



WKU[®]

Tips to Financial Aid

Definitions

FAFSA – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the official application for all types of federal aid, and some state and campus-based aid as well

SAR – The Student Aid Report is generated for the student after their FAFSA is processed; it shows the EFC and Pell Grant eligibility

EFC – The Expected Family Contribution is calculated from the information provided on the FAFSA and is used to calculate financial aid

COA – The Cost of Attendance is an estimate of how much it will cost for a student to go to school for one academic year; includes estimates for tuition, books, housing, meals, transportation, etc.

Grant – a form of financial aid that does not have to be repaid

Pell Grant – a federal program that awards undergraduate students grant funds based on need; award amounts vary

Subsidized Loan – U.S. Department of Education pays the interest that accrues on this loan while the student is in school or during any deferment period

Campus Contacts

Cohort Office
270-745-2710
amy.fitzpatrick@wku.edu

**Office of Student Financial
Aid and Scholarships**
270-745-2755
<http://www.wku.edu/financialaid/>

Other Contacts

**Federal Student Aid
Information Center**
1-800-4-FED-AID

Useful Links

FAFSA
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
File your FAFSA online for faster processing.

Department of Education PIN site
<http://www.pin.ed.gov>
First time filers will need to apply for a PIN to sign their FAFSA electronically. Parents of dependent students should apply for their own PIN as well.

Direct Loan Servicing Center Master Promissory Note
<http://www.studentloans.gov>
First time borrowers will have to visit this site to complete their entrance counseling and sign their master promissory note. You will need your FAFSA PIN in order to sign in.

Financial Aid Tips

- ✓ File your FAFSA as soon as possible.
- ✓ The WKU school code is 002002.
- ✓ Be sure to enter your social security number correctly – making an error here will cause you to have to start completely over.
- ✓ Make sure your adjusted gross income is NOT the same as your taxes paid.
Hint: Adjusted gross income is the larger of the two numbers.
- ✓ Do *not* leave the drug conviction question blank.
- ✓ If you file the FAFSA using estimated numbers, be sure to go back and update the figures.
- ✓ To make corrections on your FAFSA:
 - Go to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
 - Click “Make corrections to a processed FAFSA”
 - Follow the directions to get to your FAFSA
 - Make the corrections
 - Save and submit with your PIN
- ✓ To sign your Master Promissory note and complete Entrance/Exit counseling, log onto and use <http://www.studentloans.gov>
- ✓ To verify WKU received your FAFSA data:
 - Log into TopNet.
 - Click Financial Aid link.
(Also watch this site for additional information required by the office of student financial aid and the necessary steps to accept your aid.)
- ✓ To apply for Winter or Summer Financial Aid, you must apply separately. You can download the forms at <http://www.wku.edu/financialaid/>

Additional Reading

- See <http://studentaid.ed.gov/guide/> for the online version of *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid*, the perfect beginner’s guide to financial aid, updated each year.
- You can find tons of useful information at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/pubs>. The FSA fact sheet section contains easy to understand handouts on a variety of FAFSA topics, such as whether you are considered dependent or independent.



Guide to Accepting Your Loans in TopNet

Please follow these steps to accept or decline your federal student loans.



GUIDE TO ACCEPTING YOUR FEDERAL DIRECT STAFFORD LOANS ON YOUR WKU TOPNET ACCOUNT

The **Federal Direct Stafford Subsidized Loan** is a **need-based loan** in which the interest is paid by the federal government until the student graduates or drops below half-time. The **Federal Direct Stafford Unsubsidized Loan** is a **non-need based loan** in which the interest begins on the loan at the time of disbursement. **Interest rate: Subsidized Loan-** 4.5% (fixed), **Unsubsidized-** 6.8% (fixed).

