Financial Information

Financial Aid
Financial assistance to support graduate students is available in the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships, internships and loans. Entering students awarded either teaching or research assistantships will normally receive statements pertaining to the type and level of financial assistance from the Graduate Admissions Office.

The academic standing of students holding awards for teaching and research assistantships is reviewed annually. To remain eligible for a graduate assistantship, a student must demonstrate acceptable progress toward degree requirements, be registered continuously, and maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in courses and research work (A = 4.0).

Teaching Assistantships
Teaching assistantships are awarded to graduate students on a competitive basis. They include tuition support for a maximum of 10 credit hours per semester and a stipend. Teaching assistants (TAs) are generally assigned duties that support faculty in their teaching responsibilities. Typical duties of TAs include (but are not limited to) grading of undergraduate and graduate student course paperwork, supervision of undergraduate science and engineering laboratory course sections, as well as individual and small-group conference sections associated with faculty lecture courses. TAs are required to be on campus and available for their assignments ten days before undergraduate classes begin in the fall, and every day the Institute is open during the academic year, until the spring graduation (see The Academic Calendar, page 5). TAs are expected to work 20 hours per week on their assigned duties. Some departments have more stringent requirements. Consult specific departmental descriptions for details.

Research Assistantships
Research assistants (RAs) are compensated for participating in sponsored research projects in connection with their academic programs. Typical duties of RAs include (but are not limited to) conducting laboratory experiments, assisting in the development of theoretical advances related to faculty research projects, and conducting literature reviews on topics of research interest. Research projects are typically supported by grants and contracts awarded to the Institute by government agencies, industrial firms or other private organizations.

RAs who perform research directly connected to their thesis/dissertation must recognize that research is a full-time professional commitment that must be balanced with the course work required for the desired degree.

The level of support provided to graduate students who have been selected for an assistantship varies depending on the specific nature of the course work, project and student’s status. Funds may also be available to support summer research activities for students through Institute or departmental sources, or sponsored research projects. Some provisions exist under which WPI will pay the tuition for a student’s graduate program, but provide no support beyond tuition.

GAANN Graduate Assistants in Areas of National Need or GAANNs are provided through government grants to specific departments and research faculty. WPI has been awarded several of these grants, which are available to qualified graduate students.

Fellowships
Fellowship assistance for graduate students is available in a number of areas (see page 16). Some departments offer fellowships provided by corporate gifts or philanthropic agencies. The college also directly supports graduate research programs through fellowship awards.

GEM Fellowships
WPI is proud to be a GEM qualified university. GEM fellowships are awarded to minorities interested in studying science and engineering at the graduate level. For more information, please contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 508-831-5301 or gao@wpi.edu.

Goddard Fellowships
The Robert H. Goddard Fellowships are awarded to new full-time graduate students on a competitive basis. These highly sought-after awards span the entire research interests of the Institute. The Robert H. Goddard Fellowships are limited to U.S. citizens and provide the recipients with a full 12-month stipend and tuition support.

Support required by the student beyond the initial 12 months may be provided by the department in which the student is enrolled, or by a research award from the Thesis Advisor. Applicants are evaluated on merit by the Faculty Selection Committee, chaired by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, from whom application forms and instruction are available. A completed application must be submitted by February 1 to be considered for a fall semester award.

Internships
Graduate internship programs are offered in biomedical engineering, civil and environmental engineering, and fire protection engineering. These opportunities are similar to the traditional undergraduate cooperative education concept, except that participating students have already achieved the baccalaureate degree and are working toward a master’s degree.

Two options are available for scheduling students’ work and study activities: parallel and alternating formats. Under the parallel format, students work part-time and attend classes during the academic year. They may work full-time during the summer. The alternating option permits cycles of full-time work and full-time study. Departments may allow students to take courses during the full-time work cycle. Consult department descriptions for more information.

Student Loans
Financial assistance is also available through the WPI Financial Aid Office in the form of student loans. To qualify, students must be enrolled in a degree-granting program on at least a half-time basis and must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Available loans include the Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan, the Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, and the Professional Education Plan Loan (PEP).

Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
A low-interest government subsidized loan. Students can borrow up to $8,500 per year with repayment starting six months after graduation. The current interest rate is 8.25%.

Eligibility requirements: students must qualify for the loan by filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and demonstrating financial need. WPI also requires students to complete an institutional Graduate Personal Data Form. Students must be enrolled on at least a half-time basis (minimum of 6 credits) and must not be in default on any other educational loans.
Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
A low-interest loan not subsidized by the federal government. Borrowers are responsible for the interest while enrolled. Graduate students can borrow up to $10,000 or cost, whichever is less. These loans carry the same interest rate as the Subsidized Stafford Loan above. Eligibility requirements: students must first apply for the Subsidized Stafford Loan and must not be in default on any other educational loans.

Professional Education Plan Loan
A private, credit-based education loan not subsidized by the federal government. To apply, students need only complete the Graduate Personal Data Form and the application for the loan. Graduate students may apply for up to $7,500 per year under their own names. Principal and interest may be deferred, but interest will accrue while the student is enrolled.

For information on the above loan programs and copies of the forms, contact WPI’s Financial Aid Office, 508-831-5469.

Withdrawal Policy/Refund
If the student has paid a tuition bill with proceeds from either a Subsidized or an Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan and has received a refund for either or both of the loans, the student shall be responsible for any overpayment of funds. It is, therefore, necessary for the student to contact the lender(s) upon withdrawal.

