Request a Department of Education Personal Identification Number (PIN). PINs are available at www.pin.ed.gov. Both the student applicant and at least one parent will need to request a PIN.

File student (and spouse) federal taxes. If your 2013 federal taxes are filed online, within 1-2 weeks after filing, you should be able to retrieve your federal tax data right into your FAFSA. This option will streamline and expedite the processing of your financial aid application.

Submit the completed FAFSA. Complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov and be sure to include UW-L’s School Code, 003919. We strongly recommend that you use the IRS Data Retrieval option. In order to successfully use this option, you must have a federal tax return filed with the IRS, have a valid Social Security Number, a US Dept. of Education Personal Identification Number (PIN), and have an unchanged marital status since December 31, 2013. When completing the tax information on the FAFSA, indicate “Already Filed” and select the IRS Data Retrieval option.

It is recommended that you submit the FAFSA shortly after acceptance to UW-L in order to be considered for all programs, although the FAFSA can be completed throughout the academic year. Make sure your Social Security Number is correct on all forms.

Submit a completed Summer School Application if you will be attending at least half time in the summer and wish to receive financial aid in the summer. Remember that any Direct loans taken during the summer will reduce your eligibility during the academic year.

Apply for UW-L Scholarships. Information about available institutional scholarships is available at http://foundation.uwlax.edu. Applications must be submitted by February 15.

Check with your graduate program to see if they offer graduate assistantships or non-resident tuition waivers. Each program’s graduate aid amount is different and some may have a separate application process.

Submit any additional forms specifically requested by the UW-L Financial Aid Office. When the results of your FAFSA are received by the Financial Aid Office, you will be sent an email. This email will also indicate whether there is additional documentation required from you. Any requested items will be listed in the “To-Do” section of your WINGS Student Center, https://wings.uwlax.edu.

View your financial aid award on-line. All students will receive an email notification when their award is available to accept on their WINGS Student Center. You are able to accept, decline or reduce the aid offered. Click on the name of the award for more information about each award type.

Review the “Guide To Your Financial Aid Award” for the upcoming academic year, available at www.uwlax.edu/finaid/awardinfo.html. Note the information regarding “Other Financing Options.”

Complete a Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Entrance Loan Counseling (ELC). If you are a first-time borrower receiving a Federal Direct Loan, the Direct Loan MPN and ELC must be completed before your loan can be applied to your student bill. Links for both of these requirements can be found at www.uwlax.edu/finaid/Quicklinks.html. If you may also borrow a PLUS loan you may want to complete the counseling the covers Direct and PLUS loans.

Activate your Tower One Card. This is also your student ID card. You should receive the card after you have been to campus to have a photo taken or sent a photo to the Tower One Office. All financial aid proceeds are applied first to the student’s university bill. If funds remain after the bill is paid in full, a refund is generated. When you activate your Tower One Card, you must choose one of three options for the handling of the refund: funds are applied to your Tower One debit account; funds are transferred to your personal bank (an ACH transfer); or a paper check is mailed to you.

Print and submit a Federal Graduate PLUS Loan Request Form. After reviewing the “Other Financing Options” some graduate students choose to take out a Federal Grad PLUS Loan. You must also complete a Grad PLUS Loan Master Promissory Note (Grad PLUS MPN), available at www.uwlax.edu/finaid/graduateplusloans1314.html. The maximum that can be borrowed in a Grad PLUS Loan is indicated on your award as “Your Other Loan Eligibility-G”. Not all graduate students will have other loan eligibility. Some student’s eligibility will be met by Direct unsubsidized loans.

Complete and submit the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Release Form (optional). The FERPA Act of 1974 protects the privacy of student records, including those created and maintained by the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office cannot discuss your information with your parents, spouse or other individuals without your written permission. This release form will remain in effect for the current academic year and is available at www.uwlax.edu/finaid/forms.html.

Find helpful information on college and finances provided through the UW-La Crosse ‘It Make$ Cents!’ financial literacy program. Visit www.uwlax.edu/itmakescents.