

UW FLEXIBLE OPTION: CREATING A WELL-TRAINED WORKFORCE IN AMERICA

The Lumina Foundation reported that to remain globally competitive, the country will need 60% of its population to have a college credential by 2025. How do we get there? A partnership between UW-Extension and UW System campuses called UW Flexible Option is helping to strengthen the nation's workforce and economy. This new, competency-based suite of programs allows students to start any month and progress at their own pace--aimed at adult students who can complete a degree or certificate while continuing to work.

With the launch of UW Flexible Option in 2014, the University of Wisconsin System became the first public higher educational system to offer a competency-based education. Within 3 years of inception, nearly 1,200 students have been served, with enrollments continuing to grow strongly.

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY: HOW UW FLEXIBLE OPTION WORKS

UW Flexible Option uses an innovative CBE approach that provides students with a quality University of Wisconsin education, on their own schedule, and on their own terms. UW Flexible Option does not rely on traditional courses or credit hours. Instead, students make progress by demonstrating that they can apply knowledge, skills, and abilities in real-world settings. Students learn and are guided within a structured educational curriculum, receiving support with an integrated environment of instructors and resources.

Students enroll in three-month subscription periods that they can start at the beginning of any month for one flat fee. In that three-month subscription period, they can choose to master as many competencies as they can. Or, they can focus on just one competency at a time. Students work when they want, at the pace they want. And in the end, graduates earn a degree or certificate from a University of Wisconsin institution that is recognized and respected.



“I really enjoyed working in IT but knew I would need a bachelor’s degree to have any career mobility.

So I looked into online degrees that would give my family the future we wanted. With UW Flexible Option, I earned 49 credits in just nine months. I’m a huge advocate for the UW Flexible Option. It’s a great solution for those who need more education to advance in their careers. I credit my bachelor’s degree for my ability to qualify for a job at Google. Everyone recognizes the University of Wisconsin name and what it stands for.”

Jamie Dear, 2016 graduate of UW-Milwaukee with his Bachelor of Science in Information Science and Technology via the UW Flexible Option format



CREDIT HOUR
Focus on teaching



COMPETENCY-BASED
Focus on learning

EDUCATION ALIGNED WITH WORKFORCE NEEDS

Today, UW Flexible Option offers eight degrees and certificates with more in development, including our newest addition, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration offered by UW-Extension.

DEGREES

- Associate of Arts and Science (UW Colleges)
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing, RN to BSN completion (UW-Milwaukee)
- Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences Diagnostic Imaging (UW-Milwaukee)
- Bachelor of Science in Information Science and Technology (UW-Milwaukee)
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree (UW-Extension)

CERTIFICATES

- Business and Technical Communications (UW-Milwaukee)
- Project Management (UW-Parkside)
- Substance Use Disorders Counselor (UW-Madison)



“My goal was to finish a BSN degree in one year, and I did it! Thanks to the self-paced Flexible Option format, I was able to complete 36 credits while working full time as an ER nurse.”

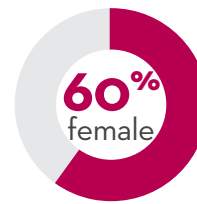
Lori Kenyon, 2015 graduate of the UW-Milwaukee RN to BSN program via the UW Flexible Option format

UW FLEXIBLE OPTION FACTS As of April 2017:



Served over
1,200
students
↑=100

100
Veterans



36
Average age

Over **140** students earned credentials

22
Nursing
graduates

8
Diagnostic
Imaging
graduates

31
Information
Science and
Technology
graduates

8
Associate
of Arts and
Science
graduates

67
Substance
Use
Disorders
completers

Realized retention of **70%** or higher in bachelor degree-seeking students

“Wisconsin’s Flexible Option program is quite visionary.”

Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education