



FAQ for Participating WUE Institutions

What is WUE?

WUE (pronounced “woo-wee”) is the Western Undergraduate Exchange, a regional tuition reciprocity program of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Through WUE, students in western states may enroll in participating two-year and four-year college institutions at a reduced tuition level: 150 percent of the institution's regular resident tuition. WUE began in 1987 and all WICHE states have signed the agreement. A copy of your state’s signed WUE agreement is available for your review. Students from all WICHE member states are eligible to request the WUE tuition discount. WICHE member states are: Alaska; Arizona; California; Colorado; Hawaii; Idaho; Montana; Nevada; New Mexico; North Dakota; Oregon; South Dakota; Utah; Washington; and, Wyoming. At present, 150 western institutions enroll more than 29,000 students through WUE.

"Most of the Western states have been severely affected by the economic downturn and decreased funding for higher education. WUE gives students the ability to widen their horizons and take advantage of exciting educational opportunities that are out-of-state, yet at an affordable price. New Mexico State University is benefitting from WUE; we are seeing an influx of students who are looking to escape daunting tuition costs.

In fact, some NMSU students enrolled through WUE are paying less than they would in their home state."

*- Candace Aragon, Coordinator
Admissions/Records, New Mexico State
University, Las Cruces*

How much do WUE students pay in tuition?

Participating institutions charge WUE students 150 percent of resident tuition. Fees are additional and not calculated in the 150 percent. Furthermore, schools have the prerogative to give students additional discounts on the WUE tuition rate. Please make coding arrangements with your bursar’s office so that WUE students are charged the correct amount.

What are the advantages for participating institutions?

While the WUE tuition reciprocity arrangement does not provide financial reimbursement to institutions for WUE students, there are many advantages to the participating institution. WUE can help institutions to build an enrollment base to strengthen programs, improve efficiency by filling excess capacity, and provide student diversity. WUE also allows border institutions to serve the citizens of their nearby communities. The WUE online searchable database is a valuable tool to promote your institution and its programs of study available at the discounted WUE rate.

What are the advantages for the sending and receiving states?

States benefit from WUE in several ways. Sending states’ residents are able to attend affordable institutions in other Western states at no expense to the student’s home state. Receiving states also

benefit if a student decides to remain there following graduation, helping the state to build an educated workforce.

What are the advantages to participating students?

WUE gives students from WICHE states affordable access to programs that may not be available in their home state or that do not have sufficient capacity. WUE also provides students with a more diverse array of institutions in which to enroll.

How can our institution join the WUE network?

All accredited public institutions in WICHE states are eligible to participate. All WICHE states have signed the original WUE Agreement. To formalize participation, coordinate internally with your offices of admission and enrollment management, as well as the president's office and your system office (if applicable). Send a letter to WICHE from your president's office confirming your institution's intent to participate, noting the academic year in which you will begin enrolling students at the WUE discounted rate. WICHE's student exchange staff will help you arrange the details of your participation.

"The students who have attended Montana Tech as part of the WUE program have been a great asset to the school. They bring new perspectives into the classroom and generally excel academically. Many of these students have gone on to be significant contributors both intellectually and financially as alumni. Without the WUE program, Montana Tech would not have its current regional presence and many of these students would not have been able to afford to study at our school."

-Tony Campeau, Director of Enrollment Management, Montana Tech of the University of Montana

What are the admissions requirements for students who want to enroll at the WUE discounted rate?

Entrance requirements for WUE applicants are set by each participating institution. Requirements typically include minimum GPA and/or ACT/SAT score requirements; some institutions require higher GPAs and test scores for WUE students. Most WUE institutions do not require applicants to demonstrate financial need to receive the discounted rate. Please make note of your WUE admissions requirements in your institution's online WUE profile.

Can we accept transfer students?

This is entirely up to you. Please note whether or not you accept transfer students in your institution's online profile. If admissions requirements differ for transfer students, please address that too.

How many WUE students can we enroll?

This is entirely up to your institution and in some cases, your system and/or state higher education office may also be involved in making this determination. Some WUE institutions might have more qualified applicants eligible for the WUE rate than the number of discounted seats they're able to offer. Below are some admissions control strategies currently used by other WUE institutions. These strategies can help control the number of WUE applicants and attract the most highly qualified WUE students who will become top performers on your campus.

1. Establish a priority WUE application deadline. Schools that use this strategy have chosen dates that range from late December to late June; this is entirely at the receiving institution's discretion.
2. Increase the admissions requirements for WUE students; require higher GPA and/or SAT/ACT test scores.
3. Review your program enrollments and make high-demand programs unavailable to WUE students. To find out in which programs your WUE enrollments are most concentrated and from which geographic areas your students are coming from, consult the most recent Fall WUE Enrollment Report posted at <http://www.wiche.edu/wue> (scroll down to the bottom of the page for the link).
4. Cap the number of new WUE seats each year. Students who apply for the WUE rate after the quota has been filled can be denied the discounted WUE rate.
5. Limit each student to a maximum of four years (two years for community colleges) at the discounted WUE tuition rate, as outlined in the original WUE Agreement.

"Both students and administrators consider it a great advantage to participate in WUE. It enables students to meet tuition costs for their studies and it makes it possible for institutions to recruit out-of-state students whose presence enhances the diversity of the student body. As we talk to students, they express their gratitude to be spared insurmountable debt burdens, thus allowing them to pursue their professional dreams. And, they can focus on their studies. The collaborative effort between WICHE staff, the participating institutions and their states, and the students is inspirational."

