

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

STUDENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important for students to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as they relate to applying for and receiving financial aid from Northern Illinois University.

It is important to note that financial aid eligibility is determined in accordance with the laws, regulations, and appropriation of the U.S. Congress, the State of Illinois, and Northern Illinois University, and is subject to adjustment or cancellation in the event of changes to these laws or your eligibility.

STUDENT'S RIGHTS:

- **You have the right to privacy.** All records and information submitted with your application for financial aid are confidential, and subject to legal requirements concerning disclosure of such information.
- **You have the right to request a reduction or cancellation** for your Federal Direct Stafford Loan or Federal Perkins Loan within 14 days of its disbursement, unless a refund of loan funds has already been issued by the Bursar's Office. Remember that a student loan is a debt that must be repaid; borrow only what you need.
- **You have the right to know what financial aid programs are available to you**, including information on all federal, state, and university financial aid programs (see page 2).
- **You have the right to know the application procedures**, priority filing dates, and deadlines for each of the available programs.
- **You have the right to know how your financial aid eligibility was determined.** This includes how costs for tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, travel, and personal and miscellaneous expenses were determined in your estimated cost of attendance. It also includes what resources were considered in the calculation of your financial aid eligibility (such as the expected family contribution and other financial aid).
- **You have the right to know how and when financial aid is disbursed.** Make sure to check your MyNIU account for more information on these processes.

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **It is your responsibility to obtain and complete any necessary financial aid application forms** and submit them in a timely manner. You must read and understand all forms you are asked to sign and keep a copy of each. You are also responsible for knowing the financial aid reapplication deadlines.
- **It is your responsibility to regularly check your MyNIU and NIU student e-mail account** for correspondence from NIU and the Student Financial Aid Office.
- **It is your responsibility to keep your parents informed of all financial aid requirements and deadlines**, as well as the status of your Bursar's Office student account (dependent students).
- **It is your responsibility to provide complete and correct information.** Purposely reporting false or misleading information is a violation of the law and may be considered a criminal offense.
- **It is your responsibility to notify the NIU Office of Registration and Records** (and any lenders with whom you have loans) if there are changes in your name or permanent mailing address.
- **You must accept responsibility for all agreements that you sign.** Read and understand all forms you are asked to sign and keep a copy of each form.
- **It is your responsibility to contact the Student Financial Aid Office if you want your loan reduced or canceled.** Once you have completed the Federal Direct Stafford Loan Master Promissory Note, and completed Loan Entrance Counseling if you are a first-time borrower, the semester portion of the requested loan amount will disburse to your NIU Bursar's Office student account. You must contact our office in writing within 14 days of the disbursement if you want the loan reduced or canceled, unless a refund of loan funds has already been issued by the Bursar's Office.
- **It is your responsibility to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress policies** and standards of NIU in order to maintain financial aid eligibility.
- **It is your responsibility to report to the NIU Student Financial Aid Office** any money you receive from sources outside of NIU (i.e. Rotary Scholarships, employee reimbursement, other scholarships, etc.).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To be eligible for financial aid, you must:

- be a US citizen or eligible non-citizen
- be registered with Selective Service (if male)
- attend a participating college or university
- be working toward a degree or certificate
- be making Satisfactory Academic Progress
- not owe a refund on a Federal Grant
- not be in default on a Federal Educational Loan

Enrollment Requirements:

- Students must be enrolled in courses for credit. Coursework taken on an audit basis does not qualify for Title IV financial aid. Students can apply for Private Alternative Loans to help offset the cost of attendance.
- Undergraduate students taking a combination of undergraduate and graduate coursework will only be eligible for financial aid based on undergraduate coursework.
- Graduate students taking a combination of undergraduate and graduate coursework will only be eligible for financial aid based on graduate coursework.
- Financial aid is offered based on full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester or in the case of the State of Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant, 15 credit hours per semester). Following the add/drop period each semester, the Student Financial Aid Office will recalculate your awards based on your level of enrollment.
- Visiting students are not eligible for financial aid at NIU. Students may consider pursuing a consortium agreement with their home institution, or applying for Private Alternative Loans.