Graduate Student Classifications
• Full-time Degree Seeking
• Part-time Degree Seeking
• Nondegree Seeking
• Graduate Certificate or Advanced Graduate Certificate
• Student on Graduate Exchange or Internship

Definition of Full-Time and Part-Time Status
If a student is registered for 9 or more credits, the student is deemed to be a full-time student for that semester. If a student needs fewer than 9 academic credits to complete degree requirements, registration for the number of credits required for completion of the degree gives the student full-time status. A student pursuing a master’s degree, whose plan of study shows completion of all degree requirements within a single two-year period, retains full-time status so long as the student complies with that plan of study. A student officially enrolled in a graduate internship program has full-time status during the internship period. If a student has completed the minimum number of credits required for a degree, and is certified by the department or program to be working full-time toward the degree, enrollment in 1 credit of dissertation research (for a student seeking the doctorate) or 1 credit of thesis research (for a student seeking a master’s degree) establishes the student’s full-time status. For the purposes of this rule, the semesters are fall (extending from August 15 through December 31), spring (extending from January 1 through May 14) and summer (extending from May 15 through August 14).

Part-time status applies to students who register for 2 to 8 credits per semester.

Tuition and Fees
Tuition Rate
Tuition for all courses taken by graduate students is based on a $752 fee per semester hour for the 2001-2002 academic year.

Audit Rate
A reduced tuition rate of $376 per semester hour for the 2001-2002 academic year is available for those who wish to audit a course. Audit registration cannot be changed to credit once the semester has started.

Tuition Payments
Tuition charges do not include the cost of textbooks. Tuition must be paid in full at the time of registration. The following forms of payment will be accepted: check payable to WPI, American Express, MasterCard, VISA or Discover. (If MasterCard/VISA/Discover accounts are declined, either a penalty fee will be charged or registration will be invalidated. Transcripts may also be held.)

Late Registration
A $25.00 late registration fee will be charged starting September 5, 2001 (fall semester) and January 15, 2002 (spring semester). A $50.00 late registration fee will be charged starting September 11, 2001 (fall semester) and January 22, 2002 (spring semester).

Deferred Payment Plan
A deferred payment plan is available for the fall and spring semesters. By paying a one-time fee per use, students may divide their tuition into three equal monthly payments. For specifics, call the Accounting Office at 508-831-5728.

Deposit
The letter of admission from the Graduate Admissions Office indicates the semester for which approval is granted and requires that the student respond. If accepting an offer for full-time graduate study, the student must submit a $150 nonrefundable deposit. Of this amount, $100 is credited toward tuition, $20 is the Graduate Student Organization fee and $30 is the orientation fee.

Health and Accident Insurance
All graduate students must be covered by health and accident insurance equivalent to that offered under the Student Health and Accident Insurance Plan. Optional coverage for a spouse or dependent may be obtained through a separate policy. Please see the Accounting Office for this coverage. For additional information, please call 508-831-5741.

Orientation
All new full-time graduate students are required to pay a one-time $30 orientation fee. (This is paid by entering students as part of the $150 deposit.)

Graduate Student Organization
Each full-time graduate student is charged a fee of $20 per year to support the activities of the Graduate Student Organization. (This fee is paid by entering students as part of the $150 deposit.)
Graduate Fellowship Opportunities

Fellowship awards are administered through the Office of the Associate Provost. Students interested in additional sources of funding should contact the graduate coordinator in their department. Funding includes teaching and research assistantships, corporate and federal sponsored programs, and graduate assistantships available to first-year and returning graduate students.

Robert H. Goddard Fellowship
Student applications and details of criteria for eligibility are available in the Graduate Admissions Office and on the Web at www.wpi.edu/+GAO for the Robert H. Goddard Fellowship. Fellowship applications are due in the Graduate Admissions Office no later than February 15 for the class beginning the following fall. Fellowship applications will be considered for students with admission applications on file no later than February 1. This fellowship is reserved for first-year graduate students. Recipients receive a monthly stipend and tuition for one year as a full-time student.

Axel F. Backlin Tuition Scholarship
Department heads may request funding from the Backlin Scholarship on behalf of deserving graduate students by contacting the Associate Provost's Office.

Arvid and Marietta Anderson Fellowship
This fellowship is awarded to an outstanding woman graduate student in her first year of doctoral studies. Preference is given to admission applications completed by February 1.

Fire Protection Engineering Distinguished Scholars Fund
Part of the purpose of this fund is to provide teaching assistantships to students in WPI’s graduate Fire Protection Engineering Program.

Robert and Esther Goddard Fellowship Fund
This fund is used to underwrite the Robert H. Goddard Fellowship, available to full-time graduate students on a competitive basis.

The Norton Graduate Fellowship
This fellowship is primarily awarded to a first-year graduate student in manufacturing engineering.

Robert S. Parks Graduate Fellowship
Established through an endowment, this fellowship shows preference to students in electrical engineering.

Harold Lesher Pierson Memorial Fellowship
This fund is used to support a graduate student whose research is in an area related to medicine that is likely to result in near-term benefits to mankind.

Ralph E. Spaulding Fellowship
Preference in the awarding of this graduate fellowship is given to students in civil engineering.

Helen E. Stoddard Fellowship in Materials Science and Engineering
This fellowship is awarded annually to an outstanding first-year graduate student in the field of materials science and engineering.

Carl and Inez Weidenmiller Fellowship
This fellowship was created from a bequest through the Carl and Inez Weidenmiller Fund.