Registration Information & 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 non-admitted students.

Graduate students are expected to enroll in graduate courses or thesis credit on the registration days designated in the WPI Calendar. Registration on days not designated will obligate additional fees (see Fees). Students should consult with the Registrar’s Office for assistance on these matters. Registration is not complete until tuition has been paid. Tuition payment schedules can be arranged with the Business Office.

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 Seeking Student Course Registration

Non-degree 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. It is important to register as early as possible.

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. Degree-seeking students receive preferred registration privileges and, as a consequence, audit registration in some courses may be denied. Tuition fees for audit registration are lower than fees for other registrations (see Tuition Payment).

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 place a petition with the registrar within the first three weeks of class. Forms for change to audit registration are available from the registrar. No fees will be returned to students who change to audit registration.

Admission

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.

Registration by Mail

Students who have been admitted to degree status will receive registration materials in the mail. These are due prior to the first day of classes.

Walk-In Registration Dates

Fall Semester 2000

Projects and Registrar’s Office, Boynton Hall:
- August 28 - September 1 — 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Waltham Campus:
- August 28 - August 31 — 8:00 a.m.- 7:00 p.m.
- September 1 — 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

MetroWest Campus in Southboro:
- August 17 — 5:00 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.

Spring Semester 2001

Projects and Registrar’s Office, Boynton Hall:
- January 8 - January 12 — 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Waltham Campus
- January 8 - January 11 — 8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
- January 12 — 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

MetroWest Campus in Southboro:
- January 9 — 5:00 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.

Summer Semester Registration

Graduate students planning to register for project, thesis, independent study or courses during the summer semester should do so through the Projects and Registrar’s Office. For information on summer registration, call 508-831-5211.

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 and Incomplete Grades

Because the college makes a financial commitment at the time a course is scheduled for instruction, tuition refunds will be made on the following basis: If notice of withdrawal is received, in writing, in the Projects and 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 13, 2000

Spring Semester: March 26, 2001
Withdrawal after these dates is permitted only by petition to the Projects and Registrar’s Office. Notice to the instructor or discontinuance of attendance does not constitute withdrawal. Such notice must be submitted in writing to the Projects and Registrar’s Office. Incomplete grades are transitional grades and must be changed by the instructor within 12 months. If course work is not made up by this time, the grade automatically becomes an F.

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:
• Non-degree 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 one credit of dissertation research (for a student seeking the doctorate), or one 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.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The following are WPI’s minimum requirements for advanced degrees. The General Requirements for all advanced degrees must be satisfied to earn any advanced degree. The Additional General Requirements for specific degrees must be satisfied in order to earn the specified degree, regardless of the field in which the degree is earned.

General Requirements for All Advanced Degrees
All degree requirements must be satisfied before the degree is awarded. Exceptions to general and specific degree requirements or to other rules may be made, but only by the Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR). Requests for exceptions are to be made by written petition to that committee.

At the time the degree is awarded, the student must have been admitted to the graduate program of the degree-granting program. Administratively, a degree-granting program may be a department or a program.

A minimum of two-thirds of the required graduate credit for an advanced degree must have been earned at WPI.

For the master of mathematics, the student must have a program QPA of 2.9 or greater. For all other degrees, the student must have a program QPA of 3.0 or greater.

From time to time, the faculty amends the general and specific degree requirements. To earn a degree, a student must satisfy the graduate rules in effect at a single date. These rules may be those in place on the date of the student’s matriculation, those in place on the date of the student’s application for graduation, or those in place in a single graduate catalog in effect between the dates of matriculation and graduation. In applying for graduation, the student must specify by year which graduate catalog contains the rules being satisfied.

After the Application for Degree is submitted, all advanced degrees are subject to the final approval of the CGSR, which determines if the student has satisfied the letter and intent of the requirements for advanced degrees.

The CGSR makes its recommendations for the approval of advanced degrees to the faculty of the Institute, which in turn recommends to the president and trustees for their final approval the names of students who should be awarded advanced degrees.

General Requirements for the Master of Science and Master of Engineering
The student must obtain a minimum of 30 credit hours of acceptable course, thesis or project work.

If a thesis is required by the student’s program, it must include at least 6 credit hours of research directed toward the thesis, in a project resulting in the completion of an M.S. thesis.

A student completing a master’s degree with a thesis option is required to make a public presentation of the thesis. Departments may, at their option, extend the presentation to include a defense of the thesis.

The student must obtain a minimum of 21 credit hours of graduate-level courses or thesis, (18 credit hours for students in the Combined Bachelor’s/Master’s Program) including at least 15 credit hours of graduate-level courses or thesis in the major field of the student. Other courses (to make up the minimum total of 30 credit hours) may include advanced undergraduate courses approved by the student’s program. Such courses are normally considered to be those at the 4000 level. The use of advanced undergraduate courses for satisfaction of graduate degree requirements must be approved by the student’s program.

A 1/3 unit WPI undergraduate course taken for graduate credit is assigned 3 credit hours of graduate credit. A graduate student registered for graduate credit in an undergraduate course may be assigned additional work at the discretion of the instructor.

General Requirements for the Doctorate
The student must demonstrate to the faculty high academic attainment and the ability to carry on original independent research.

The student must complete a minimum of 90 credit hours of graduate work beyond the bachelor’s degree, or a minimum of 60 credit hours of graduate work beyond the master’s degree, including in either case at least 30 credit hours of research.

The student must establish residency by being a full-time graduate student for at least one continuous academic year.

