

University of Massachusetts Amherst

# Guide to Understanding Financial Aid 2020-2021

Financial Aid Services  
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University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst **BE REVOLUTIONARY™**

# Message from Financial Aid Services

Financial Aid Services  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

UMass Amherst Financial Aid Services is committed to working with students and families to provide the best possible information about available financial aid resources.

We created this guide to help you understand the components of your financial aid award, as well as the options available for financing your education.

What is the best way for you to pay for a UMass Amherst education? The first step should include reading this guide and understanding your options. Then take a careful look at your household budget and determine what funds are available to cover educational expenses and any potential additional funds you may have.

When planning how to finance your education, it is important to plan your expenses for the entire academic year. Included in this guide is information about paying your University bill and an expense worksheet to help you estimate what that amount will be.

Financial Aid Services can assist you with questions you may have regarding your financial aid award and available financing options.

Our office can be reached at (413) 545-0801 or by email at [finaid@finaid.umass.edu](mailto:finaid@finaid.umass.edu).

We look forward to working with you!

**It all starts with the FAFSA!**  
**Apply for financial aid at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov)**

# Eligibility for Financial Aid

Students, and parents of dependent students, have the primary responsibility to pay for college. Financial aid is meant to supplement that responsibility. Eligibility for financial aid begins with filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA should be completed online at: **studentaid.gov** each academic year. The information provided on the FAFSA is used by the Central Processing System (CPS) to determine an expected family contribution (EFC). This is an estimate of the amount of money you (and your parents, if you are dependent) could reasonably contribute toward college costs for one year. The EFC is the initial indicator of what types of grants and/or loans you may be eligible for. In addition, financial aid applicants must meet the following key criteria to receive most types of financial aid:

- Be enrolled in a degree-granting program.
- Be a United States citizen, permanent resident or eligible non-citizen as defined by the federal government.
- Be enrolled in at least six credit hours each semester (some forms of financial aid require full-time enrollment, 12 credits).
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress toward completion of your degree.
- Additional eligibility requirements may apply.

At UMass Amherst, students applying for financial aid are considered for a variety of programs based on eligibility. Programs include federal, state and institutional sources of aid. Initial financial aid award packages may include need-based and non-need based grants, loans and work-study programs.

**Need-Based Financial Aid** is awarded based on the availability of funds to students who have demonstrated financial need. You have financial need when your EFC is less than your estimated cost of attendance (COA). UMass Amherst determines your COA. The CPS determines your EFC using the U.S. Department of Education's formula. Need-based financial aid includes federal, state and university grants, subsidized student loans and work-study.

**Non Need-Based Financial Aid** is awarded when you have no financial need, i.e. your EFC is greater than the COA. In this case, you only qualify for non need-based aid, which includes the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan.

## Graduate Students on Program Fee or Continuous Enrollment

Graduate students who are not enrolled for any course credits but who are candidates for a degree must pay a program fee each semester to be considered for continuous enrollment until the degree is formally awarded. Program Fee students may be eligible for a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan if the work on their degree requirements is classified as equivalent to at least half-time (six credits per semester). If you are on program fee and would like to borrow a Direct Loan, you must update your enrollment status each semester with the Graduate Student Service Center at 534 Goodell Building by providing them with a letter from your Program Director. It is your responsibility to notify Financial Aid Services, as your loan eligibility will be affected. Financial aid eligibility is directly related to your billed expenses.

## Graduate Non-Degree Students

Graduate non-degree students enrolled at least half-time (six credits per semester) may be eligible for a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan for up to \$6,250 per semester only under the following conditions: the student applied for admission to a graduate degree program, will be considered for admission at a later date, and the coursework is verified by a Graduate Program Director as prerequisite for admission to a degree program. A memo from the Graduate Program Director to Financial Aid Services is required each semester to verify this information before a non-degree student may be awarded Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans. A non-degree sample letter is available on our website at [umass.edu/umfa/non-degree/eligibility](http://umass.edu/umfa/non-degree/eligibility). Please note that after 12 consecutive months (two semesters) of non-degree status, you must be enrolled in a degree-granting program to be considered for a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan. Students are only eligible to receive federal loans as a non-degree student once during their lifetime.

# Estimated Cost of Attendance (COA)

**COA** is the amount we estimate it may cost you to attend UMass Amherst for one academic year. A student's eligibility for financial aid is not based on individual preferences and spending habits, but on the standard budget allowances developed by UMass Amherst. These costs have been developed as guides to help students anticipate their educational expenses. Some students will spend more than the estimated amounts, others less, depending on individual lifestyles and circumstances. COA includes billed and non-billed expenses.

Costs for the academic year are based on estimated information. Final fees are set by the Board of Trustees in Summer 2020 for the 2020-2021 academic year, therefore estimates are subject to change. Visit the Bursar's website at: [umass.edu/bursar](http://umass.edu/bursar) for up-to-date 2020-2021 tuition, fees and room and board charges.

**Estimated Cost of Attendance for 2020-2021** information presented below is only an estimate. There may be additional charges not listed below that appear on your University bill. These additional fees may be based on the student's career, level and program. For example: counseling fee, entering fee, Engineering fee, Honors College fee, Isenberg fee, lab fees, program fees and commencement fee are not listed below.

**Regional students** bill will reflect the full cost of out-of-state tuition and fees AND either the New England regional discount or, for those who are eligible, the out-of-state merit award. (Students receive either the regional discount or the merit award, but not both.)

