Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*

KEY WEBSITES

**Banner Web:** This site, also sometimes called just Banner or the Web Information System, is a hub for all sorts of information including course registration, student course reports data, academic advisee information, financial accounting, employee and payroll information, submission of Faculty Annual Reports, and more. Log on at [bannerweb.wpi.edu](http://bannerweb.wpi.edu).

**Helpdesk:** The Computing and Communications Center (CCC) has a Helpdesk service that is generally highly praised on campus. For any computer-related question or problem, you can check for information on their website [www.wpi.edu/+Helpdesk](http://www.wpi.edu/+Helpdesk), send an inquiry to [helpdesk@wpi.edu](mailto:helpdesk@wpi.edu), or call x5888.

---

**Academic Honesty Policy**

The Faculty Guide to Academic Integrity at WPI is a great resource and is online at [www.wpi.edu/offices/policies/facultyguide.html](http://www.wpi.edu/offices/policies/facultyguide.html). If you are ever unsure about how to address a possible case of academic dishonesty, Associate Dean of Students Greg Snoddy (gsnoddy@wpi.edu, x5800, see photo) is the go-to person for information and advice.

**Athletics – Potential Conflicts with Coursework**

Participation in athletics is an important part of undergraduate education at WPI for many students. Coaches and students know that academics come first. At the same time, some conflicts with scheduled class activities or assessments may arise occasionally, and students might ask if you can make alternative arrangements. In these cases, instructors are asked to be as flexible as possible to accommodate student athletes.

**Calendars**

WPI academic calendars can be found at [wpi.edu/calendars/](http://wpi.edu/calendars/). **Important Note:** The undergraduate and graduate calendars include instances when the schedules of particular days of the week are swapped. For example, Thursday might run on a Monday schedule. This is so that each seven-week term has 7 occurrences of each daily schedule—important when lab sessions or classes meet only 1 or 2 days a week.

**Catalogs**

Hard copies of the undergraduate and graduate catalogs are distributed by department offices in the spring of each year. Talk to an administrative assistant to see if hard copies are still available; online versions are always available at [wpi.edu/academics/catalogs.html](http://wpi.edu/academics/catalogs.html). These catalogs contain course descriptions, degree requirements, and academic policies.

**Class Lists**

To find the names of students in your courses, log on to Banner and go to Faculty Services, then Course Information Menu. Detailed Class List includes photos which are great for learning students’ names. Class lists are also automatically loaded into myWPI course sites.

**Class Email Addresses**

You can send a group email or select individual recipients via myWPI course sites. Student email addresses are also listed in Banner, and there is an “Email Class” option at the bottom of the Class List.

*If you have an important question during your first months at WPI that isn’t answered in this document, please contact tkscola@wpi.edu so that we can add it in the future.*
listing in Banner class lists. A final option is to create a mailing list or “alias” (such as ES2001-D16@wpi.edu) at the following site: wpi.edu/Academics/CCC/Services/Email/mailinglist.html.

Class Scheduling Requests
The course scheduling process begins in B-term for the following academic year. Each department has its own process for handling requests and scheduling courses, so just be attuned for messages that invite you to make requests. Or ask an administrative assistant about the process in your department.

Classroom Reservations
Classroom assignments are made as part of the annual course scheduling process. To find your classroom assignment, check the “Faculty Teaching Schedule” tab in Bannerweb, or the course schedules at wpi.edu/offices/registrar/schedules.html. If you need to schedule a classroom for something like a help session, you can use the campus scheduling website, https://scheduling.wpi.edu, or contact Cathy Battelle, the Academic Scheduler in the Registrar’s Office (clb@wpi.edu, x6002), or ask the Administrative Assistant in your department to make the arrangements.

Classroom Technology & Software
Contact the Academic Technology Center’s Technology for Teaching & Learning staff at atc-ttl@wpi.edu if you have questions about how to use the technology in your classroom, or if you would like some particular software to be installed. This group also has a website filled with ideas and how-to’s: wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/.

