated approach to advertising and public relations. Skills in cross-platform content creation, integrated campaign analytics, and unified messaging provide students with a well-rounded and adaptable knowledge base desired by advertising and public relations organizations.

Curriculum Requirements (Catalog field: Program Requirements)

Admission Requirements

Students wishing to enter the major in Integrated Advertising & Public Relations initially are admitted as majors seeking admission. Prospective majors may take no more than 15 hours in the major before admission. Students must meet the following requirements before they can be admitted:

1. Completion of a minimum of 24 hours of coursework applicable to a baccalaureate degree;
2. A minimum overall grade point average of 2.5;
3. Completion of ENG 100 with a grade of "C" or better and 9 additional hours in general education
4. Completion of SMC 101 and ADPR 200 with a grade of "C" or better

Program Requirements (39 Hours)

The major offers two concentrations: Advertising (AD) or Public Relations (PR)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses, Both Concentrations		
SMC 101	Understanding Media Content, Ethics and Technology	3
ADPR 200	Course ADPR 200 Not Found	3
AD 230	Digital Tools	3
SMC 301	Mass Communication Law and Ethics	3
ADPR 321	Course ADPR 321 Not Found	3
or COMM 300	Introduction to Applied Communication Research	
or PS 302	Research Design in Political Science	
or SOCL 302	Social Research Methods	
ADPR 494	Course ADPR 494 Not Found	3
SMC 310	Media Diversity	3
or AFAM 343	Communities of Struggle	

or ASL 302	Deaf Culture in America	
or COMM 363	Interracial Communication	
or COMM 365	Intercultural Communication	
or COMM 371	Communication in Multinational Organizations	
or CRIM 361	Race, Class, and Crime	
or CRIM 446	Gender, Crime, and Justice	
or FLK 280	Cultural Diversity in the U S	
or FLK 373	Folklore and the Media	
or GWS 375	American Masculinities	
or HIST 302	Disability in the United States	
or HIST 343	Communities of Struggle	
or LEAD 450	Leadership in Global Contexts	
or PH 410	Global Perspectives on Population Health	
or PS 373	Minority Politics	
or SOCL 355	Sociology of Gender	
or SOCL 362	Social Institutions: Race, Class, and Gender	
or SOCL 375	Diversity in American Society	
or SOCL 376	Sociology of Globalization	
or SPS 400	Foundations of Global Citizenship	
or SWRK 300	Diversity and Social Welfare	
Total Hours		**21**

Advertising Concentration

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
MKT 220	Basic Marketing Concepts	3
AD 330	Branding	3
AD 349	Advertising Media	3
Content Creation Electives (Choose THREE of the following courses; TWO must be at the 300+ level)		**9**
AD 400	Special Topics Advertising	
AD 415	Study Abroad in Advertising	
AD 489	AD Internship or Practicum	
AD 495	Independent Study in Advertising	
ART 243	Digital Media	
ART 399	Professional Work	
ART 499	Career Experience in Art	
BCOM 264	Digital Video Production and Distribution	
COMM 346	Persuasion	
ENG 212	Introduction to Digital Texts and Media	
or COMM 212	Introduction to Digital Texts and Media	
MKT 321	Consumer Behavior	
MKT 322	Integrated Marketing Communications	
MKT 323	Services Marketing	
MKT 324	International Marketing	
MKT 325	Personal Selling	
MKT 326	Sports Marketing	
MKT 327	Retailing Management and Strategy	
MKT 328	Digital Marketing	
MKT 329	Business-To-Business Marketing	
MKT 331	Social Media Marketing	
MKT 427	Entrepreneurial Marketing	
PR 385	Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations	
SMC 102	Media Content, Collaboration and Community	
UX 220	Introduction to User Experience Design	
UX 300	User Experience Strategy & Content Creation	
VJP 131	Fundamentals of Photography	
VJP 261	Mobile Media Storytelling	

VJP 330	Short Form Documentary	
VJP 332	Visual Media Editing and Design	
VJP 339	Visual Media Business Practices	
Total Hours		**18**