**Undergraduate Students:** Full-time enrollment and living on campus.

	In-State	Out-of-State	Regional
<b>Tuition &amp; Fees</b>	\$16,439	\$36,427	\$29,490
<b>Room &amp; Board</b>	\$13,938	\$13,938	\$13,938
<b>Books &amp; Supplies</b>	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
<b>Personal &amp; Transportation</b>	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400
<b>Total ESTIMATED Cost of Attendance</b>	\$32,777	\$52,765	\$45,828

### Billed expenses

are the charges that appear on your University bill. These include tuition, fees, and on-campus room and board.

### Non-billed expenses

are the cost of items such as books, supplies, off-campus room and board, personal expenses (clothing, laundry, recreation), and transportation needs.

### Other charge or fee that may appear on your bill that is not included in your COA

**Student Health Plan** - Massachusetts state law requires that students enrolled at a college or university carry comprehensive health insurance. This fee may be waived upon request if your health insurance meets the Massachusetts state requirements. Otherwise you will be charged for the Student Health Plan every semester. For detailed information on the cost of this fee, please visit: [umass.edu/bursar](http://umass.edu/bursar).

**Financial Aid Services website has information to assist in determining your estimated cost of attendance at: [umass.edu/umfa](http://umass.edu/umfa). This includes information for part-time undergraduates and graduate students.**

# Types of Financial Aid

## Need-Based Financial Aid

### Grants & Scholarships

- **Federal Pell Grant**

is awarded to full and part-time undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional need and are seeking their first bachelor's degree. Awards are limited to the equivalent of 12 full-time semesters. Final eligibility determination is required.

- **MASSGrant Program**

is a need-based grant funded by appropriations from the Massachusetts Legislature for Massachusetts residents. Eligible undergraduate students must take at least 12 credits each semester, be seeking their first bachelor's degree and file the FAFSA by May 1, 2020. Award amounts are determined by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

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

is awarded to Federal Pell Grant eligible students. Awards range from \$200 to \$2,000. Students enrolled part-time may also be eligible for FSEOG. Not all Federal Pell Grant eligible students are awarded FSEOG due to limited funding.

- **University Awards**

are awarded in the form of grants, tuition credits and scholarships. These funds are awarded to full and part-time eligible undergraduate students seeking their first bachelor's degree. Please note that some of the university academic grants and awards have grade point average (GPA) requirements. A student may only receive one tuition credit per semester regardless of the source of the credit. All awards are subject to fund availability.

- **State Financial Aid Programs**

may be available from your state of residence. Visit your state department of higher education website to get information regarding available financial aid programs. Massachusetts residents should visit: [mass.edu/osfa](http://mass.edu/osfa) for more information.

### Work-Study & Subsidized Loans

- **Federal Work-Study (FWS)**

is a federally funded program that provides students with funding to obtain part-time employment. Students typically work 10-15 hours per week and receive a biweekly paycheck. Earnings are taxable.

- FWS is not applied to your University bill.
- FWS can be used for on-campus hourly employment and at APPROVED FWS off-campus sites.
- For available jobs visit: [umass.edu/umfa/seo](http://umass.edu/umfa/seo).
- You can have more than one job; however, you may not work more than eight hours per day and should not work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- Earnings from Federal Work-Study jobs are excluded from income on future year FAFSA.

- **William D. Ford Federal Direct Subsidized Loan**

is a low-interest loan funded by the federal government and available to eligible undergraduate and University Without Walls (UWW formerly known as CPE) students enrolled at least half-time who complete the FAFSA. A credit check is not required to receive this loan. Direct Subsidized Loans are awarded based on demonstrated need.

- The current interest rate for 2019-2020 is fixed at 4.51%.
- There is a 1.059% origination fee retained by the federal government.
- The interest rate and origination fee are subject to change.
- The government pays the interest while the student is in school.
- Eligibility is limited to 150 percent of the program length.
- Repayment begins six months after the student leaves school or drops below six credits.
- First-time borrowers are required to complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Loan Entrance Counseling at: [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov), and the MPN Informed Borrowing Confirmation at [StudentAid.gov](http://StudentAid.gov) before the loan funds are disbursed to your university bill.

**All financial aid programs are subject to change due to external factors.**

## Non Need-Based Financial Aid

### • William D. Ford Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan

is a non need-based, low-interest loan funded by the federal government and available to degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at least half-time who complete the FAFSA. A credit check is not required to receive this loan.

- The current interest rate for 2019-2020 is fixed at 4.51% for undergraduate and 6.08% for graduate students.
- There is a 1.059% origination fee retained by the federal government.
- The interest rate and origination fee are subject to change.
- Interest accrues from the date the loan is disbursed and may be paid while in school or capitalized (added to the principal) at a specified time.
- Student borrowers are billed quarterly for the interest.
- Repayment begins six months after the student leaves school or drops below six credits.
- First-time borrowers are required to complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Loan Entrance Counseling at: **studentaid.gov**. All loan borrowers must also complete the MPN Informed Borrowing Confirmation at **StudentAid.gov** before the loan funds are disbursed to your University bill.

