

Understanding & Comparing Aid Offers

WILL BEGIN IN A MOMENT

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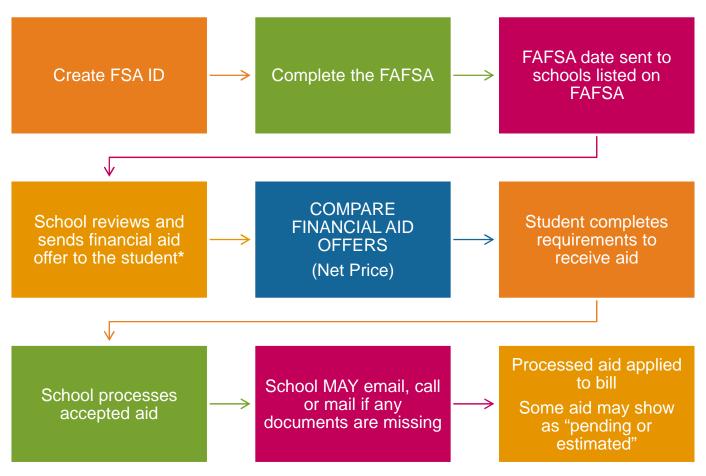




- ✓ The Financial Aid Process
- ✓ Financial Aid
 Notification
- ✓ Understanding the Parts
- ✓ Comparing FA
 Offers
- ✓ Strategies for a
 Successful Appeal



FA Process Review

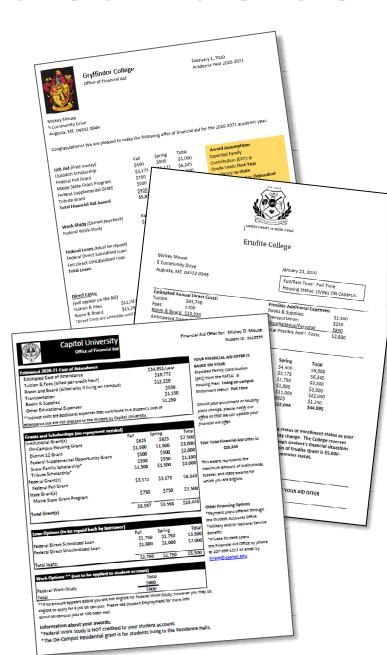


*If selected for verification, student may not receive an award letter until process is complete



What is it?

- Paper document or electronic notification sent by Financial Aid Office AFTER student has been offered admission.
- The financial aid offer provides:
 - A breakdown of the types and amounts of financial aid offered





How do schools determine the aid a student receives?

• All schools use the following formula:

- The Cost of Attendance (COA) includes direct and indirect expenses.
- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is determined when the student files the FAFSA.
- Because COA varies, need varies by school.



How do schools fill need?

 Schools attempt to fill need with a combination of types of aid from federal, state, and institutional sources.

Often there is a "gap" between a student's need and

the financial aid offered.





What are the types of aid?

- Gift Aid grants and scholarships that don't have to be repaid
- 2. Federal Direct Loans student loans that are not credit based but do have to be repaid
- 3. Work-Study money available to be earned during the academic year





How and when will they arrive?

- Paper or email notification will be sent; usually just one paper letter
- FAOs working to get aid offers out ASAP; some arrived in late January!



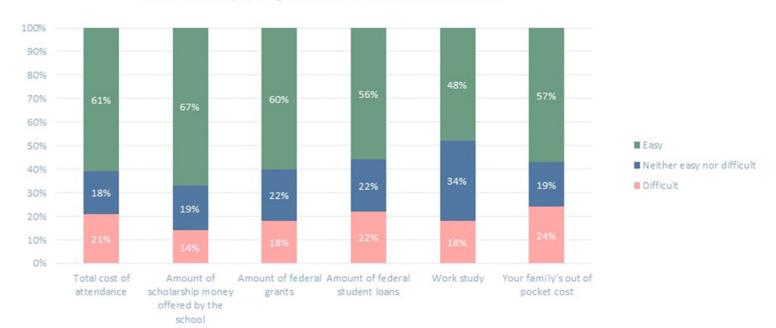


The Challenge

Financial aid offer letters are not well-understood

- 67% of families said they received a financial aid offer letter from the school the student is attending
- 43% of these families found at least 1 of the components 'difficult' to understand
- 16% didn't know that the aid offer letter might include loans

