

WI G.I. BILL BENEFITS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Service before 9/11*)

***NOTE:** This FAQ is only for WI GI Bill eligible veterans, spouses, and children who:

1. Are not eligible for the Federal Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), that is, have had no active duty military service following September 10, 2001;

or
2. Have not had Federal Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits transferred to them.

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WHAT IS THE WI GI BILL?

1. What is the WI GI Bill?

The WI GI Bill is a state of Wisconsin program to provide tuition benefits for qualifying Wisconsin veterans at Wisconsin public post-secondary educational institutions. The WI G.I. Bill was enacted in 2005. Wis. Stats. §36.27(3p) provides for a tuition remission for certain qualifying veterans, including both veterans who are Wisconsin residents and those veterans who would otherwise be non-residents but who are classified as residents for tuition purposes under the provisions of Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)4.

The WI G.I. Bill also provides a tuition remission benefit of 128 credits or 8 semesters, whichever is longer, for the eligible spouse, unmarried surviving spouse, and children of certain deceased and disabled veterans. The tuition remission is for the combined total credits and semesters attended at all University of Wisconsin (UW) institutions and Wisconsin Technical Colleges. For example, if a student uses 30 credits of WI GI Bill tuition remission at a Wisconsin Technical College and 30 credits of WI GI Bill tuition remissions at UW institutions, that student will have 68 WI GI Bill credits remaining of the 128 total credits allowed. Students will be responsible for the costs of credits beyond 128 credits or 8 semesters, whichever is longer.

To be eligible to receive the WI GI Bill tuition remission, spouses and children of eligible veterans must themselves be residents for tuition purposes (as defined by Wis. Stats. §36.27.2). Non-resident children and spouses are not eligible for WI G.I. Bill benefits.

Questions about the WI GI Bill benefit should be directed to each UW System institution by the School Veterans Certifying Official. A list of those individuals and their contact information is available at <http://uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/studentlife/gicontacts.asp>

2. What does the WI G.I. Bill remission cover and what doesn't it cover?

The Wisconsin G.I. bill includes two programs:

1. Veterans who meet the qualifying criteria under Wis. Stats. §36.27 are eligible to receive 100% remission of standard academic fees (resident tuition) and 100% of segregated fees for 128 credit or 8 semesters, whichever is longer. An eligible veteran who entered active military duty as a Wisconsin resident but is nonetheless considered a non-resident for tuition purposes is eligible also to receive 100% remission of the non-resident portion of the tuition.
2. The spouse, surviving spouse, or child of certain deceased or disabled veterans who meet the eligibility criteria under Wis. Stats. §36.27(3n) are eligible to receive a full remission of standard academic and segregated fees for 128 credit or 8 semesters, whichever is longer.

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Academic fees are commonly referred to as either “resident tuition” or “in-state tuition.” Segregated fees are separate non-instructional fees charged to all students for the support of student life activities such as the student center and recreational sports, among others.

Academic fees over and above regular tuition and fees for undergraduate, graduate or professional courses are also eligible for remission including courses funded on a self-supporting or “cost recovery” basis. These courses, including distance education and online programs, are operated without state support. If you have questions about the remission of tuition and fees for a specific course contact the veterans' services coordinator at your campus for more information.

The Wisconsin G.I. bill remission does **NOT** apply to the following:

- **Academic fees charged by a UW institution for study abroad programs where the fees collected are subsequently paid by the UW institution to a non-Wisconsin institution.** It also does not apply to any non-instructional fees charged in connection with a study abroad program such as for travel or living expenses.
- **Other costs at UW institutions that are assessed in addition to academic student fees and segregated fees are not covered. Examples of costs that are not covered by the remission include, but are not limited to, travel, books, supplies, meals, parking, textbook rental, laptop rental, special technology and computer fees, and other miscellaneous expenses. The excess credits surcharge, the United Council assessment and housing and meals plans are also not covered by the remission. Special course fees, such as laboratory fees, may also be charged to students depending on the purpose of the special course fee.**
- **Fees charged for continuing education courses** (where continuing education units – CEU’s – are granted). The Wisconsin G.I. Bill applies only to tuition remissions for eligible individuals enrolled in academic, university-credit courses.