## Direct Loan Borrowing Requirements

### • Loan Agreement for Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loan (MPN)

If you are a first-time borrower and choose to accept a Federal Direct Loan, you must sign the MPN online at: **studentaid.gov**. This is a legal document in which you promise to pay back the loans with interest. Your MPN covers both Federal Direct Subsidized and Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans and is valid for 10 years. If you become eligible for more loan funds, your MPN will cover all loan increases. In subsequent years, Financial Aid Services will notify you of your loan eligibility. *Please note you are required to complete an annual Informed Borrowing Confirmation at **Studentaid.gov** before your Direct Loans are disbursed to your student account.* Your MPN may become invalid or expired if there is no disbursement activity for twelve consecutive months. To learn about Direct Loans and to complete the MPN visit: **studentaid.gov**.

### • Informed Borrowing Confirmation

Beginning April 2020 a new MPN confirmation process will require student and parent borrowers to view how much they currently owe in federal student loans, and to acknowledge that they have seen this amount before a school can disburse the Direct Loan. The Informed Borrowing Confirmation must be completed once each award year, starting with loans awarded for 2020–21 at **StudentAid.gov**.

### • Direct Loan Entrance Counseling

Is required if you are a first-time borrower and choose to accept a Federal Direct Loan. You must complete the Direct Loan Entrance Counseling at: **studentaid.gov**. A combination of student loans is included in most undergraduate financial aid awards. You may choose not to borrow the loan(s) awarded or borrow a lesser amount than offered. Remember, loans are debts that must be repaid, in most cases with interest. Please consider your options and other resources prior to borrowing student loans.

### • Direct Loan Exit Counseling

Is required to be completed by borrowers of Federal Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized or PLUS loan after they graduate, withdraw from school, or stop attending at least half-time. The Exit counseling provides important information to prepare you for repayment of your federal student loans. Visit **studentaid.gov** for a Direct Loan Exit Counseling demo.

Learn more about Federal Direct Loans, the MPN, Entrance and Exit Counseling at: **studentaid.gov**

# Graduate Students Financial Aid

**The Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan** is the primary source of financial aid for many graduate students. The annual loan award is based on the cost of attendance and individual eligibility, with a maximum annual limit of **\$20,500**.

**Note:** *When awarding a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan to graduate students we assume that they are receiving a graduate appointment, (also called a graduate research or teaching assistantship). If you do not receive a graduate appointment, please contact Financial Aid Services as this may increase the amount of loan you are able to receive. You may be able to receive up to the annual maximum.*

This assumption does not apply to students enrolled in UWW (formerly known as CPE) online graduate programs.

## Other Alternative Loan Options for Graduate Students

**Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan** is available to creditworthy graduate students in need of funds beyond those provided by the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan.

### Eligibility and Requirements:

- Enrolled at least half-time in a degree program
- File the 2020-2021 FAFSA and maximize eligibility for Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan.
- Not have an adverse credit history. May be able to obtain the loan with an endorser who does not have an adverse credit history.
- May borrow up to the cost of attendance for the period of enrollment, minus other financial assistance you receive.
- If credit is approved the graduate student borrower must complete a *Loan Agreement for a PLUS Loan (MPN)* at: **studentaid.gov**.
- And every year before loan disbursement complete the *Informed Borrowing Confirmation* at: **Studentaid.gov**
- **To apply for a Graduate PLUS Loan** complete the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan Application form available online at: **umass.edu/umfa/forms**.
- PLUS Loans are disbursed directly to the student's University bill, generally in two disbursements.
- Repayment starts six months after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment.
- Borrower is responsible for paying all the interest.
- Interest rate is currently fixed at 5.30% with an origination fee of 4.236% ( both subject to change).
- The U.S. government is the lender; payment is owed to the U.S. government.
- For more information on the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan, visit: **studentaid.gov** or contact Financial Aid Services at (413) 545-0801.

**MEFA Graduate Loan** is offered by MEFA, a non-profit state authority offering low fixed interest rate loans to students attending Massachusetts colleges or universities. For students needing help financing their graduate education, a MEFA Graduate Loan can be used to cover all or part of the amount due to the University. Unlike many private loans, the MEFA Graduate Loan offers low fixed interest rate options. MEFA loans are disbursed directly to the school in two installments and are applied to the student's University bill.

Visit: **mefa.org/collegeloans** for up to date 2020-2021 rates and options.

### Current Fixed Interest Rates Ranges:

Deferred Repayment Option: 4.55% - 5.50%  
(Repayment starts six months after graduation, dropping below six credits or leaving school).

Interest-Only Repayment Option: 4.25% - 5.40%.  
(Interest payment starts 45 days after final disbursement).

- No origination fee or application fee.
- Student and/or co-borrower must meet MEFA's credit standards.

Apply online at: **mefa.org/collegeloans** or call (800) 449-MEFA (6332).

**Learn about assistantships, fellowships and other funding for graduate students at: [umass.edu/graduate](http://umass.edu/graduate)**

# Federal Direct Loans Annual and Lifetime Limits

Undergraduate and UWW Students	Dependent Students	Independent Students	Additional unsubsidized for dependent students whose parent is denied a PLUS Loan
First Years (0-26 credits)	\$5,500 (up to \$3,500 subsidized)	\$9,500 (up to \$3,500 subsidized)	\$4,000/ per year
Sophomores (27-56 credits)	\$6,500 (up to \$4,500 subsidized)	\$10,500 (up to \$4,500 subsidized)	\$4,000/ per year
Juniors/Seniors (57-120 credits)	\$7,500 (up to \$5,500 subsidized)	\$12,500 (up to \$5,500 subsidized)	\$5,000/ per year
Maximum Cumulative Amount	\$31,000 (up to \$23,000 subsidized)	\$57,500 (up to \$23,000 subsidized)	
Graduate Students Annual and Lifetime Direct Loan Limits			
Graduate Students	Annual Unsubsidized Limit \$20,500		Graduate Maximum Cumulative Amount (including loans borrowed as an undergraduate) \$138,500

## Debt Management

A college education is the best investment you can make for your future, but it can be a costly one without a careful borrowing plan. Student loans are an excellent resource to pay for educational costs, but the amount of debt incurred should be considered carefully.