Ease of Interpreting the Financial Aid Award Letter





Financial aid offers are like the apples and oranges, or apples and apricots

....all round fruits, but they are different. Let's examine some differences!



Trends you have seen with aid offers recently:



What Information Might Be Included on Your Offer?

So what information might be found on a financial aid offer?

- Types of aid
- Cost of attendance
- Assumptions used
- Calculation to help determine true cost
- May also include other funding options, notices, or next steps

Let's look at some examples!



Things to note from this offer:

- Aid is broken down and totaled by category
 - Gift Aid
 - Work-Study
 - Loans
- Cost of attendance
 - Direct Costs
 - Indirect Costs
- Assumptions listed
- Calculated estimated bill



Gryffindor College Office of Financial Aid

February 1, 2020 Academic Year 2020-2021

Mickey Mouse 5 Community Drive Augusta, ME 04332-0949

Gift Aid (Free money)

Congratulations! We are pleased to make the following offer of financial aid for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Total

\$500	\$500	\$1,000
\$3,173	\$3,172	\$6,345
\$750	\$750	\$1,500
\$500	\$500	\$1,000
\$950	\$950	\$1,900
\$5,873	\$5,872	\$11,745
Fall	Spring	Total
\$1,400	\$1,400	\$2,800
Fall	Spring	Total
\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
\$2,750	\$2,750	\$5,500
	\$3,173 \$750 \$500 \$950 \$5,873 Fall \$1,400 Fall \$1,750 \$1,000	\$3,173 \$3,172 \$750 \$750 \$500 \$500 \$950 \$950 \$5,873 \$5,872 Fall Spring \$1,400 \$1,400 Fall Spring \$1,750 \$1,750 \$1,000 \$1,000

Direct Costs:		Indirect Costs	
(will appear on the	bill)	(will not appear on the	bill)
Tuition & Fees	\$11,747	Books & Supplies	\$1,000
Room & Board	\$11,255	Travel & Miscellaneous	\$2,200
*Direct Costs are esti	mates until finalized	Loan Fees	\$70

Award Assumptions
Expected Family
Contribution (EFC): 0
Grade Level: First-Year
Residency: In-State
Dependency Status: Dependent

Housing: On-Campus

Enrollment: 15 credits per semester

Estimated Griffin	ndor Bill
Estimated Direct	
Cost to Attend:	\$23,002
Total Gift Aid -	\$11,745
Estimated	
Remaining Cost	\$11,257
Federal Loans -	\$5,500
Estimated	
Remaining Cost -	\$5,757
(After Loans)	

The enclosed information provides detailed information about reading your award, pes of aid in your award and estimating your cost. Please call us if you have questions. We are happy help in any way we can!

Gryffindor College, NEASC Accredited Manere tranquillitas



Things to note from this offer:

- Aid is broken down and totaled by category
 - Gift Aid
 - Work-Study
 - Loans
- Cost of attendance
 - Direct Costs
 - Indirect Costs
- Assumptions listed
- Other financing options



Financial Aid Offer for: Mickey D. Mouse

Student ID: 0115555

Estimated 2021-22 Cost of Attendance Estimated Cost of Attendance \$34,951 Tuition & Fees (billed per credit hour) \$19,772 Room and Board (billed only if living on campus) \$12,229 Transportation \$550 Books & Supplies \$1,150 Other Educational Expenses \$1,250

**Indirect costs are additional expenses that contribute to a student's cost of attendance but are not charged to the student by Capitol University.

