DATA SCIENCE

YOU ASKED WE ANSWERED

This document is a compilation of Frequently Asked Questions emailed to the Data Science office by prospective students. If you do not find your question answered here, please email us at datascience@wpi.edu and you'll receive a prompt reply.

1. AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

The purpose of the WPI Data Science application process is to have our faculty determine if you fit the criteria for the program. That determination can only be determined once you have completed and submitted your application.

2. SHOULD I EMAIL MY INFORMATION TO THE DS OFFICE TO GET THEIR OPINION ON MY ELIGIBILTIY?

The staff cannot give opinions on either your eligibility or your possibility of acceptance. That is the purpose of the application, and you'll receive an email reply to that effect.

3. WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

Apply as soon as you feel your application is strong enough, or as soon as possible.

4. WILL MY APPLICATION BE PROCESSED FASTER BY SENDING DIRECTLY TO THE DS OFFICE?

Please do not send your resume, CV, or any official transcripts to the DS office. We just have to forward by inter-office mail to the Graduate Admissions Office and this delays processing by several days. You lose.

5. WHAT ARE THE PRE-REQUISITES FOR HE MASTERS DEGREE IN DATA SCIENCE?

1. An earned Bachelor's Degree	5. Calculus
2. A Quantitative or Computational Background	6. Linear Algebra
3. Programming with Data Structures	7. Basic Statistics
4. Algorithms for Computational Skills	

6. WHAT IF 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 or courses before you are admitted to the DS program. You may take the courses at WPI in conjunction with other DS courses, or you may take the courses, get exceptional grades, and then re-apply.

7. WHAT OTHER CRITERIA DOES THE FACULTY 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*
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*
h. *Maturity*

8. WHAT DOES THE PLAN of STUDY ENTAIL?

The *'Plan of Study'* for both the M.S. and the Ph.D., tracks your course work to ensure that all of your core requirements are fulfilled. It ensures that you stay on track to graduate on time with courses that align with your career goals. https://web.wpi.edu/Images/CM.S./Datascience/M.S._DS_Plan_of_Study(2).pdf

9. WHAT PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES WILL I LEARN?

The Data Science M.S. uses many programming languages but R and python are the most common.

10. THE CLASS I WANT IS FULL! WHAT NOW?

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: You must arrive on the first day of class and politely tell the professor that you are a Data Science student, that you *need* this class, and politely ask to be admitted. 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. WHO IS MY FACULTY ADVISOR? SHOULD I CONTACT HIM/HER BEFORE I START MY FIRST SEMESTER?

You will be assigned a Faculty Advisor in your focus area and you will meet during the Data Science Orientation. It's not necessary to make contact before classes begin as DS students take most of the same classes during the first year of their master's program. Also, before classes begin the faculty are still on vacation and need this time to refresh.

13. HOW LONG IS THE MASTERS IN DATA SCIENCE PROGRAM?

The Masters in Data Science is a two year, or 33 credit program. Some students take longer to complete the program but that depends on visa requirements and lifestyle demands.

https://www.wpi.edu/academics/departments/data-science

14. CAN A WPI M.S. GET A TRANSCRIPT/DIPLOMA SHOWING A CONCENTRATION/DISTINCTION?

No. Only that is only available is as mentioned below.

15. FOR SPECIALIZATIONS LIKE COMPUTER SECURITY, WHAT IS SHOWN ON THE TRANSCRIPT AND DIPLOMA?

Your official diploma will read: "M.S. in Computer Science." The transcript will show your specialization, but not the diploma.

16. IS THE DATA SCIENCE PROGRAM A STEM-DESIGNATED PROGRAM?

Yes, the WPI Data Science Program is **STEM** certified. http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/stem-program.html

17. PLEASE EXPLAIN THE GQP.

GQP is an acronym for the Graduate Qualifying Project or the M.S. practicum. M.S. students may choose to do either a GQP or a Master's Thesis during the last semester of the M.S. program.

https://www.wpi.edu/academics/departments/data-science/graduate-qualifying-project

18. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 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.

19. HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE ACCEPTED FOR EACH COHORT?

The Data Science Program limits each cohort to very strong students. However our cohorts have been growing as the demand for Data Scientists across the globe has increased so dramatically.

20. WILL THERE BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNSHIPS?

Absolutely! Most, if not all of our DS students have internships. They are hired at companies like: Monster.com, ESPN, Kronos, Red Hat, UMass Medical School, Pay Pal, and eBay, Dimensional Insight, iRobot Corporation, Object Edge, etc.

https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/career-development

21. I'VE EARNED A DS GRADUATE CERTIFICATE, CAN THESE CREDITS BE APPLIED TOWARD THE DS M.S.?

Student enrolled in the Certificate program **MUST APPLY** to the masters program *and be accepted*. **All** of the credits

earned in the certificate program may be transferred to the M.S. if it's the same major, i.e., both in Data Science.

22. 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://wpi.edu/academics/datascience/certificate-program.html

24. WOULD THE STUDENT HAVE BOTH? AN "M.S. IN COMPUTER SCIENCE" *AND* A "GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE"?

Yes, but only if a student *first* earns a DS Certificate and *then* subsequently proceeds to earn an M.S.

25. DOES DATA SCIENCE OFFER A PH.D.?

Yes, we have one of the first Ph.D. Programs in the country! http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/phd-program.html

26. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS—PLEASE READ!

International students are expected to take the on-campus version of the degree program **IN WHICH THEY ARE ENROLLED.**

If a student chooses the online option, ***THEY WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR F1 STATUS***.

If a student opts to enroll in an online degree program, they must do so

WHILE REMAINING IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY.

Special exceptions can be made via a formal written petition, if a given course is required for the degree program and no suitable alternative is available in the on-campus program.

However, AT MOST 1 COURSE (up to a maximum of 3 credits) can be taken IN A SINGLE SEMESTER.

27. I ALREADY HAVE MORE THAN ONE WPI MASTERS DEGREE AND A DS MS

A student with one or more WPI master's degrees who is seeking an additional master's degree from WPI may petition to apply *up to nine prior graduate credits* towards the requirements for the subsequent degree.

28. WHERE DO I FIND?

* Data Science web page: http://www.wpi.edu/academics/datascience/degree-requirements.html

* Answers regarding being an international student: http://www.wpi.edu/offices/ih.html

* The application process: http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/application-process.html

* Applying to WPI: http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/faqs.html

* Course catalogue or list of classes I can research? http://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/

* DS Program cost? http://www.wpi.edu/admissions/graduate/financing.html

* The WPI calendar?
  http://www.wpi.edu/Images/CMS/Academics/GR_15-16_with_summer_FINAL.pdf