NOW IS YOUR MOMENT

Get yourself ready to apply to a University of Wisconsin campus

apply.wisconsin.edu
College is coming up faster than you think. On August 1, all University of Wisconsin System campuses are open for admissions. Let’s get you ready to apply.

Good things start now

We’re here to make things easier. We put this workbook together to help get your application prepared, and we’ve got the whole summer to get it right. Ready? Let’s get started.

Not just for early birds

Your application is just the first step. The sooner you apply, the sooner you’ll know where you’re going to college. And once you know, you can start getting ready for a whole new world. There will be plenty to keep you busy: making the most of your senior year and getting a jump on all the things you’ll need to get ready for college. Don’t wait. Your future self will thank you!

This workbook is designed to take you step-by-step to August 1, when you can submit applications to your UWs. You’ll find helpful advice on choosing your UWs, applying, and even preparing for life after high school.

Feeling lost? We’re here to help (it’s literally our name). We’re UW HELP and you can call us any time at 1-800-442-6459 and we’ll get you back on track. It’s our job to make it easy for you to find, choose, and apply to the right University of Wisconsin campuses.
Chances are by now, you already know which UWs are right for you. But if not, we get it — with 26 UWs to choose from, it can be pretty hard to decide. This workbook can help.

Each UW has its own specialties and areas of study. They stretch across every corner of the state, with campuses big and small. Take a moment to get to know them all. We bet you’ll find a few UWs fit you better than you thought.

Need to find your perfect UW? There’s an app for that. We created UW Journey to help students just like you explore and discover which UWs are right for you.

UW Journey is your all-in-one guide to finding your perfect UW. Explore and compare campuses, navigate the application process, and learn about options to pay for college.

uwjourney.wisconsin.edu
Free to download, free to use.
CONSIDER THIS!

There’s a lot to consider when choosing your UW. What’s important to one person won’t be important to the next. Think about the subjects you want to study and the type of degree you need. Then, consider the activities you enjoy, the size and location of the campus, class size, housing options, tuition, and proximity to home. What’s most important to you?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO STUDY?

You’ll get a great education at any UW. But some UWs will let you dive deeply into the subjects that naturally interest you. Even if you don’t know what you want to major in, it’s really helpful to think about what you might want to study.

Which subjects interest you?

Tip

Choosing a major now doesn’t mean it’s set in stone. You can always change your mind. Think of it as simply choosing a direction: the best adventures start when you head off toward something you’ve always wanted to explore.

The truth about majors

Here’s the deal. Across the country, schools often use slightly different names for the same majors. For example, a major in Accounting at one campus might be called Finance at another. That can make it challenging to find what you’re looking for. So, how do you find out which campuses are a good academic fit? We have two recommendations.

1. Keep it simple

Don’t get caught up trying to cross-reference majors across campuses. All you really want to know is if a campus will let you study the things that interest you. The UW Journey app is great for that, or search and filter for a UW program of interest to you here: applywisconsin.edu/find-a-program.

2. Ask

Every UW will work with you to make sure you get the education you need. Once you have narrowed your choices down, ask your UWs what majors they offer in your area of interest. Then, you can compare actual classes to see which UWs sound most interesting.
2 or 4?

Now, ask yourself what kind of college education is right for you?

The two-year UWs

Our two-year campuses can be the perfect place to start, with lower costs and smaller class sizes. They have simpler admission standards and consider non-academic factors. Earn an associate degree and/or make a plan with your academic advisor about how to earn credits that you can transfer directly to UW’s four-year universities.

Some two-year campuses offer a select number of bachelor’s degree programs.

The four-year UWs

Our four-year universities give you a comprehensive, rigorous education. Earn a bachelor’s degree that positions you for an advanced professional career or graduate-level studies. These campuses have higher standards for admission and take into consideration the full breadth and diversity of your experiences.

CHOOSE YOUR UWs

STEP 01

4-yr university

2-yr campus

Campus affiliation
There are thirteen 2-year and thirteen 4-year campuses in the UW System. We invite you to dig in and research. Which ones are the best for you?
As you get to know each campus, you can use this chart to help rank what each one has to offer you. Score each campus on a scale of 1 to 5 (1—does not fit me, 5—totally fits me). Then, add up the total for each campus to see which might be a good fit.

