



Financial Aid Reminders for Spring Semester

AP Policy and More...

AP Policy and Graduate Students

The recent revision to Academic Progress (AP) policies at UF has updated policies governing graduate students.

Beginning with the 2011-12 academic year, graduate students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to be eligible to receive financial aid. Graduate students who did not maintain this GPA after the fall of 2011 received notice of entering financial aid 'warning' status, meaning they have one semester to reach the 3.0 GPA. Failure to do so will result in the termination of future financial aid eligibility. Once terminated, graduate students can submit an academic progress petition (found on SFA's website) to request reinstatement of their financial aid eligibility.

This policy does not apply to professional students in the following colleges: medicine, dentistry, law, and pharmacy.

No More Three-Peats

It is possible for students to enroll in a course for which they have previously received a passing grade. Students often do this in order to receive a higher grade for the course and may receive financial aid to retake the course.

Students should be aware that financial aid will not be available for an additional retake, or a three-peat. If a student enrolls for a third time in a course for which they have received two prior passing grades, SFA will not include hours for that course when calculating financial aid eligibility and funding will be reduced accordingly.

Summer Pell Is Done

The federal Pell Grant is no longer being funded year-round, as it was in summer of 2011. Students should be aware that if they enroll full-time for both fall and

spring, they will have exhausted their Pell eligibility for the 2011-12 academic year. Summer Pell money will only be available to those students who did not attend fall and/or spring full-time. For financial aid purposes, full-time is 12 or more hours per semester.

Students should see their financial aid advisers if they have further questions regarding the Pell Grant and summer enrollment.

Scholarship Search Engine

As students prepare their 2012-13 financial aid applications, they should also be pursuing aid that is not awarded by SFA. Our Scholarship Search Engine, www.sfa.ufl.edu/search, is a comprehensive, up-to-date database of college-awarded aid available at UF. It is searchable by multiple criteria, including college, major, academic unit, and deadline. Users can save searches, email searches to themselves, or can subscribe to feeds for various academic units.

Student Financial Management Center

As a service to students, SFA is opening a new facility in our main customer service lobby, S-107 Criser Hall. The Student Financial Management Center (SFMC) is a resource center for students, dedicated to educating students in areas of financial management, debt management, avoiding identity theft, budgeting, consumer credit, and a whole host of other important areas.

For more information about hours and services, keep an eye on SFA's website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed.

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INSIDE:

- 2012-13 Financial Aid: Prepare Now
- Financial Aid in the News:
 - Pell Grant Remains Intact
 - Tips for Getting Federal Aid
- Ways to Pay
- New on SFA's Website
- Loan Deferment & Forbearance: Do You Qualify?
- SFA Calendar

Prepare for 2012-13 Financial Aid

March 15 Deadline Is Closer than You Think

Fall of 2012-13 sounds far away, right? It isn't.

UF's "on-time" financial aid application deadline is mere weeks away.

The Deadline

Think of the on-time deadline as a priority deadline. Students who are able to complete their FAFSA and whose financial aid files are complete before March 15 are given priority when aid is awarded. Completing the application before March 15 makes students eligible for federal aid such as Federal Pell Grant, Federal Subsidized Direct Loans, and Work Study.

Federal aid is generally the most desirable aid available to students. Federal loans, for example, are more advantageous for the student, both in terms of interest rates and repayment terms.

This premium aid is limited, especially in today's economic climate, so it's crucial that students complete any and all requirements to ensure their eligibility.

Students whose financial aid files are not complete by the March 15 deadline are eligible only for whatever aid remains after all on-time students have been awarded their packages. This typically means that the best aid is gone.

What can students do to prepare for 2012-13?

Apply online

About 94 percent of aid applicants nationally now apply online. We recommend filing online using the FAFSA website. Filing an online FAFSA can save you weeks of processing time. The online application also has edit checks to catch errors.

To apply online, go to www.fafsa.ed.gov and follow the instructions. For assistance, stop by the SFA Student Resource Center in S-107 Criser Hall.

Apply Early

For your application to be considered "on-time," Student Financial Affairs (SFA) must receive your FAFSA results, with a calculated Expected Family Contribution (or EFC), from the federal processor by March 15.

Apply early—give the feds enough time to send your FAFSA data to our office before March 15. Don't settle for leftovers when it comes to financial aid.

Be Careful

Read "Common Mistakes Completing the FAFSA" on SFA's website, <http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/applying/fafsa-tips>.

Remember, the FAFSA is the cornerstone of your financial aid application—completing it carelessly or filing it late may make you ineligible for the aid you need to attend UF.

Don't Hesitate—Estimate

Many students make the mistake of waiting to file their FAFSA until their income taxes for the previous year are complete. If you or your parents haven't filed your federal income tax returns for the previous year when it's time to apply for aid, report "estimated" income information on your FAFSA. You must correct your FAFSA if the estimate differs from the actual income.

Reapply

Don't make the mistake of assuming that financial aid magically renews itself—students must reapply each year by filling out the FAFSA.



Do you still need Financial aid for 2011-12?

We encourage applying online using the FAFSA website at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. It's faster than filling out a paper FAFSA, and there are built-in edits to help prevent application errors. You can also track the status of your FAFSA after you apply.

Students who need help applying online can use the SFA Resource Center in the SFA lobby.

Gator Aid Application Guides for 2011-12 are available at SFA in S-107 Criser Hall. They are also available electronically from our website, <http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/publications/#appguides>.

