

# University of Illinois Springfield Office of Financial Assistance Student Guide

University of Illinois Springfield – Office of Financial Assistance, University Hall, One University Plaza, MS UHB 1015  
Springfield, IL 62703 217-206-6724 888-977-4UIS Fax 217-206-7376 <http://www.uis.edu/financialaid>

This guide is designed to help you understand the financial aid process from the initial awarding through delivery of financial aid. Please keep this guide to assist you in answering questions that may arise regarding correspondence from the Office of Financial Assistance (OFA).

It is important that you respond promptly to all requests for information. Any questions regarding your financial aid should be directed to the UIS OFA. The OFA staff is committed to providing you with the best possible service and we will make every effort to respond to your requests promptly. **However, please note that during peak processing periods**, the OFA receives a large volume of mail, email, and telephone calls, so it may take additional time to meet your needs.

## Terms of Your Award

- You must be classified as a degree seeking student at UIS to be eligible for financial aid. Unclassified students, non-degree seeking students, and provisionally admitted students are not generally eligible for financial aid. If you are a graduate student, you must be fully admitted to your program. Conditionally admitted graduate students may be eligible for aid, but you need to check with the Office of Financial Assistance to determine if you are eligible and to find out what limitations exist. Provisionally admitted graduate students are not eligible for financial assistance. Only specific graduate certificate programs are aid-eligible; please visit <https://www.uis.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid/policies/financial-aid-certificate-programs> for details.
- Your financial assistance is awarded based on merit and/or calculated need as determined from the information provided on your financial aid application form. Financial aid offers are subject to adjustments or cancellations due to changes in laws, regulations, appropriations, changes in your financial situation, discovery of data errors or changes in your enrollment status.
- If you receive any financial assistance from an outside source (e.g., a private scholarship) that is not included on your offer notice, you must inform the Office of Financial Assistance.
- Dated material requiring a timely response will be emailed. Please be sure to monitor emails carefully, as the UIS email is used for many official UIS business.

## Enrollment

- If your enrolled hours are less than those indicated on your offer notice, your financial aid may be affected. You must inform our office of any change in your enrolled hours.
- Dropping courses or withdrawing from UIS will affect your current and future aid eligibility. Contact OFA prior to dropping courses or withdrawing from UIS to discuss potential consequences.
- For purposes of financial aid, the following definitions apply for the fall and spring semesters:
  - **Undergraduate**
    - Full time = 12 or more credit hours
    - Three-quarter time = 9-11 credit hours
    - Half-time = 6-8 credit hours
    - Less than half time = < 6 credit hours
  - **Graduate\***
    - Full time = 9 or more credit hours
    - Three-quarter time = 6-8 credit hours
    - Half time – 5 credit hours
    - Less than half time = < 5 credit hours

\*certain graduate accelerated programs may follow different definitions

- Classes taken for audit are not eligible for financial assistance and do not count toward enrollment purposes of financial assistance. It is the student's responsibility to inform UIS OFA if he/she enrolls in a class for an audit grade.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

As a financial aid recipient, you must satisfy the academic requirements as defined by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy of the University of Illinois Springfield. This policy is listed at <https://www.uis.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid/policies>.

### Financial Assistance E-Offer Notice

Upon completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the United States Department of Education (DOE) transmits an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) to UIS OFA. This report allows us to offer you financial aid when completed fully and correctly. In the cases of conflicting information, the DOE will notify you in the comments section of your Student Aid Report (SAR). After all requirements have been satisfied by both the DOE and UIS, the awarding process may begin.

Students applying for financial assistance will receive their financial aid offer letter electronically through the Financial Aid section of the UIS student portal, [Self Service](#). More information can be found at <https://www.uis.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid>

All first time Direct Loan borrowers must complete a [Federal Direct Loan Master Promissory Note](#) and [Federal Direct Loan Entrance Counseling](#), at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov). These requirements only need to be completed once as long as you stay enrolled at UIS.

The amount of the Federal Direct Loan(s) we have determined you are eligible to borrow is stated in your offer notice. You must Accept or Decline loans through Self Service. If you desire to borrow less than the amount indicated, you may use the "Accept/Decline Aid" or "Request Changes" button to request a lower award amount.