Computer Problems
If you have a problem with the computer or LCD projector in your classroom, call the Academic Technology Center (x5220, atc@wpi.edu). If you have a problem with your office computer, contact the Computing and Communications Center (CCC) Helpdesk at helpdesk@wpi.edu or x5888.

Copiers and Making Copies
Different departments have different traditions and processes for making copies of documents for courses and other professional needs, so check with an administrative assistant in your department. Some instructors have made their classes paperless, with electronic documents posted on myWPI so that students may choose to print their own. There is a printing services department in the basement of Boynton Hall that can be used for large printing jobs. Copiers and scanners are also available in Gordon Library.

Copyright & Fair Use
WPI has a website dedicated to information on copyright law and fair use guidelines, for content creators and for instructors and students who wish to use copyrighted content in their courses and projects: wpi.edu/offices/policies/copyright.html. There are many gray areas, so if/when you have questions, contact Jessica O’Toole (jrotoole@wpi.edu, x4960) or other research and instructional librarians in Gordon Library for advice.

Course Evaluation Forms
Paper course evaluation forms, also known as student ratings of instruction or “student course reports”, are sent to all instructors by the Provost’s Office typically about two weeks before the end of the term. All instructors are expected to distribute these forms in class on a day of their choosing. (Administering on the same day as an exam is NOT recommended.) The packet of forms includes instructions for distribution and return of forms.
Course Evaluation Results
You will receive an electronic summary of the quantitative results by email from the Registrar’s Office, typically within a week after the grading deadline. The original forms (with students’ written responses to open-ended questions) will be returned to you by campus mail. Historical data for all instructors and school-wide averages for particular questions can be found on Banner: click on WPI Student Course Reports in the Faculty Services listing.

Course Reserves
If you would like to place books, documents, or other resources on reserve for your students at the Gordon Library, stop by the library or contact Ginny Julian, Access Services Coordinator (x6603, accessservices@wpi.edu).

Course Syllabus
A course syllabus is an expectation in WPI academic culture, but instructors are given considerable leeway, and there is quite a bit of variation as to level of detail and format. Explaining how grades will be determined is expected. See the Syllabus Checklist document for more information, or contact Chrys Demetry, Director of the Morgan Teaching & Learning Center (cdemetry@wpi.edu, x5707, see photo).

Course Withdrawal
Unlike many other universities, WPI does not have a formal withdrawal process for undergraduate courses. Students can make course changes (add or drop) without penalty through the 5th day of the undergraduate term, not including weekends. On days 6-10, add/drops are permitted only with instructor approval and with payment of a late fee. No add/drops are allowed after day 10. Students may still stop participating in a course after that point, however, and “take an NR” (grade of No Record). There is no mechanism like withdrawal. Some will contact you to explain why they are dropping the course; others probably will not.

The course change/withdrawal process is somewhat different and more traditional for graduate courses. For details, see wpi.edu/offices/registrar/course-change.html.

Exam Scheduling Policy
Instructors are asked to schedule exams during regularly scheduled class periods. If you feel strongly about scheduling an exam for a longer period of time outside of the regular class schedule, WPI policy is that the exam must take place in the evening. Furthermore, the date and time must be announced and published during the first week of class.

Instructors are asked to be sensitive to problems associated with allowing students to stay late to complete an exam. The next class using the room may not be able to start on time, and they may have an exam as well. (It’s safe to assume that the next instructor will be annoyed if the room isn’t vacated by 5 minutes before the hour.) Furthermore, not all students in your class may have equal opportunity to take advantage of the extra time if they have another class to go to in the next hour.

Expense Reports
To be reimbursed for reimbursable expenses related to your job (talk to your department head if unsure), complete and submit the “Expense Report” spreadsheet found on the Accounting website: wpi.edu/offices/finops/controller-forms.html. Note that original receipts must be submitted, including an itemized receipt for meals (i.e., not just the credit card slip).
Faculty Handbook
A link to the complete Faculty Handbook can be found at the bottom of the Faculty Governance page: wpi.edu/Campus/Faculty/.