ed)		
Fall	Spring	Tota
\$1,250	\$1,250	\$2,500
\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000
\$500	\$500	\$2,000
\$550	\$550	\$1,100
\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000
\$3,172	\$3,173	\$6,345
\$750	\$750	\$1,500
\$9,222	\$9,223	\$19,445
	\$1,250 \$1,500 \$500 \$550 \$1,500 \$3,172 \$750	Fall Spring \$1,250 \$1,250 \$1,500 \$1,500 \$500 \$500 \$550 \$550 \$1,500 \$1,500 \$3,172 \$3,173 \$750 \$750

Loan Options (to be repaid back by borrower)			
	Fall	Spring	Total
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Total loans:	\$2,750	\$2,750	\$5,500

Work Options ** (not to be applied t	to student account)	
	Total	
Federal Work-Study	\$600	
Total	\$600	

^{**}if no amount appears above you are not eligible for Federal Work-Study; however you may be eligible to apply for a job on campus. Please see Student Employment for more info about on-campus jobs at 100 Main Hall.

Information about your awards:

- *Federal Work Study is NOT credited to your student account.
- *The On-Campus Residential grant is for students living in the Residence Halls.

YOUR FINANCIAL AID OFFER IS BASED ON YOUR:

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the FAFSA: 0 Housing Plan: Living on campus Enrollment status: Full Time

Should your enrollment or housing plans change, please notify our office so that we can update your financial aid offer.

Your Total Financial Aid Offer is: \$25,545

This award represents the maintain amount of institutional, lederal, and state awards for which you are eligible.

Other Financing Options

*Payment plans offered through the Student Accounts Office *Military and/or National Service Benefits

*Private Student Loans the Financial Aid Office by phone at 207-999-1212 or email by finaid@capitol.edu



Things to note from this offer:

- Aid is lumped together
 - Not clear what has to be repaid or earned
- Cost of attendance
 - Direct Costs
 - Indirect Costs
- Some assumptions listed





Erudite College

Mickey Mouse 5 Community Drive Augusta, ME 04332-0949

January 23, 2020

Full/Part-Time: Full-Time

Housing Status: LIVING ON CAMPUS

Estimated Ann	ual Direct Costs:	Possible Additional Expenses	:
Tuition:	\$43,740	Books & Supplies:	\$1,500
Fees:	\$700	Transportation:	\$250
Room & Board	\$13,936	Miscellaneous/Personal	\$850
Anticipated Dir	ect Costs: \$58,376*	Total Possible Add'l. Costs:	\$2,600

Offered Financial Aid:

Source	Fall	Spring	Total
Erudite College Grant	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$9,000
Pell Grant	\$3,172	\$3,173	\$6,345
Federal Direct Subsid Stafford Loan #1	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
Federal Direct Unsub Stafford Loan #2	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Distinguished Scholarship	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$22,000
Campus Work Study	\$625	\$625	\$1,250
Total Financial Aid Award	\$22,047	\$22,048	\$44,095

Approximate Annual Billable Cost after Aid: \$15,531

You must notify the Financial Aid Office if you change your housing status or enrollment status as your financial aid, specifically any need-based Erudite College funding may change. The College reserves the right to adjust your aid at any point in time in such cases. Although student's financial situations are reviewed individually as a point of reference, the typical reduction of Erudite Grant is \$5,000 - \$8000 per year when a student switches from campus resident to commuter status.

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AID OFFER

^{*}Annual Direct Costs will be finalized mid-February



Let's talk about how to compare financial aid offers to find the bottom line.