Prior to registration, you are urged to check with the School Veterans Certifying Official at the campus you plan to attend to obtain specific information about any costs that may not be covered by the WI GI Bill Tuition Remission for your planned course of study. You will be assessed and are responsible for paying any fees not covered by the WI G.I. Bill remission. Once the certification and eligibility process is completed you will be provided a bill indicating what fees are due and a due date by which to pay them. You will be responsible for the assessed fees.

3. Am I eligible for other state veterans’ benefits if I use the WI G.I. Bill benefits?

The best way to know what benefits you are eligible for is to contact your County Veterans Service Office <http://dva.state.wi.us/CVSO.asp> or the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs <http://dva.state.wi.us/> directly.

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**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WI GI BILL AND
FEDERAL POST-9/11 GI BILL (CHAP 33)**

4. How does the WI GI Bill relate to the new Federal Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)?

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a federal veterans' benefits program administered by the federal Veterans Administration (VA) that began in August of 2009. The Post-9/11 GI Bill applies only to those who have had active duty military service following September 10, 2001.

Beginning January 2010, veterans who are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit must elect that federal benefit in order to use the WI GI Bill.

IMPORTANT: This FAQ is only for those veterans, spouses, and children who are NOT eligible for, nor have had Federal Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits transferred to them. (A separate FAQ document answers questions for those with Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility and it can be found at:
http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/student/WIGI_Bill_FAQs_Service_following_9-11.htm.

APPLYING FOR WI G.I. BILL BENEFITS

5. Does this FAQ apply to anyone eligible for the WI G.I. Bill?

No, these FAQs are only for:

- a. WI GI Bill eligible veterans, spouses or children NOT also eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33); and
- b. Students attending University of Wisconsin System institutions.
If you are a student in the Wisconsin Technical College System contact the appropriate School Veterans Certifying Official. The Officials are listed in the brochure described in the next question.

6. Where do I get information about these benefits and how do I apply?

A brochure, which explains the benefits, lists School Veterans Certifying Officials at each institution, and includes the forms necessary to apply, is available for downloading online at [http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_\(WI_GI_Bill\)_Color.pdf](http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_(WI_GI_Bill)_Color.pdf)

This information is also available from your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) or the School Veterans Certifying Official at your educational institution. Your CVSO provides information and assistance in obtaining state and federal veterans benefits. For a listing of CVSO's go to <http://dva.state.wi.us/CVSO.asp>.

7. Do I need to complete both forms in the WDVA B0105 brochure?

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Yes. To be considered for the WI G.I. Bill benefits a student must submit the form entitled “Request for Certification...” (#2030) to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) AND submit the form “Application for WI G.I. Bill Benefits...” (#2029) to the educational institution the student plans to attend. When WDVA determines the eligibility of the veteran, they will notify the educational institution of their determination. To have the certification process proceed in a timely manner, the student must submit the application to the educational institution at the same time as submitting the certification request to the WDVA. *Certification by WDVA is only the first part of a two part WI GI Bill eligibility process. WDVA certifies the veteran is eligible, and the post-secondary educational institution determines if a student (be it veteran, spouse, or child of a veteran) is eligible for tuition remission based upon state statute.*

8. What is the “Verification of Continued Eligibility form”?

Beginning spring 2010, any student who received WI GI Bill benefits previously must also submit a “Verification of Continued Eligibility” form to determine continuing eligibility to receive WI GI Bill benefits. This form will only need to be completed once to reestablish whether the student continues to be eligible to receive the WI GI Bill tuition remission. The School Veterans Certifying Official at the school will be able to provide this form.

9. Does it matter when I apply to receive the WI GI Bill tuition remission?

Apply early! Please submit applications for WI G.I. Bill benefits to WDVA and to the UW institution you plan to attend **no later than 14 calendar days** from the official start of the fall or spring term, by June 1st for summer terms, and by the due date for term fees for interim terms in order to have your remission processed in a timely manner. Applying within the suggested timeline allows for financial aid to be accurately determined and reduces the risk of receiving an overpayment that would need to be repaid to the institution.

Be sure to submit the request for certification to WDVA *at the same time* as you submit the application to the educational institution in order to allow time for WDVA to process the application, request additional information if needed, and send the completed certification to the educational institution. You are responsible to respond in a timely fashion if WDVA requests additional information.

If WDVA certification is not received by the educational institution by November 1 for fall, April 1 for spring, and July 1 for summer, you may not be eligible to receive the remission for that term. Certifications received after these dates will be processed for the subsequent term.

Once the certification and eligibility process has been successfully completed, a student's account will be adjusted to reflect the remission. The student will be responsible for any unpaid fees and late charges that accrue after a specified due date.