MAJOR FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS:

By filing the 2009-2010 or 2010-2011 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and completing any NIU Student Financial Aid requests for additional information, students are considered for the following financial aid programs, EXCEPT the Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan, the Federal Direct Grad PLUS Loan, and Private Alternative Student Loans. Students and/or their parents must complete separate applications for PLUS or private loans. Applications and more information on loans can be found at

<http://www.niu.edu/fa/types/loans.shtml>

STATE OF ILLINOIS GRANTS

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	ELIGIBILITY	TERMS
Illinois Incentive for Access (IIA) Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois State funded • Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need-based • Illinois resident (If you are a dependent, the parent whose information is used on the FAFSA must be an Illinois resident.) • Must be eligible for the Illinois State Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant • Undergraduate, freshman • An Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500 academic year award • Must be enrolled at least half-time (6 credit hours per semester) • The amount of IIA Grant, in combination with other need based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.
Illinois State Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois State funded • Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need-based • Undergraduate working toward first bachelor's degree • Illinois resident (If you are a dependent, the parent whose information is used on the FAFSA must be an Illinois resident.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award amounts vary, based on financial need. • Non-refundable tuition and mandatory fee grant • Full award requires 15 credit hours per semester; partial award can be disbursed with enrollment between 3-14 credit hours per semester. • Award amounts are initially offered based on the assumption of full-time enrollment of 15 credit hours per semester. For each credit hour less than 15, the MAP Grant will prorate, or reduce, per program regulations. • This award is an estimate. MAP Grant funding levels are appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly. Please be aware that, in light of state funding constraints, reductions to estimated or actual MAP grants are possible. • The amount of MAP Grant, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY GRANT

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	ELIGIBILITY	TERMS
Huskie Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIU funded • Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need-based • First-time, incoming freshman, who is an Illinois resident and enrolled in 12 or more credit hours • Awarded both the Federal Pell Grant and Illinois State MAP Grant • FAFSA filed by May 1, prior to the academic year for which you are applying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award amounts vary, based on the difference between a student's actual tuition charges and the amount received in Pell, MAP and other tuition only awards. • Awards are only offered the fall and spring terms. • Awards are based on funds available, and only on initial aid eligibility. Huskie Advantage is not available if aid eligibility is modified through professional judgment or reconsideration. • Awards are based on anticipated state aid and full funding of Pell and MAP Grant programs. Reductions in those programs would not result in additional funds being awarded through the Huskie Advantage Program. • The amount of Huskie Advantage, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	ELIGIBILITY	TERMS
Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need-based Must be Federal Pell Grant eligible Entering freshmen who have completed a 'rigorous secondary school program,' as designated by the state in which the student resided when completing the program Sophomores also need a cumulative 3.0 GPA during their freshman year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$750 for freshman year \$1,300 for sophomore year Award is based on full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester) if taking less than 12 hours, the awarded amount will prorate per program regulation. (12+ hours=full-time award, 9-11 hours=three-quarter-time award, 6-8 hours=half-time award). The amount of ACG, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.
Federal Pell Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need-based Undergraduate students working toward their first bachelor's degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awards from \$488-\$2,675 per term (need based) Award is based on full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester). If taking less than 12 hours, the awarded amount will prorate per program regulations. (12+ hours= full-time award, 9-11 hours = three-quarter-time award, 6-8 hours= half-time award, less than 6 hours=less than half-time award)
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need-based, limited funding Undergraduate students working toward their first bachelor's degree Dependent students with an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that demonstrates significant financial need. Student portion of the EFC must be less than \$4000 and parent portion must be \$0. Independent students with an EFC of 0 and are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award amounts vary based on academic level and available funding. Award is based on full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester), except during the semester a student is graduating if proper documentation is submitted. See your financial aid counselor. The amount of FSEOG, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.
National SMART Grant (Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Gift aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need based Awarded only to Federal Pell Grant eligible applicants Undergraduate juniors and seniors Major in physical, life, or computer science; engineering; mathematics; technology; or a critical foreign language 3.0 cumulative GPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$4,000 for junior year and \$4000 for senior year Award is based on full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester) if taking less than 12 hours, the awarded amount will prorate per program regulation. (12+ hours=full-time award, 9-11 hours=three-quarter-time award, 6-8 hours=half-time award). The amount of National SMART Grant, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.
Teach Grant (Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Gift aid that reverts to a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan if service requirements are not satisfied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-need-based Undergraduate junior and senior, post-baccalaureate, or graduate student Enrollment in coursework to teach in high-need field (bilingual education and English language acquisition; foreign language; mathematics; reading specialist; science; special education) 3.25 cumulative GPA Sign a TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve and meet with both a designated academic advisor and Student Financial Aid Counselor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$4,000 each year if enrolled full-time (at least 12 credit hours per semester). Like Federal Pell Grant, the TEACH Grant will prorate for enrollment less than full-time. Must agree to teach in a high-need field serving low-income students. Must teach for 4 full years within 8 years of receiving the grant. TEACH Grant reverts to Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan (with interest from the date the grant was disbursed) if recipient does not complete service obligation. TEACH Grant, in combination with other financial aid, cannot exceed the recipient's Cost of Attendance.

