

# Financial Aid 2026-27 GRADUATE CHECKLIST

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## **Complete the FAFSA at Studentaid.gov**

- You must create an FSA User ID and password if you don't already have one.
- You must submit the completed 2026-27 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which is available starting October 2025. Be sure to include UWL's school code, 003919.
- We recommend you apply as soon as possible, although the FAFSA can be completed throughout the upcoming academic year.

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## **Know your cost to attend UWL**

- Estimate your cost at [www.uwlax.edu/cost](http://www.uwlax.edu/cost)

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## **Submit any additional documentation requested by the UWL Financial Aid Office**

- We will send you an email when we receive your FAFSA which will let you know if we need any additional documentation from you. Be sure to check the "To Do" section of your UWL WINGS Student Center.

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## **Submit a completed Summer Aid Application**

- Complete this application if you will be enrolled in the Summer semester and wish to have an aid offer arranged for the term. It will be added to your To Do list in WINGS for you to complete after you have submitted your 2026-27 FAFSA and have registered for your summer courses.

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## **Your financial aid offer**

- Students will receive an email notification when their aid offers for the Summer term, as well as the Fall 2026/Spring 2027 academic year, are available in their WINGS Student Center where you are able to accept, decline, or reduce the aid being offered.
- The Summer semester will have a separate offer. Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans borrowed in the Summer term count towards the annual federal loan limit for the academic year.
- After Summer aid is processed, the Fall/Spring academic year aid offer is made. Any Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans accepted for the Fall/Spring academic year are split into two even disbursements between the Fall and Spring terms.
- Review the "Guide to Your Graduate Financial Aid Offer", available at [uwlax.edu/financialaid/actions/accept-decline-my-financial-aid-award/](http://uwlax.edu/financialaid/actions/accept-decline-my-financial-aid-award/) for more detailed information about the aid offered.

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## **Information on Federal Direct Unsubsidized student loans**

- Graduate students are NOT eligible for Subsidized Federal Direct student loans. Instead, graduate students are eligible only for Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans. Unsubsidized Loans begin to accrue interest starting at the time of disbursement. Repayment begins after the 6-month grace period ends. The grace period begins at graduation or when at least half-time enrollment ends. Interest or principal payments can be made earlier without penalty.
- Eligibility for an Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loan requires at least 5 graduate credits of enrollment each term. If enrolled in less than 5 credits for some reason, a private student loan may be an option.
- For the 2026-2027 award year (Summer 2026, Fall 2026, Winter Intersession 2027, and Spring 2027) the annual borrowing limit in Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans for a graduate student is \$20,500 total. This means that between these semesters, the most a graduate student can borrow in Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans is a combined total of \$20,500. Additionally, there is an aggregate borrowing limit for graduate students seeking Federal Direct Unsubsidized student loans. More information on aggregate borrowing limits can be found at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov).
- The interest rate for graduate level Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans disbursed between July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026 was fixed at 7.94%. The rate for July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027 will be determined in late May or June of 2026.

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## **Additional steps: Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans**

- If you are a first-time Federal Direct/Stafford loan borrower (or have not borrowed since 1996), you must complete the Federally required Entrance Loan Counseling (ELC). Additionally, unless you have borrowed a Federal Direct loan in the last 10 years, you must complete a Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN).
- Both the Entrance Loan Counseling and Direct Loan Master Promissory Note requirements can be completed at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov) using your FSA ID username and password.