10. What exactly is an academic term?

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An academic term, and its beginning and ending date, is defined by the educational institution. A term may be fall, spring, winter, or summer. In this document, “semester” and “term” are used synonymously.

11. Will I need to reapply each academic term?

Once you have applied, have been granted certification by WDVA, and have been determined eligible by the educational institution, you do not need to reapply if you are continuously enrolled at that same institution. However, if there are changes to your residency, marital status, or to other items requested as part of the WI G.I. Bill benefits application (Form #2029), you must inform the school. If there is a break in your enrollment, excluding summer, or if you transfer to another UW System institution, you will need to reapply to the educational institution you plan to attend.

Once a particular UW institution has deemed you eligible for the WI G.I. Bill tuition remission, you will continue to receive this remission unless you inform the School Veterans Certifying Official in writing **within 14 calendar days** from the official start of the fall or spring term, or by June 1st for summer sessions, that you do not wish to receive it.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify WDVA of any changes in the disability assessment of the eligible veteran.

12. How will I find out if I have been awarded a remission? Will WDVA or the campus inform me?

If you have been awarded a remission, the educational institution to which you have applied will notify you that your application has been successful and that the remission has been put into place. You will also receive a bill, assessing you for any fees not covered by the remission (see Question #2). To avoid late charges, you will be responsible for paying those fees by the date determined by your campus for individuals receiving WI G.I. Bill remissions.

13. Might my financial aid be affected if I receive a WI G.I. Bill tuition remission?

Yes. The amounts and types of financial aid for which you are eligible may be affected by the WI G.I. Bill tuition remission. If your WI G.I. Bill tuition remission is approved after your financial aid package has already been issued, the financial aid package will need to be reassessed to reflect the new tuition resources you have received. Financial aid reassessments may occur throughout a term and are required by federal law whenever a student’s financial need changes. Please consult the Financial Aid Office at the school you are attending if you have questions.

ELIGIBILITY

14. How will eligibility for the WI GI Bill be determined?

Eligibility for the WI GI Bill benefit is determined in part by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and in part by the Wisconsin public institution of higher education

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where you will attend. WDVA determines some components of eligibility and the institution of higher education determines other components. You will be required to submit to the UW System institution you wish to attend, an application (Form #2029), and other materials to demonstrate if:

- ▶ You have been certified as eligible for the benefit by WDVA
- ▶ You are a child or spouse of an eligible veteran, and are you within the statutory time frame to receive the benefit.
- ▶ If you are a child or spouse of an eligible veterans, and you are a resident of Wisconsin for tuition purposes as defined by Wis. Stats. 36.27(2).
- ▶ You have had no active duty service since September 10, 2001.
- ▶ You have had active duty service since September 10, 2001, and can submit a rejection letter from the Federal Veterans Administration showing you are ineligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) benefits.
- ▶ You have not had Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits transferred to you.
- ▶ You have exhausted the 128 credits or 8 terms, whichever is longer, eligibility to receive the WI GI Bill Benefit.

The application packet for the WI GI bill has a checklist of the documentation that will be needed depending upon whether you are applying for the WI GI Bill as a veteran, child, or spouse. If you have questions about what documents are needed, confer with your School Veterans Certifying Official at the higher educational institution you plan to attend.

15. Does the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement allow me to use the WI G.I. Bill to attend a Minnesota school?

No, the WI G.I. Bill legislation is only for students attending University of Wisconsin institutions or Wisconsin Technical Colleges.

16. Will the WI G.I. Bill apply to me if I take classes while on active duty?

Wisconsin veteran status does not require that one is in inactive duty status. If you meet all of the eligibility requirements, the WI G.I. Bill can apply for those still on active duty. It is possible to be currently in the military (Active Duty, Guard, or Reserves) and be considered a Wisconsin state veteran at the same time.

17. What does it mean to be a “resident” under the provisions of the WI GI Bill?

There are multiple references to “resident” in the WI G.I. Bill and in the statute exempting certain veterans from non-resident tuition. There are two different uses of the term “resident” in Wisconsin statutes. One use refers to the WDVA definition of resident under Chapter 45 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and the other is to the UW System definition of resident under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2).