COMPARING COSTS & FINANCIAL AID OFFERS worksheet to compare estimated college costs and financial aid offers. Find the information you need to complete this worksheet to compute estimated coisage cass and nearcial aid afters, rind the information you need to complete this worksheet in your financial aid notification or your school's website. Costs and financial aid offers can vary significantly from one college or university to another. Schoolx \$10600 +\$9297 Room & Board - \$17,877 Direct Costs - \$8,730 Grants & Scholarships - \$11,167 \$3,500 Federal Dred Unsubsidized Loan - 42,000 - \$5,500 Total Loan Amount - 5.667 Balance Due (Direct Costs minus grants, scholarships, & loans + \$1,500 Books, supplies, travel - \$7,167 Estimated Total Cost \$1,500 everyone, a roun or private soon enginesty a sates, premie technics for the purposes or comparing crisis. Estanded lited Cost would be the critical paid by the student and/or the student's lamily using agency, custout

Comparing Financial Aid Offers

Tools exist to help students compare offers:

- FAME's Comparing Financial Aid Offers worksheet
- Informational, animated videos on our website
- Online tools, Excel spreadsheet, etc.
- Smart gadget "App"



Comparing Financial Aid Offers



COMPARING COSTS & FINANCIAL AID OFFERS

Use this worksheet to compare estimated college costs and financial aid offers. Find the information you need to complete this worksheet in your financial aid notification or your school's website. Costs and financial aid offers can vary significantly from one college or university to another.

College Name	Example	School 1		School 2		School 3
	Schoolx	Griffindor		Capitol	E	rudite
Direct Costs to Attend						
Tuition & Mandatory Fees	\$10,600		11747	19	772	43740
Room & Board	+\$9,297	+	11255	+ 12	229	+ 13936
Direct Costs (Billed by School)	- \$17,877	-	23002	32	001	57676
Financial Aid: Grants &	Scholarships					
Grants & Scholarships	- \$8,730	-	11745	20-	445	37345
Net Cost Before Loans	- \$11,167	-	11257	- 11	556	20331
Financial Aid: Loans						
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$3,500		3500	3	500	3500
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	+ \$2,000	+	2000	+ 2	000	+ 2000
Total Loan Amount	- \$5,500	-	5500	_ 5	500	5500
Estimated Total Cost						
Balance Due (Direct Costs minus grants, scholarships, & loans)	- 5,667	-	5757	_ 6	056	14831
Indirect Costs (Books, supplies, travel)	+ \$1,500	+	3270	+ 2	950	+ 2600
Estimated Total Cost ² (Out-of-packet cost)	- \$7,167	-	9027	- 9	006	1743
Financial Aid - Work Stu	dy					
Work Study	\$1,500		2800		600	1250

¹ Most schools do not list Federal PLUS or private loan eligibility as part of the offer, as these loans are credit-based and may not be approved for everyone. If PLUS or private loan eligibility is listed, please exclude for the purposes of comparing offers.

Which is the most affordable option?

Direct Costs- Grants and scholarships= Net Price

Net Price: What you pay the school for one year of college

² Estimated Total Cost would be the amount paid by the student and/or the student's family using savings, outside scholarships and/or loans.

³ Federal Work Study funds are earned throughout the year so are not available to help pay the fall balance.



Other Financial Factors

Encourage students to consider the following:

- Is any of the aid on the financial aid offer renewable?
 - Amounts may differ in subsequent years
- Costs could increase each year
 - Tuition, room & board, fees



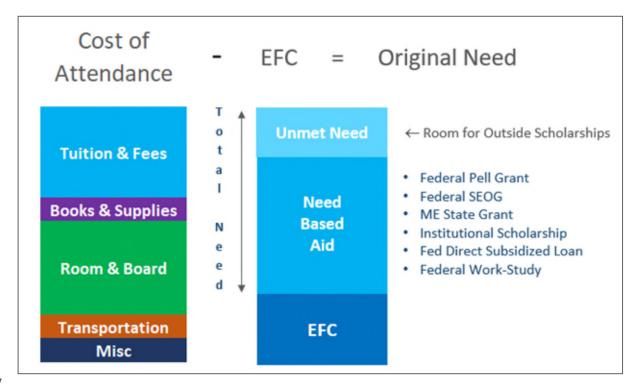


Other important considerations!