Public Relations Concentration

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
JOUR 202	Introduction to News Writing	3
or BCOM 265	Basic Broadcast News	
or BCOM 325	Survey of Electronic Media Writing	
PR 358	Public Relations Writing and Production	3
PR 385	Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations	3
Content Creation Electives (Choose THREE of the following courses, TWO must be at the 300+ level)		**9**
AD 250	Personal Branding	
ART 399	Professional Work	
ART 499	Career Experience in Art	
BCOM 264	Digital Video Production and Distribution	
BCOM 265	Basic Broadcast News	
BCOM 266	Basic Television Production	
BCOM 325	Survey of Electronic Media Writing	
BCOM 368	News Videography and Editing	
BCOM 335	News Discovery and Selection	
COMM 315	Sport Communication	
or SPM 315	Sport Communication	
COMM 320	Health Communication	
COMM 346	Persuasion	
COMM 345	Advanced Presentational Speaking	
COMM 349	Small Group Communication	
COMM 364	Crisis Communication	
ENG 212	Introduction to Digital Texts and Media	
or COMM 212	Introduction to Digital Texts and Media	
JOUR 323	Multiplatform News Presentation	
JOUR 325	Feature Writing	
PR 347	Sport Media Relations	
PR 400	Special Topics in Public Relations	
PR 415	Study Abroad in Public Relations	
PR 489	PR Internship or Practicum	
PR 495	Study in Public Relations	
MKT 220	Basic Marketing Concepts	
MKT 322	Integrated Marketing Communications	
MKT 331	Social Media Marketing	
SMC 102	Media Content, Collaboration and Community	
SPM 305	Sport Event Management	
VJP 261	Mobile Media Storytelling	
VJP 330	Short Form Documentary	
Total Hours		**18**

4-Year Plan

Finish in Four Plan
Advertising Concentration

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
SMC 101	3	ADPR 230	3
COMM 145	3	AD CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION	3
ADPR 200	3	COLONNADE COLLEGE COMPOITION (IF NEEDED) (F-W1)	3

	Hours		Hours
COLONNADE QUANTITATIVE REASONING (QR)		3 COLONNADE WORLD HISTORY (F-SB)	3
WORLD LANGUAGE (IF NEEDED) OR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE		COLONNADE NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCE (E-NS)	3
	12		**15**

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
MKT 220	3	COLONNADE LITERARY STUDIES (F-AH)	3
COLONNADE ARTS AND HUMANITIES (E-AH)	3	COLONNADE SOCIO-CULTURAL (K-SC)	3
COLONNADE NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCE WITH LAB (E-NS, SL)	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		**15**

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
ADPR 321	3	SMC 301	3
AD CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION	3	SYSTEMS COURSE (E.G., COMM 349) (K-SY)	3
DIVERSITY ELECTIVE (SMC 310, COMM 365) OR ANOTHER APPROVED COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
COLONNADE WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINE (W2)	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		**15**

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
AD 330	3	ADPR 494	3
AD 349	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
AD CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION ELECTIVE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		**15**

Total Hours 117

Public Relations Concentration

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
SMC 101	3	ADPR 230	3
COMM 145	3	PR CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION	3
ADPR 200	3	COLONNADE COLLEGE COMPOITION (IF NEEDED) (F-W1)	3
COLONNADE QUANTITATIVE REASONING (QR)	3	COLONNADE WORLD HISTORY (F-SB)	3
WORLD LANGUAGE (IF NEEDED) OR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE		COLONNADE NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCE (E-NS)	3
	12		**15**

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
JOUR 202, BCOM 265, or BCOM 325	3	COLONNADE LITERARY STUDIES (F-AH)	3
COLONNADE ARTS AND HUMANITIES (E-AH)	3	COLONNADE SOCIO-CULTURAL (K-SC)	3
COLONNADE NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCE WITH LAB (E-NS, SL)	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		**15**

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
ADPR 321	3	SMC 301	3
PR CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION	3	SYSTEMS COURSE (E.G., COMM 349) (K-SY)	3

	Hours		Hours
DIVERSITY ELECTIVE (SMC 310, COMM 365) OR ANOTHER APPROVED COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
COLONNADE WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINE: W2)	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		15

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PR 358	3	ADPR 494	3
PR 385	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
PR CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION ELECTIVE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		15