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To be considered an “eligible veteran” under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)(4) and Wis. Stats. §36.27(3p), the applicant must meet WDVA’s definition of “resident” under Chapter 45 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

In contrast, the term “resident” as it is used in Wis. Stats. §36.27(3n) relating to fee remissions for certain family members of eligible veterans has a different meaning. In that section, “resident” refers to residency for tuition purposes under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2). In other words, the family member (eligible child or spouse) must be determined to be a “resident for tuition purposes” to satisfy one of the criteria for eligibility for G.I. Bill benefits.

18. Can I appeal if I am denied eligibility by WDVA or denied a fee remission by the school?

If you are denied eligibility by WDVA, you will receive notice of the denial directly from WDVA. You may appeal this denial to WDVA according to WDVA’s own appeal protocol as described in the notice of denial.

If you are denied a tuition remission after having been determined eligible by WDVA, you will be informed by the educational institution. Typically, the School Veterans Certifying Official will contact you in writing to inform you of the denial and the basis for the denial. If you wish to appeal the institutional decision, contact the School Veterans Certifying Official at your institution to request information about the institution’s appeal protocol.

19. Do I need to be a full-time student to benefit from the WI G.I. Bill?

No, spouses, unremarried surviving spouses, and the veterans themselves are not required to be enrolled full-time. However, children and spouses must be Wisconsin residents for tuition purposes and meet other eligibility requirements.

20. For how many semesters and/or credits can I use the WI G.I. Bill?

You can receive the WI GI Bill tuition remission for a combined total of up to 128 credits or eight semesters, whichever is longer, at any public higher educational institution in Wisconsin (i.e., all UW institutions and all Wisconsin Technical Colleges) beginning the first time you are granted the WI G.I. Bill remission, provided that you maintain the other eligibility status requirements. The WI G.I. Bill was first implemented for the fall 2005 academic term. Students cannot receive remissions for semesters or credits used prior to that time or for any academic term for which there is no WDVA certification.

21. What if I transfer to another UW System or Wisconsin Technical College institution?

Your credits/semesters while enrolled at any Wisconsin public higher educational institution (UW institutions and Wisconsin Technical Colleges) are cumulative under the WI G.I. Bill. Your eligibility limitations (10 years, age, number of credits/semesters, etc.) are tracked based on enrollment at all UW System institutions and at Wisconsin Technical Colleges. Remember that if you transfer or have a break of more than a semester (other than summer) in enrollment, you

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will need to submit a new application for the WI G.I. Bill tuition remission to the applicable UW institution.

22. *What if I am concurrently enrolled in more than one UW institution or Wisconsin Technical College?*

In order to receive a WI G.I. Bill remission, you need to apply for it at each UW institution or Wisconsin Technical College you attend.

If you are concurrently enrolled in more than one UW System institution and/or WTCS institution and have been granted a WI G.I. Bill tuition remission, your credits earned/semesters attended at UW System institutions and WTCS institutions are cumulative under the WI G.I. Bill, the same as they are in the case of transfer between institutions (see Question #21).

23. *What does “whichever is longer” mean when referring to semester and credit limitations?*

You have eight full semesters to receive this remission, even if your credits total more than 128. Conversely, you may receive this remission for more than eight semesters, as long as your total credits remain under 128.

For example:

- a. If you have received the remission for fewer than eight semesters but have completed 128 credits, you will still be eligible for eight semesters of remission even if it will put your total credits over 128.
- b. You can continue to get the remission for more than eight semesters if the number of credits you've taken is less than 128. After you have received the remission for eight or more semesters, and your credits total 128, you will not receive the remission for subsequent semesters.

24. *How are the 128 credits counted? What if I drop a course?*

If a grade is assigned in a course, then those credits will count towards the 128 credit limit. All courses graded on an A-F scale, pass/fail, or audit basis will count toward the limit. If you drop a course prior to the institutional add/drop deadline, the course will not appear on the transcript and will not count toward the 128 credit limit. Courses dropped after that deadline will appear on the transcript with a grade (e.g. W or DR) and will count toward the 128 credit limit.

25. *Will the semester count against the WI GI Bill limits if I withdraw during the semester?*

If you withdraw from the institution prior to the 100% refund deadline, the semester and credits will not be counted toward the eight semesters and 128 credits allowed for the WI G.I. Bill benefits. If you withdraw from the institution after the 100% refund deadline, the semester and credits will count toward the eight semesters and 128 credits you are allowed under the WI G.I. Bill.

