

News Releases

New Master's Degree Program from WGU Prepares Students to Meet the Challenges of Big Data News Brief - 10/6/16

SALT LAKE CITY — Data is growing in complexity and volume, leaving organizations overwhelmed and scrambling to find the sophisticated tools and techniques needed to harness its value. Demand for high-level experts who can not only manage data, but also leverage it to provide actionable insights, has surged to unprecedented levels.

To help address the growing demand, Western Governors University (WGU) has launched a new [Master of Science Data Analytics \(MSDA\) degree](#). Designed in collaboration with industry experts, the MSDA Program provides experienced professionals with the advanced training they need to grow their careers and tackle the most complex challenges posed by Big Data.

The MSDA, offered through WGU's College of Information Technology, focuses on both data management and analysis, with coursework structured around data mining, manipulation, interpretation, programming, and communication/visualization. The online, competency-based program builds on students' existing knowledge of data management and analysis, helping them earn Oracle SQL Expert, Base SAS, and Business Analyst with SAS certifications while earning their degree.

Students in the MSDA Program will have access to all of the advanced statistical and data mining software they will need in an online sandbox environment, enabling them to complete hands-on exercises and labs. Tuition for the program covers industry-standard tools like R, Python, SAS, Tableau, MySQL, and Excel, which can be accessed on-demand through the WGU student portal.

“Organizations are being inundated with unprecedented quantities of data, driving the need for highly qualified professionals to manage and interpret it in ways that enable positive change,” said Dr. Myles Vogel, National Director of WGU's College of IT. “We've worked closely with industry experts to design an MSDA program that will provide our students with the critical skills and certifications they will need to make a real impact in the workplace.”

The MSDA, like all WGU programs, is online and competency-based, which allows working professionals to apply what they already know to move more quickly through their coursework. WGU's competency-based model allows students to study and learn on their own schedules, completing courses as soon as they demonstrate proficiency in the subject matter. Along with affordable tuition of about \$6,000 per year, WGU's model provides the flexibility to earn an accredited degree on a busy schedule.

For more information about this new degree program, go to <http://www.wgu.edu/msda>.

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