



About WGU

News Brief - 4/9/08

Western Governors University Offers First Online Bachelor's Degree in Special Education

Excellence in Special Education Scholarships Are Also Available

SALT LAKE CITY -- If you want to become a certified special education teacher, Western Governors University (www.wgu.edu) now offers a new online degree program in the field. Several scholarships are also available. The Bachelor of Arts in Special Education is suited for individuals such as school paraprofessionals, unlicensed substitutes, parents, and career changers who seek a special education teaching certification that also meets the more stringent "highly-qualified" requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The U.S. faces a severe shortage of teachers with a [special education certification](#), and the situation is expected to worsen as the number of special needs students continues to grow disproportionately. WGU's online degree—and scholarship opportunity—offer answers to the education and hiring dilemmas many school administrators are dealing with as they struggle to help special needs students.

The [special education bachelor degree](#) program includes four domains of study: Interdisciplinary Studies, Foundations of Teaching, Effective Teaching Practices (in Special Education), and Demonstration Teaching (which includes in-classroom student teaching). The degree program gives a student the content knowledge and effective teaching skills to become a special education teacher for students with mild-to-moderate cross-categorical disabilities. Enrollments are open continuously and new cohorts begin each month.

Western Governors University is a regionally-accredited online, competency-based university, and the only online university accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE, the leader in teacher education accreditation, sets robust and stringent standards for teacher training in all areas of the discipline.

The WGU [Excellence in Special Education Scholarship](#) is valued up to \$5,000. The scholarship will be credited at the rate of \$1,000 per six-month term, renewable up to a maximum of five terms. Multiple scholarships will be awarded and will be based on academic record, readiness for online study, and current competency, plus other considerations.

WGU's personalized competency-based education approach makes it possible for students to accelerate their programs and complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree in two to four years. The actual time to completion will depend on the incoming student's prior college, professional experience, and time commitment to study. For already licensed teachers, WGU also offers a Master of Science in Special Education.

Visit the WGU Web site for more information on the [Bachelor of Arts in Special Education](#) and for more information on the [Excellence in Special Education Scholarship](#) or call toll-free 1-866-225-5948.

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- Accreditation
- Financial Aid
- Is online study for you?
- Student Success and Performance Data
- WGU Student Experience
- See videos of past graduation ceremonies 

"Competency-based..."

"I like the idea of a competency-based program. In some areas I already had expertise and skills so I could take an independent study class and build the portfolio and take the exams. In other areas I needed more instruction."

—Gretchen Burr, WGU graduate, high school teacher

"I am an expert..."

"Western Governors has raised the bar for online courses. Instead of graduating from their courses and saying, "I have passed all of the requirements," they want their students to say, "I graduated from WGU and I am an expert in the field of..."

—Jeffrey Cravy, WGU graduate student

"Competency-based..."

"Google has pioneered the idea of access to information. The reason Google thinks WGU is such a good idea is because WGU has pioneered the concept of competency-based education whenever you want it."

—Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google Inc.

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