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of students' education records. Education records may include grades, grade reports, progress reports, transcripts, handwritten notes, computer records, e-mails, audio and video recordings among other items.

It is important to note that WPI gives parents of financially dependent students full access to their dependents' educational records. Access includes parents' receiving copies of their dependents' grade reports each semester from the Office of the Registrar. WPI assumes that its undergraduate students are financially dependent on their parents unless the student informs us otherwise. If the student is financially independent, the student must notify the Registrar of his or her independent financial status by using the Financially Independent Student form available in the Registrar’s Office.

Please visit these two sites for more complete information: wpi.edu/Admin/OAA/Handbook/rules.html and www.wpi.edu/offices/policies/ferpa.html. If you have questions, please contact the campus FERPA officer Sarah Miles, University Registrar (smiles@wpi.edu, x5211).

A consequence of FERPA is that graded work must be returned to students in a manner that protects the privacy of those grades. Therefore, for example, homework with the grade shown on the front cannot be left in a box in the hallway for students to pick up.

Grade Standards
All of WPI’s options for letter grades are presented in the Undergraduate Catalog: wpi.edu/academics/catalogs/ugrad.html and in the Graduate Catalog: wpi.edu/academics/catalogs/grad.html. Instructors have substantial leeway in deciding how to assign grades in courses. The most important thing is to communicate in writing with students how grades will be determined. The faculty-approved guidelines for project grades (IQPs, MQPs) are published in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Grade Submission - Courses
Course grades are submitted electronically on Banner. After logging in, go to Faculty Services, then Course Information Menu, then Final Grade Entry. Grade submission deadlines for faculty come up more quickly than at many other universities. For example, if the term ends on a Thursday, final grades are likely to be due by 5pm on the following Tuesday. The Registrar or Dean of Undergraduate Studies usually sends a reminder each term about the grading deadline. Course grade changes may also be made on Banner.

Grade Submission – Projects
IQPs and MQPs receive both “term grades” and “final grades.” Term grades are attached to the academic credit in each term. For example, 1/3 unit of project work in A-term might earn a C. The next 1/3 unit of the same project in B-term might earn a B, and the last 1/3 unit in C-term might earn a B. The advisor would then decide on the project’s final grade—perhaps a B in this case— which would appear with the project description highlighted on the student’s transcript. The final project grade for IQPs and MQPs is taken into consideration for graduation with honors. See the Undergraduate Catalog for more information.

Term grades are submitted electronically on Banner just like course grades and are subject to the same grade submission deadlines. Final project grades, however, are submitted with a “CDR”
(Completion of Degree Requirement) as part of the electronic submission process for project reports. After students submit their reports electronically, the advisor will be prompted to “approve” the report, which just means the project has concluded and is ready for grading. Students are then prompted to print a CDR form and deliver it to the advisor. The advisor then fills in the letter grade and delivers the form to the Registrar’s Office. CDR submission deadlines are typically AFTER the end of the term, with one important exception: in D-term, seniors who are planning to graduate in May must submit their CDRs by a specific deadline that is about a week BEFORE the end of D-term. Submission deadlines are published on the Registrar’s website.

Grade Appeals
WPI undergraduate and graduate students have the right to appeal a course or project grade on grounds of arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error. Challenge of an instructor’s grading standard is not sufficient grounds for appeal. The Faculty Review Committee oversees the appeals process. The details of the grade appeal procedure are described in the Policies and Procedure section of the undergraduate catalog and the Grading System and Academic Standards section of the graduate catalog.

Grants Application Process
The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) website is a treasure trove of information: proposal toolkits, key forms, budget templates, funding opportunities, and more: wpi.edu/offices/osp.html. All grant proposals, large and small, submitted to either government agencies, corporations, or foundations, must be reviewed by the OSP prior to submittal.

Holidays and Religious Observances
WPI holidays are shown on the academic calendar (see “Calendars”). You may wish to avoid scheduling exam dates on major religious holidays. The BBC maintains a calendar of religious holidays and festivals: go to www.bbc.co.uk/religion and search for “religious holidays.”