Total Hours 117

Public Relations Concentration

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
SMC 101	3	ADPR 230	3
COMM 145	3	AD CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION	3
ADPR 200	3	COLONNADE COLLEGE COMPOITION (IF NEEDED) (F-W1)	3
COLONNADE QUANTITATIVE REASONING (QR)	3	COLONNADE WORLD HISTORY (F-SB)	3
WORL LANGUAGE (IF NEEDED) OR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE	3	COLONNADE NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCE (E-NS)	3
	15		15

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
MKT 220	3	COLONNADE LITERARY STUDIES (F-AH)	3
COLONNADE ARTS AND HUMANITIES (E-AH)	3	COLONNADE SOCIO-CULTURAL (K-SC)	3
COLONNADE NATURAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCE WITH LAB (E-NS, SL)	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		15

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
ADPR 321	3	SMC 301	3
AD CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION	3	SYSTEMS COURSE (E.G., COMM 349) (K-SY)	3
DIVERSITY ELECTIVE (SMC 310, COMM 365) OR ANOTHER APPROVED COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
COLONNADE WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINE: W2)	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		15

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
AD 330	3	ADPR 494	3
AD 349	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
AD CONCENTRATION CONTENT CREATION ELECTIVE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3	2ND MAJOR/CERTIFICATE/ MINOR COURSE	3
	15		15

Total Hours 120

Will this program be managed or owned by more than one department?
No

Does this program include courses from outside your department?
Yes

Outside Courses Details

Who approved including these courses?	When were they approved?
Lukas Forbes, All Marketing Courses	9/11/2025
ART 243, 399, 499 and UX 220, 300, Kristina Arnold	9/30.2025
ENG 212, Alison Langdon	9/11/2025
SPM 305, Stacey Forsythe	10/8/2025
PS 302, Scott Lasley	10/9/2025
SOCL 302, Amy Krull	

Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

Explain how the proposed program relates to the institutional mission and academic strategic plan.

The reason this program is being created is because we understand that scholarly excellence in the fields of AD and PR requires cross training in an increasingly digital world. Students who are cross-trained in this manner will be more prepared for success on the global stage. Further, streamlining these two programs into one major gives students the flexibility to pick up another major, minor, or certificate which will give them more career depth. It also makes the cost of getting an education in these areas more affordable. While both programs already have high 4-year and 6-year graduation rates, this streamline should only increase this potential.

From the first class, this program will focus on the need for professional communicators to understand and engage with diverse audiences (demographically, geographically, socioeconomically, and politically). This program will also be innovative because it will expose student to the most cutting edge software, research, and technology in the AD&PR industries. Such focus on the part of the faculty, will undoubtedly open up more research and creative opportunities, especially as the students reach the new capstone class in the major.

Explain how the proposed program addresses the state's postsecondary education strategic agenda

Student in the existing, separate programs have high 4- and 6-year graduation rates and a solid track record for gaining meaningful employment. We suspect this streamlined program will only increase such results. We also suspect this innovative, integrated curriculum will attract more majors than the programs would if they remain separate. We have worked hard to decrease and remove overlap between the content in the courses so that students will get everything they need in the fewest number of hours possible. By doing a deep dive into course content and assignments, we were also able to find ways to expose our students to more content creation courses which will better prepare them for careers in the industry. This program is a professional preparation program. It takes guidance from industry trends and current research to make sure its graduates are career ready. We just received CEPR re-accreditation and will be up for re-accreditation by ACEJMC in the next cycle.

Further, this program meets all of the Kentucky Graduate Profile 10 Essential Skills. Across the curriculum students will be asked to communicate effectively, both in writing and in public speaking. In creating professional-quality, ethical campaigns, student will be asked to think critically, apply quantitative reasoning to make informed decisions, work in groups and teams, consider diverse audience opinions.

Program Quality and Demand

Provide justification and evidence to support the need and demand for this proposed program. Include any data on student demand; career opportunities at the regional, state, and national level; and any changes or trends in the discipline that necessitate a new program.

