

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT STUDENT LOANS

Q: What classes/programs are eligible for student loans?

A: Most of our full-time programs are eligible for student loans. These are the programs that run Monday through Friday for six hours each day, where you can earn a certificate or a degree when you finish.

Q: Can I get a loan to pay for pre-requisites? What about General Education classes?

A: You have to be enrolled at least half time (6 credits minimum), and the pre-requisites have to be for one of our loan-eligible programs. You are eligible for one consecutive calendar year only, and you can only do this for one program. If you have already completed the certificate portion of one of our programs, and you wish to earn the degree, or if you will be taking one of our programs soon, you can get a loan to pay for your required General Education classes. We do not offer a general studies degree, so you cannot get a loan for just General Education classes, nor are you eligible if you took your certificate program at a different college.

Q: Why do I need to fill out a FAFSA?

A: We must have a completed file for you before we can calculate your loan eligibility. The formula to award loans is cost of attendance minus your expected family contribution (which is determined by your FAFSA), minus any aid that you receive.

Q: Why does it take so long to get my loan awarded?

A: The time it takes to award your loan depends on multiple factors. If you have just completed your FAFSA, it must be reviewed and then awarded before we can calculate your loan. If we need to make any corrections to your information, that

will add more time. The loan itself needs to be awarded once the calculations have been made. The work flow in the Financial Aid Office is determined by the deadlines that we have for submitting information to the Business Office, and by the volume of incoming applicants. Due to the large number of people that are unemployed, our office has seen unprecedented volumes lately.

Q: How do I know when my check is here? Where do I get it?

A: After you sign your Master Promissory Note, you should receive a disclosure statement from the Direct Loan Program that will tell you the dates of your disbursements. You may also inquire in the Financial Aid Office, since your actual disbursement dates will be based on the college's loan disbursement schedule. You will pick up your checks at the Cashiering window. Note: It is best to check the availability of your disbursement in the Financial Aid Office, as the cashiers do not have a record of when it was requested. In order to pick up your checks, you will need proof of attendance (a Verification Form, which is available from either the Financial Aid Office or the Cashiering window), and current photo ID.

Q: I just started at your school - how come I am not getting my loan check on the first day of school?

A: All new students are subject to the 30 day delay policy during their first quarter, which means you will need to wait until the loan disbursement date that most closely follows the completion of your first 30 calendar days in your program. This applies to pre-requisite and General Education classes as well as the full time programs.

Q: How come my money doesn't just come in one lump sum?

A: We are required to disburse loan funds in multiple disbursements. If you are here for more than one quarter, you will receive your money on the loan disbursement date that most closely follows the beginning of each quarter. If you are only attending one quarter during a particular financial aid year, you will still get two disbursements. One will occur on the disbursement date that most closely follows the start of the quarter (unless you are just starting and are subject to

the 30 day delay), and the second one will occur on the disbursement date that most closely follows the mid-point of the quarter.

Q: Why do I have to do Exit Counseling? What if I'm not graduating yet?

A: We are required to notify you of your rights and responsibilities as a borrower, and one of the federal requirements is that you complete Exit Counseling within 30 days of your graduation, or if you drop below half time enrollment and are no longer loan-eligible. We will send you a letter when our records indicate that you are approaching your final thirty days of class, which will provide you with directions for completing the Exit Counseling on-line. If you are planning on continuing school, it is your responsibility to notify us so that we can update our records.

Q: How come I didn't get the full amount that I asked for?

A: You are only allowed to receive a certain amount of aid from all sources, including student loans, within a financial aid year. You cannot exceed the established cost of attendance for your program. There are guidelines for the maximum amounts that you can request, but your own unique eligibility is determined by the formula cost of attendance, minus EFC, minus total amount of aid received (grants, work study grants, scholarships).

Q: I had a loan last year. How come I didn't get as much money this year as I did last year?

A: There are a number of reasons why your aid will not be the same for different academic years. But if you are finishing your program, and you only have a small number of credits remaining, your loan will be awarded for only those credits. For example, if you are completing your program in August, and you only have 9 credits left to complete during summer quarter, your loan would be pro-rated to reflect that you are only attending 19% of an academic year.

Q: Why did you pay my tuition with my loan money?

A: At the time your loan funds (or your grant funds) become available, if you have unpaid tuition, the Business Office will pay those fees first, and disburse the

remaining amount to you. Tuition payment is the priority, with all other expenses being secondary.

Q: Can I increase the amount that I asked for?

A: You can request that we increase your loan, if you did not already request the maximum amount. Again, we will need to calculate your eligibility using the formula described above. Note: you can only do this once, so it is best to make use of a budget calculation tool to be sure you are requesting enough money.

Q: What if my loan check gets here, but I decide I don't want a loan after all? What if I got the first check, but decide I don't want the second one?

A: It's actually easier for us to decrease a loan, rather than increase one. If you change your mind, just contact the Financial Aid Office, and we can return the unwanted funds. We will make sure that your loan is either reduced or cancelled.

Q: When do I have to pay my loan back?

A: Once you graduate, or you leave school, or you drop to less than half time attendance, you have a six month grace period during which you do not have to make any loan payments. After that grace period is up, you are expected to make monthly payments.

Q: What if I drop out of school after I get my loan checks?

A: You need to notify the Financial Aid Office if you drop your classes, or if you make changes to your classes, or if you drop to less than half time. Your six month grace period starts the day after you leave school, even if you don't notify us. When you get your loan money, you are basically being paid ahead of time to complete a certain number of credits, and to complete a certain block of time in school. If you leave before you complete all of those credits/hours, you may not have earned all of the money that was paid to you. If the college needs to return money to your student loan on your behalf, you will be billed for that money. Refer to the "Understanding Return of Title IV Funds" that you received with your award letter, or you can pick one up in our office, to find the dates for each quarter when your money would be considered 100% earned.

Q: What if I fail a class? What if I fail all my classes?

A: You will want to refer to our "Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements", which were sent to you along with your award letter. If you did not receive this information, please stop by the Financial Aid Office for a copy. To summarize, at the end of each quarter we look at your quarterly and cumulative GPA and the number of credits you completed vs. the number you registered for. If either your quarterly or cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0, you will be placed on "Warning" for the following quarter. If either GPA falls below 2.0 at the end of that following quarter, you will be placed on "Temporary Suspension", and you will no longer be eligible for any aid, including student loans. We are also required to measure your pace of progression for your program, and you must be on track to complete a minimum of 67% of your program's credit hours each time we review your pace (which will be done at the end of each quarter when we review your grades). You will be notified if you fall below the 67%, and depending on your situation, you could be in jeopardy of losing your loan eligibility. If your loan is for pre-requisite classes only, you are still required to complete at least 67% of all classes, including classes that you paid for out of pocket, or took before your loan began.

Q: What if I graduate, but six months have gone by and I still don't have a job?

A: The most important thing is that you stay in contact with your lender, and make sure they know about your unemployment, or any financial hardship that you have. You may qualify for a deferment, where you do not have to make some or even all of your payments for a time. There are programs in place to help you. No one wants to see you ruin your credit because you made late payments or didn't pay at all.