



**KNOWLEDGE  
POWERS  
WISCONSIN**

# INTRODUCING THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN **FLEXIBLE OPTION**

## THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY FACE OF THE WISCONSIN IDEA

For the 20 percent of working-age adults in Wisconsin who have some college credit but no bachelor's degree, the University of Wisconsin Flexible Option offers a more personalized, convenient, and affordable way to earn a UW degree or certificate. A partnership between UW-Extension and UW System campuses, this competency-based format allows students to start anytime, progress at their own pace, and earn credit for what they already know—so they can complete their degrees, advance their careers, and strengthen Wisconsin's workforce and economy.

## A NEW EDUCATIONAL MODEL FOR ADULT STUDENTS

The UW Flexible Option is designed to make higher education more accessible and attainable while maintaining the same high standards as UW degrees earned through traditional classroom learning or online instruction. Students will:

- Enjoy the flexibility to earn a University of Wisconsin degree on their own schedules while balancing work, family, and other responsibilities.
- Use their existing knowledge—gained from prior courses, work experience, military training, and other experiences—to make progress toward a degree.
- Start anytime and advance at their own pace, taking assessments whenever they feel ready.
- Learn skills employers value. By passing rigorous and reliable assessments, students will prove their mastery of the skills and knowledge employers seek.
- Choose from two affordable pricing models to fit their goals and budget.

## THE FIRST UW FLEX DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Later in 2013, UW-Milwaukee will offer three degree programs and one certificate program:

- The College of Nursing will offer a bachelor's degree option for registered nurses who seek higher credentials (RN to BSN)
- The College of Health Sciences will offer a B.S. in Biomedical Sciences Diagnostic Imaging degree completion program
- The School of Information Studies will offer a bachelor's degree in Information Science and Technology, preparing students for jobs in today's digital culture and economy
- The College of Letters and Science will offer a Business and Technical Communication Certificate, providing students with the strong written and oral communication skills that workplaces demand

UW Colleges, the UW System network of 13 two-year campuses, will offer freshman- and sophomore-level general education, liberal arts competencies in the UW Flexible Option format, in subjects such as biology, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, engineering, business, political science, English, Spanish, geography, history, art, music, philosophy, and more.

Several other UW System institutions, including UW-Parkside, are working to offer UW Flex options for their degree programs starting in fall 2014.

[flex.wisconsin.edu](http://flex.wisconsin.edu)



## HOW IT WORKS

The self-paced, competency-based UW Flexible Option lets busy adult students learn at their own pace, without the constraints of class schedules or semesters. Students make progress by passing assessments (such as tests, papers, projects, and portfolio assessments) that prove they have mastered competencies—the key skills and knowledge identified by UW faculty as essential to their fields of study. Once students can prove they have mastered a competency, they can move on to the next competency and assessment.

## TURNING EXPERIENCE INTO CREDITS

With the UW Flexible Option, students may draw upon existing knowledge to complete assessments and make progress toward their degrees. Students may also take advantage of open online courses and other free resources to learn and master the competencies necessary to complete their degrees. Highly motivated students with significant knowledge gained from prior education or work experience may use that knowledge to accelerate their progress and graduate sooner.

## MORE AFFORDABLE, MORE ATTAINABLE

UW Flexible Option students study only the material they need to master; they will not waste time or money sitting through courses they don't need. Two subscription options let students choose the cost and time commitment that is right for them. Degrees and certificates are granted by the accredited campuses already offering traditional UW degrees, making the UW Flexible Option a viable and valuable way to earn credentials from UW institutions. In these ways and more, the UW Flexible Option provides an efficient way for busy adult students to boost their careers and the economy.

*“The UW Flexible Option is a new approach to getting a degree or a certificate that helps adults to bridge the gap between what they already know and what they need to learn to earn that degree or certificate.”*

**UW System President,  
Kevin P. Reilly**



*“The UW Flexible Option offers a distinctive value and a unique promise to working adult students. They can start the Flexible Option anytime, without constraints imposed by the academic calendar.”*

**UW Colleges and UW-Extension  
Chancellor Ray Cross**



*“Wisconsin’s Flexible Option program is quite visionary,” said Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education.*

**The Wall Street Journal**

*“I enrolled in the UW Flexible Option pilot and found it is a great way to gain credits toward the completion of my associate degree.”*

**Ginger Kieltyka**

To find out more about this accessible and affordable new way for working adults to earn their degrees, advance their careers, and boost Wisconsin’s economy, visit [flex.wisconsin.edu](http://flex.wisconsin.edu).