This document is a compilation of the most frequently asked questions emailed to the Data Science office by prospective students. If you don’t find your question/answer here, please email datascience@wpi.edu and we’ll be more than happy to answer your questions.

1. Am I Eligible To Apply?
   The purpose of the Data Science application process is to have our faculty determine if you fit the criteria for the program. Please don’t send your resume or CV to the DS office; we can’t advise you on whether or not you will be accepted. The best option is simply to apply.

2. When Should I Apply?
   Apply as soon as you feel your application is strong enough, or as soon as possible.

3. Where Do I Find?
   Data Science web page: http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/degree-requirements.html
   Questions regarding being an international student: http://www.wpi.edu/offices/ih.html
   The application process: http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/application-process.html
   Applying to WPI: http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/faqs.html
   Course catalogue or list of classes I can research? http://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/
   DS Program cost? http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/financing.html

4. What Are The Required Pre-Requisites for the Data Science M.S.?
   Pre-Requisites for the Master’s in Data Science include:
   a. Earned Bachelor’s Degree
   b. Quantitative or computational background
   c. Programming with data structures
   d. Algorithms for computational skills
   e. Calculus
   f. Linear Algebra
   g. Basic statistics
5. **What If I Have Some But Not All Of The Pre-Prerequisites?**

   If the rest of your application meets the Data Science criteria, you may be admitted on the condition that you take the needed course while at WPI, it’s called a conditional admission. Or, you may take the courses, and then re-apply.

6. **What Other Criteria Does the Data Science Faculty Use When Making Admission Decisions?**

   Admission to the Data Science Program is highly competitive and selection is based on:
   a. Whether required prerequisites are met
   b. Demonstration of high aptitude for quantitative analysis
   c. Academic success as evidenced by undergraduate and graduate course work
   d. Professional experience that suggests a propensity for teamwork
   e. Maturity
   f. Self-initiative and leadership potential
   g. Career aspirations that align with the Data Science program’s mission
   h. Academic performance is important but is not a sufficient condition for enrollment

7. **What Does the ‘Plan of Study’ Entail?**

   The ‘Plan of Study’ for both M.S. and the Ph.D., tracks your course work to ensure that all of your core requirements are fulfilled. It ensures that you stay on track to graduate on time with courses that align with your career goals.

8. **What Programming Languages Are Taught?**

   The Data Science uses many programming languages but R and python are the most common.

9. **What If I ’m Accepted But A Required Course Is Full?**

   If a required class is full, be sure to put your name on the Waitlist! This alerts us to the number of students who want or need a particular class, in which case we may open another offering. Also, arrive on the first day of class and politely ask the professor to admit you. Remember to smile.

10. **May I Take Data Science Courses Without Being Officially Enrolled In The Program?**

    Certainly, if there’s space in the class.

11. **Who Is My Faculty Advisor And Should I Contact Him/Her Before I Start?**

    You will be assigned a Faculty Advisor in your focus area who you will meet during the Data Science Orientation. It’s not necessary to make contact before classes begin.

12. **Is The Data Science Program A STEM Program?**

    Yes, the WPI Data Science Program is STEM certified.

    [http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/stem-program.html](http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/stem-program.html)
13. **What is a Cohort-Based Program?**
A learning cohort is a group of students moving through their courses and related learning experiences together. Cohort learning prepares students for employers who value teamwork and collaboration.

14. **How Many Students Do You Accept for Each Cohort?**
The Data Science Program limits each cohort to approximately 30 or so very strong students.

15. **Will There Be Opportunities for Internships?**
Absolutely!

16. **If a Student Earns a Data Science Graduate Certificate, Can These Credits Be Applied Toward the DS M.S.?**
Yes.

17. **How Long Is the Masters in Data Science Program?**
This is a two year, or 33 credit program.

18. **What is the Data Science Certificate Program?**
The Certificate program is a shortened program for those who are not interested in earning a Master’s Degree in Data Science. [http://wpi.edu/academics/datascience/certificate-program.html](http://wpi.edu/academics/datascience/certificate-program.html)

19. **Please Explain the GQP.**
GQP is an acronym for the Graduate Qualifying Program or practicum. M.S. students may choose to do either a GQP or a Thesis in the M.S. program; they are typically done during the final semester.

20. **Can a Student With an M.S. Apply the Same Credits Used for the M.S. Towards a DS Certificate?**
No. Please see Page 7 of the WPI Graduate Catalogue.

21. **In Either Case, Would They Then Have BOTH an “M.S. in Computer Science” AND a “Graduate Certificate in Computer Science”?**
Yes, if a student earns a DS Certificate and then earns an M.S. in Computer Science.

22. **Can a WPI M.S. Get a Transcript/Diploma Showing Concentration/Distinction?**
No. Only that is only available is as mentioned below.

23. **For a Specialization (e.g. Computer Security), What Shows Up On the Transcript and the Diploma?**
Your official diploma will read: “M.S. in Computer Science.” The transcript will show the specialization, but not the diploma.

24. **Do You Offer a Ph.D. In Data Science?**
Yes, we have one of the first Ph.D. Programs in the country! [http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/phd-program.html](http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/phd-program.html)