### Financial Assistance Programs

#### **Federal Pell Grant**

Federal Pell Grants are awarded to help undergraduates with financial need pay for the pursuit of their first baccalaureate degree. The maximum annual award will depend on financial need and program funding, as determined by DOE.

#### **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)**

The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant is a federally funded, campus-based program. Recipients must demonstrate exceptional financial need as determined by the federal formula. Funds are limited and Federal Pell Grant recipients are given priority.

#### **Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant**

The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grant is a federally funded program that began in the 2008-2009 academic year. Students who plan to begin a career in teaching may qualify for up to \$4000 each year, based on meeting program conditions. In exchange for this grant, a student must sign an Agreement to Serve (ATS) as a full-time teacher at certain low-income schools and within high-need fields for at least four academic years within eight years after completing (or ceasing enrollment) the course of study for which the candidate received the grant.

Failure or refusal to carry out the obligations of this program will convert the grant(s) into a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan(s) with interest dated back to the time of disbursement.

### **State of Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP)**

The Monetary Award Program (MAP), a grant funded by the State of Illinois, provides need-based grants for qualified undergraduate students pursuing their first baccalaureate degree to help pay for tuition and mandatory fees. Independent students must be Illinois residents and parents of dependent students must be Illinois residents who are enrolled at least half time in a degree or certificate program.

### **Military & Veterans Benefits**

All students wishing to use any veteran's or military benefits must complete a UIS Request for Veteran Program Benefits form each semester. You can access the form by going to the Financial Assistance web page and clicking on Financial Aid Resources and selecting Financial Aid Forms: <https://www.uis.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid/financial-aid-resources/financial-aid-forms>.

For more information on Veteran Benefits, please visit: <https://www.uis.edu/veterans/benefits/>.

### **Graduate Tuition Waivers**

If at any time during the award year you receive a graduate assistantship or internship, your financial aid may need to be revised to exclude any institutional grants and waivers or adjust for over-awards.

### **Federal Work-Study**

Federal Work-Study (FWS) is awarded to undergraduate students with the financial need after their eligibility for grants and need-based scholarships has been considered. The FWS program is a form of financial aid that allows you to earn money to pay for a portion of your educational expenses. The program encourages both community service work and work related to your course of study. FWS is one of the few types of financial aid awarded by the Office of Financial Assistance that does not credit directly to your University account. Rather, you must work to earn the amount of FWS for which you may be eligible. Student employees are paid every two weeks. Wages vary depending on the type of work involved.

If your offer notice includes an FWS amount, you may search the Student Employment Virtual Job Board for available positions. The Virtual Job Board may be accessed at <https://www.uis.edu/careers-internships/federal-work-study>. A complete description of the position and pay rate is included in each job listing. Students who are hired to work on campus will need to complete the applicable employment paperwork.

If you wish to decline your FWS offer or reduce your offer (minimum FWS is \$1,000) and request additional Federal Loans, please contact OFA. An advisor will be able to determine if you have additional loan eligibility.

If your offer notice did not include an FWS offer but you would like to work on campus as an FWS student, please contact OFA. An advisor will be able to determine your eligibility for an FWS award. If you have been offered a student loan, your student loan eligibility may be reduced.

### **Federal William D. Ford Direct Loan Program (DL)**

A part of your financial aid offer may include your eligibility to participate in the federal Direct Loan Program (DL). The federal government created this program to provide low-interest loans to assist students and their families in financing postsecondary education. There is no separate loan application for federal student loans. The FAFSA is the application.

## Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans

The subsidized loan is based on financial need as determined by the government from the results of the FAFSA. If you qualify for a subsidized Federal Direct Loan, the government will pay the interest on your loan during the following periods:

- While you are enrolled in school at least half time
- During the six-month grace period after you graduate or drop below half-time enrollment
- During authorized periods of deferment

The unsubsidized loan is not based on financial need. The government does not pay the interest in your behalf. You are responsible for payment of all interest that accumulates while you are in school, during grace periods, and deferment periods. You have the option of making interest payments while you are still in school, or you may defer interest payments until you begin repayment. All other terms and conditions of the unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan are the same as the subsidized Direct Stafford Loan.