Taking out student loans to pay for college has long-term financial implications. Like any other debt, a student loan is a serious financial obligation that must be repaid with interest when you leave school. Failure to repay your student loans may affect your credit rating and your ability to borrow for other purposes.

It is important to plan for the entire cost of your education and consider how much you need to borrow to meet that cost while keeping your debt at a manageable level. Be sure you understand your rights and responsibilities under each loan program before you accept any student loan.

## Repaying Your Federal Direct Loans

- Repayment of principal and interest begins six months after leaving school or dropping below six credits. You must repay student loans even if your financial circumstances become difficult.
- You make payments to your loan servicer. William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans are serviced by multiple Federal Loan Servicers. To find your loan servicer visit: [nslds.ed.gov](http://nslds.ed.gov).
- You are responsible for staying in touch with your servicer and notifying them of any changes.
- Borrowers of Direct Loans have multiple flexible repayment options.
- You may be eligible for a deferment or forbearance on your federal student loans.

**For more information about repaying your Federal Direct Loans visit: [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov)**

# Example of Direct Loan Repayment at 6.8% Interest\*

The following chart gives examples of monthly payments for specific loan amounts. You can use this chart to estimate how much your monthly payments will be when you leave the university. To calculate your repayment visit [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). If you need more information on debt management contact UMass Amherst Financial Aid Services.

Loan Debt at Repayment	<b>STANDARD</b> (10 Years) Loans are repaid in the shortest time with the least interest.		<b>EXTENDED</b> Fixed or Graduated (up to 25 years) Must have more than \$30,000 in loan to be eligible.		<b>GRADUATED</b> (up to 10 years) Payments start low and increase every two years.		<b>INCOME CONTINGENT**</b> Single payment is calculated on yearly AGI, family size and total loan debt.		<b>INCOME BASED (IBR)**</b> Single (up to 25 years) payment is calculated on yearly AGI, family size.	
	Monthly Payment Fixed	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment Fixed	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment Fixed	Total Repaid
\$25,000	\$288	\$34,524	N/A		\$166	\$37,150	\$205	\$40,896	\$210	\$36,706
\$35,000	\$403	\$48,334	\$243	\$72,879	\$232	\$52,010	\$287	\$57,254	\$210	\$59,316
\$50,000	\$575	\$69,048	\$347	\$104,111	\$332	\$74,300	\$236	\$82,585	\$210	\$105,584
\$70,000	\$806	\$96,667	\$486	\$145,755	\$465	\$104,020	\$397	\$157,878	\$210	\$145,206
\$90,000	\$1,036	\$124,287	\$625	\$187,399	\$597	\$133,740	N/A		N/A	
\$120,000	\$1,381	\$165,716	\$833	\$249,867	\$797	\$178,320	N/A		N/A	
\$138,000	\$1,588	\$190,573	\$958	\$287,346	\$916	\$205,068	N/A		N/A	

\*Please note these figures are estimated; your payment amount may be different based on marital status, yearly income, and state of residency. To get more information on these plans, review your total loan debt, and calculate your estimated repayment visit: [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov).

\*\*Sample repayment is based on \$35,000 yearly income, single no children, Massachusetts resident.

**Other Repayment Plans Available:** In addition to the five plans above, there are two more plans outlined below. Contact your loan servicer to determine your eligibility for the different plans or visit: [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov).

<b>INCOME-SENSITIVE REPAYMENT PLAN</b>	<b>PAY AS YOU EARN REPAYMENT PLAN</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your monthly payment is based on annual income.</li> <li>Your payments change as your income changes.</li> <li>Up to 10 years repayment.</li> <li>You'll pay more for your loan over time than you would under the 10-year standard plan.</li> <li>Each lender's formula for determining the monthly payment amount under this plan can vary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your maximum monthly payments will be 10 percent of discretionary income, the difference between your adjusted gross income and 150 percent of the poverty line for your family size and state of residence (other conditions apply).</li> <li>Your payments change as your income changes.</li> <li>Up to 20 years repayment.</li> <li>You must be a new borrower on or after Oct. 1, 2007, and must have received a disbursement of a Direct Loan on or after Oct. 1, 2011.</li> <li>You must have a partial financial hardship.</li> <li>You'll pay more for your loan over time than you would under the 10-year standard plan.</li> <li>After 20 years of repayment, any outstanding balance on your loan will be forgiven.</li> <li>You may have to pay income tax on any amount that is forgiven.</li> </ul>

**Learn about Repayment Plans at: [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans](http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans)**

# Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Student Loan Borrower

## Rights

### You have the right to:

- A “grace period” before your repayment begins. The grace period starts when you leave school or drop below half-time status, half-time is 6 credits.
- Loan deferments, forbearance, and to know the conditions under which your loans can be cancelled and/or repaid by the Department of Education.
- An explanation of default and its consequences.
- A loan repayment schedule, an explanation of refinancing and consolidation options, and your option to pre-pay your loan at any time without penalty.
- Know the amount of your total debt (principal and interest), interest rate, total interest charged on your loan, the number of payments, and what fees you should expect during the repayment period.
- Know where to send your payments and where to write if you have questions about your loan.
- Know when your first payment is due and the number, frequency, and amount of all payments.
- Receive documentation when your loan is paid in full.

