Applying to WPI

Requirements for admission include submission of the following:

- Application for admission to graduate study (preference given to fall applicants with complete files before February 1)
- Nonrefundable $70 application fee (waived for WPI alumni and current WPI undergraduates)
- Official college transcripts from all accredited degree-granting institutions attended
- Three letters of recommendation (and/or other references) from individuals who can comment on the qualifications relevant to the applicant’s admission
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores must be submitted by all applicants for whom English is not the first language (waived for international students who have attended a U.S. school full time for one year). TOEFL scores are only valid for two years. Minimum score of 550 on the paper test is required, or 213 on the computer-based test, or 79-80 in the new internet-based test. WPI’s school code for the TOEFL is 3960. This requirement may be waived in special cases by the departmental Graduate Committee with the exception of teaching assistants.
- Statement of purpose is required for individuals applying to several programs (see chart on page 11). This is a brief essay discussing background, interests, academic intent and the reasons the applicant feels he/she would benefit from the program.
- For GRE (Graduate Record Examination) and GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) requirements, see the chart on page 11. WPI’s school code for the GRE is 3960.
- Goddard Fellowship applicants are required to submit GRE or GMAT scores. Incomplete applications are retained in the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office for one year.

Applications for WPI’s graduate science and engineering programs may be requested from the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office at 508-831-5301 or online at www.grad.wpi.edu.

Graduate management applications should be requested directly from the Management Department at 508-831-5218 or at mgt@wpi.edu.

To learn more about admissions standards and policies, deadlines, fellowships, teaching assistantships and research assistantships, refer to the Graduate Studies and Enrollment website: grad.wpi.edu.

For information on loan programs and copies of the forms, contact WPI’s Financial Aid Office at 508-831-5469, or at www.wpi.edu/Admin/FA/.

Admission

Admission to the graduate program of any department is granted by that department via the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office. Admission to graduate interdisciplinary programs is granted by the Committee on Graduate Studies and Research.

Admission to a program generally entitles a student to work toward a degree offered by the admitting program. A student who has not been admitted to a program may not earn a degree from WPI.

Some programs, in admitting a student, determine the degree toward which the student may work. In such a case, an admitted student who wishes to work toward a different degree in the same program should consult the department head of the admitting program as to procedures to be followed and requirements. Typically, such cases involve students who have been admitted to a program leading to a master’s degree and who wish to continue toward a doctorate.

An admitted student who wishes to work toward a second degree offered by a different department or program must apply to that second program for admission. Standard application procedures are followed except that no application fee is required for a second degree.

Under some circumstances a student not yet admitted to a program may earn graduate credit toward the requirements for a graduate degree. The fact that a student has been allowed to register for courses and earn graduate credit from a program does not guarantee that the student, at a later date, will be admitted to that program.

Students are therefore encouraged to apply for admission to a program at the earliest possible date.

The procedure for applying as a part-time degree-seeking student is the same as that for a full-time student.

Deferred Enrollment

An admitted student who wishes to defer enrollment must make such a request in writing to the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office, which will seek counsel from the department involved and reply to the student.

Probational Admission

If an applicant’s undergraduate record is below the usual standards for admission, but there are mitigating circumstances, probational admission may be granted. Such admission usually means that the student’s performance will be reviewed at a specified time and a decision will be made about continuation in the graduate program.

Conditional Admission

Under some circumstances (usually where the background of the student is considered to be incomplete by the department or program), conditional admission may be granted. Conditional admission indicates that the student will receive regular admission status only after overcoming the specific deficiencies as outlined in the conditional admission letter. The conditionally admitted student will be instructed as to specific course deficiencies, required minimum grades expected to be attained in these classes, time over which deficiencies are to be completed, etc. Progress of the conditionally admitted student will be monitored by the student’s department.