Additional unsubsidized loan may be available for dependent students whose parents cannot obtain a federal PLUS Loan. Check with a financial aid advisor for more details on how to qualify additional loan.

## Terms of Federal Direct Loans

**Interest Rate:** For undergraduate students, Federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans disbursed between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 have a fixed interest rate of 3.73%. For graduate/professional students, Federal Unsubsidized Loans have a fixed interest rate of 5.28%

**Loan Fees:** Upon disbursement, you will receive a disclosure statement from the Direct Loan Borrower Services detailing your loan information. For loans disbursed after October 1, 2020, the loan origination fee is 1.057%. The net disbursement of your loan will be 98.949% of the principal.

**Repayment:** Repayment of your Federal Direct loans begins automatically six months after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time attendance. The standard repayment term is 10 years, but several repayment plan options are available.

**Loan Disbursement:** According to federal regulations, loans borrowed for full academic year periods will be paid in two installments called “disbursements.” There typically will be one disbursement in the fall and one in the spring. For loans processed for only one semester (e.g. Fall only loan), the funds will be issued in one disbursement.

**Entrance Loan Counseling:** Federal regulations require all first-time borrowers at UIS to complete Entrance Loan Counseling prior to loan disbursement. Your funds cannot be obtained until you have completed mandatory entrance counseling. You may complete your Direct Loan entrance counseling online at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov). Failure to complete this requirement will delay the delivery of your loan proceeds.

**Exit Loan Counseling:** Federal regulations require all students who graduate, drop below half-time enrollment or leave school to complete an Exit Loan Counseling session. This requirement can be fulfilled online at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

## Federal Direct PLUS Loans for Parents

The PLUS Loan is a federal funded program for the **parent(s)** of a dependent undergraduate student. Eligibility is not based on financial need; however, applicants are required to have their credit checked. An approved applicant can borrow up to the anticipated expenses (cost of attendance) minus other financial aid awarded.

The PLUS loan is an unsubsidized loan, meaning the borrow will be charged interest from the time the loan is disbursed until it is paid in full. For PLUS loans disbursed between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, the fixed interest rate is 6.28%.

When you borrow through the PLUS Loan Program, the **parent who borrows** must sign a master promissory note agreeing to pay back the loan with interest, according to the terms of the program.

Parents who are interested in a Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), visit [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) and begin the process of completing your PLUS application online.

### Aggregate Loan Limits

The federal government has set strict limits on the amount of Direct Loan funds a student may borrow within a given year and throughout their educational career. The lifetime aggregate limits listed below are calculated by including all Direct Loan funds borrowed from **all** schools attended. Once a student reaches their aggregate limit, they are **no longer eligible to borrow** under the Direct Loan Program (subsidized or unsubsidized.)

Lifetime Aggregate Maximums		
	Total subsidized Stafford Loan funds borrowed cannot exceed	Combined subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loan funds borrowed cannot exceed
Dependent Undergraduates	\$23,000	\$31,000
Independent Undergraduates	\$23,000	\$57,500
Graduates	\$65,500	\$138,500

If you have questions about your Direct Loan eligibility or other options available to you, please contact your financial aid advisor to review your loan status. You may also view your borrowing history online <https://studentaid.gov/h/manage-loans>.

### Institutional Scholarships

Annually, the UIS Institutional Scholarship process begins approximately December 1<sup>st</sup>. All applications must be submitted to by February 15<sup>th</sup> each year. To complete the annual application online, please go to <https://www.uis.edu/cost-aid/scholarships>.

### Other Options – Alternative Loan Programs

Alternative Loans were designed to bridge the gap between college costs and traditional financial aid resources. These loans are typically borrowed in the student's name and are not based on financial need. Rather, lenders examine the student's – or cosigner's – creditworthiness, and the student's ability to repay the loans after finishing school; however, the Office of Financial Assistance must certify enrollment.

