About the University and the Community

Graduate Study at WPI

WPI, the nation’s third oldest technological university, was also among the first to recognize the need to provide engineering, technical and management professionals with graduate-level educational opportunities on a part- and full-time basis.

Opportunities for graduate study at the university include masters and doctoral graduate degree programs, graduate certificates, and advanced study for nondegree students. Off-campus study through WPI’s Advanced Distance Learning Network, is also available in several academic areas. These programs bring graduate education to the workplace or home. Part-time graduate students at WPI benefit from the same faculty and academic quality as our full-time students.

WPI addresses the requirements of full-time students, technically-oriented professionals and secondary school educators with a wide range of advanced courses and programs with flexibility, quality and optimal accessibility.

The University

WPI was founded in 1865 as the Worcester County Free Institute of Industrial Science, primarily through the efforts of John Boynton, a prosperous tinware manufacturer from the nearby town of Templeton, Mass. It was the merger of Boynton’s vision with that of Ichabod Washburn, the community’s leading industrialist, that resulted in what was then a unique educational program, one that combined scientific and technical studies with practical work in a model industrial shop.

WPI awarded its first master of science degree, in electrical engineering, in 1893. Its first doctoral degree, in natural science, was granted in 1904. New programs have been added regularly in response to the growing capabilities of the university and the changing needs of the professions. Currently, WPI offers close to 40 master’s and doctoral programs.

More than 40 years ago, responding to the demanding work schedules of professionals, WPI developed the first of what is today an extensive array of part-time graduate programs. Each program is designed to accommodate the professional development needs of those with significant career and family commitments.

The current student body of 3,700 includes more than 450 full-time and approximately 600 part-time and nondegree graduate students. They are taught by approximately 320 faculty.

Colleges of Worcester Consortium

The Colleges of Worcester Consortium was established in 1967. In the Consortium, 20,000 students from eight four-year colleges with graduate programs, two two-year schools, a medical school and a veterinary school have access to all the educational benefits of these institutions as well as nine other specialized institutions in the area. The Consortium members and associates whose facilities and programs have been particularly useful to WPI graduate students are Assumption College, Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School, and Worcester State College. Cross-registration in courses and the use of special laboratory facilities are encouraged. The Consortium operates a free bus service for transporting students between the colleges.

Locations

WPI is set on an 80-acre hilltop campus situated in a residential section of Worcester, Massachusetts, New England’s third largest city. The campus is within a region known for its concentration of high-technology, healthcare, biotechnology and biomedical engineering research and industry.

Worcester, a city of 170,000, is well known for its many colleges and for such cultural landmarks as the Worcester Art Museum, which houses one of the finest collections in the country, and the world-renowned American Antiquarian Society, both of which are adjacent to WPI. Also nearby are the historic Higgins Armory Museum and the Ecotarium, a museum dedicated to environmental exploration.

Music is well represented by several excellent choruses, a symphony orchestra and concerts performed by internationally recognized artists in Mechanics Hall, one of the country’s finest concert halls. The city is also home to several professional and amateur theater companies. The 15,500- seat DCU Center hosts a wide variety of entertainment and athletic events.

In the heart of New England, the city is within an easy drive of many historical sites, cultural centers and recreational facilities. These include Boston’s Freedom Trail, Fenway Park, the beaches of Cape Cod and Maine, the ski slopes of New Hampshire and Vermont, the Berkshires, and several major metropolitan areas featuring world-class museums, concert halls and professional sports teams.

To provide easy access to some WPI programs for working professionals, the university offers evening graduate courses in Computer Science and Electrical and Computer Engineering at its MetroWest Campus in Westborough, MA.