## Responsibilities

### You are responsible for:

- Keeping accurate records of your federal student loans.
- Repaying your federal student loans, plus interest, even if you did not finish your program, are unable to get a job, or are unhappy with the education received, according to the repayment schedule your lender will give you.
- Using your loan money only for tuition and other related educational expenses.
- Completing a Direct Loan Exit Interview before you leave school, which may be conducted online at: [nslds.ed.gov](https://nslds.ed.gov), in person, or sent to you for completion.
- Keeping your copy of the signed Master Promissory Note (MPN).
- Opening, reading and maintaining any loan information you receive from your school or loan holder. Don't ignore your loan payments.
- Contacting your loan holder to discuss repayment options when having difficulty making your scheduled payments.

### You must notify the lender if you:

- Graduate, withdraw from school, or drop below half-time status.
- Transfer to another institution.
- Change your name, Social Security Number, address, phone number, references or driver's license number.
- Have a change of address while you are in school. You must also notify the University of the change.
- Have a change that affects your ability to repay the loan or your eligibility for deferment or cancellation.

**Learn about repaying your federal student loans at: [studentaid.ed.gov/manage-loans/repayment](https://studentaid.ed.gov/manage-loans/repayment)**

# Factors Affecting Your Financial Aid Awards

*Your award was determined in accordance with the laws, regulations, and appropriations of the U.S. Congress, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. It is subject to adjustment or cancellation in the event of changes to these laws, funding, or your eligibility.*

## Most Common Reasons for Adjustments or Cancellations to Financial Aid Awards

### Outside Scholarships, Credits, Resources:

Financial Aid Services may adjust your award(s) if you receive scholarships, grants, university credits or loans that are not currently listed on your award. Per federal regulations, your total financial aid, including federal, state, university and other sources may not exceed your total COA. In cases where your total financial aid exceeds your demonstrated need, Financial Aid Services will adjust or reduce your awards in this order: first loans, then work-study, then grants and scholarships.

### Verification:

The U.S. Department of Education and the University select certain financial aid applications for a process called verification. If your application is selected, you will need to update your tax information on the FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool and supply our office with documents to verify the financial and family information submitted on your 2020-2021 FAFSA. A revised award notification and Student Aid Report (SAR) will be emailed to you after verification is complete and adjustments are made.

### Residency:

If your residency status changes during the academic year (e.g., out-of-state residency to in-state residency), an adjustment to your financial aid may be required.

### Appeals:

You may request a review of your eligibility by completing an appeal form. Some common appeal requests include changes to family income or family size due to a change in employment, divorce, or death in the family, or increased cost of attendance due to educationally-related travel, off-campus living expenses or computer purchase. You can download an appeal form at: [umass.edu/umfa/forms](https://umass.edu/umfa/forms).

### Enrollment Status:

Financial aid awards are initially based on full-time enrollment (12 or more credits per semester) for undergraduate students and six credits for graduate and UWW students. If your enrollment changes, an adjustment to financial aid may be required. Adjustments to financial aid occur after the University add/drop period each semester.

### Loan Limits or Loan Default:

If you have reached your annual or lifetime aggregate loan limit or are in default on a federal loan, your award may be cancelled or adjusted.

### Cancellation or Reduction Requests:

You may cancel or reduce your federal loans and/or work-study on the award summary page in SPIRE. Please note that you have 30 days from the date of disbursement of your Federal Direct Loan to request an adjustment.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):

The U.S. Department of Education requires that students receiving federal financial aid meet the University academic progress standards ensuring sufficient progress toward their degree. Determination of SAP is conducted at the end of each semester. To meet the University's academic status standards, undergraduate students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 and the necessary credit hours to ensure graduation within ten semesters. Failure to maintain these standards will, at a minimum, place the student on financial aid warning. If a student does not meet the University's academic progress standards after the warning period, the student may become ineligible to receive federal, state and university financial aid. An appeal process is available for students who may lose or have lost financial aid due to failure to maintain SAP. Students who wish to earn a double major or add a minor are reminded that they must complete their requirements within the ten-semester limit to ensure financial aid under the SAP regulation. Visit the Financial Aid Services website for more information at: [umass.edu/umfa/undergraduates/receiving-aid](https://umass.edu/umfa/undergraduates/receiving-aid).

**Graduate students** must maintain a 2.0 GPA to receive or keep federal loans. Visit the Financial Aid Services website for more information at: [umass.edu/umfa/graduates/receiving-aid](https://umass.edu/umfa/graduates/receiving-aid).

# Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Financial Aid Recipient

## You have the right to know:

- What financial assistance is available at UMass Amherst.
- The deadlines for submitting required documents for all of the financial aid programs available.
- The cost of attending UMass Amherst and the University's refund policy.
- The criteria used by Financial Aid Services to select financial aid recipients.
- How your financial aid eligibility is determined.
- What resources are considered in the calculations of your financial aid eligibility.
- How much of your financial need is unmet, as determined by Financial Aid Services.
- The terms and conditions of the various financial aid programs, including the criteria for your continued eligibility in the programs.
- The portion of the financial aid you received that must be repaid, and what portion is grant and therefore not repayable. If the aid is a loan, you have the right to know what the interest rate is, the total amount to be repaid, the procedure for repayment and when repayment is to begin. You have the right to a sample loan repayment schedule for loans.
- How UMass Amherst determines whether you are maintaining satisfactory academic progress for financial aid and what happens if you are not.
- You have the right to privacy. All records and information that you submit are confidential and subject to legal requirements concerning disclosure of such information.
- You have the right to request a review of your financial aid eligibility (appeal based on extenuating circumstances).
- You have the right to know specific consumer information such as campus crime statistics and athletic information.
- If you withdraw from the University after the semester begins, you should be informed about the refund policies for both university charges and financial aid. The Dean of Students Office acts as a resource for students considering withdrawal from the University.

## You are responsible for/required to:

- Review and consider all information about UMass Amherst before you enroll.
- Inform Financial Aid Services of any outside sources of aid that do not appear on your award summary in SPIRE. Some examples include: scholarships, tuition credits and veteran's or rehabilitation benefits.
- You are responsible for completing all requests for information. Some examples include: Tax Return Transcripts, verification forms, loan entrance counseling, loan promissory notes and loan exit counseling.
- You must notify the office if you would like to reduce or cancel your loan.
- You are responsible for maintaining satisfactory status on your student loans.
- Students who default or owe refunds on federal grants are not eligible for any financial aid.
- Contact Financial Aid Services if you plan to participate in an Internship/Co-op or Study Abroad/ National Exchange program.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress in your academic career as prescribed in the satisfactory academic progress policy.
- Notify Financial Aid Services once you have met all degree requirements in your declared major(s), regardless of your intent to pursue a minor, retake courses to improve your GPA or for any other reason.
- Notify Financial Aid Services should you be convicted of a drug offense while receiving Title IV funds.
- Notify Financial Aid Services if you currently are or if you become incarcerated in a federal, state or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm or similar correctional institution.
- You must inform the Registrar's Office and your student loan servicer/lender of any changes to your name, Social Security Number, address or phone number.

**Learn About Student Support Services at: [umass.edu/dean\\_students/student\\_services](https://umass.edu/dean_students/student_services)**

# Paying Your University Bill

All tuition bills are sent to the student's UMass IT email account and are posted in the QuikPAY section of SPIRE. QuikPAY is the electronic system for students and authorized payers to view, print and/or make online payments. To access QuikPAY, go to your Student Center in SPIRE and select "View/Pay Bill." For more information about QuikPAY and tuition charges, please visit the Bursar's website at: **[umass.edu/bursar](http://umass.edu/bursar)**.

The University bills students by semester. For undergraduate and UWW students, fall semester bills are due in August; spring semester bills are due in January. Graduate student bills are due after the add/drop period, typically in October and March. If your financial aid award is finalized before your semester bill is sent to you, your financial aid will appear as an anticipated credit on the bill. The earliest your financial aid will be disbursed to your student account is 10 days prior to the start of the semester. Log into your SPIRE account at: **[spire.umass.edu](http://spire.umass.edu)** for up-to-date information on your University bill. Visit the Bursar's Office website at: **[umass.edu/bursar](http://umass.edu/bursar)** for additional information about your bill. You can call the Bursar's Office at (413) 545-2368 or email them at **[bursar@admin.umass.edu](mailto:bursar@admin.umass.edu)**.

The Bursar's Office accepts payment by cash, check, eCheck, credit card, or debit card. To pay your University bill with a credit card or eCheck, go to QuikPAY by logging into your SPIRE account and click on "View/Pay Bill" under Finances. A non-refundable service fee will be applied to all credit and debit card transactions.

To be in good standing with the University you must meet your financial obligations to the Bursar's Office by all published deadlines. In accordance with University policy, failure to do so will result in any one or a combination of the following sanctions, depending on the specific time in the semester in which your financial account is past due:

- Suspension of meal privileges in the dining halls
- Cancellation of registration and dropping of your classes
- Late fee charge
- Eviction from the residence halls
- Registration hold for any future semesters
- Administrative withdrawal

**For more information about your bill please visit the Bursar's website at: [umass.edu/bursar](http://umass.edu/bursar)**

# Refunds

If the amount of financial aid and other credits on your University bill exceeds the tuition, fees and other charges and you do not have a previous balance, you may receive a refund.

To ensure timely processing of your refund:

- Sign up for Excess Express, required by the Bursar's Office to process refunds to students. With this service, funds will be electronically deposited into the USA checking or savings account of the student's choice. To enroll, log into your SPIRE account and go to the "Finances" panel.
- Register for your classes early. You must be registered for at least six credits for your financial aid to be disbursed to your account. Some types of financial aid require 12 plus credits.
- Make sure you have completed all required loan documents at **studentaid.gov**:
  - Loan Agreement for a Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loans (MPN)
  - Loan Agreement for Graduate or Parent PLUS loans (MPN)
  - Direct Loan Entrance Counseling and
  - Informed Borrowing Confirmation

Loans will not be paid to your account until required loan documents are completed.

- Graduate students receiving a teaching assistantship or appointment, make sure your contract and all payroll paperwork is complete and submitted to the Graduate Assistantship Office in order for your tuition and fee credits to be applied to your University bill.
- If you are a graduate student on program fee/continuous enrollment, be sure that your Graduate Program Director notifies the Graduate Registrar's Office that you are considered enrolled at least half-time.

