

Edmonds Community College to Launch Online, Competency-Based IT Program

SEATTLE, Sept. 12, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- [WGU Washington's](#) innovative education model is catching on at several local colleges. The online, nonprofit university uses a competency-based system, which measures learning rather than seat time. This month, [Edmonds Community College](#) launches its version of competency-based education, modeled after WGU Washington's system.

Starting this fall, Edmonds CC will allow Information Technology students to earn IT certificates online in a competency-based learning program called [PACE-IT](#). Two 44-credit certifications are available: Technology & Integration Support and Web Developer. Just like WGU Washington, PACE-IT is student-focused, self-paced, and designed for student success.

"We're thrilled to offer competency-based education to our students at Edmonds Community College," said Edward

Sergeant

the Program Director of PACE-IT at

Edmonds CC

. "WGU Washington has been an excellent resource for us, helping us establish a model that measures what students have learned and lets them progress toward a credential at their own

pace."

In the PACE-IT program applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and students can enroll anytime. Additionally, at Edmonds CC, tuition is free; students in the PACE-IT program only pay for books, enrollment fees, and any certification exam fees.

Just as it has assisted Edmonds CC, WGU Washington is working with Bellevue College, Spokane Falls Community College, and Columbia Basin Community College to develop their own versions of competency-based education. Each of those schools is expected to launch its program later this school year.

What is competency-based learning?

- Competency-based learning allows students to earn their degrees by demonstrating what they know and can do (competency) rather than spending time in class to accumulate credit hours.
- Competency-based learning is ideal for adult learners who enroll in college with different levels of knowledge, as well as a wide variety of learning styles, because it allows them to move quickly through material they already know so they can focus on what they need to learn.
- Required competencies for each degree or certificate program are defined in collaboration with external program councils. Program councils consist of representatives from industry and academia, and that help ensure that students learn the competencies they will need to be successful in their fields. In addition, they regularly review curriculum to make sure that it is up to date and relevant.
- Students demonstrate their mastery of subject matter by successfully completing assessments—objective tests, papers, projects, or presentations.

What are the advantages of competency-based education?

- Because students work through course material at their own speed, they can fit their studies into their busy schedules, studying when it is most convenient for them.
- Many students are able to accelerate their progress because courses have no set time requirements. This allows them to save time as well as tuition money.
- Students who graduate with a degree from WGU have proven their mastery of the

material. Employers can be assured that graduates they hire know their stuff.

- Because each degree or certificate program has an established set of competencies, the curriculum is standardized, which means that all graduates of a program have mastered the same course material.

- Faculty members provide students one-on-one guidance and support from the time of enrollment through graduation. Because students work through courses at their own pace, the faculty members are free to work with them individually, providing one-on-one guidance and support.

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[About WGU Washington](#)

WGU Washington was established by the State Legislature in 2011 in partnership with nationally recognized and regionally accredited Western Governors University to expand access to higher education for Washington residents.

The state-endorsed, online university offers more than 50 bachelor's and master's degree programs in Business, Information Technology, Teacher Education and Health Professions, including Nursing. WGU Washington's competency-based learning model is designed to meet the needs of working adults by providing an affordable, flexible option for earning an accredited, respected college degree. The university is a non-profit and receives no money from the state.

Degrees are granted under the accreditation of Western Governors University, which is regionally accredited through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Teachers College programs are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on

Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE*).

The university has earned the support of more than 20 leading corporations and foundations. They include institutions such as AT&T, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lilly Endowment, HCA, Hewlett-Packard, Lumina Foundation, Microsoft, Oracle, SunGard Higher Education and Zions Bank.

* The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education is located at One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 5380, Washington DC 20036, 202-877-6791

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