Advising/Plan of Study

Newly admitted full-time graduate students will be assigned an academic advisor at the time they are accepted and pay a tuition deposit. Part-time graduate students will be assigned an advisor at the time of their admission to degree-seeking status.

An Advisor of Record for M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation research must:

- be a tenured/tenure-track WPI faculty member and hold a dual or collaborative appointment in the degree-granting department,
  or
- be a Professor of Practice with an appointment in the degree-granting department.

In some cases, the Advisor of Record and the Thesis Advisor will be different people. In these cases, a Thesis Advisor or Dissertation Advisor not from the department granting the graduate degree must be approved by a majority of the full-time tenured and tenure-track department faculty.

After consultation with and approval by the advisor, each admitted student must file a formal Plan of Study with the department within the first semester if full-time, and within the first year if part-time. Program changes are implemented by advisor and student. Copies of the revised Plan of Study will be maintained in department files.

Registration Information and Procedures

The basic requirement for enrollment in a given course is a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution in a relevant field of science or engineering. Although those with management backgrounds may enroll in graduate management courses, no prior management study is required. Persons who have been admitted to graduate study at WPI are given first priority in course registration. Persons not holding a bachelor’s degree, but who might qualify through training or experience, may be allowed to enroll on either a credit or audit basis with permission of the instructor. Registration for graduate courses is on a space-available basis for nonadmitted students.

Graduate students are expected to enroll in graduate courses or thesis credit on the registration days designated in the WPI academic calendar (inside front cover). Registration on days not designated will result in additional fees (see Tuition and Fees, page 16). Registration is not complete until tuition has been paid in full. Enrollment in a course or courses, and satisfactory completion of those courses, does not constitute acceptance as a candidate for the master’s degree nor admission to graduate study. For students seeking advanced degrees (post-baccalaureate degrees), formal admission to a graduate program is required.

Degree-Seeking Student Registration

Graduate students must be registered for the semester in which degree requirements are completed. For master of science programs requiring a thesis, the student must register for a minimum of 1 semester credit hour. For a Ph.D. program, the student must register for a minimum of 3 semester credit hours.

Students seeking degrees not requiring a thesis are not required to maintain continuous registration.

Non-degree Student Course Registration

Nondegree-seeking students are to register for courses in the same manner as all other students. Degree-seeking students have preference in registering for courses with limited enrollments.

Audit Registration

Students primarily interested in the content of a particular course may register as auditors. Thesis and project work cannot be taken with audit registration. Audit registration receives no credit and receives no grade. Audit registration is controlled in limited enrollment courses.

Audit registrants are encouraged to participate in the courses, but typically do not submit written work for evaluation. Often professors will accept written work of audit registrants, but this is left to the discretion of individual instructors.

A student may change from credit to audit registration, but may not change from audit to regular credit registration. To change to audit registration for any graduate course, the student must complete an audit form (available in the Registrar’s Office) within the first three weeks of class. No tuition or fees will be returned to students who change to audit registration.

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.

Walk-In Registration Dates

Fall Semester 2005
Projects and Registrar’s Office, Boynton Hall:
- September 1, 2 and 6
  8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Spring Semester 2006
Projects and Registrar’s Office, Boynton Hall:
- January 12, 13 and 16
  8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Summer Semester 2006
The Summer Session schedule will be available on the web in December, 2005. Most graduate summer courses meet in the evening hours from mid-May through the end of June. Graduate Computer Science classes run through mid-July. Many graduate students work on their research during Summer Session. For information on summer registration, call 508-831-5999.

Transcripts
WPI will issue one transcript of record to a student without charge. Additional transcripts are issued upon receipt of a fee of $4 per copy.

Withdrawal Policies
If written notice of withdrawal is received in the Registrar’s Office before classes begin, a refund minus $25 will be given; after first class, before second, refund minus $100; after second class, before third, refund minus $200; after third class, before fourth, refund minus $300; after fourth, no refund. A grade of W will be recorded if written notification of withdrawal from the course is received after the third meeting of the class and not later than the following dates:

Fall Semester: November 11, 2005
Spring Semester: March 24, 2006

Withdrawal after these dates is permitted only by petition to the Registrar’s Office. Notice to the instructor or discontinuance of attendance does not constitute withdrawal. Such notice must be submitted in writing to the Registrar’s Office. Incomplete grades are transitional grades and must be changed by the instructor within 12 months. If coursework is not made up by this time, the grade automatically becomes an F.

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.