Please insert one Learning Outcome per box. Click green plus sign for additional LO boxes

Learning Outcomes and Measurement Plan

	List all student learning outcomes of the program.	Measurement Plan
SLO 1	Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and laws of freedom of speech/press, professional ethics, cultural proficiency, and the historical role of media institutions in shaping communications	Instrument 1-Direct-Analysis of research papers from sections of SMC 301-Mass Communication Law/Ethics (Rubric) or other defined artifact
		Instrument 2-Direct-Analysis of Pre/Post test from sections of SMC 101-Understanding Media
		Instrument 3-Indirect-Analysis of aggregate SMC Student Exit Surveys
		Instrument 4-Indirect-Analysis of aggregate student awards, graduation rates and employment data
SLO 2	Apply analytical reasoning skills using tools and technology appropriate to the discipline in the research, presentation, and evaluation of information.	Instrument 1-Direct-Analysis of Student Portfolio and/or Capstone Project (Rubric)
		Instrument 2-Direct-Analysis of Employer Internship Evaluations (Rubric)
		Instrument 3-Indirect-Analysis of aggregate SMC Student Exit Surveys
		Instrument 4-Indirect-Analysis of aggregate student awards, graduation rates and employment data
SLO 3	Demonstrate knowledge and skills required for campaign research, data-based strategy, effective decision making, planning, and evaluation in the advertising and public relations fields	Evaluation of capstone project in ADPR 400 or the ADPR 489 portfolio
SLO 4	Demonstrate proficiency in utilizing industry-standard advertising and public relations technologies for actionable media planning, media monitoring, content creation, and campaign reporting, analytics, and evaluation.	Evaluation of capstone project in ADPR 400 or the ADPR 489 portfolio

Assessment Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/ee/assurance_learning_resources.php

Upload Assessment Plan

ADPR_asl_template.docx

Change in Discipline (If the program is being proposed to meet changes in the academic discipline, please outline those changes and explain why they necessitate development of a new program.)

The inclusion of SMC 101, 301, and 310 are being done so that the new program will be in line with ACEJMC accreditation standards during SMC's next re-accreditation cycle. Further, during AD's APR review, it was recommended that we find ways to include more content creation courses in the major. Taking all of this, as well as changes in the industry into account, we decided to develop this new, streamlined program. Our CEPR accreditation team supported a draft of our plan when they reviewed it last spring.

Specify any distinctive qualities of the program.

Students will be able to access a thorough education in both the AD and PR professions without having to double major.

Course realignment now affords students more content creation electives.

It will be aligned with ACEJMC accreditation standards alongside the JOUR, VJP, and BCOM majors.

Does the proposed program differ from existing programs in terms of curriculum, focus, objectives, etc.?

Yes

Please explain

Program SLOs
• Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and laws of freedom of speech/press, professional ethics, cultural proficiency, and the historical role of media institutions in shaping communications. (Required SLO from our ACEJMC Accreditation Committee)

• Apply analytical reasoning skills using tools and technology appropriate to the discipline in the research, presentation, and evaluation of information. (Required SLO from our ACEJMC Accreditation Committee).
• Demonstrate knowledge and skills required for campaign research, data-based strategy, effective decision making, planning, and evaluation in the advertising and public relations fields.
• Demonstrate proficiency in utilizing industry-standard advertising and public relations technologies for actionable media planning, media monitoring, content creation, and campaign reporting, analytics, and evaluation.

Does the proposed program serve a different student population (i.e., students in a different geographic area, non-traditional students) from existing programs?

No

Is access to existing programs limited?

No

Describe how the proposed program will articulate with related programs in the state. It should describe the extent to which students transfer has been explored and coordinated with other institutions.

As noted on the attached NOI, this program shares similarities, but not direct overlap with other programs in the state. We did not explore or coordinate transfers with other institutions yet. However, transfer plan will be create where feasible with other programs in the state such as the KCTCS system. Course at other institutions being transferred to WKU will be articulated in the TES system by our program coordinator, Professor Cliff Shaluta in consultation with the ADPR faculty.

Describe student demand data for this program.

This program is designed to prepare students to enter the workforce directly upon graduation. As of September 23, 2025, our Advertising major had 56 majors, and our Public Relations major had 79 majors, for a combined 135 majors. This healthy demand demonstrates strong interest in both fields. We believe a combined PR and Advertising major will both broaden and deepen the skills learned by our students, making them more marketable in these rapidly evolving industries.

