

Integrated Baccalaureate and Master's Degree in Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration



The integrated master's degree program allows Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration (RPTA) undergraduate students at Western Illinois University to take up to 9 semester hours of 400G/B level classes to meet requirements for both the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in RPTA. The integrated program allows students to complete the RPTA master's degree in a shorter period of time and to focus exclusively on their chosen area of practice within the profession.

Requirements for Enrollment

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.

Integrated Degree Requirements

In addition to the 16 semester hours (SH) of core classes required for the master's degree, students accepted into the integrated program are required to take a minimum of 12 SH of Directed Elective courses along with 6 SH toward the exit option. Students may select up to 9 SH of bridge classes from the courses that follow. Only 400G-level RPTA courses can be used as bridge courses.

Students accepted into the integrated program are required to take 16 SH of core classes toward the master's degree:

I. Core Courses (or their equivalent competency): 16 SH

- RPTA 511 Measurement and Statistical Analysis (3 SH)
- RPTA 515 Philosophy of Leisure (3 SH)
- RPTA 522 Seminar in Administration of Leisure Services (3 SH)
- RPTA 526 Fiscal Management in Leisure Services (3 SH)
- RPTA 599 Research Methods in Leisure Services (3 SH)
- RPTA 600 Seminar in Leisure Services (1-3 SH)

II. Directed Electives*: 12 SH

- RPTA 422G/B Advanced Administration of Leisure Services (3 SH)
- RPTA 424G/B Fund Raising and Volunteerism in Leisure Services (3 SH)

- RPTA 428G/B Youth and Leisure Services (3 SH)
- RPTA 446G/B Wilderness Leadership (3 SH)
- RPTA 448G/B Interpretation of Cultural and Environmental Resources (3 SH)
- RPTA 449G/B Management of Outdoor Adventure Recreation (3 SH)
- RPTA 450G/B Traveling Workshops (1-3 SH, repeatable to 6 SH)
- RPTA 451G/B Principles of Therapeutic Recreation (3 SH)
- RPTA 452G/B Leisure Services for the Older Adult (3 SH)
- RPTA 453G/B Clinical Therapeutic Recreation Processes (3 SH)
- RPTA 454G/B Management of Therapeutic Recreation (3 SH)
- RPTA 460G/B Sustainable Tourism Development (3 SH)
- RPTA 461G/B Conference and Convention Planning and Management (3 SH)
- RPTA 462G/B International Tourism (3 SH)
- RPTA 464G/B Groups Tour Planning and Management (3 SH)
- RPTA 465G/B Tourism Destination Promotion (3 SH)
- RPTA 466G/B Resort Management (3 SH)
- RPTA 467G/B Event Planning and Management (3 SH)
- RPTA 481G/B Management of Outdoor Recreation Resources (3 SH)
- RPTA 485G/B Resource Management for Fly Fisheries (3 SH)
- RPTA 487G/B Site Planning in Recreation and Parks (3 SH)
- RPTA 488G/B Park Open Space Planning (3 SH)
- RPTA 489G/B Park Maintenance and Operation Management (3 SH)
- RPTA 490G/B Independent Study (1-3 SH, repeatable to 8 SH)

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

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Higher Education*

Academic Excellence
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III. Select one of the following exit options: 6 SH

- A. Thesis: RPTA 601 Thesis (6 SH)
- B. Graduate Research Project: RPTA 602 Graduate Research Project (6 SH)
- C. Internship: RPTA 603 Professional Internship (6 SH)

Total Program: 34 SH

*“B” courses may be used at the undergraduate level to satisfy the requirements of both the bachelor’s and master’s degrees in RPTA. If taken after the undergraduate degree has been completed, 400-level courses must have the “G” designator.

Featured Alumni

“My love of 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 experience 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

Career Opportunities

Opportunities for advanced study, subject concentration and professional specialization across the broad spectrum of leisure service categories are available to students enrolled in the bridge program. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Adventure recreation
- Camp administration
- Event planning and programming
- Facility and venue management
- Natural resources recreation management
- Outdoor education, cultural and environmental interpretation
- Public recreation
- Youth and human services
- Therapeutic recreation
- Tourism management
- Commercial recreation and fitness

Distinctive Features

- The RPTA department is one of a limited number of departments to hold professional accreditation from the National Recreation and Park Association.
- Established in 1967, the department is a recognized leader in preparing professionals for every aspect of the recreation, parks and leisure services field.



- Opportunities for travel study are integrated into the bridge program.
- Numerous opportunities are available for students to obtain professional qualifications and certifications such as certified outdoor educator, outdoor leader certificate, wilderness first responder, kayak instructor, preparation for National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) certification as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and other certifications relevant to the student’s chosen area of specialization.
- The RPTA department is quite diverse, with graduate faculty possessing international perspectives and considerable professional and personal experience. Graduate students come from Europe, Central and South America and a number of Asian countries.



“Finding the RPTA Department at WIU was the first step in launching me into a whirlwind of professional advancements. Not only did they get me ready to pursue my passion as a young professional in the therapeutic recreation field, they also prepared me to take on the challenges in my life I did not even know were coming. I am honored to be a part of such a diverse family unit and am inspired by the continued support I see them giving to all alumni.”

— Rachel Lenz, MS, 2012, CTRS, CPRP
Executive Director, Macomb, Illinois Park District