

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON | TACOMA

# Next Step Scholarship Application 2026/2027

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***BE BOUNDLESS***



# Next Steps Application 2026/2027

The University of Washington Tacoma Next Step Scholars Endowment recognizes and rewards exceptional scholarly achievement at the community college level. The fund was specifically created to motivate top students at seven South Puget Sound community colleges to enroll at UW Tacoma. In bringing top community college scholars to UW Tacoma each year, the endowment hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve the quality of the South Puget Sound regional workforce
- Strengthen the bonds between UW Tacoma and its primary transfer institutions
- Improve the classroom experience for all UW Tacoma students

Seven scholarships are available, one for each community college. The scholarship is primarily intended to help students pursue their degrees as full-time students. Part-time students may use their scholarship award over, at most, a three-year period.

## Deadline

Check with your community college advisor for your school's application deadline.

## Eligibility

Students currently enrolled at the following community colleges are eligible to be considered for a UW Tacoma Next Step Scholars award:

- Green River Community College
- Highline Community College
- Olympic College
- Pierce College Fort Steilacoom
- Pierce College Puyallup
- South Puget Sound Community College
- Tacoma Community College

Recent graduates from these institutions may also be eligible; however, they must have completed their coursework no earlier than September 1, 2025. Recent graduates who are already attending other four-year institutions are not eligible for the award. One student from each institution will be offered a Next Step Scholarship each year.

Students must be permanent Washington state residents; international students are not eligible for this scholarship.

There is a strong expectation that the student will have completed the necessary credits and requirements for autumn quarter 2026 admission to UW Tacoma to complete their baccalaureate degree. Should a prospective student accept the scholarship and then not qualify for transfer or enrollment, the award will be withdrawn and may go unfilled that year.

**The student should also post a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of no less than 3.5 at the time of application for the scholarship (rare exceptions may be made for students who can show exceptional improvement over their last 45 credits).**

To be eligible, students must be pursuing their first baccalaureate degree, having earned a high school diploma (or equivalent), and subsequently enrolled in community college. **Those who have already have earned a bachelor's degree, or are pursuing graduate study, will not be considered for this scholarship.**

If a student is selected, he or she has up to two weeks to decide whether to accept the award. UW Tacoma reserves the right to offer the scholarship to other nominees should the first winner decline.

## **Nomination and Application Procedures/Selection Criteria**

### **Part I: Presidential Nomination**

Community college presidents (or their official designees) are encouraged to submit at least two, but no more than three nominations from their campus. In selecting the nominees, presidents should consider the following criteria in making final selections: GPA, strength of coursework, writing ability, participation in honors programs, academic enrichment, demonstrated leadership and community service, and faculty recommendations.

As part of the nomination procedure, community college presidents must sign the nomination and eligibility form. Because GPA and strength of coursework will be given exceptional weight, careful review of student transcripts is highly recommended.

### **Part II: Letters of Recommendation from Faculty**

One letter of recommendation is required. **Faculty members** with whom the student has had direct academic contact should complete the letters. **Letters should focus on academic merit** detailing classroom experience or other activities that illustrate academic accomplishments. Letters may also discuss leadership, service or personal integrity. The letter must be on college letterhead and signed by the Faculty member. Students are responsible for securing letters of recommendation.

### **Part III: Student Application Materials**

Students must complete the biographical information, the Release Authorization Form, and the honors, awards, memberships, enrichment activities, leadership, and community service form (if applicable), and secure one letter of recommendation from faculty (see above). Students will need to submit official transcripts from their nominating community colleges, along with the other application materials, if these transcripts have not been previously obtained by the nominating institution.

### **Part IV: Personal Interview**

Finalists may potentially be interviewed by the UW Tacoma Next Step Scholars Selection Committee.

## **Award Acceptance Policy**

The participating community colleges will each have respective deadlines for scholarship submissions and will forward no less than two (or up to three) nominees to UW Tacoma by April 24, 2026. The UW Tacoma Next Steps Scholarship Committee will review and notify the final recipient(s) no later than **May 22, 2026**.

Winners of Next Step Scholars awards must inform UW Tacoma of their intention to accept or decline the award in writing within two weeks of being notified. Instructions on accepting the scholarship will be on the award notification letter. Should a student decline the award, UW Tacoma reserves the right to offer the award to another nominee from the institution's pool.

In the event that a student formally accepts the award and then elects not to enroll at UW Tacoma in autumn quarter 2026, the scholarship may go unfilled for that academic year. Exceptions may be made for students who can show that non-enrollment results from hardship or other circumstances beyond their control. Hardship exceptions will normally be granted for one quarter only.

Next Step recipients must also agree to have their names released publicly and to participate willingly in academic ceremonies such as commencement and in donor stewardship activities, which may involve writing letters, attending events, etc.

## Scholarship Renewal Criteria

The Next Step Scholarship for the 2026-27 academic year for up to two academic years. Eligibility for the second year is contingent upon meeting the following minimum requirements in the first:

- Maintain a cumulative UW Tacoma GPA of at least 3.00
- Be consecutively enrolled each quarter (not including summer quarter)
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress towards degree completion (complete at least 80% of credits attempted)

## Nomination Materials

All nomination materials are to be assembled by the president (or designee) at the participating community college and complete packets sent to the UW Tacoma Next Step Scholars Selection Committee.

Nomination materials include:

*From the president*

1. Institutional nomination form (president's signature required)
2. Official student transcripts from the nominating college.

*From the applicant*

1. Biographical information form
2. Release authorization and statement of candidacy statement
3. Honors, awards, memberships, enrichment activities, leadership, and community service form
4. One letter of recommendation (on college letterhead and faculty signature required)

**Incomplete nomination packets will result in disqualification.**

NEXT STEP SCHOLARSHIP | UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA  
**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

*To be completed by the nominee.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID number (current institution): \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 digits of SSN: xxx-xx- \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening): \_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of community college credits **completed** through March 20, 2026: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you submitted a complete transfer application to UW Tacoma for autumn quarter 2026?

YES NO

If NO, will you meet all UW Tacoma requirements in time to enroll for autumn quarter 2026, to the best of your knowledge?

YES NO

Academic program in which I plan to enroll at UW Tacoma: \_\_\_\_\_