Nationally, jobs for AD and PR professionals are growing at a rate of 5-6%. Median pay, depending on job title, is anywhere from $69,780 for a PR Specialist to $159.660 for an Advertising, Promotions, and Marketing Manager (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook).

In the state of KY, mean annual salary, depending on job title, can range anywhere from $48, 420 for an Advertising Sales Agent to $114,070 for a Public Relations manager. Currently in then state of KY there are 3,710 job in these industries (Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics).

Grey data, attached, also indicates high market demand both in the state and regionally.

Will this program replace or enhance any existing program(s) or concentration(s) within an existing program?

Yes

Please specify the existing program

Program(s)
Advertising, Bachelor of Arts
Public Relations, Bachelor of Arts

Program Demand Data and Support Documents

WKU_090900_state.pdf
WKU_090900_region.pdf

Delivery Mode

Is 25% or more of this program offered at a location other than main campus?

No

Is 50% or more of this program offered by distance education (online asynchronous, online synchronous, connected classrooms, etc.)?

No

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program online?

No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that will be taught online.

10%

Do you plan to offer 100% of this program face-to-face?
No

If no, enter the percentage of the program that is taught face-to-face
90%

Do you plan to offer at least 25% of this program as a direct assessment competency-based educational program?
No

Are there any in-person on-campus requirements?
No

Does this program have experiential learning (practicum/internship/clinical)?
No

Library Resources

Click here https://www.wku.edu/library/services/access/faculty/resourcesform.php
for link to the Library Resources Form.

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
This streamlines two majors into one in several ways described throughout this proposal. For the students, it deletes redundancy while at the same time expanding what can be taught to the students. As such, students will be exposed to a wider variety of courses that will help them tailor their degree to their career goals. It also helps us realign with ACEJMC standards now that the programs have rejoined SMC.

Budgetary Implications

Budget Template:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/process_overview.php

CPE Proposal
Notification of Intent_WKU_IntegratedADPR_10_13_2025_FINAL.docx
Employer Demand.docx

Reviewer Comments
Jessica Dorris (jessica.dorris) (Tue, 02 Dec 2025 17:07:54 GMT): Rollback: At request of UCC chair.

Key: 417

SUSPENSION OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ART HISTORY

REQUEST: Approval for suspension for the following academic program: **Bachelor of Arts in Art History**.

FACTS: The Bachelor of Arts in Art History at Western Kentucky University has enjoyed ample success since its implementation in 2008. In recent years, however, new student needs and demands have led to the realization that the vast majority of students enrolled in these courses (in excess of 95%) are not Art History majors. By attempting to serve the needs of a dwindling pool of Art History majors through a rigid rotation of upper-division courses, many of the core courses required by other programs within the Department of Art & Design have been left bursting at the seams. To better respond to the needs of the students throughout the Department of Art & Design, the decision has been made to suspend the Bachelor of Arts in Art History program.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: Closing this academic program to new admissions will have minimal impact on the University Budget. The intent behind this closure is to reallocate current faculty resources to respond to the needs of programs with greater demand.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of the suspension of the **Bachelor of Arts in Art History** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to suspend the following program: **Bachelor of Arts in Art History** with implementation in Fall 2026.

613: ART HISTORY, BACHELOR OF ARTS

In Workflow

1. ART Approval (kristina.arnold@wku.edu)
2. AR Dean (merrall.price@wku.edu)
3. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
4. Board of Regents (all)
5. CPE (rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
6. SACSCOC (rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
7. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Sat, 31 Jan 2026 17:39:01 GMT
   Kristina Arnold (kristina.arnold): Approved for ART Approval
2. Mon, 02 Feb 2026 19:56:32 GMT
   Merrall Price (merrall.price): Approved for AR Dean
3. Wed, 04 Feb 2026 21:49:28 GMT
   Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons): Approved for Provost

History

1. May 25, 2021 by Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons)
2. Sep 27, 2021 by Jennifer Hammonds (jennifer.hammonds)
3. Feb 3, 2023 by Jessica Dorris (jessica.dorris)
4. Apr 10, 2023 by Merrall Price (merrall.price)
5. Mar 19, 2024 by Guy Jordan (guy.jordan)
6. May 23, 2024 by Jessica Dorris (jessica.dorris)
7. Oct 16, 2025 by Zachary Miller (zachary.miller)