The total amount of **Federal Direct Stafford loan (Subsidized and Unsubsidized combined)** that a student can receive is based upon need calculated by the information provided on the FAFSA, and also the student's classification. The maximum a student can receive per classification is: **Freshman \$5,500; Sophomore \$6,500, Junior or Senior \$7,500; Graduate \$20,500.**

Students that have been awarded Federal Direct Stafford loans (Sub. or Unsub.) must do the following to initiate the loan process:

1. Accept the loan that has been offered as follows:
 - Go to www.wku.edu On the "Quick Links" tab, click on "[TopNet](#)"
 - Please use your assigned **WKU ID** or **NetID** to log in, Click on "**Continue Log In**"
 - Click on the "**Financial Aid**" tab
 - Click on "**Award**", click on "**Award for Aid Year**"
 - Select appropriate aid year. Click on "**Accept Award Offer**"
 - Click on "**Accept Full Amount All Awards**" or enter the amount you desire.
 - Click on "**Submit Changes**", then click "**Exit**" at top of page
2. The student will then need to go to www.studentloans.gov, and complete the "**Entrance Counseling**" and electronically sign the "**Master Promissory Note**". "**Sign In**" using the student's social security number, the first two letters of the student's last name, the student's birth date, and the student's PIN number used to submit the FAFSA (If you have forgotten your PIN you can go to www.pin.gov to request a duplicate).
3. This process needs to be completed before our office can certify the amount borrowed so it will be transferred towards the student's tuition bill. The student will only need to complete the "**Entrance Counseling**" once but the "**Master Promissory Note**" will need to be signed each year the student accepts his or her federal student loans.
4. Student loan funds are credited to the student's account at the beginning of each semester. Once the loan funds have credited the student's account, if the **financial aid is greater than the tuition balance**, a residual will be disbursed to the **HigherOne** debit card for the difference. **The student MUST activate a preference using the HigherOne account for the funds to be disbursed to them.** If you do not have the card or have questions you can contact the debit card office at 270-745-5551.



Promissory Note/Entrance Counseling

After you accept your federal student loans on TopNet, do this!






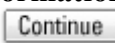

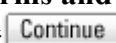

START HERE
GO FURTHER
FEDERAL STUDENT AID

StudentLoans.gov

Students must complete two requirements for the Direct Lending program by signing in with their four digit FAFSA PIN number at www.studentloans.gov:

- 1) **Entrance Counseling**: an online tutorial that introduces new borrowers to student loans; must only be completed the first time a student borrows a Stafford loan.

Sign In

- a. using your ¹. **Social Security Number**, ². **first two letters of your last name**, ³. **Date of birth**, ⁴. **Four digit FAFSA pin number**.
 - b. Once you are at the welcome screen, click on “**Complete Entrance Counseling**”.
 - c. Please read the instructions before getting started.
 - d. Click on  **Complete Entrance Counseling**
 - e. **Counseling Type**: If you are an undergraduate student, please select the **first option**. If you are a graduate student, please select the **second option**.
 - f. Helpful hints screen, click on “”
 - g. In the “**School and Loan Information**” section select “**Kentucky**” and “**Western Kentucky University**”.
 - h. There are 16 sections of “quiz” questions to answer. In the event you answer the questions wrong, it will not penalize you. Just continue on until the end.
 - i. Once completing section 16, you will have to review the “**Borrower’s rights and responsibilities**” link before you can continue.
 - j. You will see a confirmation page once this section is completed.
 - i. Complete **Master Promissory Note** next!
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- 2) **E-Sign Your MPN**: students use their four-digit FAFSA PIN number to electronically sign a Master Promissory Note, which is a commitment to repay the loan after graduation; the MPN is valid for ten years.
 - a. Click on  **Subsidized/Unsubsidized**
 - b. In the “**School and Loan Information**” section select “**Kentucky**” and “**Western Kentucky University**” and “”
 - c. Please provide the information of two personal references and “”
 - d. Please select and read of section of the “**Terms and Agreements**” select the check box at the bottom of the screen and “”
 - e. Please review the information and e-sign (type in your first, middle and last name) and click on “”
 - f. You will see a confirmation page once this section is completed.

Congratulations! You are done!



WKU[®]

Tips to Keeping Financial Aid

KEEPING FINANCIAL AID

We want you to receive full benefit from your financial aid each semester and be eligible for aid each year. Understanding the guidelines for aid sources and responsibilities for aid recipients is important to ensure on-going financial assistance.

ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

Matriculated students, those enrolled in a degree program, are eligible for financial aid. Unless otherwise noted, students must be registered at least half-time (6 credit hours each semester for undergraduate and 4.5 credit hour for graduate) to be eligible to receive aid. Some aid programs are available only to students who are full-time (12 or more credit hours each semester). Also, students must be registered for 6 credit hours (4.5 for graduate students) during the summer to receive summer financial aid. Audited courses do not count toward enrollment for financial aid and scholarships.

Dropping classes or withdrawing from the university can significantly affect a student's aid eligibility. Federal aid recipients are subject to refund and repayment obligations that may differ from university withdrawal policies. Generally, financial aid recipients whose class load changes during the semester's drop/add period will have their aid prorated. A student may also be required to repay all or a portion of the aid received depending upon the point of withdrawal. Finally, review how dropping or withdrawing from classes can impact next year's aid through the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) review.

Federal Pell Grants are awarded to less than half time students (less than 6 credit hours each semester) if the student is eligible for payment per the Pell Grant payment schedule.

Federal Pell Grants and KHEAA's CAP Grants are reviewed after the drop/add period and are adjusted to reflect the enrollment status at that time. The reduction in grants may be greater than the adjustment of tuition and fees. A student may be responsible for returning the difference to the business office.

WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Withdrawing from the university can significantly affect a student's aid eligibility. Federal aid recipients are subject to refund and repayment obligations that may differ from university withdrawal policies. Generally, financial aid recipients whose class load changes during the semester's drop/add period will have their aid prorated. A student may also be required to repay all or a portion of the aid received depending upon the point of withdrawal. Finally, review how dropping or withdrawing from classes can impact next year's aid through the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) review.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Significant changes to this policy effective 07/01/11 for the 2011-12 academic year

I. INTRODUCTION

Federal and state regulations require that students receiving assistance from financial aid programs be monitored for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Satisfactory Academic Progress includes qualitative progress (grade-point average) and quantitative progress (hours earned) toward degree completion.

Monitoring is required for students who receive aid from any of the following programs:

- Federal Pell Grants
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal and Institutional Work-Study
- Federal Perkins Loans
- Federal Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans
- Federal PLUS Loans
- KHEAA College Access Program (CAP)

KEES, Incentive, Alumni, Scholarship and Waiver Programs are not covered by this policy.

The University's Academic Progress policy (administered through the Academic Advising and Retention Center) is separate from the Department of Student Financial Assistance's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy. A student may be placed on probation and/or be required to appeal by both the Academic Advising and Retention Center and the Department of Student Financial Assistance.

II. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To be admitted officially to the University a student must have a high school diploma, a GED certificate or completed home schooling. Undergraduates receiving financial aid must be admitted in good standing, degree-seeking and taking courses applicable to their degree program. Graduate students must be officially admitted to a program of study in good standing and taking courses applicable to their degree program.

Students admitted to the University on probation are automatically placed on probation with the Department of Student Financial Assistance for financial aid purposes (refer to Section V & VI).

III. QUALITATIVE PROGRESS: Grade-Point Average (GPA)

Undergraduates:

- Beginning first year students and transfer/readmit students must be admitted to the University in good standing.
- Continuing students must maintain the minimum cumulative higher education (HiEd) GPA **and** minimum cumulative WKU GPA as indicated in the table below.

Total HiEd or WKU Quality Hours	Cumulative GPA WKU GPA
1 – 17	1.7
18 – 33	1.8
34 – 50	1.9
51 or greater	2.0

Graduate Students:

- Students must be admitted or readmitted in good standing and maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative HiEd GPA **and** a minimum 3.0 WKU GPA.

Qualitative progress is monitored for all recipients at the end of each term. Failure to meet the grade-point average requirements indicated above will result in a student being placed on warning status for the next semester in which they apply for financial aid (refer to Section VI).

IV. QUANTITATIVE PROGRESS (Hours Earned)

Each term students are awarded financial aid they must earn at least 75% of the number of hours for which they were awarded aid as indicated in the tables below.