- Amber Cook, Accounting Specialist, Financial Aid & Scholarships, University of Utah

How do prospective students apply for the discounted WUE rate?

Administration of WUE is very decentralized. WICHE does not have a general WUE application for prospective students. Institutions use their own application and add a space where applicants indicate that they want to be considered for admission at the discounted WUE rate.

We encourage you to review your internal administration of the WUE program with your admissions staff and work study students who answer phone inquiries in your offices. Occasionally we hear from frustrated parents and future students who contacted an admissions office and could not find anyone who knew about the institution's participation in the WUE program. We want to avoid these types of occurrences and maintain a positive experience for prospective WUE students and their families, so we appreciate your efforts to keep your staff trained and well informed about WUE.

Enrolling a student at the WUE rate

Your admissions office should note whether or not the student will be enrolled at the WUE discounted tuition rate in their letter of acceptance. Some students do not learn about the WUE program until after they are enrolled at the full nonresident rate. The original WUE agreement states that a student must apply for the discounted WUE rate prior to their enrollment. However, converting a student from the full nonresident rate to the lower WUE rate is at the institution's discretion.

Once a student has been granted the WUE rate, they should be charged the discounted rate through graduation or until their four-year limit has been reached, as long as they maintain the minimum academic requirements. If your institution requires that students periodically reconfirm their intent to continue under WUE, please alert them to this when they enroll.

What if a student changes their course of study to a program not available at the WUE rate?

If a student enrolls through the WUE program in a course of study that is available at the WUE discount and then later changes majors to a course that is not available at the WUE rate, the receiving institution has the right to charge the student full nonresident tuition. We encourage you to inform students and their parents of this upon their enrollment through the WUE program.

How is WUE publicized?

The program is promoted in several ways. WICHE's website has a searchable database located at <http://www.wiche.edu/wue>. Students and parents can search for specific programs available at the WUE discounted rate at participating institutions located in the geographic area of their choice.

WICHE also produces a "WUE handout" in PDF format; it is posted on the website for high schools to download and print to distribute to their college-bound students. Many of our participating states actively promote WUE to their high school guidance counselors who in turn tell students and their parents about the program. We encourage receiving institutions to develop their own materials too, and invite you to link to our WUE page on WICHE's website at <http://www.wiche.edu/wue>.

What are the reporting requirements?

WICHE requests the following from each receiving institution:

1. **A Profile Editor.** Every summer, this person will update the participating institution's profile and the programs of study offered at the WUE rate. Your profile contact will update your profile online; we will establish a password-protected account for the individual requiring access. Typically the person in this role is located in the admissions office.

Programs are entered using the standard Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes established by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The initial profile set up requires institutions to enter all the majors they wish to make available at the WUE rate. Prospective WUE students will be able to search on their major to locate WUE institutions that offer it at the discounted rate. Institutions can customize the names of their programs, but CIP

"The WUE program has been a wonderful boon to Cal State East Bay. It has allowed us to attract a very talented and diverse group of students from other Western states to our campus in California. This not only offers opportunities at a very affordable rate to those students who are joining us, but it also enriches the experience of our California residents studying here, by exposing them to perspectives and experiences different from their own."

*- Greg Smith, Associate Vice President,
Planning, Enrollment Management,
and Student Affairs, California State
University, East Bay*

codes must match NCES's list (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/default.aspx?y=55>).

2. **An Enrollment Reporter.** Every September we ask for your WUE student enrollment numbers by program CIP code and the student's home state. This data is collected for our annual WUE Enrollment Report which is available on our WUE website (<http://www.wiche.edu/wue>).

The objective is to obtain a "snapshot" of the number of WUE students enrolled as of fall semester. Students who won't enroll until the spring should not be counted. This report has proven to be a valuable document for program planning and reviews, and to track student migration in the region. Data collection is done online. Institutions are typically given about 30 days to complete their enrollment report.

Receiving institutions will need to establish an internal coding system for WUE students to facilitate reporting and insure that they are charged 150 percent of resident tuition. The system should also track the student's home state, and the CIP code of the major in which they are enrolled. WICHE's central office does not track the names of WUE students, nor any other personal identifying information.

What if we need to withdraw from the WUE program?

In the rare event that an institution decides to leave WUE, we ask that you give WICHE a year's notice of your plan to leave, and that you grandfather students who are already enrolled at your institution through their graduation at the discounted WUE tuition rate.

For more information

WICHE has a comprehensive "Ask WICHE" FAQ for WUE; please see the link on our WUE website. If you still have questions, please contact the Director of WICHE's Student Exchange Programs at 303.541.0214 or mcolalancia@wiche.edu, or contact Laura Ewing at Lewing@wiche.edu or 303.541.0270.

"The WUE program has allowed our coaches to broaden their recruiting scope while maximizing their scholarship budgets. We have a significant number of student athletes who receive partial or no athletic aid, and WUE allows them to attend Metro State at an affordable rate, participate on a highly competitive Division II team, and pursue the major of their choice. Student athletes account for about 15-20 percent of our WUE enrollment. WUE has allowed us to remain competitive in the recruiting process and attract talented and diverse students from the West at an affordable tuition rate."

*- Ellen Boswell, Director of Institutional Research,
Metropolitan State College of Denver*

www.wiche.edu/wue