Once you’ve narrowed things down, write them here.

**My Safe Bet School:**

It has what I need and can launch me to my next step.

**My Stretch School:**

Sure it might be hard to get into, but it would be amazing.

**My Sweet Spot School:**

I can totally see myself here.
Once you know where you want to apply, you can start preparing your application. You’ll need to gather up some information and write a great essay. Then, on August 1, you can apply online to all your UWs at once using the UW System Application in less than 30 minutes.

Tip
Sure, your UWs will look at your grades. But that’s just a tiny part of what makes you a good candidate. They’ll look closely at your essay, your background, activities, extracurriculars, community involvement, and more to get a clear picture of the whole you. They can’t wait to meet you.

Admission guidelines
Want to know how competitive your UWs will be? This chart shows the average GPA for freshmen at each campus. Remember, that means the GPAs represent just the middle 50% of students. The average for 25% of admitted students was lower and 25% was higher.

Many high schools consider GPA on different scales and some do not report GPA or class rank at all. Each UW campus will consider both GPA and rank in the context of your school.

No ACT or SAT requirement
ACT and SAT scores are suspended as part of the application review process for all UW System campuses through the 2024-2025 academic year. You do not have to submit ACT or SAT scores, but they are optional to send in for consideration.

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<td>UW-GREEN BAY</td>
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<td>UW-Green Bay, Manitowoc Campus</td>
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<td>UW-Green Bay, Marinette Campus</td>
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<td>UW-Green Bay, Sheboygan Campus</td>
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<td>UW-LA CROSSE</td>
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<td>UW-MILWAUKEE</td>
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<td>UW-Milwaukee at Waukesha</td>
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<td>UW-Oshkosh, Fox Cities Campus</td>
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<td>UW-RIVER FALLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>UW-Whitewater at Rock County</td>
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WRITE YOUR UW ESSAY

It doesn’t get said enough, but your UWs are literally looking for reasons to admit you. That’s why they ask for an essay. They simply want to hear about you.

You’re more than just facts and figures

Your application is a lot like a resume, with dry lists of dates, grades, and achievements. But the essay is different. It’s your opportunity to shine through. Your UWs want to hear about the whole you — from the little victories, stumbles, and lessons learned to what makes you excited for college and life after high school.

Take your time. Give it some thought, share it with a few people you trust, and revise. In the end, it’ll be worth it.

All campuses ask the following question:

This part is all about you. Tell us about something you’ve done — academically or personally — and what you’ve learned from it. Was it a success or a challenge? Did it represent a turning point in your life? How did this particular moment in your life influence you, and how will it continue to influence you as you pursue your college education?

If you apply to UW-La Crosse or UW-Madison, you’ll need to answer a second question as well:

UW-La Crosse

Please respond to ONE of the following: How will your life experiences, commitments, and/or characteristics enrich the UW-La Crosse campus community? OR Tell us why you are interested in attending UW-La Crosse and what aspects of the campus are especially important to you.

UW-Madison

Tell us why you would like to attend the University of Wisconsin—Madison. In addition, please include why you are interested in studying the major(s) you have selected. If you selected undecided, please describe your areas of possible academic interest.
IT’S ALL ABOUT YOU!

Did you notice anything? The essay questions aren’t made to weed you out. They’re designed to give a little glimpse of the human being behind the application.

Your UWs realize you’re still young. You’re a work in progress. That means no matter how well you did in high school, what matters most is the challenges you faced and how you responded.

It’s also worth saying that while your instincts probably tell you to puff up your accomplishments and go big, bragging is never interesting. Give yourself permission to just be you when you write. Write like you, about you.

Here are some questions to get you started.

What are your 2 biggest academic achievements?

What are your 2 biggest personal achievements?

What are your 2 biggest strengths?

What were your 2 biggest challenges?

What are the 2 biggest obstacles you’ve overcome (and how did you do it)?

What are your 2 biggest failures (and what did you learn)?

What beliefs have you challenged (why, and what did you learn)?

