Financial Information

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 or fellowships will receive official notification pertaining to the type and level of financial assistance from the Graduate Studies & Enrollment 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 10 days before undergraduate classes begin in the fall, and every day the university is open during the academic year until Commencement (see Academic Calendar page 2). 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 selected by the faculty to participate 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 university 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 coursework required for the desired degree.

The financial support provided to graduate students who have been selected for an assistantship varies depending on the specific nature of the coursework, project and student's status. Funds may also be available to support summer research activities for students through university 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.

Fellowships
Fellowship assistance for graduate students is available in a number of areas. Some departments offer fellowships provided by corporate gifts or philanthropic agencies. The university also directly supports graduate research programs through Goddard and Institute fellowship awards. Fellowship awards are administered through the Graduate Studies and Enrollment Office. Fellowship applications are due in the Graduate Studies & Enrollment Office no later than January 15 for the class beginning the following fall. Recipients receive a monthly stipend typically for 9 or 12 months and tuition for one year as a full-time student. Packages may vary. Check the website for up-to-date information.

WPI offers the following fellowships:

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.

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 Studies & Enrollment Office at 508-831-5301 or grad_studies@wpi.edu.

Goddard Fellowships
The Robert H. Goddard Fellowships are typically awarded to new full-time Ph.D. students. These highly sought-after awards span the entire research interests of the university. The Robert H. Goddard Fellowships are limited to U.S. citizens and provide the recipients with a 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, appointed by the Provost.

Axel F. Backlin Tuition Scholarship
Department heads may request funding from the Backlin Scholarship on behalf of deserving graduate students by contacting the Graduate Studies and Enrollment Office.
Marietta Anderson Fellowship
This fellowship is awarded to an outstanding woman graduate student in her first year of doctoral studies.

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.

Institute Fellowships
The Institute Fellowships are typically awarded to new, full-time PhD students. The Institute Fellowships provide recipients with a 12-month stipend and tuition support. Candidates for Institute Fellowships are nominated by their academic department.

The Norton Graduate Fellowship
This fellowship is typically 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.

Internships
Graduate internship programs are offered in several departments. A graduate internship is a short-term work assignment (3 to 9 months) in residence at a company or other external organization that forms an integral part of a student’s educational program. For international students, if not a mandatory part of the degree program, credit must be awarded. Where credit is involved, academic advisors will assign grades and may require written reports detailing the internships’ accomplishments. Students pursuing internships at not-for-profits and government agencies typically pay tuition themselves.

Two options are available for scheduling students’ work and study activities: parallel and alternating formats. Under the parallel format, students 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 a course or courses during the full-time work cycle. Consult department descriptions for more information.

The work assignment is determined by the company or organization that owns the work product with the approval of the faculty advisor. The company or organization owns the work product of students on internships. Students must use care in signing agreements to ensure they do not limit their rights beyond the duration of the internships. It would be reasonable, however, that the student agrees to hold confidential material so designated for a reasonable time beyond the internship. WPI’s Intellectual Property Office will provide guidance to students contemplating internships regarding such agreements.

Typically, corporate-sponsored internships are paid. Where credit is included, the corporation typically pays the tuition. Payment for internships must be at a rate comparable to full-time employment in that field at that educational level. Payment is typically made directly by the company to the student intern as an employee. With prior approval of the Provost, arrangements may be made for the company to pay WPI and WPI direct pay the student. Payments for internships sponsored by not-for-profits and government organizations may be waived.

Students participating in graduate internships must be registered in a specific course. An internship will appear on the transcript either with or without credit. Students may not participate as interns at their place of employment.

Special Notes for International Students:
An international student on an F-1 visa must maintain full-time status for the duration of their stay. If the student is participating in a full-time graduate internship (one that is not administered through the Office of Cooperative Education), the student must be registered for nine credits. International students in F-1 status may apply for two types of practical training:

1. Curricular Practical Training (CPT): CPT is used for internships and cooperative education while students are pursuing their degrees. CPT is authorized by the university and the requirement is that the internship or co-op is an integral part of an established curriculum. Internships should be for credit, co-op education does not have to be for credit if it is based on a cooperative agreement between WPI and the employer and approved by the Career Development Center.

2. Optional Practical Training (OPT): OPT is typically used by students for one year of employment after completion of degree. It can also be used in part for summer jobs or part-time employment during the academic year if employment is in the student’s field of study. OPT requires approval by U.S. Customs and Immigration Services.
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 or certificate 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 private education loans.

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/.

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. Eligibility requirements: students must qualify for the loan by filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form 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 require-
ments: students must first apply for the Subsidized Stafford Loan and must not be in default on any other educational loans.

Private Student Loans
Several private student loans are available to cover tuition and living expenses if applicable. All loans are credit-based, and students can borrow a maximum of the cost of the program less any other assistance. Since students must pass a credit review to be eligible, a co-borrower may be required. International students are eligible to borrow but a credit-worthy co-borrower who is a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident of the United States is required. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid for terms and conditions of each program available.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition Rate
Tuition for all courses taken by graduate students is based on a $997 fee per credit hour for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Audit Rate
A 50% reduced tuition rate per semester hour for the 2006-2007 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 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 or Discover. (If MasterCard/Discover accounts are declined, either a penalty fee will be charged or registration will be invalidated. Transcripts may also be held.) Tuition charges do not include the cost of textbooks.

Late Registration
A $50.00 late registration fee will be charged starting September 12, 2006 (fall semester) and January 22, 2007 (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 Studies & Enrollment Office indicates the semester for which admission is granted and requires that the student respond by a specified date. If accepting an offer for full-time graduate study, the student must submit a $185 nonrefundable deposit.

Health and Accident Insurance
All graduate students must be covered by health and accident insurance equivalent to that offered under the WPI Student Health and Accident Insurance Plan. Optional coverage for a spouse or dependent may be obtained through a separate policy. Please contact the Accounting Office (508-831-5741) for further information.