

Financial Aid Programs & Disclosures

Federal Aid Programs: The federal government offers several grant and loan programs for students and families. Students apply for these by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

- [Federal Pell Grant \(Pell\)](#) – Need-based grant awarded to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree to assist with their educational costs. Award amounts can vary from year to year and depend on your financial need, attendance costs and other factors.
- [Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant \(FSEOG\)](#) – Need-based grant generally targeted to undergraduate students with exceptional need who have not earned a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree.
- [Federal Perkins Loan \(Perkins\)](#) - Under federal law, the authority for schools to make new Perkins Loans ended Sept. 30, 2017. The final disbursements occurred in spring 2018.
- [Nursing Student Loan \(NSL\)](#) - Low-interest loans to assist student to achieve careers in nursing.
- [Federal Work-Study Program \(FWS\)](#) – Need-based self-help aid which allows the student to earn income while working on-campus or with an approved non-profit agency. Students are not guaranteed employment. Students are responsible for securing employment and working scheduled hours to earn FWS funds.
- [Federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans \(Sub and Unsub\)](#) - low-interest loans funded by the federal government, are either subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are awarded based on financial need, and the government pays the interest while a student is enrolled in college. Unsubsidized loans are awarded regardless of need but interest, which isn't covered by the government, accrues from the time of loan disbursement. Neither loan requires repayment during the time a student is enrolled in college.
- [Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students \(PLUS\)](#) – Parent PLUS loans are federal loans that parents of dependent undergraduates can use to help pay education expenses.
- [Federal Direct PLUS Loan for Graduate and Professional Students](#) – Graduate PLUS loans are federal loans that graduate students can use to help pay education expenses.
- [Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education \(TEACH\)](#) - Non-Need-based Grant provides funds for students enrolled in an eligible program who agree to teach four years in an elementary school, secondary school or educational service agency that serves students from low-income families.

To receive maximum funding from the above programs, you must:

- Provide verification documentation by the designated due date for any information requested by the Financial Aid Office. A student's financial aid will be determined after the completion of [verification](#).
- Demonstrate financial need (except for Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan and PLUS Loans).
- Have a high-school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate or pass an ability-to-benefit test approved by the U.S. Department of Education, or complete a high-school education in a home-school setting which is approved under state law.
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- Have a valid Social Security number.
- Maintain [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) for financial aid eligibility.
- Certify, by means of your signature on the FAFSA, that you will use federal student aid only for educational purposes.

- Be enrolled at least half-time to receive federal student loans. Other financial aid may be available if not enrolled at least half-time.
- Not have a bachelor's degree to be eligible for Pell Grant and FSEOG (eligibility will not extend past your term of degree completion).
- Not have outstanding Federal Perkins Loans or Federal Stafford Loans (either Federal Direct or Federal Family Education Loans) in excess of the annual or aggregate loan limits.
- Not be in default on a federal student loan nor owe money on a federal student grant and certify this by means of your signature on the FAFSA and by your signature on a promissory note.

State financial aid programs

- [PA State Grants](#) – need-based grant assistance to Pennsylvania residents. Students receive up to eight full-time semesters of PA State Grant assistance or 16 semesters of part-time assistance.
- [PA Special Programs](#) - Commonwealth of Pennsylvania funded programs administered by PHEAA.
- [State Aid](#) – Several states (including Delaware, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Ohio Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia) have grants that can be transferred to schools outside the state. Every state has its own funds and process for distributing aid. Contact your state grant agency for more information.

PennWest Foundation and Institutional Scholarships

For comprehensive information about PennWest’s student scholarship criteria, please view our [Scholarships](#) page.

DISCLOSURES

Financial aid disbursement procedures

Financial aid funds must be used first to pay university tuition and fees and then to pay university housing and other institutional educational expenses. Before the start of each term, Student Accounts will notify you of your university Statement of Account availability on my.pennwest.edu. Your online statement will show tuition and fees, living expenses (on-campus housing and food), and other appropriate charges. Any aid for which you are eligible will not initially appear on the Statement of Account, but will be reflected under "Authorized Aid or Memo Balance." Disbursement of your financial aid will begin the week after add/drop of each term and will be reflected as a credit(s) on your Statement of Account. All fees, including penalties, must be paid according to the deadline indicated on your Statement of Account. Students can view their anticipated disbursement dates in their PennWest student portal. Click the ‘Financial Aid Self-Service’ link in the Quick Access section and select the ‘Award Offer’ tab.

Student-athletes: Due to NCAA regulations, there are additional procedures for disbursement of certain types of aid and the release of credit balances.

Eligibility checks

Please be aware that you must fulfill certain criteria of enrollment status and eligibility to receive your financial aid funds. Your eligibility is monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the term. Aid which was initially credited to your Statement of Account for which you cease to be eligible will be withdrawn. Eligibility checks include [verification](#) status, hours of enrollment, academic standing, and not being in default or [owing an overpayment to a financial aid program](#). If you are ineligible for any of the aid originally credited to your account, you will be responsible to pay those charges which were covered by that aid on your original Statement of Account.