Undergraduates:

Financial Aid Award Status	Minimum hours that must be earned during an academic year
Full-Time	9
Three-Quarter Time	6.75
Half-Time	4.5
Less than Half-Time	Based on enrollment

Graduate Students:

Financial Aid Award Status	Minimum hours that must be earned during an academic year
Half-Time	6.75
Less than Half-Time	N/A

Students who were awarded financial aid that drop below half-time enrollment status are denied aid for the next subsequent term until eligibility is regained or student has been approved on an appeal (refer to Section VII & VIII).

Students pursuing an Associates Degree must complete graduation requirements by the time they have reached 90 quality (attempted) hours. Students pursuing a Bachelors Degree must complete graduation requirements by the time they have reached 180 quality (attempted) hours. All quality (attempted) hours for which grades are received are counted, regardless if Title IV aid was received for those hours.

Quantitative progress is monitored for all recipients at the end of each term. Failure to meet the hours earned requirements indicated above will result in a student being placed on warning status for the next semester in which they apply for financial aid (refer to Section VI).

V. FAILURE TO MEET SAP REQUIREMENTS

Students who fail to meet either the grade-point average or hours earned components of the SAP policy are placed on warning status for the next subsequent semester in which they apply for assistance. In addition, students admitted to the University on probation are likewise placed on warning status with the Department of Student Financial Assistance.

In order to receive aid on a warning status the following criteria must be met:

- Student must complete a SAP counseling session at <http://www.wku.edu/finaid/sapoc.htm>
- Student must meet with an academic advisor to develop an Academic Plan
 - Undergraduate students attending main campus should contact the Academic Advising and Retention Center at 270-745-5065
 - Undergraduate students attending a regional campus should contact their advisor at the regional campus
 - Graduate students should contact their advisor on the main campus

VI. WARNING STATUS

Students that are placed on warning status for a particular term and have completed SAP Counseling and established an Academic Plan must meet the following requirements to continue to receive assistance beyond the warning period:

- Satisfactory Academic Achievement (GPA): Must earn a minimum 2.0 undergraduate, 3.0 graduate grade-point average for the semester
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (Hours Earned): Must earn 100% of the credit hours for which aid was awarded for the semester
- Academic Plan: Must adhere to the established Academic Plan

Students that do not meet these requirements while on warning status are ineligible for aid for any subsequent semester until they meet the criteria for reinstatement of aid (refer to Section VII), or have gained approval based on an appeal (refer to Section VIII).

Students that are placed on warning status and continue to earn the minimum semester grade-point average and hours earned requirements while also adhering to the Academic Plan, will remain on warning status until their cumulative grade-point average is a minimum of 2.0 undergraduate, 3.0 graduate AND their total hours earned is at least 75% of total hours attempted. Once these requirements are met, the student will be removed from warning status for the next subsequent term.

VII. REINSTATEMENT OF AID

Students who are deemed ineligible for financial aid due to unsatisfactory academic progress (failure to meet requirements of warning/probation status) must earn at least 6 credit hours at their own expense AND meet the minimum qualitative and quantitative requirements listed below before aid can be reinstated. Such students should complete a SAP Clearance Form (available online at www.wku.edu/finaid/faforms.htm) once the conditions have been met to be re-considered for eligibility.

Qualitative Requirements: See table below:

	Total HiEd or WKU Quality Hours	Cumulative GPA WKU GPA
Undergraduate	1 – 17	1.7
Undergraduate	18 – 33	1.8
Undergraduate	34 – 50	1.9
Undergraduate	51 or greater	2.0
Graduate	1+	3.0

Quantitative Requirements: Student's overall GPA hours must be at least 75% of their overall hours attempted.

Students who are deemed ineligible for financial aid due to unsatisfactory academic progress (failure to meet requirements of warning status) and also have *documentable extenuating circumstances* may be eligible to appeal (refer to Section VIII).

VIII. APPEAL PROCEDURES

Eligibility to Appeal:

Only certain conditions allow a student to appeal. Listed below are such conditions:

- A. If a student withdrew (officially or unofficially) after receiving federal aid (and was not already on a warning/probation status), they are eligible to submit an appeal for the term in which aid is being sought.
- B. If a student has earned excessive hours without completing a degree (pursuing an Associate's Degree and attempted 90 or more hours; pursuing a Bachelor's Degree and attempted 180 or more hours) they are eligible to submit an appeal for the term in which aid is being sought.

