Financial aid plays a critical role in affordability, access, and retention as students pursue their degrees and in viability after they graduate—manageable levels of debt, career choice, and ability to pursue an advanced degree. **Goal of this guide:** *Provide a quick reference for academic advisers and career counselors.*

**RESOURCES**

- **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**—source of all need-based federal, state, and University financial aid. For U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and eligible non-citizens (e.g., refugees, asylum granted). **Apply by priority deadlines to optimize grant/scholarship awards**—March 1 for incoming freshmen; April 1 for transfers and returning students. [http://www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) If filed four weeks after the start of the semester, state grant eligibility is lost.

- **One Stop Financial Aid Home Page and One Stop Student Services**—[http://onestop.umn.edu/finances/financial_aid/index.html](http://onestop.umn.edu/finances/financial_aid/index.html) Information on how to apply for financial aid, financial aid status, different types of financial aid awards; contains links to resources below. Comprehensive in-person, phone, email information and counseling.

- **Financial Resources Wizard**—contains a broad range of financial aid and other resources to help students pay for their education; quickly identifies options that are likely to match users’ individual situations. [frw.cce.umn.edu/frwizard](http://frw.cce.umn.edu/frwizard)

- **Financial Aid Estimator**—estimates Expected Family Contribution (EFC); dollar amounts of Pell Grant, Mn State Grant, U Promise Scholarship, and federal education tax credits and deductions. [http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/rsPg.cfm?pageID=620](http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/rsPg.cfm?pageID=620)

- **Scholarship Search for undergraduates**—matches UMNTC campus-wide, college, and departmental scholarships with student’s profile. [https://scholarships.umn.edu/](https://scholarships.umn.edu/)

**FINANCIAL AID TOOLS FOR ADVISERS/COUNSELORS**

- **Scholarship Student Selector Report (UM Reports)**—identify high-need students and scholarship prospects; award scholarships.

- **PeopleSoft Student Services Center** (at-a-glance look at students’ information in Campus Community) —Financial Aid *To Do List and Holds* (some are year/term specific).

**FINANCIAL AID ESSENTIALS**

- **Two basic types of grant/scholarship aid**—merit and need, but some programs are a mix of both. Every need or mix-based program has its own definition of financial need.

- **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** calculated by FAFSA. Most 18-23 year-old-students are considered dependent; need analysis uses parents’ + student’s financial situation.

- **Major elements of EFC**—previous tax year adjusted gross income; some untaxed income; household size; assets (cash, savings, checking, net worth of investments); unusual medical expenses. Home equity and tax-deferred retirement accounts are excluded.

- **Financial need**= **Cost of Attendance minus Expected Family Contribution (EFC).**

- **Special Circumstances Appeal**—job loss or reduction in income (specific situations); unusual, unreimbursed medical care expenses; separation, divorce, or death of parent or spouse after filing FAFSA; plus other circumstances. If appeal approved, EFC can be modified; financial need will be based on estimated current tax year rather than previous tax year. See One Stop *Forms Online.*

- **Independent Status Appeal**—for exceptions to federal dependency definition due to unusual and extenuating circumstances for students under age 24. See One Stop *Forms Online.*

- **Cost of Attendance Appeal**—2010-11 total cost of attendance for a Minnesota resident for two semesters is $23,058. Tuition & fees $12,288; books $1,000; dormitory room & board $7,576; transportation $194; and personal/miscellaneous expenses $2,000. Cost of
attendance can be adjusted for unusual expenses—tuition and fees, U-sponsored health
plan benefits, computer purchased for educational use, etc. See One Stop Forms Online.

- **Financial aid availability**—Pell Grant, MN State Grant, and loans are generally available
  throughout the academic year; some limited grant/scholarship funds may be available after
  FAFSA priority deadlines. Final deadline for 2010-11 FAFSA is June 30, 2011.

- **Office of Student Finance awarding priorities**—first bachelor’s degree, full-time
  enrollment, MN resident, fall/spring semesters; FAFSA filed by priority deadline

- **Financial Aid Award Notification (eFAAN)** sent to students via U of M email. OSF
  assumes full-time enrollment of 15 credits per semester. **Aid is reduced when enrollment
  is below required number of credits (varies by financial aid program).**

- **Registration** should be completed at least two weeks before start of semester to receive
  earliest disbursement of aid. Registration after second week (end of cancel-add period) will
  result in the loss of federal Pell, ACG and SMART financial aid. **State grant changes by
  credit as registration changes.**

- **Dropping classes and effect on financial aid**—consult the One Stop before
  withdrawing from one or more courses. Students may be billed for repayment of aid if
  they fall below the minimum required enrollment (varies by aid program).

- **Consequences of not graduating in four years**—loss of Minnesota State Grant, U
  Promise Scholarship, OSF-administered grants/scholarships, etc.

- **Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (different from colleges)**—three
  elements, including 2.0 GPA, 75% completion ratio of all attempted credits, and maximum
  timeframe 180 credits; appeal form on Forms Online.

- **Summer financial aid**—aid year ends with summer which often means that aid options are
  limited. Year-round MN State Grant and Pell Grants are available, but most University
  scholarships and federal loans are for fall/spring only.

- **Impact of outside scholarships on OSF aid**—if total aid exceeds Cost of Attendance,
  loans are reduced, then work-study, then other aid need-based aid with exception of Pell
  Grant and MN State Grant which are entitlements.

- **Extended term Online and Distance Learning (ODL) courses**—ineligible for OSF aid,
  with exception of MN State Grant.

- **Loans**—federal, state, private/alternative; great variation in interest rates, terms, eligibility
  requirements. Some loans don’t require need. Average U of M student loan debt= $25,000
  (doesn’t include education-related credit card debt, home equity loans, etc).

- **Financial aid outlook**—aid programs are in flux. Available funds and eligibility
  requirements change from year to year. **Advice to students:** steward limited resources; live
  frugally, plan carefully, regularly consult One Stop staff, academic advisers, and career
  counselors.

**SAMPLE FINANCIAL AID AWARD FOR HIGHEST NEED STUDENT**—Junior, dependent,
  dormitory, MN resident, enrolled full-time (15 credits)

$23,058 Cost of Attendance for Juniors-Seniors

0 Expected Family Contribution (highest financial need)

$ 5,550 Pell Grant (maximum award for two semesters; summer availability)
$ 3,058 MN State Grant (maximum award for two semesters; summer availability)
$ 744 MN Stimulus Grant (fall/spring terms only)
$ 3,320 U Promise Free Tuition Program (fall/spring terms only)
$13,072 Grants/scholarships

$ 3,000 Work-study
$ 6,986 Loans (max per year is $7,500)
$ 9,986 additional aid self-help aid

$ 23,058 TOTAL FINANCIAL AID= COST OF ATTENDANCE