YOU ASKED - WE ANSWER

This is a compilation of the most frequently asked questions emailed to the Data Science office by prospective students. If you don’t find your question/answer here, please email datascience@wpi.edu and we’ll be more than happy to answer any questions you have.

1. Am I Eligible To Apply?
   The purpose of the application process is to have our faculty determine if you fit the criteria for the program. Please don’t send your resume or CV to the DS office; we can’t advise you on whether or not you will be accepted. The best option is simply to apply.

2. What Are The Required Pre-Requisites?
   Pre-requisites for the Master’s in Data Science include:
   a. Earned Bachelor’s degree
   b. Quantitative or computational background
   c. Programming with data structures
   d. Algorithms for computational skills
   e. Calculus
   f. Linear Algebra
   g. Basic statistics

3. What Programming Languages are taught?
   R and python are both used in several of the courses.

4. I Have Some But Not All Of The Pre-Requisites?
   If the rest of your application meets the Data Science criteria, you may be admitted on the condition that you take the needed course while at WPI, or you may take the course, and then re-apply.

5. What Other Criteria Do You Use When Making Admission Decisions?
   Admission to the Data Science Program is highly competitive and selection is based on:
   a. Whether required prerequisites are met
   b. Demonstration of high aptitude for quantitative analysis
   c. Academic success as evidenced by undergraduate and graduate course work
   d. Professional experience that suggests a propensity for teamwork
d. Maturity  
e. Self-initiative and leadership potential  
f. Career aspirations that align with the Data Science program’s mission  
g. Academic performance is important but is not a sufficient condition for enrollment

6. When Should I Apply?  
Apply as soon as you feel your application is strong enough, or as soon as possible.

7. What Is A Cohort-Based Program?  
A learning cohort is a group of students moving through their courses and related learning experiences together. Cohort learning prepares students for employers who value teamwork and collaboration.

8. How Many Students Do You Accept For Each Cohort?  
The Data Science program limits each cohort to approximately 30 very strong students.

9. How Long Is The Masters In Data Science Program?  
This is a two year, or 33 credit program.

10. What If I’m Enrolled And A Required Course Is Full?  
If a required class is full, be sure to put your name on the waitlist! This alerts us to the number of students who want or need a particular class, in which case we may open another offering. Also, arrive on the first day of class and politely ask the professor to admit you. Remember to smile.

11. May I Take Data Science Courses Without Being Officially Enrolled In The Program?  
Certainly, if there’s space in the class.

12. Please Explain The GQP.  
GQP is an acronym for the Graduate Qualifying Project or practicum. MS students may choose to do either a GQP or a Thesis in the MS program; they are typically done during the final semester.

13. Will There Be Opportunities For Internships?  
Absolutely!

14. Who Is My Faculty Advisory And Should I Contact Him/Her Before I Start?  
You will be assigned a faculty advisor in your focus area who you will meet during the Data Science Orientation. It’s not necessary to make contact before classes begin.

15. What Does The Plan Of Study Entail?  
The Plan of Study tracks your two years of work to ensure that all of your core requirements are fulfilled and that you stay on track to graduate on time and with courses that align with your career goals. http://www.wpi.edu/Images/CMS/Datascience/plan-of-study-in-a-nutshell.pdf

16. Is The Data Science Program A STEM Program?  
Yes, the WPI Data Science program is STEM certified. http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/stem-program.html

19. Where Do I Find?  
a. Data Science web page: http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/degree-requirements.html
b. Questions regarding being an international student: [http://www.wpi.edu/offices/ih.html](http://www.wpi.edu/offices/ih.html)

c. Application process: [http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/application-process.html](http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/application-process.html)

d. Applying to WPI: [http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/faqs.html](http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/faqs.html)

e. Course catalogue or list of classes I can research? [http://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/](http://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/)

f. Program cost? [http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/financing.html](http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/financing.html)


18. Do You Offer A Ph.D. In Data Science?
   Yes, we have one of the first Ph.D. programs in the country.
   [https://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/phd-program.html](https://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/phd-program.html)

17. What Is The Data Science Certificate Program?
   The Certificate program is a shortened program for those who are not interested in earning a
   Master’s Degree in Data Science.
   [http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/certificate-program.html](http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/certificate-program.html)

18.

1) Can a WPI M.S. get transcript/diploma showing
concentration/distinction (like our undergrad degrees can have a
concentration that shows up on the transcript)? E.g., an "M.S. in
Interactive Media with Game Development with a Concentration in
Serious Games."

No. Only available is as for #2.

2) For a specialization (e.g., Computer Security
[http://www.wpi.edu/academics/cs/comput26.html](http://www.wpi.edu/academics/cs/comput26.html) what shows up on the
transcript/diploma? Is it:only a) an "M.S. in Computer Science", or
b) do they have a "M.S. in Computer Security", or c) an "M.S. in
Computer Science with a Computer Security Specialization"?

Only a), "M.S. in Computer Science" shows up as the official credential.

The transcript will show the specialization, but not the
diploma.

3) If a student gets a graduate certificate (e.g., [http://www.wpi.edu/academics/cs/graduate-certificate.html](http://www.wpi.edu/academics/cs/graduate-certificate.html)) can s/he *also* apply the same classes towards an M.S.?

Yes.

4) Can a student with an M.S. then apply the same credits used for the M.S. towards a certificate?

No (page 7 of catalog).

5) In either case, would they then have *both* an "M.S. in Computer Science" *and* a "Graduate Certificate in Computer Science"?

Yes (if follow step #3).