### Delivery of Funds

Delivery of financial aid funds is the function of the Office of Student Financial Services and Cashiering Operations. Scholarships, grant awards, and loan proceeds are applied directly to your student account at the University. Loan proceeds will only be credited to your account after you have completed required Entrance or Loan Counseling and the Master Promissory Note. **Students are required to enroll in direct deposit at <http://paymybill.uillinois.edu> so that their excess funds can be electronically deposited into their designated bank accounts.** Your financial aid file must be complete before this process can take place. Thus, it is imperative that you follow up promptly on any information requested by our office. The Office of Student Financial Services and Cashiering Operations will process any excess funds and electronically deposit these

funds into your designated bank account. However, please note that during peak processing periods, this process may require additional processing time.

### Summer Financial Assistance

Students who plan to attend during the summer semester may or may not have eligibility for financial aid. You must be enrolled for the summer semester before your summer aid offer will be processed. Typically, in order to receive financial assistance for the summer semester, undergraduate students must be enrolled in no fewer than six (6) credit hours and graduate students must be enrolled in no fewer than three (3) credit hours.

### Student's Rights and Responsibilities

#### You have the right to:

- Be advised of what financial aid programs are available and how to apply for them
- Be advised of requirements in the case of withdrawal, refunds, and repayment of financial aid
- Have all application information treated with the highest of professional confidentiality
- Be advised of the procedures and deadlines for submitting application(s) for financial aid
- Be advised of the selection criteria for financial aid recipients
- Be advised of how and when financial aid funds are disbursed
- Request a review of your aid package if you believe a mistake has been made or if your enrollment status or family and/or financial circumstances have changed
- Be advised of how the school determines whether you are making satisfactory progress for financial aid, and what happens if you are not

#### You have a responsibility to:

- Establish plans to meet your educational and living expenses
- Apply for financial aid early if you need financial assistance
- Submit all forms required to complete the application process in a timely and accurate manner
- Read, understand and retain copies of all information and/or forms that are sent to you, or that you must sign
- Keep UIS informed of any changes of address, name, or marital status while you are a student and until all loans have been repaid in full
- Notify the Office of Financial Assistance of all sources of funds you receive that are not already showing on your offer notice
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Satisfactorily perform any work assignments through student employment programs
- Inform the UIS Office of Financial Assistance of any changes in your attendance, any private scholarship money you receive or changes that may impact your projected income for the coming year so that your aid offer can be adjusted.

### Financial Aid Tips

- Your aid offer cannot exceed the estimated cost for attending UIS.
- In case we need to contact you, be sure to update UIS of any address, email address, or telephone changes by contacting the Office of Registration and Records.
- When using FAFSA on the web (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>) review your Student Aid Report for any errors or conflicts that need resolved.
- If your plans should change and you decide not to attend UIS, inform OFA of your decision.
- Keep copies of all documents you send to our office.

- Start a file to store all your financial aid documents.
- Keep your FSA ID handy, but confidential.
- Meet all deadlines.
- Ask the Office of Financial Assistance staff any questions you may have. We're here to assist you!

### How Do I Contact the Office of Financial Assistance?

Please include your UIN in all correspondence with our office.

**Send an e-mail.** The best way to contact our office is via email at [finaid@uis.edu](mailto:finaid@uis.edu).

**Call our office.** Please feel free to call our office at 217-206-6724. If we are unavailable, please leave a voicemail message and an advisor will return your call as quickly as possible. If you need to fax any information to us, please do so at 217-206-7376.

**Visit our office.** Our office is located on the first floor of University Hall. We are open between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Advisors are available to meet with students and their families on a walk-in or appointment basis. For directions to University Hall, please go to <http://www.uis.edu> and click on the "Visit UIS" link.

**Mail documents to our office.** Our address is University of Illinois Springfield, ATTN Office of Financial Assistance, University Hall, One University Plaza, MS UHB 1015, Springfield, IL 62703.

**Visit the UIS Office of Financial Assistance online.** It is easy to check your financial aid status online by using the Student Self-Service Access System. Just go to <https://www.uis.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid/check-your-financial-aid-status> and login to Self Service.