- C. If a student was on a warning status and did not meet the terms of that status and has *documentable extenuating circumstances* (i.e. illness, death of immediate family member, divorce) they are eligible to submit an appeal for the term in which aid is being sought. If a student was on a warning status and did not meet the terms of that status and does not have extenuating circumstances, they are not eligible to appeal and therefore not eligible for aid until the conditions for reinstatement of aid (refer to Section VII) are met.

Students are limited to 2 SAP appeals per academic career level (i.e. Undergraduate, Graduate).

For more information on how to appeal or the appeals processes in general, visit www.wku.edu/fin call 270-745-2755.

IX. COURSES FOR WHICH NO CREDIT IS EARNED/REPEATED

- A. Audits, Incompletes, and grades of ‘W’ or ‘F’ do not count as hours earned.
- B. A student must complete all assignments for an Incomplete (X) or an In Progress (IP) course and have a passing grade for that course posted on their academic transcript before credit may be included in the number of hours earned for that term. A grade of NR (no report) or ER (no report for just one student) indicates a grade has not been posted by an instructor. Students on warning/probation must also have official grades for these courses reflected on their academic transcript before they can be included in the number of hours earned for that term.
- C. A student can receive aid for a repeated course until the course is passed (credit received). If a student chooses to repeat a previously passed course (for a better grade), federal aid can be paid for only one repetition of the passed course.
- D. Courses numbered 0-99 (continuing education and special purposes courses) do not count in the total hours and quality points required for graduation. If such courses are recommended for a student’s program of study, the courses will be considered as part of the hours earned for financial aid purposes. Students receiving financial aid may not take more than 30 hours of courses numbered 0-99.

X. FAILURE TO PASS ANY COURSES FOR A TERM

Students that fail to pass any courses for a term (due to non-attendance) in which federal financial assistance was received, will automatically be denied assistance for the next subsequent term. Such students are eligible to appeal (refer to VII), assuming they are not already on warning/probation status for the term in which all failing grades were received.

A return of funds to financial aid programs may be required as a result of receiving all failing grades. In these instances, students are not eligible to appeal until all financial obligations to the University have been resolved.

Students that have an incomplete grade and all other grades of failing, will be treated as a student that has failed all courses for purposes of Satisfactory Academic Progress. Such students are eligible to appeal, assuming they are not already on warning/probation status for the term in which incomplete and failing grades were received. If documentation is received to validate that the student is in the process of completing the incomplete grade, he/she will not be subject to a return of funds that could result in owing an obligation to the University. If documentation is not received regarding the incomplete course, then the student is subject to a return of funds calculation and must resolve any remaining balance to the University as a result before an academic appeal can be submitted for a subsequent term.

XI. ACADEMIC RENEWAL

A student's entire academic record is considered when deciding if Satisfactory Academic Progress is being made. Students who have completed academic renewal (refer to WKU Undergraduate Catalog) are still subject to the qualitative and quantitative standards of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

XII. TRANSFER CREDIT

Transfer credit is considered as part of the cumulative grade-point average and overall hours for those courses that are recognizable as transfer credit by the University. Likewise these are included in the cumulative grade-point average and overall hours for purposes of evaluating Satisfactory Academic Progress.

XIII. CONCLUSION

It is the student's responsibility to maintain the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Students should be familiar with their academic records. Academic records are available to the student from their TopNet account and an official copy can be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. Students should work closely with their academic advisor to plan their degree program and to develop strategies for timely degree completion. Students planning to complete their degree at WKU should contact either their advisor or the Academic Advising and Retention Center before registering for courses at another college or university.

Any student who does not meet the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid and who plans to enroll for a particular term must be prepared to pay all tuition and fees for that term.

The SAP policy is available to students in the office of the Department of Student Financial Assistance, 317 Potter Hall and on-line at <http://www.wku.edu/financialaid/sap.php>.

Please contact the Department of Student Financial Assistance if you have questions regarding financial aid policies and procedures.