Financial aid payment process:

Your financial aid will be applied towards the allowable charges that appear on your Statement of Account if you remain eligible at the time of disbursement. Any overage, a credit balance, will be refunded to you for other educational expenses including off-campus housing (see information about credit balances below).

Credit balances

Once financial aid has been applied to the statement of account, The Office of Student Accounts issues credit balances (credits which exceed the charges on your account) via:

- Direct deposit to your personal checking or savings account. To set up direct deposit, access your my.pennwest.edu student portal. On the right-hand side click on the 'electronic refunds' hyperlink. You will be directed to the appropriate website, where you can enter your deposit information.
- Paper check. If you are not signed up for direct deposit, your credit balance will be mailed to you in the form of a check. Checks are mailed to the address listed as your home/current address regardless of your campus of attendance. To update your home/current address information, go to your my.pennwest.edu student portal and click on the Student Self Service link on the Student Quick Access Tile. Then go to the waffle menu at the top left of the page, next to the PennWest logo and click on 'Banner'. Next click on 'Personal Information' and then select 'Personal Information' again. In the middle of the screen, select the 'Personal Information' icon. You will then have access to update your address.

Reductions in disbursed aid:

If Financial Aid determines that you are no longer eligible to receive aid that has already been disbursed to you, you may be asked to repay it. This is a result of the continuous, ongoing eligibility and reconciliation checks the Financial Aid Office performs for all aid programs to ensure that funds are going only to eligible students. If necessary, a recovery of disbursed funds from you will take one of the following forms:

- FA may reduce future disbursements of aid to make your award consistent with your eligibility status. This reduction might result in an increase of your personal financial obligation for university charges for those terms.
- FA may reduce your aid for the current term to make your award consistent with your eligibility status. This reduction would take the form of a reduced credit placed on your account that may increase your personal financial obligation for university charges.
- FA may reduce prior term aid which would result in an additional charge on your account. This will increase the amount you owe for university charges (or reduce your credit balance) and could result in a balance due.

Please periodically check your statement of account to ensure any balance that may be created due to an enrollment change or loss of eligibility does not remain unpaid. If you have questions regarding your eligibility for financial aid, please contact financialaid@pennwest.edu.

Return of Federal Aid Monies Due to University Withdrawal

Federal Title IV regulations dictate the return of federal aid monies. If a recipient of Title IV funds (Pell Grant, IASG, SEOG Grant, TEACH Grant, Direct Student Loan) withdraws from school after beginning attendance, a portion of the Title IV funds may have to be returned to the U.S. Department of Education

(USDE). Title IV funds are awarded to a student under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded. When a student withdraws, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of the Title IV funds that the student was originally scheduled to receive. Students who are considering withdrawing after the semester begins or reducing their credit hour load, should contact the Financial Aid Office first to determine the impact on their financial aid awards. If a student withdraws before completing 60 percent of the semester, the percentage of Title IV funds earned is equal to the percentage of the semester completed. The university is required to return the unearned portion to the U.S. Department of Education. If a student earned less aid than was disbursed, the institution is required to return a portion of the funds and the student is then required to return a portion of the funds. When Title IV funds are returned, the student borrower may owe a balance to the institution. The institution must return the amount of the Title IV funds for which it is responsible no later than 45 days after the date of the determination of the date of the student's withdrawal.

The percentage of payment period or term completed up to the withdrawal date is determined by dividing the total number of days enrolled by the total days in the standard payment period or term. (Any break of five days or more is not counted as part of the days in the term.) This percentage is also the percentage of earned aid. Funds are returned to the appropriate federal program based on the percentage of unearned aid using the following formula: aid to be returned= (100 percent of the aid that could be disbursed minus the percentage of earned aid) multiplied by the total amount of aid that could have been disbursed during the payment period of the term.

Returns are allocated in the following order:

1. Unsubsidized Federal Direct Student Loans
2. Subsidized Federal Direct Student Loans
3. Federal Direct PLUS Loans
4. Federal Pell Grants
5. Federal SEOG Grants
6. TEACH Grant
7. Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

If a student withdraws after completing more than 60 percent of the semester, the percentage of Title IV funds earned is 100, and neither the student nor the school return any funds to USDE.

If a student earns more aid than was disbursed to him/ her, the institution owes the student a post-withdrawal disbursement which must be paid within 120 days of the student's withdrawal. The full policy can be found on PennWest's website.

Please note: The university refund policy for tuition and fees is very different from the Federal Title IV regulations for returning financial aid. For example: If a student withdraws after the end of the university refund period, the student will be charged for 100 percent of his/her tuition and fees. If the student withdraws before completing more than 60 percent of the semester, the university is required to return a portion of his/her Title IV funds. In most cases, the student will owe the university for the Title IV funds returned. If not repaid to the university, the student will not be able to return in future semesters or receive official transcripts.