Financial Aid in the News

Pell Grant Remains Largely Intact

(*St.LouisToday.com, Retrieved January 6, 2012*)

Despite fears nationwide that budget-cutting in Washington, D.C., would result in major cuts to the federal Pell Grant program, recent debates in Congress yielded only relatively minor changes to the program. Lawmakers avoided a major reduction in awards by instead changing eligibility rules, thereby affecting far fewer students.

The eligibility changes? Beginning July 2012, the eligibility period for Pell was reduced from 18 semesters to 12. Also, 'low-income' has been redefined—families reporting \$23,000 or more will be expected to contribute to a student's education costs, whereas the amount had been \$30,000 previously. In addition, only students with a high school diploma or GED will be eligible for Pell money.

While the changes are not without their critics, there seems to be a collective sigh of relief that the changes weren't worse.

Tips for Getting Federal Student Aid

(*CBS MoneyWatch, Retrieved January 6, 2012*)

If you and your family are beginning work on your 2012-13 FAFSA (and you should be!), here are a few tips, courtesy of CBS Moneywatch.

- Don't provide retirement assets. The Department of Ed only requires that you share non-retirement assets.
- Don't include business assets. If your family owns a business, you're only required to report assets if the company employs more than 100 full-time workers.
- List the most current marital status, according to the date you actually file the FAFSA. Sometimes, separated and divorced parents will see an advantage.
- Don't leave any questions blank—if the answer is zero or if the question is not applicable to you, write "0" or "N/A."

For even more tips for filling out the FAFSA, see SFA's "FAFSA Tips" page at www.sfa.ufl.edu/applying/fafsa-tips.

February: FAFSA Workshops in Residence Halls

Students in various residence halls around campus will have the opportunity of speaking with SFA staff in the comfort of their own home during February.

Each week in February, SFA staff will be tabling in a different residence hall. Students can talk to financial aid professionals directly about any aspect of the financial aid process, but these help sessions are focused primarily on helping students complete their FAFSAs before the March 15 deadline.

The sessions will be offered at Broward, Murphree, Beaty, Jennings, and Graham halls.

See SFA's website for further details, including times and locations.

WAYS TO PAY

Students can pay UF fees using the following methods:

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Use "Make A Payment" within myUFL. No service charge.

Online credit card payments Use "Make a Payment" within myUFL. There is a 2.6 percent service charge. Visa is not accepted.

GatorParent Payment Access Add parents to your account using myUFL, "My Campus Finances." There is a 2.6 percent service charge.

Personal check, cashier's check, or money order (secure drop box or USPS) There is no service charge for this payment method.

Remember, UFS will pay oldest debts first.

New on SFA's Website | www.sfa.ufl.edu

- Bright Futures Renewal Predictor
<http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/bright-futures/renewal>
- UF Net Price Calculator
<https://npc.collegeboard.org/student/app/ufl>
- Spanish Language Version of SFA Site
<http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/?lang=es>

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NEWS Financial Aid for Gators is produced once a semester by the Information/Publication Services section of the Office for Student Financial Affairs, to inform students about financial aid programs and services that help UF students meet educational costs.

Interim Director: Rick Wilder
Editor: Harry Monkhorst

NEWS Financial Aid for Gators is available in other formats for students with documented, print-related disabilities. Students who are speech- or hearing-impaired can contact the Florida Relay Service.

Dial 711 or 1-800-955-8771 (TTY)

Online at <http://www.ftri.org/FloridaRelay>.

The University of Florida is committed to equal treatment of students without regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, or veteran status.

Loan Deferment, Forbearance & Forgiveness

Do You Qualify?

Under certain circumstances, students may qualify to receive a deferment or forbearance on their federal loans, allowing them to temporarily stop or lower payments on their loans.

In addition, programs such as the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program (PSLF) and the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program are aimed at helping certain students with their loan burden in exchange for their willingness to work in specific public service jobs.

If you, at any time, need assistance with repayment or would like more

information regarding loan deferment or forbearance, contact your servicer. If you're not sure which company is currently servicing your loan, visit the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) website at www.nsls.ed.gov/nslds_SA.

Once you log in to the secure site, NSLDS shows your entire federal loan history, including the pertinent loan servicers and their contact information.

Students may also call 1-800-433-3243 or email inquiries to Studentaid@ed.gov.



SFA CALENDAR

JANUARY 9

Classes Begin

January 16

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

JANUARY 20

Fee Payment Deadline (3:30 UFS)

FEBRUARY 3

Withdrawal Deadline, All Courses

MARCH 3

Spring Break Begins

MARCH 15

- UF 'On-Time' Financial Aid Application Deadline for 2012-13
- 'On-Time' Loan application Deadline for Spring 2012

APRIL 25

End of Classes

TOLL-FREE Federal Student Aid Number

1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

Florida Bright Futures

For information about application, renewal requirements, reinstatements, restorations, appeals, summer awards, and other topics, go to the

Florida Department of Education

website,

www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org

Send questions by email:

osta@fldoe.org

Send mail to:

Florida Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1514
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Toll-Free Hotline: 1-888-827-2004

U.S. Department of Education

Student Aid Information Center
P. O. Box 84
Washington DC 20044-0084
1-800-433-3243 / 1-800-730-8913 (TTY)
www.ed.gov/finaid/landing.jhtml?src=rt

Federal Direct Loan Information
<http://www.studentloans.gov>

- View loan documents
- Entrance Counseling
- Sign MPN
- Complete PLUS Request Process

National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)
http://www.nsls.ed.gov/nslds_SA

Federal Direct Loan Consolidation
1-800-557-7392; 1-800-557-7395 (TTY)
<http://loanconsolidation.ed.gov>

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