

# Financial Aid 2025-26 GRADUATE CHECKLIST

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## Complete the FAFSA at [Studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)

- You must create an FSA User ID and password if you don't already have one.
- You must submit the completed 2025-26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which is available starting December 2024. 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)

**3**

## 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 submitted your 25-26 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 2025/Spring 2026 academic year, are available in their WINGS Student Center online 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 for the Summer term will reduce the amount available in these loans for the Fall/Spring 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 [www.uwlax.edu/finaid](http://www.uwlax.edu/finaid) 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 2025-2026 award year (Summer 2025, Fall 2025, Winter Intersession 2026, and Spring 2026) 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, 2024-June 30, 2025 is fixed at 8.08%. The rate for July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026 will be determined in late May or June of 2025.

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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. Make sure to complete the Graduate/Professional Student versions of both. (Grad Entrance Counseling will cover both Unsub and PLUS).

## Welcome to UWL!

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



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 "Other Loan Eligibility-G". This line is informational only and notifies you of the option to apply for an additional loan if needed.
- Federal Direct PLUS loan for graduate students
  - o An application is required and can be completed at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). The U.S. Department of Education will conduct a credit check on all PLUS loan applicants. Approval is required to borrow, with no adverse credit history. The interest rate for PLUS loans disbursed between July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 is fixed at 9.08%. The rate for July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026 will be set in late May or June of 2025. An Origination Fee of 4.228% is assessed on Direct PLUS Loans. A deferment option is available.
  - o A separate Direct PLUS Loan Master Promissory Note and graduate level Entrance Loan Counseling (not PLUS credit counseling) will be required for first-time PLUS borrowers. These requirements can also be completed at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). Even if you did loan counseling for Direct Loans as an undergraduate, you will need to do the graduate Entrance Loan Counseling for PLUS Loans. Steps for the entire process can be found at [www.uwlax.edu/finaid/info/types-of-aid/graduate-plus-loans/](http://www.uwlax.edu/finaid/info/types-of-aid/graduate-plus-loans/)
  - o Like the Unsubsidized Federal Direct student loan, the Graduate PLUS loan also requires at least 5 credits of graduate level enrollment each term.
- Private student loans from various student loan lenders
  - o 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 31st. 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 2025-26 reciprocity application prior to the start of classes at [www.oh.state.mn.us/ssl/reciprocity2024/](http://www.oh.state.mn.us/ssl/reciprocity2024/). This application should be available starting March 2025. If your program starts in Summer 2025, you will also need to complete the 2024-25 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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