Scholarships

- Different process at each school
- Unmet need filled first in most cases
- Impact on financial aid offer generally minimal!





Scholarships

- Loan or work study eligibility typically reduced first when possible.
- Schools may swap institutional funds if student receives outside scholarship.
- ALWAYS better to get as many outside scholarships as possible than to worry about aid impact.
- More scholarships = fewer loans!
- Ask questions have student call financial aid office to ask about scholarship impact.





Other Considerations

- How many years will the student be in school?
- Will the plan for year one be feasible for years 2-4 or more?
- Consider entire cost of education vs. first year earnings.
 - Check out FAME's Salary/Debt calculator.
 - Every \$10,000 borrowed translates to a payment of about \$100 per month for 10 years.
- What living options make sense to keep the costs down?





What if family income circumstances have changed?



Laying the Foundation

Appeal terminology:

- Appeal is the term I'll be using for today.
- Professional Judgment (PJ) is often used by financial aid offices.
 - Language used in the Higher Education Act that allows financial aid administrators to make adjustments after the FAFSA has been filed.
- Special circumstances is sometimes used as well (though more commonly when discussing dependency status determination when the FAFSA is being filed).



Process to Appeal

What is the process to appeal?

- School specific appeal form
- Write an appeal letter Other times, the school will want the student to write a letter outlines the situation.
 - Suggest the free online service called SwiftStudent that can help students write appeal letters. https://formswift.com/swift-student
- It is helpful to write a letter, even if a standard form is required.



Who is asking?

It's great if the **student** can initiate the appeal...

But when parent information has changed, the parent will often take the lead.



Process to Appeal

- When writing an appeal letter, be sure to have the student/parent:
 - Summarize the situation and the impact on the family.
 - Emphasize when the special circumstance was beyond the family's control.
 - Include documentation of the situation; letter and documentation are kept confidential in the student's file
 - Provide contact information in case the financial aid office has follow up questions.
 - Keep the letter concise no more than a page or two.



Process to Appeal

- Example of information to include:
 - Change in income:
 - What happened and when: "I lost my job on 3/20/2020 when my place of business permanently closed" or "I was furloughed from my job on 4/2/2020 when my place of business closed but hope to return during the summer when the business reopens." When possible, indicate whether the job loss appears to be temporary or permanent, and include letters from your employer.
 - Document income prior to job loss or income reduction (copy of 2019 tax return or paystubs prior to job loss or income reduction).
 - Document current income, including unemployment or other work sources.
 - Predict, to the best of your ability, what the rest of the year looks like, as well as any anticipated income (severance or unused vacation pay).





STEPS TO APPEAL A FINANCIAL AID OFFER

When it comes to appeals, students and families should plan to discuss their circumstances openly, even when it is difficult, and work together with the financial aid office to find solutions.

- EVALUATE YOUR SITUATION. What situation is impacting your ability to pay for school? Though you can simply ask for more money, most of the time you will need to identify a "special circumstance" or change in situation to be considered for more financial aid.
 - Special circumstances may include: loss of job, reduction in income, parental divorce or separation, death
 of a parent, significant out-op-packet medical expenses, parent out-op-packet twition payments for their own
 education or education loan repayment, or other significant non-discretionary expenses.
 - Determine how much you (the family) can contribute ("here's what we can do") and how much more is needed. Wait to see what the school is able to affer, but it is helpful to have an amount in mind in case they ask how much you need.
- CONTACT THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE TO ASK ABOUT THE APPEAL PROCESS. Provide a quick overview
 of your situation. If a specific form is required, ask how to obtain the form. Also ask the appeal response time
 once submitted. If you call, be sure to make a note of when you called and the name of who you spoke with on
 the phone.

