Admission Information

Applying to WPI

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

Applications for WPI's graduate management programs should be requested directly from the Management Department at 508-831-5218 or at http://www.mgt.wpi.edu/graduate.

Requirements for admission include submission of the following:

• Completed Application for Admission to Graduate Study. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the online application which is available at www.grad.wpi.edu/Admissions/application.html.

• Nonrefundable $70 application fee (waived for WPI alumni and current WPI undergraduates).

• Official college transcripts in English 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.

• Proof of English language proficiency must be submitted by all applicants for whom English is not the first language with the exception of applicants who have attended a United States college or university full time for at least one year. In order to prove English language proficiency, applicants must submit an official score report from either the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing Service). The minimum scores for admission are:
  - TOEFL: 213 (computer based test)
    550 (paper-based test)
    79-80 (internet-based test)
  - IELTS: 6.5 overall band score with no sub-score lower than 6.0

  Note: Higher scores are required for Teaching Assistants.

WPI’s institutional code for the TOEFL is 3969. Scores are valid for two years from the test date. For more information or to register to take the TOEFL go to: www.toefl.org. For more information or to register to take the IELTS, go to: www.ielts.org.

• Statement of purpose is required for individuals applying to several programs (see chart on page 14). 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) requirements, see the chart on page 14. WPI’s school code for the GRE is 3969.

• Goddard Fellowship applicants are required to submit GRE or GMAT scores.

• WPI master's degree students seeking to continue for a Ph.D. must complete the formal application process and be admitted to the Ph.D. degree granting program.

• On-line applicants may check the status of their applications via the web at http://cosmo.admin.wpi.edu/pls/prod/bwskalog.P_DispLoginNon. Applicants who have submitted a paper application form may contact the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office by e-mail (grad_studies@wpi.edu) or by phone 508-831-5301.

Incomplete applications are retained in the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office for one year. All applications and support material become the property of WPI.

Deadline

Research and teaching assistantships are typically awarded by April 1 for the fall semester. For prospective students requesting such financial assistance, completed applications must be on file no later than January 15 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 may apply at any time.

Admission

Admission to a WPI graduate program 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.

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.

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.

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 academic department or 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. However, 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. 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 prior credits toward satisfying requirements for the subsequent degree.

A student who withdraws from a graduate program and is later readmitted may 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 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 include:
• Coursework included in the approved Plan of Study.
• Coursework completed at the graduate level and successfully transferred to WPI from other institutions (see Transfers and Waivers).
• Graduate coursework completed at the undergraduate level at WPI and not applied toward another degree.
• Up to 9 credit hours from a previous master's degree may be used in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a second master's degree at WPI.
• Coursework approved for the Combined WPI Bachelor’s/Master’s Program.

• Project work done at the graduate level at WPI.
• Thesis work done at the graduate level at WPI.

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

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 5 and 71).

Advanced Study for Nondegree Students
Individuals with earned bachelors degrees may wish to enroll in a single course or a limited number of courses prior to applying for admission. When registering for courses as a nondegree student, grading may be either conventional (A,B,C) or Pass/Fail. Pass/Fail grading must be elected at the time of registration, and courses taken on the Pass/Fail basis are not transferable to any master’s degree program.

Non-admitted students may take a maximum of four graduate courses and receive letter grades in most departments. See department descriptions for specific information. Once these maximums are reached, additional course registrations will be changed to pass/fail and may not be used for degree credit.

The fact that a student has been allowed to register for graduate courses (and earn credit) does not guarantee that the student will be admitted to that department’s certificate or graduate program at a later date. Students are therefore encouraged to apply for admission to a certificate program prior to any course registration.