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Essay basics

- Write your essay in a program like Microsoft Word or Google Docs so you can simply copy and paste it into your online application.
- Keep your essay between 250 and 650 words (UW–Madison requires all essays to strictly follow these guidelines).
- Ask a friend or teacher to look for inconsistencies, grammatical mistakes, and typos.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread. You don’t want some small mistake to accidentally make it look like you don’t care.
- Proofread again.

Essay Tips

- Tell your UWs something about yourself that you can’t capture in the application.
- Jump off the bandwagon. Don’t write what you think your UWs will want to hear. Let your UWs know about what drives you.
- Use your own voice. Ask someone you trust to read your essay to see if it “sounds like you.”
- Be short and sweet. Clear, concise writing matters more than length.
- Show, don’t tell. Be specific and factual.
- Write about your real life. Don’t exaggerate or embellish (You’d be surprised at how well your UWs can smell baloney).
- Be confident. Skip all the maybes, sort ofs, I thinks, and so on.
YOUR SUMMER CHECKLIST

Here’s a handy checklist of all the things you’ll need to have on hand when you fill out your application on August 1.

☐ BASICS
  Social Security Number (optional)
  City, state, and country of birth
  Country of citizenship
  Do your parents/guardians have four-year college degrees?

☐ PREFERRED MAJOR (OPTIONAL)
  Some majors may require you to select a specific emphasis or concentration

☐ RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES
  Ask your parent or guardian the following questions:
  Have they filed Wisconsin income tax returns within the past two years?
  Do they work in a state besides Wisconsin?
  Was Wisconsin the last place they registered to vote or voted?
  Do they hold a valid Wisconsin driver’s license?

☐ PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)
  Have your parents/guardians served in the military?
  Parent/guardian email
  Parent/guardian phone number

☐ UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT
  A PDF copy of your unofficial high school transcript

☐ COURSE LIST
  Your senior schedule—either:
  » A PDF copy of your senior year schedule or unofficial transcript listing senior year courses, or
  » A list of your courses for senior year, with credits per course, so you can manually enter them in your application

☐ COLLEGE COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL (IF APPLICABLE)
  A PDF copy of your unofficial college transcript, or a list of the college courses you are taking during your senior year to manually enter including course title, course number, and course credits

☐ EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
  List of academic activities, sporting activities, etc. Include for each activity:
  » Grades during which you participated
  » Level of participation in each activity
  » Leadership roles and awards received in each activity
  » Whether you intend to continue in these activities in college

☐ EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (OPTIONAL)
  You can upload a PDF of your resume or enter the information into your online application. Make sure you include the following information for each job:
  » Employer name(s)
  » City and state
  » Job title
  » Whether you are currently employed and start date
  » Average number of hours worked per week

☐ COMPLETED ESSAY(S)
  Essay questions can be found in the Write Your UW Essay section in Step 2 of this workbook

☐ APPLICATION FEE
  The UW System application has a no-cost undergraduate application fee except for the following campuses that require a fee unless students qualify for a fee waiver based on financial hardship. You can self report the need for an app fee waiver on the application
  » UW-Eau Claire ($25)
  » UW-Eau Claire – Barron County ($25)
  » UW-La Crosse ($25)
  » UW-Madison ($60)

☐ SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS

  Campus name
  Date submitted

Letter of recommendation

A letter of recommendation is not required for admission to a UW campus except UW-Madison, which requires a single letter from an academic source like a teacher or counselor.
This is it!
On August 1, you can start your application. Just visit apply.wisconsin.edu and click the big red “Create an Account and Get Started” button, then follow along.

Hopefully, after all your hard work getting ready, applying should be pretty easy. But we do get a number of students each year who get stuck. If it happens to you, please reach out to us at UW HELP at 1-800-442-6459 or apply@uwsa.edu and we’ll get you on your way. In the meantime, here are a few bonus tips!

Use a good email address
You should use an email address you know you will have access to in the future. For example, try not to use your high school email address because you probably won’t be able to access it after you graduate.

Selecting a major
- Each campus might describe their majors differently (apply.wisconsin.edu/find-a-program).
- Search alphabetically, by Career Cluster, or using the search bar.

Major emphases and concentrations
- Some majors require you also choose a specific emphasis or concentration for your study. For example, Engineering may require you to specify Mechanical or Electrical Engineering.