WPI has a Policy on Religious Observances, in accordance with Massachusetts state law: "Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or denominational educational or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement which he/she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any students because of his/her availing himself/ herself of the provisions of this section."

Independent Study (ISP)
Students may occasionally approach you asking to do an independent study or ISP (independent study/project), if they have interest in a special topic that isn’t accommodated by a regular course or if they have a scheduling conflict with a course. You are not obligated to advise these types of learning experiences. Registration is done with a paper form that can be found on the Registrar’s website. ISPs are designed most commonly for 1/3 unit of academic work, but occasionally a student may propose 1/6 or 2/3 unit; it’s negotiable.
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Federal mandate and WPI policy require that the WPI Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approve all applicable research involving human subjects that is performed under the auspices of WPI. Please visit this site for complete information: wpi.edu/offices/irb.html. When you have questions, contact the IRB Chair, Professor Kent Rissmiller (kjr@wpi.edu, x5019, see photo). Note that there is an abbreviated IRB process for student project teams conducting research using surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Intellectual Property Policy
WPI’s policy can be found at wpi.edu/offices/policies/intell.html. For IP questions related to inventions and licensing, see also Technology Transfer.

Laboratory Safety Requirements
WPI’s Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) maintains an extensive website with resources and policies that are important to faculty who are establishing laboratories: wpi.edu/offices/safety/laboratory.html. The Laboratory Experiment Safety Form (third link from bottom) must be completed by every student or student team who is planning to conduct an experiment as part of an MQP, independent study or graduate project, and then reviewed with the laboratory manager and faculty advisor. Contact the Director of EHS, Daniel Sarachick (dtsarachick@wpi.edu, x5298), with any questions related to lab safety.

Learning Management System (LMS) Sites: Canvas and Blackboard
During the 2016-17 academic year WPI is transitioning from Blackboard, more commonly called “myWPI,” to Canvas. Both platforms will be available for use during the transition period. Course sites are created automatically in both systems, but instructors are not required to use them. (Sites do not become visible to students unless the instructor activates/publishes the site for student access.) Course sites are generated using a blank shell and include Banner student and instructor enrollments. You can request to re-use content from a past course offering, to merge multiple sections into one master course site, and/or to add course support staff to your site (e.g. TAs) by filling out the form linked at wpi.edu/+canvasrequest. We encourage all new faculty to start off in Canvas unless they are bringing with them Blackboard content from their prior institutions. The Academic Technology Center (ATC) is holding plenty of Canvas trainings; watch your email for announcements or see wpi.edu/+canvas for a listing of the ATC’s training sessions under “Workshops.” Staff are also available for individual appointments; contact atc-ttl@wpi.edu. If you ever need immediate help, send questions to myhelp@wpi.edu; someone will get back to you as soon as possible, typically within 24 hours.

Makeup Policy and Student Illness
WPI does not have a policy specifying the conditions under which instructors should or must provide makeup opportunities to students (e.g., if a student misses an exam or an extended part of the term due to illness.) The Committee on Advising and Student Life took up this issue and has published some suggestions and guidelines. See “What To Do When Students Miss Graded Work” in Section III of this resource binder or online at wpi.edu/academics/morgan/resources.html.

If you want to ask students for documentation about an illness (“a note from the doctor”), be aware of the limitations. If students visit the WPI Health Services Office, they can pick up a form indicating that they “have been seen,” but the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule prevents the release of more detailed information.
Office Hours
WPI has no institute-wide requirements or guidelines for instructor office hours, but the culture is that some office hours are expected. Please note that a few departments DO have specific guidelines about the number of office hours, so it’s best to check with a colleague in your department. They seem to vary from 2 hours/week to 5 hours/week, or “by appointment. Virtual (online) office hours are not distinguished from face-to-face office hours.

Ombudsperson
The Ombuds Office provides informal, confidential, and impartial complaint-handling services for students, staff, faculty, and administrators. For more information and contact information for current ombudsperson(s), see wpi.edu/offices/ombuds.html.

