

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

---

**Institution:** Eastern Kentucky University

**Program Name:** Instructional Design and Learning Technology

**Degree Designation:** MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS)

**Degree Level :** Master's

### **Program Description**

The Instructional Design and Learning Technology (IDLT) Master's Degree is designed to confer job readiness skills bound by applied theoretical frameworks related to the fields of instructional and eLearning design, corporate training, and performance management. The core of the program consists of courses that will help the student to master instructional design, to analyze and make data-driven decisions, and afford them an opportunity for in-house or external internships. At the same time, students are afforded choices among various electives to fulfill the course requirements. In short, these are divided into the following broad categories:

- a. Multimedia Design for Learning: Provides a professional foundational understanding of the research and development of multimedia elements to positively improve learning outcomes.
- b. Graphic/User Interface Design: Use of typography, symbol systems, color, and space to create intuitive electronic interfaces as well as communicate instructional messages clearly and effectively.
- c. Online distance learning: Provides historical context and modern approaches to online learning through use of tools, techniques, and best practices.

#### **Internship Requirement**

Because the proposed program will focus on career readiness, we devised a three-dimensional, proactive approach to providing students instructional design experience with maximum flexibility in mind to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

A. Internal placement at ECU. Students work as academic instructional designers at the ECU Instructional Design Center (IDC) in support of the mission and goals of the university. Students may intern with the IDC remotely when they have a reliable, high speed internet connection.

B. External placement. Students complete an internship in an organization identified by IDLT program coordinators with whom the student has no prior affiliation. Alternately, students may find their own placement with department approval. Remote internships will be at the discretion of the respective employer, but ECU will take significant steps to find remote positions for students who are firmly location-bound where there is not an immediate employment need, such as a rural or low population density area.

C. External placement in student's workplace. Students complete an internship at their current workplace where they are already gainfully employed, but not as a trainer, instructional designer, or in a related capacity.

#### **Portfolio Requirement**

While conducting research for this program, we did not identify any other program in the state that integrates portfolio artifacts into their curriculum. As a normal part of IDLT coursework, students will create a series of portfolio "artifacts," or elements demonstrating their growing abilities and accomplishments. These are significant

products that may consist of complete instructional units, training programs, multimedia products, needs analysis and program evaluation reports, and other creations pertinent to instructional design.

Whatever the future may bring, the field of instructional design and learning technologies is poised to grow to meet the demands of an ever-changing workforce (Finn & Conway, 2019). These changes will be especially evident as universities redefine and redesign the educational experience to offer greater flexibility, student choice, and to remove obstacles in the educational process (Miaoulis, 2020).

**Will this program replace or enhance any existing programs(s) or tracks, concentrations, or specializations within an existing program? If yes, please specify**

This program will not replace or enhance any existing program(s) or tracks, concentrations, or specializations within an existing program.

**CIP Code:** 13.0501

**Credit Hours:** 30

**Institutional Board Approval Date:** 12/10/2020

**Implementation Date:** 8/23/2021

**Student Demand**

Year 1	- 177
Year 2	- 255
Year 3	- 255
Year 4	- 255
Year 5	- 255

**Market Demand**

Student Demand

Year 1	-177
Year 2	-459
Year 3	-449
Year 4	-449
Year 5	-449

Market Demand

The ECU IDLT Program seeks to address the need for qualified Instructional Designers, Instructional Coordinators (Bureau of Labor Statistics designation), and Training and Development Specialists across the state and beyond. It is a need primarily driven by the rise of distance education and online learning initiatives (McFarland et al., n.d.).

Recent shifts in both public and private sectors, including P-20 institutions, have seen increased demand for online instructional delivery even before the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Extraordinary circumstances resulting from SARS-CoV-2 have further catalyzed rapid organizational change regarding the structure and delivery of work.

Instructional designers and trainers have long held expertise leveraging appropriate, effective technology using evidence-based approaches to design and deliver effective instruction across myriad settings. They became essential contributors responsible for significant efforts toward implementation and operation of training and education.

The IDLT program adds to current offerings in Kentucky. However, the proposed ECU program is differentiated because our coursework blends theoretical and practical concepts toward a unique focus on early career application and orientation, as well as a mandatory intensive cooperative/internship placement engaging students in impactful work. Students will additionally create and maintain their own professional web site portfolio that will effectively and succinctly communicate their mastery of the skills and knowledge required for today's working professionals. We believe this experience will better prepare students for the competitive job market starting with their very first course, a strategy not seen in other programs in the state or region. Successful students in this program will be job-ready upon graduation, if not before.

## Program Justification, Student Demand, and Careers on The National Level

### Instructional Design Paces with Market

According to the market research reports by Finn and Conway (2019) and Plotnik and Hinck (2019), national job opportunities for Master's-level instructional design professionals from September 2016 to July 2019 grew 123 percent (Figure 1). This growth mirrors other careers for which the master's degree is generally required (Figure 1).

### Growth At Least Fast as Average

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) suggests trainers, training development managers, fields for which Instructional designers are well-suited, will experience faster than average growth over the projected time frame 2018 to 2028. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) projects Instructional designers and instructional coordinator jobs will grow at an average rate over the same time period.

Another report by Thornton and Donohue (2017) reported significant increases (52 percent) in demand at the national level for bachelor's and master's level instructional design professionals between February 2018 and June 2018 (Figure 2).