## Welcome to UWL!

The UWL Financial Aid Office is here to help you navigate your way through the financial aid process. Visit [uwlax.edu/financialaid](http://uwlax.edu/financialaid)



Check out the **UWL Scholarship Resource Center** for information about our private scholarship database, a variety of helpful workshops and application review assistance. Visit [www.uwlax.edu/scholarships](http://www.uwlax.edu/scholarships)



Find helpful information on college and finances provided through the **UWL It Make\$ Cents! Financial Literacy Program**. Information on budgeting, credit, saving, banking, investing, protections and how to pay for college is available at [www.uwlax.edu/it-makes-cents](http://www.uwlax.edu/it-makes-cents)

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### Financial Aid Disbursed

- If all necessary requirements have been completed, financial aid funds are disbursed around the first day of classes each semester. Funds will be electronically credited to your university bill.
- All financial aid proceeds are applied first to the student's university bill. If there are funds left over after all eligible charges are paid, a refund is created. To set-up your refund preference go to your WINGS Student Center and under the "Finances" section click the "Student Choice Refund" link. Setting up direct deposit is highly recommended. More information on student refunds can be found by contacting the UWL Cashier's Office, or by visiting their website at [www.uwlax.edu/cashiers/refunds/](http://www.uwlax.edu/cashiers/refunds/).
- Students are responsible for paying their bill regardless of when their financial aid comes in.

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### Other Funding Options

- Once the annual limit of \$20,500 in Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loans is exhausted, there may be an amount listed on your aid offer labeled as "Only Private Loan Eligible". This line is informational only and notifies you of the option to apply for an additional private loan if needed.
- Only borrow what you need. Visit [uwlax.edu/finaid/info/types-of-aid/loans](http://uwlax.edu/finaid/info/types-of-aid/loans) for additional information.
- An application is required and is typically available on the website of each lender. Approval by the lender is required in order to borrow. Approval, rates, and fees for these loans are based on a credit check conducted by the lender. Interest accrues from the time of disbursement. Interest rates can often be either fixed or variable. Repayment timing and plans are specific to each lender. Additional information on private loans can be found at [www.uwlax.edu/finaid/info/private-student-loans/](http://www.uwlax.edu/finaid/info/private-student-loans/).

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### Other important information/links

- Scholarship information can be found online at [www.uwlax.edu/scholarships/](http://www.uwlax.edu/scholarships/). Consider applying for UWL Foundation Scholarship opportunities annually. Additional information and applications can be found online at the link above. The application window typically opens October 1st and runs through January 15. The UWL Scholarship Resource Center also maintains a database and has additional information on private/outside scholarship opportunities. Use your WINGS Student Center to report any private scholarships you have been awarded.
- The Advanced Opportunity Program grant is a need-based grant for WI resident students who are from traditionally underrepresented minority and non-minority groups. Visit your specific graduate program website under the Financial Aid section for more information and to apply.
- If you are a Minnesota resident, complete the 2026-27 reciprocity application prior to the start of classes at [ohe.mn.gov/paying-college/other-ways-pay/tuition-reciprocity](http://ohe.mn.gov/paying-college/other-ways-pay/tuition-reciprocity). This application should be available starting spring 2026. If your program starts in Summer 2026, you will also need to complete the 2025-26 reciprocity application. For more information on Minnesota tuition reciprocity, please visit [www.uwlax.edu/cashiers/tuition-and-billing/reciprocity/](http://www.uwlax.edu/cashiers/tuition-and-billing/reciprocity/).

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### Setting up a FERPA Pin

- The FERPA Act of 1974 protects the privacy of student records, including those created and maintained by the Financial Aid Office. To comply with FERPA, students must verify their identity when contacting UWL offices and discussing personal and confidential information. Students contacting UWL offices remotely, such as through a phone call, must provide their student ID number and another piece of identifiable information, such as the six-digit FERPA Secure PIN available in their WINGS Student Center. UWL encourages students to create a FERPA Secure PIN to help protect their student records from being released to the wrong person.
- The UWL Financial Aid Office is not able to discuss your information with your parents, spouse, or other individuals without your written permission. You may create a FERPA Secure PIN to give to a third party, such as parents or guardians, to allow UWL staff to release the details of your records to the person with the PIN. You can find more information on [www.uwlax.edu/records/ferpa/](http://www.uwlax.edu/records/ferpa/).

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