The Farm & Industry Short Course (FISC) is a 16-week, hands-on education for people who want to develop or expand the skills needed to work in production agriculture. The University of Wisconsin–Madison has offered the program for over a century and provided opportunities for generations of farmers to expand their career options. The credits earned are eligible for transfer to many four-year universities.

Classes begin in late fall and end in early spring—timed to coordinate with the nongrowing season in the Midwest. Courses are offered in the areas of soils, crops, dairy, meat animals, agricultural engineering, farm business planning, agribusiness, human relations, and communications. Students in their first year will earn a Certificate in Foundations of Farm Management. This certificate serves as a prerequisite to returning for a second year to earn a certificate in one of the more specialized areas.

Participants are UW–Madison students in University Special student status. They live on campus, enjoy all the benefits of being a UW–Madison student, and are encouraged to participate in campus groups, committees, and clubs—as well as athletic, social, and alumni events. A scholarship program is available. Current tuition, housing, and other fees are listed on the FISC webpage.

HOW TO GET IN

ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Admission decisions are made using a holistic approach with consideration of, but not limited to: an applicant’s cumulative GPA, class rank, activities, leadership roles, academic progress as reflected on an official transcript, etc. Below are eligibility criteria and considerations:

Domestic Applicants:

- High School Diploma or GED required
- Involvement in agriculture-related activities
- Academic record
- Personal and professional goals

- Rank in the upper 80% of graduating class

There is no foreign language requirement. Returning adult students will receive special consideration.

International Applicants**:
(The following requirements are set forth by the guidelines for the J-1 VISA as well as by the FISC office and UW campus).

- Degree or professional certificate from a foreign, post-secondary academic institution AND one year minimum of prior, ag-related work experience acquired outside of the United States, OR five years minimum of prior, ag-related work experience acquired outside of the United States
- Minimum of a 2.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale
- Proficiency in the English language, as demonstrated by a TOEFL score of 550 or higher, or IELTS score of 7 or higher, OR proof that your most recent four years of education were taught primarily in the English language
- Completed Certification of Financial Support form.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are available October 1 and close August 1 for domestic students for the upcoming academic year, and close June 1 for International applications. Applicants must mail an official high school or post-secondary transcript, depending upon the most recent school of attendance. (If a post-secondary transcript has fewer than 2 years of classwork reported, an applicant also must submit a high school transcript in addition to the post-secondary one.) International applicants must submit additional documents in order for their application to be considered complete as listed on the FISC International Students application page.

The online FISC application is hosted by the Adult Career and Special Student Services (ACSSS), Division of Continuing Studies, which admits all University Special students (which includes FISC). Applicants will submit an application following the process below. A committee in FISC reviews the application and makes the final admissions decisions.

3-step process:

Step 1: Create an account and apply via the University Special student application. Select “Farm and Industry Short Course” as the student classification.

Step 2: Mail all transcripts and additional application materials to:

Farm & Industry Short Course
University of Wisconsin – Madison
116 Agricultural Hall
1450 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706

Step 3: Optional but recommended: Apply for FISC Scholarships before April 1 to receive priority consideration.