Online Courses
WPI has a variety of resources to assist instructors who volunteer or are assigned to teach online courses. The Academic Technology Center has an Instructional Designer and several Instructional Technology Specialists who assist with online courses (and f2f and blended courses). Another resource is the Online Steering Committee, a group of faculty and staff. The Chair in 2016-17 is Shams Virani (ssvirani@wpi.edu).

Policies & Compliance
For a complete list and detailed explanation of all of WPI’s policies, see wpi.edu/offices/policies.html. Jon Bartelson, Chief Compliance Officer, is an excellent point of contact for all legal and policy-related questions (jonb@wpi.edu).

Project Advising
Ask your department head and other mentors for advice on when to get involved in MQP and IQP advising since it varies by department. The best way to learn about project advising is to be a co-advisor on a MQP and/or IQP before advising one alone for the first time.

Several Food for Thought seminars offered each year by the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center typically relate to project advising. Handouts from these sessions are archived on the Morgan Center myWPI site. The Morgan Teaching and Learning Center has a presence in both Blackboard and Canvas while WPI switches platforms. Contained within both sites are archives of seminar and workshop materials, example project advising (IQP and MQP) syllabi, and more. Look for the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center link in the Organizations listing on your myWPI/Blackboard home page and/or in your Canvas Dashboard. If you are unable to find the site in Blackboard, go to the Community tab, do a search for Morgan, and enroll. If you are unable to find the site in Canvas, go to your Courses area, click on the "All Courses" link and star the Morgan Center site to display in your Canvas dashboard.

The Interdisciplinary & Global Studies Division (IGSD) oversees the IQP; the interim Dean of the IGSD, Kent Rissmiller (kjr@wpi.edu, x5019, see photo), can help you learn more about IQPs and help you find a project to co-advice when you are ready. There are also project advising resources, including the template for an IQP syllabus, on the IGSD website: wpi.edu/academics/igsd/IQP/. Many of these resources can be easily adapted to MQP advising.

Project Advising Evaluation
The Student Report on IQP Learning and Advising and the Student Report on MQP Learning and Advising are administered when students submit their final reports on the e-projects system. The questions on those forms can be found elsewhere in this resource binder. To access your results, go to
the e-projects page and follow links to IQP Evaluations and MQP Evaluations: wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project.

Project Registration

Project registration (for IQPs and MQPs) is done electronically and must be initiated by the student. Instructions can be found at wpi.edu/offices/registrar/ug-forms.html. Call the Registrar’s Office if you have any difficulties with the process.

Students with Academic Difficulties

Refer students to the Academic Resources Center unit within Academic Advising, which offers one-on-one academic success skills coaching and also coordinates tutoring services and help sessions for large first-year courses. The Center’s website also contains study skills handouts and tips for academic success: wpi.edu/offices/arc/. If you are concerned about the academic progress of a student, contact the Academic Advising Office at x5381 or academic-advising@wpi.edu.

Students with Disabilities

If a student provides documentation from WPI’s Office of Disability Services (ODS) and is approved for accommodations, instructors are required by federal law to provide accommodations with the support of ODS staff and in collaboration with the student. Students are strongly encouraged to disclose to faculty early in the term and must submit a request to ODS that accommodation letters be sent to their professors. Instructors are notified about accommodation letters via an online platform called Clockwork. If a student tells you that s/he has a disability that, without accommodation, will impact their academic performance or participation and does not provide this letter, then you are not obligated to provide accommodations and should refer them to ODS for formal approval.

For more information and resources to support students and facilitate WPI courses in an accessible manner, see wpi.edu/offices/disabilities/faculty.html or contact ODS staff at x4908 or DisabilityServices@wpi.edu. The Syllabus Checklist elsewhere in this binder includes an example syllabus statement about academic accommodations.

Students in Emotional Distress

Please refer students to the Student Development & Counseling Center (SDCC), also known as West Street House. This Center offers counseling services, stress management sessions, and a variety of other holistic student development programs. Charlie Morse (cmorse@wpi.edu, x5540, see photo) directs the SDCC; he and his staff are great sources of advice and feedback.