## Options for Financing Your Education

**UPay Payment Plan** is an installment payment plan offered by the Bursar's Office. It is recommended to help budget payment of your educational expenses and limit your overall debt. UPay allows you to spread your academic year balance over 10 months for a small one-time non-refundable fee. There is no interest charged on the amount budgeted. Students, parents and guardians can enroll in UPay. Enrollment is available through QuickPAY, the University's online payment system. Please note there is an enrollment deadline for each semester. For more information on the UPay Installment Payment Plan and QuikPAY visit: [umass.edu/bursar](http://umass.edu/bursar).

**Alternative Loans** are credit-based loans available to assist with financing your education. UMass Amherst understands that to meet your specific financing needs, you must have the right choice of loans. Loans offer different combinations of rates, terms and benefits. Some loans require immediate repayment and are subject to credit approval. It is your responsibility to understand each loan program's eligibility requirements and repayment terms. For more information about credit-based alternative loan options see the Alternative Loan Information sections in this guide or visit: [umass.edu/umfa](http://umass.edu/umfa).

# Alternative Loan Information for Students

## Why would a student apply for an alternative loan?

An alternative loan is an option to finance the remaining educational expenses after all federal, state, and institutional opportunities for scholarships, grants, and loans are exhausted. As all educational expenses may not be covered by the financial aid received and the student or family may be unable to pay for the remaining expenses out of pocket.

Alternative education loans are private non-government loans made from a lender to an individual for the purpose of paying for college expenses such as tuition, fees, room and board, and other associated expenses. Because alternative loans are not guaranteed by the federal government, they must be insured privately. This extra cost is passed on to the borrower in the form of higher fees and interest rates. An alternative loan should be your last option for funding after you have exhausted all other types of federal and state grants and loans.

We strongly recommend that you apply with a creditworthy co-signer to improve your chances for approval, as well as receive a lower interest rate and better terms on your loan. Please visit our website at: [umass.edu/umfa](http://umass.edu/umfa) for detailed information on alternative loan programs. UMass Amherst is required to certify these loans to ensure that the loan amount does not exceed the cost of attendance less all other financial aid.

**Below is a list of important questions to ask a prospective lender before applying for an alternative loan. As with all borrowing, students and parents must carefully consider the terms of an alternative loan before applying.**

- What types of loans do you offer and which one is best for my situation?
- What is the enrollment eligibility? Find out if you must be enrolled at least half-time and/or in a degree-seeking program.
- How much in total loan fees will I pay? Find out if there is a fee at disbursement, additional fees at repayment, etc.
- How much will my payment be if I borrow \$\_\_\_\_\_ ?
- Do I need or should I use a co-signer?
- What is my interest rate and how is it calculated?
- How and when do you capitalize interest? Accrued interest is periodically capitalized (added) to the principal balance of your loan. The fewer times your lender capitalizes, the lower your costs will be.
- Do I have a grace period after graduation or leaving school before repayment begins?
- What are my deferment (postponement of repayment) options?
- How long do I have to repay the loan? If you are worried about high monthly payments after graduation, find a lender with a long repayment period (typical periods are 10, 15 or 20 years) and no penalty for early repayment.

**Visit our website at: [umass.edu/umfa](http://umass.edu/umfa) for information on Alternative Loan Programs**

# Alternative Loan Options for Parents

**Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan** is a loan for creditworthy parents of dependent students. A PLUS Loan can be used to cover all or part of the amount due the University.

- Before applying for a Parent PLUS Loan the student must submit the 2020-2021 FAFSA.
- Interest rate is currently fixed at 5.30%(subject to change).
- Origination fee retained by the federal government is 4.236% (subject to change).
- Borrower is responsible for paying all the interest.
- PLUS Loans are not based on need, but on parent borrower creditworthiness.
- An applicant who has an adverse credit history may be able to obtain the loan with an endorser who does not have an adverse credit history.
- PLUS Loans are disbursed directly to the student's University bill, generally in two disbursements.
- The U.S. government is the lender; payment is owed to the U.S. government.
- Repayment starts 60 days after the final disbursement.
- Parent has the option to defer repayment if student is enrolled at least half-time in a degree program.
- If the PLUS loan is denied, the student becomes eligible for an additional Direct Unsubsidized Loan.
- If the PLUS Loan is approved the parent borrower must complete a **Loan Agreement for a PLUS Loan (MPN)**, and **Informed Borrowing Confirmation** at: **studentaid.gov**.

**To apply for a Parent PLUS Loan** complete the Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan Application form and fax it to Financial Aid Services. The application is available online at: **umass.edu/umfa/forms**.

For more information regarding the Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan visit: **studentaid.gov** or contact Financial Aid Services at (413) 545-0801.

**MEFA Undergraduate Loan** is offered by MEFA, a non-profit state authority offering low fixed interest rate loans to families of students attending Massachusetts colleges or universities. For parents who want to help finance a student's education the MEFA Loan can be used to cover all or part of the amount due to the University. MEFA Loans are disbursed directly to the school in two installments and are applied to the student's University bill.

Please visit: **mefa.org/collegeloans** for up to date 2020-2021 rates and to apply.

Current Fixed Interest Rate Ranges:

- 10 year immediate Repayment Option—3.75% - 5.30%
- 15 year immediate Repayment Option—3.95% - 5.35%
- Deferred Repayment Option—4.55% - 5.50%
- Interest-Only Repayment Option—4.25% -5.40%
- Parent must meet MEFA's credit standards.
- No origination fee, application fee, or prepayment penalty
- Repayment starts 45 days after final disbursement for immediate repayment and interest only option.