Program Suspension

Date Submitted: Mon, 27 Oct 2025 04:32:06 GMT

Viewing: 613 : Art History, Bachelor of Arts

Last approved: Thu, 16 Oct 2025 18:53:37 GMT

Last edit: Mon, 27 Oct 2025 04:32:05 GMT

Changes proposed by: gyd42678

Proposed Action

Suspended

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Guy Jordan .	guy.jordan@wku.edu	270-320-1611

Term of Implementation

2025-2026

Program Reference Number

613

Review Type

Full Review

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Major

Degree Types
Bachelor of Arts

Department
Art

College
Arts & Letters

Program Name (eg. Biology)
Art History, Bachelor of Arts

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?
See attached narrative, "Suspension of the BA in Art History"

SACSCOC must approve the closure before it can be deactivated from WKU's program inventory

Program Closure Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/program_changes.php

Teach Out Plan
Art History Teach Out Form for SACSCOC.pdf

Additional Attachments
Suspension of the BA in Art History.pdf
Art History Teach Out Schedule.pdf

Additional information or attachments
Please see the narrative and teach out schedule, both attached here along with the SACSCOC Teach Out Form.

Key: 136

SUSPENSION OF MINOR IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

REQUEST: Approval for suspension for the following academic program: **Minor in Graphic Design**.

FACTS: The Graphic Design minor was originally designed to serve advertising students. The Advertising program, however, no longer requires the graphic design minor, and a new certificate program has been developed to better serve students of all majors. In light of this, the faculty of the Department of Art & Design have made the decision to suspend the Minor in Graphic Design.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: Closing this academic program to new admissions will have minimal impact on the University Budget, as faculty will continue to teach in other programs within the Department of Art & Design.

RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATE: President Timothy C. Caboni recommends approval of the suspension of the **Minor in Graphic Design** to be implemented Fall 2026.

MOTION: Approval to suspend the following program: **Minor in Graphic Design** with implementation in Fall 2026.

385: GRAPHIC DESIGN, MINOR

In Workflow

1. ART Approval (kristina.arnold@wku.edu)
2. AR Dean (merrall.price@wku.edu)
3. Provost (robert.fischer@wku.edu; rheanna.plemons@wku.edu)
4. Board of Regents (all)
5. Program Inventory (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu; jessica.dorris@wku.edu)

Approval Path

1. Mon, 13 Mar 2023 21:21:50 GMT
   Kristina Arnold (kristina.arnold): Rollback to Initiator
2. Sat, 31 Jan 2026 17:48:11 GMT
   Kristina Arnold (kristina.arnold): Approved for ART Approval
3. Mon, 02 Feb 2026 19:49:25 GMT
   Merrall Price (merrall.price): Approved for AR Dean
4. Mon, 02 Feb 2026 22:07:43 GMT
   Rheanna Plemons (rheanna.plemons): Approved for Provost

Program Suspension

Date Submitted: Wed, 28 Jan 2026 20:35:09 GMT

Viewing: 385 : Graphic Design, Minor

Last edit: Wed, 28 Jan 2026 20:35:08 GMT

Changes proposed by: krl60476

Proposed Action

Suspended

Contact Person

Name	Email	Phone
Natalie Tyree	natalie.tyree@wku.edu	931-209-7447

Term of Implementation

2026-2027

Program Reference Number

385

Review Type

Full Review

Academic Level

Undergraduate

Program Type

Minor

Department

Art

College

Arts & Letters

Program Name (eg. Biology)

Graphic Design, Minor

Rationale

Rationale for the program proposal?

The Graphic Design Certificate is a more streamlined and contemporary option for students. The original purpose for the minor was to serve advertising students. Since advertising no longer requires the graphic design minor, we created the certificate to better serve students of all majors.

Program Closure Template: https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/program_changes.php

Teach Out Plan

Graphic Design Minor Teach Out Plan.pdf

Additional information or attachments

We will teach out any students currently enrolled in the minors. No required courses will be affected.

Reviewer Comments

Kristina Arnold (kristina.arnold) (Mon, 13 Mar 2023 21:21:50 GMT): Rollback: Does not meet 50% UL credit hour requirements. Needs a re-think.

Key: 140