Requirements for Enrollment
Students must complete the admission application for graduate studies in RPTA. In addition, a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.25 and a minimum GPA of 3.25 in the Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration (RPTA) major at Western Illinois University are required to enroll in “bridge” (“B”) courses. Grades of “A” or “B” must be earned in courses taken with the “B” designation.

Most often, students will select up to 9 shr of 400G-level RPTA courses as bridge courses. While any RPTA “G” course can be taken as “B” course, students should meet with the RPTA graduate coordinator to determine which courses best fit their future plans.

Program Availability
Students may complete the integrated degree on the Macomb and/or Quad Cities campus.

Programs of Study
In a world characterized by new technology and rapidly changing human needs, leisure is increasingly recognized for its contribution to a fulfilling life. Through a combination of classroom and experiential learning opportunities, our faculty train tomorrow’s leaders for fulfilling administrative careers in:

- Park districts and public recreation
- Community sport and entertainment

Career Opportunities
Leisure industries are poised to grow greatly within the next 10 years according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Recent RPTA graduates have found employment with:
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- National Park Service
- Entertainment cruises
- Park districts across Illinois
- Hy-Vee
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Country clubs across Illinois
- Mark Twain State Park
- Adventure Works
- Washington state parks
- American Cancer Society
- TOP Golf
- U.S. Forest Service
- George Johnson Development

Admission Requirements
Admission requires a completed bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting body. A cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.75, or undergraduate GPA of 3.0 for the last two years is required for regular admission. Students with lower GPAs may occasionally be considered.

Contact Information
Questions about the program:
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration
(309) 298-1967
rpta@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/rpta

General admission questions:
School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad
admitted on a probationary status if letters of recommendation are outstanding.

Application to the department requires a:
1. Current resume
2. Cumulative GPA of 2.75 overall or 3.0 in the last two years
3. Statement of Intent (a minimum of 500 words and a maximum of 1000 words, double-spaced) that explains:
   • why the student wants to attend Western Illinois University;
   • what previous experiences they have that will contribute to their success in graduate studies; and,
   • how they believe graduate studies in Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration is consistent with their academic emphasis, career aspirations, and/or long-term academic/professional goals.
4. Three letters of recommendation

Featured Integrated Students

My love for the outdoors brought me to the RPTA undergraduate program. I liked it so much I stayed for a master’s degree in RPTA. As a natural resources management student, the Quad Cities program offered coursework and expertise I needed to land my dream job. I currently serve as a natural resource specialist on the mighty Mississippi River, and my professional successes are largely attributed to the terrific coursework and faculty of the RPTA Department.

–Steve Acuff, MS, 2018, USMC Veteran, Natural Resource Specialist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

I chose to do the integrated program because it saved me time, reduced my stress level in grad school, and gave me motivation to continue my education because I already had a jump-start compared to my peers. It gave me more time to focus on finding an awesome internship and making relationships with professionals.

–Tyler Lafferty, MS, 2019

The integrated program within the RPTA Department allowed me to get back on track after falling a year behind when I transferred to WIU my junior year. I was able to choose classes in both undergrad and grad school that I felt would directly contribute to my future career goals, which made it easier to stay engaged and motivated. I highly suggest pursuing the integrated program during your last year of undergrad if you’re even slightly considering completing graduate school!

–Erin Sullivan, MS, 2019

“My love for event planning, tourism and recreation brought me to the RPTA program at WIU. I decided to enroll in the integrated master’s program to further my education in the field. As a graduate student, I have the opportunity to do my graduate assistantship with Davenport Parks and Recreation. I am able to plan events, supervise youth sports and so much more. The integrated master’s program made it an easy transition into graduate school. I am excited to see where this degree will take me in the future.”

–Mary Kate Gassman, MS, 2020