Please consult departmental descriptions for more details.
Transfers and Waivers

A student may petition for permission to use graduate courses taken at other institutions to satisfy WPI graduate degree requirements. A maximum of one-third of the credit requirements for a graduate degree may be satisfied by courses taken elsewhere. Petitions are subject to approval by the student’s degree-granting program (which administratively may be a department or a program), and are then filed with the Registrar. To ensure that work constitutes current practice in the field, the program may set a latest date at which each course may be applied toward the degree. Such courses are recorded on the student’s WPI transcript with the grade CR, and are not included in calculations of grade point averages. Grades earned in Biomedical Consortium courses are recorded on the transcript as if the courses were taken on campus.

Applicants may file transfer or waiver petitions with their application for admission. If the department admits the student and approves the petition, notice of the approval may be included in the letter of admission to the student. This inclusion is known as admission with advanced standing.

A student with one or more WPI master’s degrees who is seeking an additional master’s degree from WPI may petition to apply up to 9 credits used to obtain the previous WPI degree toward satisfying requirements for the degree presently being sought.

A student who withdraws from a graduate program and is later readmitted may sometimes apply course and other credits taken, before withdrawal, toward the degree. The admitting program will determine at the time of readmission which courses taken by the student may be applied toward the degree and the latest date those courses may be applied. There is no limit, other than that imposed by the program, on how many credits a readmitted student may use from prior admissions to the same degree program.

With the appropriate background, a student may ask the degree-granting program for permission to waive a required course and substitute a specified, more advanced course in the same discipline. Requests are subject to approval by the student’s program and must be filed with the Registrar within one year of the date of matriculation in the program. A program may waive (with specified substitutions) up to three required courses for a single student.

Acceptability of Credit Applicable to an Advanced Degree

Graduate level credit, obtained from courses, thesis and project work, may be gained for:

- Coursework included in the approved Plan of Study completed at the graduate level at WPI.
- Any coursework completed at the graduate level and successfully transferred to WPI from other institutions (see Transfers and Waivers). Grades of transferred credits are not added to the WPI transcript.
- Graduate coursework completed at the undergraduate level at WPI and not applied toward another degree. Such requests must have the approval of the department.
- Up to 9 credit hours applied toward a previous master’s degree at WPI or elsewhere may be used in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a second master’s degree at WPI.
- Acceptable coursework approved for the Combined Bachelor’s/Master’s Program completed at WPI, provided permission to take courses for graduate credit has been granted.
- All acceptable project work done at the graduate level at WPI.
- All acceptable thesis work done at the graduate level at WPI.

Departments/programs may limit the use of credit depending upon their specific departmental requirements.

Deadlines

Research and teaching assistantships are typically awarded by April 1 for the fall semester. For prospective students requesting such financial assistance, applications must be on file no later than February 1 of the academic year preceding admission. Some programs also offer assistantships beginning in January, with an October 15 application deadline. Applicants who do not seek financial assistance must submit complete applications no later than April 1 to be considered for the fall semester registration, and no later than October 15 for spring semester registration.

Admission to Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs

WPI encourages interdisciplinary research. Students may apply for admission to interdisciplinary studies directly, but students interested in such options should do so with the assistance of WPI faculty, as these programs require internal sponsorship (see Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs, pages 6 and 10).

Admission of Students Who Have Not Completed Their Baccalaureate Degrees

In general, students must have earned a bachelor’s degree to be admitted, but WPI undergraduate students may apply for the Combined Bachelor’s/Master’s Program. See page 18.

Matriculation

Those who wish to pursue the master’s or Ph.D. degree should formally apply for admission as early as possible. Non-admitted students may take a maximum of four courses and receive letter grades in most departments; exceptions are: three-course maximum for biomedical engineering, and electrical and computer engineering; two-course maximum for computer science and management. Once these maximums are reached, additional course registrations will be changed to pass/fail and may not be used for degree credit.

Each admitted student is assigned an academic advisor. Advisors assist students in developing a Program of Study which will meet departmental requirements and at the same time provide the opportunity to explore areas of interest to the individual.