Uploading documents
There are four types of files you can upload to help speed up your application process: your high school transcript, your high school schedule, your college course schedule (if you took any college courses in high school), and your resume (not required). Each file needs to be saved as a PDF and under 10 MB.

Applying to multiple campuses
You can apply to multiple UW campuses at the same time. You’ll still customize your application for each campus, but you won’t have to re-enter all your details like transcripts and personal information. At the end of your first application, simply click the “Apply to More Campuses” button and you’ll be on your way.
YOU DID IT!

Take a moment to pat yourself on the back. Now comes the good stuff, making the most of your senior year and getting ready for life after high school.

Your UW Journey has begun!

After you apply

Once you submit your applications, you’re connected with your UWs. You can call them directly if you have any questions. They’d love to hear from you. They’ll also let you know about your application status and anything they might need from you.

Campus contacts and timelines

Need to reach out to your UWs? You can find a handy list of contacts on the UW HELP website at uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/campus-contacts

Anxious to hear back from your UW? You can see when your campus’ admissions office will start reviewing applications and how long their review process takes once they receive everything they need from you at uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/application-review-timetable

All the little details

Almost every campus will have at least a few documents they’ll need from you before they can fully review your application. Use this chart to make sure you get all your T’s crossed and I’s dotted:

Official high school transcripts

Your UW may request your official high school transcript, and GED or HSED students should submit a copy of their diploma and test scores.

Official college transcripts

If you took college credits in high school, you’ll need to send official transcripts to your UWs.

ACT or SAT scores

ACT and SAT scores are suspended as part of the application review process for all UW System campuses through the 2024-2025 academic year. You do not have to submit ACT or SAT scores, but they are optional to send in for consideration.

Letter of recommendation (UW-Madison only)

Not required for admission to a UW campus, except UW-Madison, which requires a single letter from an academic source. After you submit your application, your next steps PDF will outline how to submit a letter of recommendation.

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<th>ACT OR SAT SCORES</th>
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<th>LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION (UW-MADISON ONLY)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitted</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Submitted</td>
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</table>
College credits

Did you know you can earn real college credits while you’re still in high school? You can take Advanced Placement (AP) classes, International Baccalaureate (IB) classes, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) classes, or even enroll in actual college courses through Wisconsin’s Early College Credit Program (ECCP).

The credits you earn transfer directly to any UW campus, saving you real money, and keeping you challenged and engaged.

Find out more about high school college credit opportunities at: uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/prep-for-college/credits

15 to Finish

While you’re getting a jump on things, it’s a good time to start planning out how you will approach your courses in college too. If you want to get your bachelor’s degree in four years, or your associate degree in two, you’ll need to average 15 credits per semester (or 30 credits per year) to graduate on time. That’s good to know early, so you can start strong and plan how to keep on track.

Learn more at: wisconsin.edu/15toFinish

Why is 15 to Finish important?

Sure, it puts momentum on your side. But students who average 15 credits per semester also get better grades and are more likely to graduate. Think of it like a huge leg up that saves you money on your education and helps launch you to your career.

Credit requirements

No matter what else you do, make sure you use your senior year to meet the admission requirements for your UW.

At a minimum, all UW campuses require at least 17 college preparatory credits in high school. You can see the specific guidelines for each campus by clicking the Requirements tab at: uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/admission-guidelines/freshman

Check off the credits you have completed:

SOCIAL SCIENCE (3 REQUIRED)
For example: American Government, History, Geography

NATURAL SCIENCE (3 REQUIRED)
For example: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science

MATH (3 REQUIRED)
Including one year of Algebra and Geometry

ENGLISH (4 REQUIRED)
For example: English, Composition, Literature, Speech

ELECTIVES (4 REQUIRED)
For example: Band, Computer Science, Fine Art

SINGLE WORLD LANGUAGE (2 REQUIRED FOR UW-MADISON ONLY)

15 to Finish

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For example: English, Composition, Literature, Speech

ELECTIVES (4 REQUIRED)
For example: Band, Computer Science, Fine Art

SINGLE WORLD LANGUAGE (2 REQUIRED FOR UW-MADISON ONLY)
College is a huge investment. But there are ways to make it more affordable.

