

PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

Institution: Western Kentucky University
Program Name: User Experience
Degree Destination: Bachelor of Science

CIP Code: 11.0105

Credit Hours: 120

Implementation Date: 8/1/2025

Program Description

The Bachelor of Science in User Experience at Western Kentucky University will provide students with design-thinking processes and agile methodologies applied to the design of digital products, such as websites, dashboards, mobile apps, games, and more. Integrating human insights into the process of designing, researching, and creating technological interfaces, the User Experience program will combine insights and knowledge from a variety of perspectives, including human-computer interaction, learning, neuroscience, perception, product design, user-centered design, and usability.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- Apply user experience modeling and design frameworks to create digital products that address user needs and behaviors and meet industry standards;
- integrate design principles with one or more programming languages;
- conduct user experience research to evaluate design decisions, emphasizing the importance of the product development lifecycle, from ideation through deployment; and
- evaluate user experience research data to inform iterative design decisions.

Connection to Other Programs

Western Kentucky University currently offers baccalaureate programs in Computer Science and in Visual Arts with a concentration in User Experience Design, as well as a certificate in User Experience Design. The proposed program will enhance, not replace, these existing curricula. Courses in the program will be taught by current faculty in disciplines such as computer science, art and design, graphic design, psychological sciences, and psychology.

Similar programs exist at Northern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky, however the foci are slightly different. Northern Kentucky University's program offers content in both user experience ("front end") and the servers and databases ("back end") needed to support the functionality, while Western Kentucky University's program focuses on the user experience. The University of Kentucky's program is an industrial design program that covers both physical and digital products, whereas Western Kentucky University's program is focused on a digital user's experience.

Student Demand

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 10

Year 2 – 23

Year 3 – 37

Year 4 – 55

Year 5 – 77

Employment Demand

The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not have a specific category for user experience professionals but includes those roles under broader categories such as "User Interface Designers" and "Web Developers." Anticipated regional job growth in those types of field ranges from 17% (commercial and industrial designers) to 32% (software quality assurance analysts and testers). Glassdoor's 2023 "50 Best Jobs in America" report ranked user experience design as one of the top fields, noting strong demand and high salaries. The report also highlighted that user experience positions offer competitive salaries and are in high demand across various industries.

Budget

The User Experience program will primarily make use of existing resources. It will be an interdisciplinary program, shared by the Potter College of Arts and Letters and the Ogden College of Science and Engineering. Both colleges having existing, robust enrollment. No additional faculty will be needed, as eight current faculty across the two units will cover the courses as part of their regular teaching load.

Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$): \$ 1,027,118

Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$): \$ 415,011