You can use a free online service called SwiftStudent that will help you write your appeal letter. This website will guide you through your circumstances and prefill an appeal letter to send to your college's financial aid office. This is a free and easy-to-use service, Go to FormSwift.com/swift-student

- COMPLETE REQUIRED FORMS AND/OR WRITE AN APPEAL LETTER. It is helpful to write a letter, even if a standard form is required.
 - . Summarize the situation (see the back of this page for more specifics) and the impact on the family.
 - . Emphasize when the special circumstance was beyond the family's control.
 - · Include documentation of the situation; letter and documentation are kept confidential in the student's file,
 - · Provide contact information in case the financial aid office has follow up questions.
 - . Keep the letter concise-no more than a page or two.
- 4. THANK THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE FOR CONSIDERING THE APPEAL. The decision whether or not to make adjustments is ultimately up to the financial aid administrator. However your appeal is handled, make a good impression with a thank you, You never know if more assistance might become available in the future.

HAVE QUESTIONS? Watch our informational videos, search for scholarships and learn more about

Process to Appeal



TIPS FOR DESCRIBING YOUR SITUATION

CHANGE IN INCOME

- For example, share what happened and when: "I fast my job on 3/20/2020 when my place of business permanently closed" or "I was laid off from my job on 4/2/2020 when my place of business closed but hope to seturn to work during the summer when the business reopens." When possible, indicate whether the job loss appears to be temporary or permanent, and trickde laters from your employer.
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 - Document current treame, including unamployment or other work sources.
 - Predict, to the best of your ability, what the remainder of the year looks like, as well as any anticipated income beverance or unused vacation says.

UNUSUALLY HIGH OUT-OF-POCKET MEDICAL EXPENSES

- For example, show what happined and when: "My reafter had a stoke on 10/15/2019," And what force you paid and product for what time period: "We have post the following and of pooles from 10/15/2019 until 3/2/2020; St. Joss Hospital SX,XXX, Ambulance service SXXX, follow up visits SXXX, physical flerapy SXXX, madications SX,XXX."
 - a Document these expenses. Contact your medical provider if you don't have all of your statements.
 - o If medical condition resulted in last wages, provide details and documentation.
 - a If medical situation requires travel, include gas, food, and any housing, if needed.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT "NON-DISCRETIONARY" EXPENSES

- For example, share what happened and when: "The furnace in our house stopped working on 1/3/2020, resulting in our pipes busiting and flooding our house."
 - Document expenses you paid out of pocket, any payment plans you have set up and what expenses were covered by Insurance.
- Or another example, share what happened and when: "My grandmother lives alone on a fixed income, but my parents help support her financially on a monthly basis."
 - Document expenses covered and amount of support.
 - Document expenses covered by your family and amount of support Jexample: a copy of a statement from the
 visiting rurse showing amount family paid).
- Or another example, show what happened and when: "My Mom makes a \$300 monthly payment on her student loan or pays \$730 per month for her school tutton.
 - o Document monthly payment.

PARENTS SEPARATION OR DIVORCE AFTER FAFSA WAS FILED (If separation or divorce happened prior to filling the TATSA, the student would have only provided information for the parent they lived with more than 50% of the time in the last 12 months).

- Share what happened and wher: "My parents separated on 2/2/2020 and they are no longer living together"
 [Note: It's important to note that they are not living in the same household. If they are living in the same household but consider themselves separated, this will not affect the students FAFSA).
 - Explain which parent student is now living with and document that parent's income. State whether or not any child support is being received or paid out.
 - o Some schools may want you to document that parents are not living together. If this is the case, provide utility bill in name of non-custodial parent living at different address.





- Encourage students/families to compare aid offers and understand the bottom line.
 - FAME can help virtually via 1:1 Zoom
 - Your high school may have a contact they use
- Students may ask you to contribute a letter of support for a financial aid appeal.
- When in doubt, suggest a call to the Financial Aid Office.



Thank you for joining us today! Find more FREE resources and information at FAMEmaine.com/education.

Follow us:









Contact: education@FAMEmaine.com

PH: 207-623-3263 or 800-228-3734

TTY: 207-626-2717