**Apply online at: mefa.org/collegeloans or call (800) 449-MEFA (6332)**

# Payment Estimator Worksheet

## What Will I Owe?

### 1. Enter your total billed costs:

	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Tuition & Fees	\$ _____	\$ _____
Room & Board	\$ _____	\$ _____
Additional Fees	\$ _____	\$ _____
Supplemental Health Insurance	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>A. Total Direct Costs</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____

### Enter financial aid for the each semester and /or payments (do not include Federal Work-Study):

	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Any Payment Made to UMass	\$ _____	\$ _____
UMass Amherst Scholarship	\$ _____	\$ _____
Federal Pell Grant	\$ _____	\$ _____
State Grant	\$ _____	\$ _____
Federal SEOG	\$ _____	\$ _____
Federal Direct Loan*	\$ _____	\$ _____
Other Scholarships/Grants	\$ _____	\$ _____
Student/Parent Alternative Loan	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>B. Total Financial Assistance</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____

\*Multiply amount borrowed by 0.999 to calculate net disbursement.

### 2. Subtract Total Financial Assistance (B) from your Total Direct Cost (A) to arrive at the total amount you will owe to UMass Amherst and/or the amount of parent or student alternative loan you will need to cover all your expenses.

	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Total amount you will owe to UMass Amherst (A-B)	\$ _____	\$ _____

***Please remember that in addition to the billed charges, you will also need to purchase books and supplies and cover weekly living expenses.***

# Financial Aid Resources and Technology

## Financial Aid Home Page

[umass.edu/umfa](https://umass.edu/umfa)

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Financial Aid Services home page includes financial aid deadlines, application, eligibility, contact information, forms, and links to outside resources. Forms are available for download in PDF format.

## Keep track of student loans borrowed at UMass Amherst

[spire.umass.edu](https://spire.umass.edu)

**My Debt Center** in SPIRE allows you to monitor your borrowing activity while attending UMass Amherst, and find resources and information on managing all your student loans, repayment plans, scholarships, and financial literacy. Find **My Debt Center** on your SPIRE Home page under View Financial Aid.

## Student Job Board

[umass.edu/umfa/sej](https://umass.edu/umfa/sej)

Financial Aid Services provides students with current listings of on-campus and off-campus jobs. The listings include work-study and non work-study jobs.

## UMass Amherst Scholarships and Awards

[umass.edu/umfa/scholarship](https://umass.edu/umfa/scholarship)

The Financial Aid Services Scholarship page provides links for common sources of scholarships for UMass Amherst students. Our Scholarship Search Board allows current and prospective students to search scholarships using criteria such as undergraduate or graduate career, residency, enrollment level, or by keyword.

## Graduate Assistantship Office (GAO)

[umass.edu/graduate/funding](https://umass.edu/graduate/funding)

The GAO posts assistantship opportunities and processes graduate appointments and associated tuition and fee credits. This office does not assign or determine who gets assistantships. GAO is located in 517 Goodell Building and can be reached at (413) 545-5287 or via email at [gradappt@grad.umass.edu](mailto:gradappt@grad.umass.edu).

## The UMass SPIRE System

[spire.umass.edu](https://spire.umass.edu)

The SPIRE system is a service available to enrolled students with online access to verify their financial aid, look up bills, register for classes, and check grades.

## U.S. Department of Education Web Sites for Students:

- Complete your Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN) at: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- File your FAFSA at: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- Get an FSA ID at: [fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov)
- Get information on Student Financial Assistance at: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- Learn about Direct Consolidation Loans: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- Learn about loan repayment and Public Service Loan Forgiveness at: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- Get your federal loan borrowing history at: [nslds.ed.gov](https://nslds.ed.gov)
- Get a Department of Education contact number list at: [ed.gov/about/contacts/tollfree](https://ed.gov/about/contacts/tollfree)

## Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

[mass.edu/osfa](https://mass.edu/osfa)

Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)

(617) 391-6070

# How to Reach our Office

## Financial Aid Services

243 Whitmore Administration Building

**Phone:** (413) 545-0801    **Fax:** (413) 545-1700

**Web:** [umass.edu/umfa](http://umass.edu/umfa)    **Email:** [finaid@finaid.umass.edu](mailto:finaid@finaid.umass.edu)

**Hours of operation:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30 am to 5 pm  
Wednesday 10 am to 5 pm

# UMass Amherst Offices

**Office of the Bursar** (413) 545-2368

**Dean of Students Office** (413) 545-2684

**Dining Services** (413) 545-2472

**UCard Office** (413) 545-0197

**Undergraduate Admissions** (413) 545-0222

**Graduate Admissions** (413) 545-0722

**Career Services** (413) 545-2224

**Snow Day Hotline** (413) 545-3630

**Residential Life** (413) 545-2100

**University Health Services** (413) 577-5000

**Registrar's Office** (413) 545-0555

**Graduate Records** (413) 545-0024

**University Without Walls (UWW formerly CPE)** (413) 545-3653

**Parking Services** (413) 577-7275



## Financial Aid Services

University of Massachusetts Amherst  
243 Whitmore Administration Building  
181 Presidents Drive  
Amherst, MA 01003  
Tel. (413) 545-0801  
Fax (413) 545-1700  
[umass.edu/umfa](http://umass.edu/umfa)  
[finaid@finaid.umass.edu](mailto:finaid@finaid.umass.edu)