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In some cases, if the withdrawal is due to medical circumstances, you may not be required to count the semester or credits against your WI GI Bill eligibility. Contact the veterans' services coordinator at your campus for more information.

SPOUSE AND CHILD BENEFITS

26. How is “child” defined under the WI G.I. Bill provisions?

For the purposes of the WI G.I. Bill, the UW System has chosen to use the definitions outlined in Wis. Stats. §45.01(4), which define a child as “any biological child, any adopted child, any stepchild, or any other child who is a member of the veteran’s household, or any non-marital child if the veteran acknowledges paternity or paternity has been otherwise established.”

27. What documentation is necessary to prove that I am the “child” of an eligible veteran?

The following documentation **in addition to** providing your own government issued photo I.D. (driver license, state I.D., passport, etc) demonstrates that a student applicant is a “child” of an eligible veteran.

- ▶ **Biological Child:** A copy of the student’s Birth Certificate or similar official documents that identify parentage.
- ▶ **Adopted Child:** A copy of the student’s Adoption Certificate.
- ▶ **Stepchild:** A copy of the student’s Birth Certificate and a Marriage License that demonstrates the eligible veteran has married a biological parent of the student, or a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility for Federal VA benefits that indicates recognition as a stepchild.
- ▶ **Other Child Who is a Member of the Veteran’s Household:** A copy of the veteran’s most recent state and federal income taxes where the student is listed as a dependent and the student’s permanent address is the same as the veteran’s household address.
- ▶ **Non-marital Child:** A copy of a certificate of paternity.

28. What documentation is necessary to demonstrate that I am the spouse of a certified veteran?

The following documentation is required to demonstrate that a student applicant is eligible for WI GI Bill tuition remission as the spouse of an eligible veteran.

- ▶ The spouse’s government issued photo I.D. (driver license, state I.D., passport, etc).
- ▶ A copy of the marriage certificate showing the student’s marriage to the certified veteran.

29. What documentation is necessary to demonstrate that I am the unremarried surviving spouse of an eligible veteran?

The following documentation is required to determine that a student applicant is eligible as an unremarried surviving spouse. These documents will be used to determine the eligibility ending date of WI GI Bill benefits for the unremarried surviving spouse.

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- ▶ A copy of the marriage certificate showing the student's marriage to the certified veteran.
- ▶ A copy of the latest federal or state tax return for the unremarried surviving spouse.
- ▶ A copy of the birth certificate or adoption papers for the youngest child born to or adopted by the unremarried surviving spouse and the certified veteran.

30. *Can I provide copies of the documents to verify my relationship to the eligible veteran?*

Yes. Photocopies are fine.

31. *What are the eligibility time and age delimiting factors for children and spouses?*

The child of an eligible veteran must be at least 17 years old but not yet 26 years old on the first day of instruction as established by the institution, in order to take advantage of the WI G.I. Bill in a particular academic term.

Qualified spouses and unremarried surviving spouses have a specific window of time to take advantage of the benefits of the WI G.I. Bill.

1. If the eligible veteran and qualified spouse/unremarried surviving spouse had no children together, the spouse has a ten year period beginning from the date of the eligible veteran's death or initial Veterans Affairs disability determination of at least 30%. The educational institution will be informed of this start date by WDVA and will project ten calendar years into the future to establish a definitive eligibility end date.
2. If the eligible veteran and unremarried surviving spouse had children together, the unremarried surviving spouse has until ten years after their youngest child reaches, or would have reached, 18 years of age to take advantage of the WI GI Bill benefits, or during the first ten years after the veteran died, whichever is longer.

32. *Can I receive the remission for that academic term if the delimiting periods begin or end within it?*

If the child's 26th birthday falls on or after the second day of the term, the child would be eligible for the benefit for that term.

The qualified spouse or unremarried surviving spouse will be eligible to receive the benefits for an academic term as long as the eligibility end date is after the first day of instruction for the term, as established by the institution, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

33. *If a spouse or child of a qualified veteran meets all other criteria but does not meet the residency requirements, is he or she eligible for WI G.I. Bill benefits?*

No. Wis. Stats. §36.27(3n) provides 100% remissions to certain spouses, surviving unremarried spouses and children of deceased or disabled veterans, if the student (spouse or child) is a resident student, which means a resident for tuition purposes. Thus, if the student

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were not a Wisconsin resident or if the student relinquished Wisconsin residency, he or she would no longer be eligible for the benefit, even if the other qualifications were met.