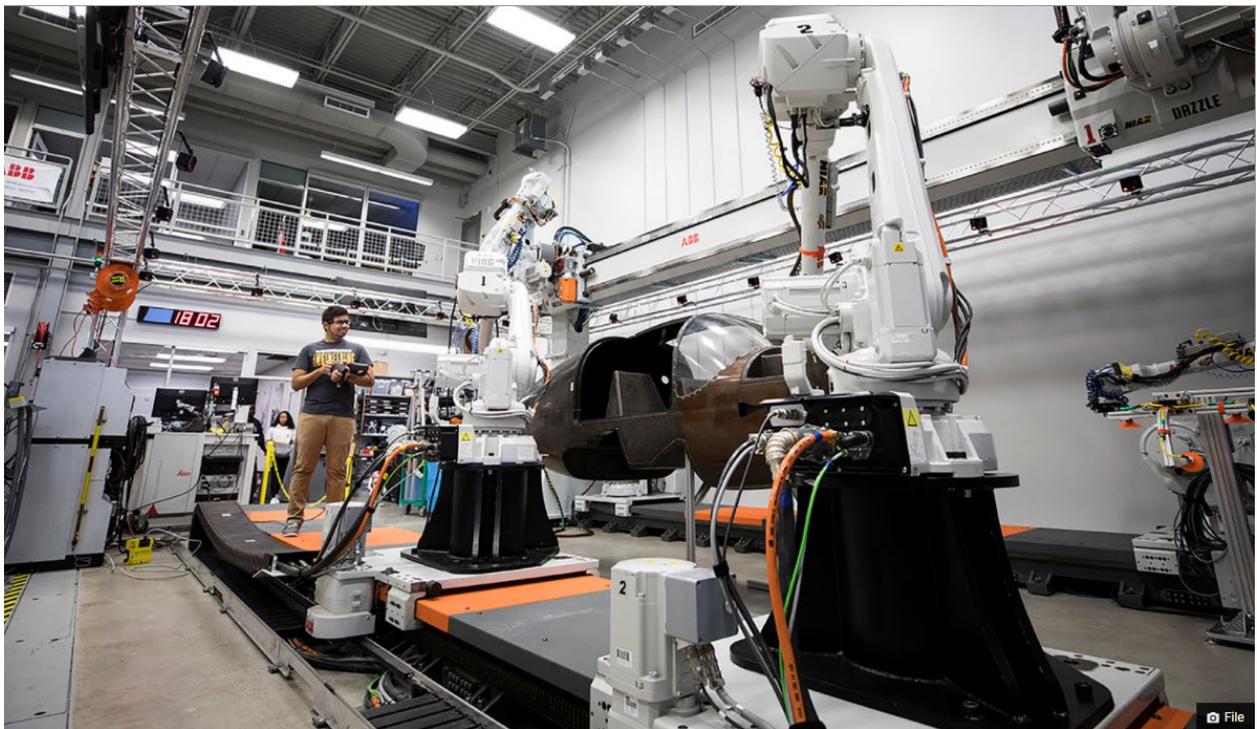


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Wichita State's mechatronics program earns ARM endorsement

By Sara Ornelas, Marketing Content Strategist



Wichita State University's mechatronics program has received an endorsement from the Advanced Robotics Manufacturing Institute, which will likely translate into stronger job prospects for students who graduate from the program.

Wichita State University's partnership with the Advanced Robotics Manufacturing Institute (ARM) has resulted in the [Department of Engineering Technology](#) being among the first programs in the nation to earn an ARM endorsement for their mechatronics track – a certification that will translate to stronger job prospects for graduates.

The endorsement is based on the following benchmark criteria:

- Relevance to the industry
- Effective curriculum
- Efficiency of the training
- Impact of the program
- Program sustainability
- Transportability

“It certifies that our instruction is at a national level of competency, and that the graduates that are coming out of the mechatronics program have a certain set of skills that are appropriate to this industry,” said Dr. Gary Brooking, chair and teaching professor of engineering technology at Wichita State. “When students earn a bachelor’s degree, it doesn’t really tell an employer what set of skills he or she has. This is more specific to say that they’ve got a degree with this precise skillset, which is robotics.”

The ARM Institute is the nation’s leading collaborative in robotics and workforce innovation, working at the confluence of industry, government, and academia. Structured as a public-private partnership, the ARM Institute and its member organizations catalyze robotic technologies and education solutions to strengthen the U.S. industrial base and secure U.S. manufacturing resiliency.

The inaugural group of ARM-endorsed schools includes three levels of education: Wichita State as a four-year university, [WSU Tech](#) as a technical college, and Horizon Science Academy — a high school in Columbus, Ohio, that focuses on math, science, and technology.

These endorsed organizations will be highlighted on www.roboticscareer.org, a federally funded, national online database that connects students and workers with leading robotics education programs for manufacturing careers.

“The ARM Institute is delighted to recognize these stellar programs and institutions that are doing an outstanding job preparing the manufacturing workforce for robotics and automation jobs,” said Linda Wood, senior certification manager at the ARM Institute. “Our endorsement program makes it easy for education or job seekers to find the programs that best prepare them for a rewarding career in advanced manufacturing.”

The endorsement also furthers Wichita State’s commitment to fueling the talent pipeline to meet the employment needs of Kansas’ businesses.

“Wichita State’s collaboration with the ARM Institute has enabled WSU and WSU Tech to invest in programs and solutions that support our regional manufacturers’ need for skilled robotics technicians and engineers and make resources available to students and workers on career opportunities in the growing robotics and automation fields,” said Debra Franklin, associate vice president for Strategic Initiatives at Wichita State.

The ARM endorsement also ties into the university's [applied learning objectives](#), said Chris Rees, assistant educator in the Department of Engineering Technology.

“What we’re doing is getting external bodies endorsing what we do so that our students are coming out more prepared for what industry is looking for,” he said.

Furthermore, students who graduate with the ARM endorsement will have an advantage over their peers.

“The ARM Institute has established itself as one of the leading organizations in the world of robotics and automation technology,” said Curtis Richardson, Technician Fellow for Spirit AeroSystems and a Wichita State alumnus with a bachelor’s degree in aerospace engineering and master’s degree in industrial engineering. “Companies serious about hiring the very best robotics technicians and engineers will recognize their endorsement as an authoritative statement of the quality of the program the students have completed. The ability to point to a third-party endorsement like this that recognizes the industry relevance of their degree should feel confidence that they will stand out amongst their peers when looking for employment.”