Another important resource is the WPI Care Team. This group of professional staff meets weekly to receive, consider and, when appropriate, act upon information or behavior(s) of concern exhibited by a student or group of students. If you are concerned about a student or notice distressed, disruptive, or dangerous behaviors, please fill out the form at wpi.edu/offices/dean-of-students/concern.html, and the Care Team will follow up in an appropriate manner.

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Graders

Each department has its own process for assigning TAs, graders, and senior tutors or undergraduate Peer Learning Assistants (PLAs) to courses. If you feel you need more of this type of support, you’ll need to negotiate with your department head. Graduate students with teaching assistantships are expected to work up to 20 hours per week supporting the course(s) to which they are assigned.
Technology Transfer/Intellectual Property & Innovation
The Office of Intellectual Property & Innovation functions to identify, evaluate, protect, classify, market, and license the intellectual property assets developed by WPI researchers, as well as significant users of WPI resources. More information can be found on the office’s website (wpi.edu/offices/ippi.html) or by contacting the Director, Todd Keiller (ipi@wpi.edu, x4907, see photo).

Textbook Orders
Most departments have an administrative assistant who coordinates book orders for department faculty. For questions about textbook costs and availability of digital or print coursepacks, contact the WPI Bookstore Textbook Manager, Jacquie Lucey at jlucey@wpi.edu or x5247. Instructional librarians will also help you identify any available e-books and other resources for your course. The reading list for course packs should be supplied at least one term prior to the course offering. Students benefit from a longer lead time for textbook orders too, since the bookstore can find more used copies.

Thesis and Dissertation Submission Procedures
Graduate student theses and dissertations must be submitted electronically. All submission procedures are compiled at the Electronic Thesis & Dissertations website: wpi.edu/+etd, including links to important submission deadlines. Just as for undergraduate MQPs, the deadlines for May graduation are especially tight!

Tutoring Services
A variety of tutoring and academic success services are available to students in your courses. Information can be found on the Academic Resources Center website (part of Academic Advising): wpi.edu/offices/arc. Call the Academic Advising Office if your students need tutoring services that don’t seem to be available. For writing tutors, see Writing.

Waitlists
Once a class enrollment limit is reached, students may add their names to the waitlist. If a seat becomes available in a waitlisted class, the open seat will be offered via email to the first student on the waitlist. The Registrar’s Office sends students a standard email to which they must respond by the given deadline to claim the seat offered. Even if there appear to be open seats in a course, instructors should NOT offer a student a seat prior to the start of the term since other students may be first in line.

The day before each term starts, waitlists are frozen until the end of the add-drop period (usually 4 days into the term). During this period, if a class has a waitlist then a student must obtain the instructor’s signature on an “Add-Drop Form” in order to be admitted to the class. Students must bring these forms to the Registrar’s Office to be processed. Instructors should feel no pressure to add students beyond a course’s capacity; indeed the capacity is often defined by seating constraints or good pedagogy.

If your class has students on the waitlist, the Registrar will send you an electronic copy (pdf file) of the waitlist that includes the date and time when each student was added to the list. If you are accepting additional students during the first few days of the term, you may wish to do so by order of the waitlist.

Wait list procedures are often adjusted, so watch for an email announcement from the Registrar’s Office or Dean of Undergraduate Studies in case there are changes for the upcoming semester.
Writing Tutors and Teaching with Writing

Trained peer writing tutors are available in WPI’s Writing Center: wpi.edu/writing. These tutors provide workshops and individual peer tutoring in a range of communication projects, such as course papers, dissertations, oral presentations, Spanish language projects, and more, including written, oral, and visual communication. All services are free to undergraduate and graduate students. Ryan Madan (ryanmadan@wpi.edu, x6561, left photo) coordinates the Writing Center. Lorraine Higgins (ldh@wpi.edu, x5503, right photo), Director of Communication Across the Curriculum, is also available to meet with faculty to discuss teaching with writing in courses and projects. Workshops related to Writing Across the Curriculum are a regular part of the Food for Thought teaching & learning seminar series.