### Regional Dearth of Interest and Mitigation

At the same time, the EAB (2019) market pulse check for online masters-level programs in Instructional Design for central Kentucky (including a 150-mile radius of Wilmore, KY, including Lexington, Louisville, and Cincinnati) does not suggest favorable program potential. However, trends identified by Finn and Conway (2019), Plotnik and Hinck (2019), and Thornton and Donohue (2017) suggest that in order to mitigate potential dearth of program demand, institutions should focus on the recruitment of students at the national level while also offering an orientation toward practical, job-focused learning outcomes which prepare students for immediate, direct-entry into the workplace. ECU's Instructional Design and Learning Technology program seeks to immediately prepare students for gainful employment by having terminal objectives culminate in deliverables suitable for inclusion in professional portfolios. Additionally, the program will directly place students into practicum experiences valued by hiring organizations.

## **Employment Demand**

	Regional	State	National
<b>Type Of Job</b>	<b>Instructional Coordinator</b>		
Avg. Wage	\$104,903	\$116,920	\$113,350
# Jobs (Postings)	668	431	42300
Expected Growth	7%	10%	7%
<b>Type Of Job</b>	<b>Training and Development Managers</b>		
Avg. Wage	\$104,903	\$116,920	\$66,290
# Jobs (Postings)	668	431	192900
Expected Growth	7%	10%	6%

### **Indicate source of market demand information**

Kentucky Occupational Outlook to 2026

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic

<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/>

Timeframe: through 2026 for Kentucky; through 2029 for National

### **Academic Demand**

After graduation, students will be qualified to perform the following jobs:

- Instructional Designer
- Instructional Coordinator
- E-Learning author
- Educational/Learning consultant
- Program evaluator
- Trainer
- Employee Performance Specialist/Manager across multiple fields
- Human resources positions with focus on workforce development and performance management

### **Unnecessary Duplication**

#### **Similar Program(s):**

Program Id	Inst code	Inst Description	Degree Designation	Program Title	Report year
2164	00197600	Morehead State University	MAED	Teacher Leader - Educational Technology	2015
3144	00198900	University of Kentucky	MSED	Education - Instructional Systems Design	2015
4981	00200200	Western Kentucky University	MS	Instructional Design	2015

### **Comparison of Objectives/Focus/Curriculum to Similar Programs:**

## University of Kentucky

The University of Kentucky (UK) Instructional Systems Design (ISD) Master's degree program prepares students broadly as to the history, theory, and implications of instructional design with an emphasis on the creation and evolution of learning and educational theories such as instructionalism, cognitive load theory, cultural psychology, and others to explicate the nature, challenges, and concerns related to learning and educational systems.

As the program is part of UK's College of Education, there is also a synergy with the needs of K-12 teachers and teacher educators. The UK program is multifaceted and serves multiple needs, primarily within the university and local region.

The primary objective of the proposed EKU program is singular: to prepare individuals for gainful employment in industry, particularly settings outside public school organizations. Additionally, EKU seeks to target populations outside the regular service regions of state institutions.

### Western Kentucky University

Comparing the proposed curriculum with the MS in Instructional Design at Western Kentucky University, EKU's IDLT program offers additional courses to prepare students to be effective instructional designers. Namely, there is an additional focus on:

1. Making data driven decisions which include needs analysis and program and training evaluation (IDL802, 814, PSY 790)
2. Designing and developing gamified learning experiences (IDL 814)
3. Catering to diverse learning populations (IDL 813)
4. Developing visually appealing instructional products (DES 850)
5. Design and production of design spaces when designing a new user interaction (DES 851)
6. Emphasizing the need for technical writing (ENG 840)
7. Development of professional portfolio which students will develop throughout the program and showcase to their future employers

### **Comparison of Student Populations:**

While the mission of state institutions is to serve the citizens of their respective service regions, EKU's IDLT program will also strive to recruit and serve students across the country and from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Many master's degree programs out of tradition and practicality accept students who are academically prepared at the baccalaureate level in their specific discipline. The IDLT program may accept graduates from any academic discipline due to the nature of the field. Moreover, we would specifically also seek to target P-12 teachers who have left the profession. Students with the disposition and skill set to be effective classroom teachers have much to offer the instructional design field and have applicable training that would benefit both themselves and organizations.

### **Access to Existing Programs:**

EKU's proposed IDLT program is keenly focused on preparing students with 21-century skills to enter organizations as critical and creative thinkers ready to solve instructional problems. At the same time, we acknowledge the University of Kentucky's College of Education (UKCOE) has expertise and an approach which orients students toward a broad theoretical perspective on learning and professional development. We would be open to any partnership which allows a student to maximize their choice relative to fulfilling their own learning and career goals. Although there is no current collaborative arrangement, potential EKU faculty have contacts with UKCOE and would be willing to explore a partnership in the future. The knowledge and experience EKU faculty provide could serve the state through a

synergistic relationship between the two institutions, as well as catalyze programs of distinction at both.

**Feedback from Other Institutions:**

No concerns have been raised by other institutions regarding the addition of the MS in Instructional Design and Technology.

**Cost**

**Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$) : 3499197**

**Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$) : 198550**

**Will Additional faculty be needed? Yes**

To establish the ECU IDLT Program and to accommodate future program growth, additional resources are required in terms of faculty positions. Specifically, two full-time faculty positions are necessary to successfully develop the IDLT program, help with the recruitment efforts, identify and maintain connections with external stakeholders and internship providers, and perform other duties that require the dedication of full-time faculty. At the time of this proposal, the IDLT program is conceptualized and proposed by the joint efforts of e-Campus Online Learning and The Department of Art and Design, with the aid of the two potential faculty members. The potential faculty are currently employed as an Instructional Designer and Faculty Development Program Manager at the ECU's Instructional Des

**Provide a budgetary rationale for creating this new program**

The program will be funded through revenue generated from new students. Most peripheral needs are already covered through existing services. Two current full-time instructional designers and full-time faculty will be reassigned to the program as well.