The student must attain status as a doctoral candidate by satisfying specific degree requirements in the student’s field.

The student must prepare a doctoral dissertation, and defend it before a Dissertation
Committee, at least two of whose members must be from the student’s program, and at least one of whose members must be from outside the student’s program. After a successful defense, determined by a majority vote in the affirmative by the Dissertation Committee, the dissertation must be endorsed by those members of the Dissertation Committee who voted to approve it. The completed dissertation must follow in format the instructions published by the library. After final approval for format of the dissertation, the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs will notify the registrar that the dissertation has been approved.

Once a student has satisfied the departmental candidacy requirements, the student will be permitted to enroll for dissertation credits. Prior to completion of candidacy requirements, a student may enroll for no more than 18 credits of directed research.

Minimum Requirements for a Social Science Interdisciplinary PhD

In addition to the general requirements established by WPI for an interdisciplinary doctoral degree, applicants must pass a qualifying examination. This examination will test the basic knowledge and understanding of the student in the disciplines covered by the research as is normally expected of degree holders in the disciplines. It must be administered within the first eighteen credits of registration in the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. The examination will be administered by a committee of no less than three members, approved by CGSR, representing the disciplines covered by the research. Students are allowed at most two attempts at passing the examination, and may take a maximum of 18 credits prior to passage.

Other Degrees

Requirements for the master of business administration, and master of mathematics for educators appear under the descriptions of the offering programs. Students in the Combined Bachelor’s/Master’s Program are subject to additional rules described in the next section.

General Requirements for the Combined Bachelor’s/Master’s Degree Program

Only registered WPI undergraduates may enter the Combined Program. To enter, a student must apply to the WPI Graduate Program. Admission to the Combined Program is made by the faculty of the program that awards the graduate degree. A student in the Combined Program continues to be registered as an undergraduate until the bachelor’s degree is awarded.

While in the Combined Program, a student may continue to take courses or projects toward the undergraduate degree; the student may also register for graduate courses, projects, directed research or thesis credits toward the master’s degree.

To obtain a master’s degree via the Combined Program, the student must satisfy all requirements for that master’s degree, including any requirements of the graduate degree-awarding program for satisfactory completion of specified courses or a master’s thesis. To obtain a bachelor’s degree via the Combined Program, the student must satisfy all requirements for that bachelor’s degree, including distribution and project requirements.

A student in the Combined Program, may, within the program limit and with prior approval, use the same courses toward the bachelor’s and master’s degrees. The limitation is computed from the graduate credit hours for each course. Courses, whose credit hours total no more than 40% of the credit hours required for the master’s degree, and which meet all other requirements for each degree, may be used to satisfy requirements for both degrees. Such courses are recorded on the transcript using the credit hours/units and grades appropriate at the graduate or undergraduate levels. For students in the Combined Program, approved undergraduate courses are assigned graduate credit with a conversion rate of 1/3 WPI undergraduate unit = 1/3 credit hour, while graduate courses applied toward the undergraduate degree are awarded undergraduate credit with a conversion rate of 1 credit hour = 1/9 undergraduate unit.

Students in the Combined Program may use advanced undergraduate courses to satisfy graduate degree requirements. The department decides which courses may be used in this way. Faculty members teaching these advanced undergraduate courses may impose special requirements, appropriate to an undergraduate course being used for graduate credit, on Combined Program students.

If the programs awarding the bachelor’s and master’s degrees are not the same, the program awarding the graduate degree may require that the student’s Major Qualifying Project relate in some way to the graduate program’s discipline. The graduate program may also make other requirements as it deems appropriate in any individual case. These requirements take the form of a written agreement (obtain form from the Graduate Admissions Office) between the student and the graduate program, which must be completed and filed with the registrar before the student may be matriculated in the Combined Program.

Additional requirements appear within each department’s section in this catalog.

The Combined Program is a full-time* program of study on both the bachelor and master’s level. Once admitted to the Combined Program, a student must register every fall and spring semester until the graduate degree is completed. A student in the Combined Program who, during the fall or spring semester, has no registered activities is automatically terminated from the Combined Program, and may only be readmitted to the Combined Program by the Committee for Graduate Studies and Research via petition showing extenuating circumstances. Termination from the Combined Program does not affect a student’s ability to continue toward the bachelor’s degree.

Students usually apply for admission to combined degree status in their sophomore or junior year of WPI undergraduate study.

Some graduate-degree-awarding programs impose additional restrictions on students in the Combined Program. Consult the degree requirements of individual programs for details.

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1 CGSR - The Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) is concerned with all post-baccalaureate programs of the university, and reviews and recommends changes in WPI policies on goals, student recruitment, admissions, academic standards, teaching and research assistantships, scholarships and fellowships. It also makes recommendations to the Faculty and Administration on new graduate programs and courses and changes in programs and courses. The Committee accredits admission of graduate students to degree candidacy, dismissal for failure to meet academic standards, and student petitions on academic matters. It brings to the Faculty for action the names of students who have demonstrated are eligible for post-baccalaureate degrees. The Committee reviews and recommends changes in policy on the funding, promotion, and conduct of research at WPI.

2 GPA - The Quality Point Average (QPA) is calculated as the sum of the products of the quality points and credit hours for each registered activity, in the average, divided by the total number of credit hours for all registered activities in the average. Quality points are as follows: A = 4.0; B = 3.0; C = 2.0; D = 1.0; and F = 0.0.

* Full-time study means a minimum registration of at least 9 credit hours.