The best way to start? By getting a good handle on what you need to budget. You can get up-to-the-minute costs for tuition, housing, meal plans and supplies using UW HELP’s Budget Builder:

[Link to UW HELP’s Budget Builder](uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/budget-builder)

Sharpen your pencils and let’s get budgeting!

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### Non-resident tuition agreements

Wisconsin and Minnesota have a tuition reciprocity agreement. This means residents of one state can attend a public college in the other state for the same tuition as an in-state resident.

Some UW campuses also participate in other nonresident tuition-reduction programs. Learn more at: [uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/nonresident-tuition](uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/nonresident-tuition)

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### Costs Table

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**Total cost of attendance**

$ $ $
HOW TO AFFORD YOUR DREAMS

Now that we know how much money you’ll need, let’s explore ways to make college affordable.

Start here

The federal government is the largest source of student financial aid. Start by seeing if you qualify for federal assistance — complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Almost every campus awards some aid to FAFSA applicants, as well as to students based on their application for admission. You can list up to 10 colleges on your FAFSA of where your information will be sent. FAFSA opens on October 1.

FAFSA Checklist

1. Find the FAFSA code for your UWs in the campus guide section of Step 1 in this workbook.
2. Apply for FAFSA at fafsa.gov before the preferred filing date and include your campus’ FAFSA code.

If you have questions, we encourage you to reach out to the financial aid office at your UW directly. Contact information for each office can be found at: uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/pay-for-college/about-financial-aid/

Grants and scholarships

Grants and scholarships are ideal because they provide money for college that you do not need to repay. They are awarded by federal and state government, community, campus, and private organizations based on financial need, academic merit, or other specific criteria. Your high school counselor is a great person to talk to about finding grant and scholarship opportunities in your community.

There are a huge number of grant and scholarship opportunities out there for you to seek out. Below is a list of great opportunities to explore:

- You can find quick links to campus-specific scholarship opportunities at: uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/scholarship-chart
- Wisconsin provides a remarkably good list of state resources at: heab.state.wi.us/programs.html
- There are a few reputable sources online, like fastweb.com, for finding scholarship opportunities (but watch out for scams!).
- PELL grants are awarded to almost 10 million students annually, based on financial need.
- SEOG are special grants for students with strong financial need, with priority given to PELL awardees.
- Check with organizations in your community, like churches, businesses, foundations, and even your parents’ employers. It never hurts to ask what’s available.
There are a number of other ways to make college affordable as well.

Loans
Loans are money you borrow. They must be repaid in full and typically include interest payments. Government loans typically have lower interest rates than private loans.

Student employment and work study
Talk to your campus financial aid office about finding work study. Wages vary, of course, but most students average 15 hours/week and earn about $3,000/year.

National Community Service Programs
Community service jobs like AmeriCorps can provide stipends for education in exchange for a commitment to serve in your community after graduation.

Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC)
ROTC programs offer more than military training and experience. Participants in Army, Air Force, or Navy-Marine ROTC programs may be eligible for scholarships and monthly stipends. Learn more at: uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/rotc

Tips
• Start soon, and plan to give it some time. Applying can take a while, so it pays to get started as early as you can!
• Keep your head up. The more you apply, the more chances you have to succeed. And expect more than a few nos on your way to all your yeses.
• Line up your letters of recommendation early.
• Remember, the smaller scholarships — they can add up.
• Sharpen your writing pen — a lot of scholarships require essays. Don’t be afraid to rework your essays for multiple applications.
• Stay organized! Deadlines count. Make a schedule and stick to it.

For more information, check out the campus Financial Aid office at your UW or visit us at: uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/pay-for-college/financial-resources

Now that you know your budget and your total award for each campus, take the time to see how much you will need to cover to attend each of your UWs. Students will often take private loans, summer jobs, or family contributions to cover the difference. Subtract your total costs from your total awards to see what funds you will still need to attend.
YOUR UW JOURNEY

If you have any questions, you can always reach out to us at UW HELP.

That’s why we’re here.

HAS BEGUN!

PHONE 1-800-442-6459
EMAIL apply@uwsa.edu
WEB uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/contact

Data in this publication is from the 2021-2022 academic year.