

Special Programs for New Students

New Student Orientation

During the week prior to classes, the Student Activities Office and the Office of Academic Advising coordinate a comprehensive new student orientation program for all first-year and transfer students. New student orientation provides an introduction to the WPI experience, ranging from academic work and expectations and project-based education, to student life and campus activities. Led by upperclass student team leaders and Insight advisors, new students attend team meetings that are designed to familiarize them with the overall campus environment.

Insight Program

Beginning with New Student Orientation and continuing through the first semester, incoming first year and transfer students are assigned to an Insight Team, a group of students and advisors dedicated to assisting with the transition to college. This group of fellow students and mentors will help new students acclimate both personally and academically, and make the most out of their first year at WPI.

Connections Pre-Orientation

The **Connections Pre-Orientation** is a week-long residential bridge program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) held in August prior to [New Student Orientation \(NSO\)](#) and the [Insight Program](#). Connections helps entering eligible new and first-year students make a smooth transition from high school to college.

The **Connections Academic Immersion Experience** allows new students to have a jump start and introduction to the WPI course structure (in a low stakes environment), an opportunity to meet WPI faculty, and form relationships with peers while learning college study skills and helpful methods for navigating through WPI. Participants who choose to take a summer course in E-Term will also have the opportunity to attend workshops in the Fall semester (A-Term and B-Term) which build upon the experiences and skillsets students bring to WPI and cover additional topics such as faculty and staff mentoring, major exploration, and guidance on course selection. This will be a time to reconnect with your Connections peers and a place to ask those questions you might have.

The Connections Pre-Orientation Program is offered at no cost to pre-registered eligible first-year WPI students. [See the website for more information.](#)

Great Problems Seminars

This is a two course sequence designed to serve as an introduction to project work and university level research with a focus on themes of global importance. Each seminar has at its core an important problem. Students explore the complexity of our global issues, and demonstrate their ability to solve some aspect of the big problem. The skills the students develop are exactly what they need to be successful both in project work at WPI and in their future careers.

Examples: In Food Sustainability, students and faculty focus on issues surrounding food: nutrition, production, economics, and policy issues. Student projects have included plans for urban gardens, extending Meals on Wheels to younger but non-mobile seniors and nutritional information in the dining hall.

In Power the World, the production, distribution and use of all forms of energy and associated ethical issues are reviewed. Student projects have included stove design for indigenous people, improvements on solar-powered emergency medical devices and energy audits of campus buildings.

Themes will change from year to year. Enrollment is limited.

Discovering Majors and Careers

Discovering Majors and Careers is a class for first year students undecided about academic majors. This 1/12 unit course can be taken on top of a regular course load. Students enrolled in this course will utilize a variety of tools including self-assessments, panels, campus resources, and informational interviews with alumni to help identify personal interests, WPI majors, related careers, and life goals.

Additional Resources on the Web

The Undergraduate Programs Web Site
(www.wpi.edu/Academics/Undergraduate/)

The Academic Advising Office (www.wpi.edu/+OAA)

The First Year Web Site (www.wpi.edu/+FYE)