FEDERAL WORK STUDY

FEDERAL GRANTS

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	ELIGIBILITY	TERMS
Federal Work-Study (FWS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award is funded partially by federal funds and partially by the NIU employing department. Award is earned as wages, through bi-monthly paycheck, for work performed for on- and off-campus employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need-based Undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time (6 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; 3 credit hours for summer semester) Undergraduate, not enrolled for summer semester, may have eligibility Limited graduate participation for fall and spring semesters only, must be enrolled full-time (9 credit hours each semester) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award amounts vary based on available funding. Locate and interview for jobs by reviewing job listing on NIU student employment web site. Work-Study wages do NOT appear on your university account; students earn a paycheck for work performed. The amount of FWS, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.

FEDERAL LOANS

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	ELIGIBILITY	TERMS
Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Repayment obligatory Fixed rate after July 1, 2009: 5.6% for undergraduate students, and 6.8% for graduate students. Fixed rate after July 1, 2010: 4.5% for undergraduate students, and 6.8% for graduate students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need-based Enrolled at least half-time (Undergraduate, post-graduate, student-at-large, and law students must be enrolled 6 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; graduate students must be enrolled 4.5 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; for summer semester, all students must be enrolled 3 credit hours.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repayment is deferred and there is no interest while enrolled at least half-time. Limited deferment provisions: 1.5% origination fee, with a 1% rebate if first 12 monthly payments made on time Undergraduate students scheduled to graduate after fall semester will have their loan eligibility prorated, per program regulations, according to the number of credit hours enrolled. Award amounts vary, based on cumulative hours earned. The amount of Subsidized Stafford Loan, in combination with other need-based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need. First-time borrowers must complete online Loan Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note.

Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Repayment obligatory 6.8% fixed interest rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-need-based Enrolled at least half-time (Undergraduate, post-graduate, student-at-large, and law students must be enrolled 6 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; graduate students must be enrolled 4.5 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; for summer semester all students must be enrolled 3 credit hours.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest begins accruing immediately; may be paid periodically or capitalized (see promissory note). Repayment of principal deferred while enrolled at least half-time Limited deferment provisions: 1.5% origination fee, with a 1% rebate if first 12 monthly payments made on time Undergraduate students scheduled to graduate after fall semester will have their loan eligibility prorated, per program regulations, according to the number of credit hours enrolled. Award amounts vary, based on cumulative hours earned. The amount of Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, in combination with other financial aid, cannot exceed the recipient's Cost of Attendance. First-time student borrowers must complete both the online Loan Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note.
Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan and Grad PLUS Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Repayment obligatory 7.9% fixed interest rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-need-based Loan amounts vary, based on borrower's request. Parent PLUS Loan borrower is the parent of an undergraduate dependent student; Grad PLUS Loan borrower is a graduate or law student. Enrolled at least half-time (Undergraduate, post-graduate, and law students must be enrolled 6 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; graduate students must be enrolled 4.5 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semesters; for summer semester all students must be enrolled 3 credit hours.) Borrower must meet credit-worthiness standards as set forth by Federal Direct Lending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This loan will be included on your award notification only if a separate application is submitted and credit is approved. Parent PLUS repayment of principal and interest begins 60 days after the loan is disbursed. There is a 4% origination fee, with a 1.5% rebate if first 12 monthly payments are made on time. Grad PLUS borrowers qualify for "in school" deferment while enrolled. First-time Grad PLUS or Parent PLUS borrowers must complete the online Master Promissory Note. First-time Grad PLUS Loan borrowers must complete the online Loan Entrance Counseling. The amount of loan, in combination with other financial aid, cannot exceed the recipient's Cost of Attendance.
Federal Perkins Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally funded Repayment obligatory 5% fixed interest rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need-based, limited funding Undergraduate working towards first bachelor's degree Enrolled full-time (at least 12 credit hours per semester), except the semester graduating, if proper documentation is submitted. See your Financial Aid Counselor. Based on available funding. Reminder: March 1st is the NIU priority filing date for the FAFSA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award amounts vary based on cumulative hours and available funding. Repayment is deferred and there is no interest while enrolled at least half-time (see promissory note). The amount of Perkins Loan, in combination with other need based financial aid, cannot exceed demonstrated financial aid need.

OTHER FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS:

Veterans Benefits

NIU processes educational benefits for veterans who are enrolled in a degree or certificate-seeking program. Veterans who have not applied for their federal or state benefits can access the forms on our web site at http://www.niu.edu/fa/vetresources/forms_apps/index.shtml

Once you have your letter of eligibility, you will need to submit a photocopy of the form. After you have enrolled for your courses each semester, you must complete and submit the Enrollment Certification Request Form to the Veterans Assistance Office.

If you are transferring from a different school or you change your academic plan or degree goal you will also need to complete and submit a Change of Program or Place of Training available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1995-ARE.pdf>

Scholarships

You are responsible to report to NIU any other money you receive from sources outside of NIU (i.e., Rotary Scholarships, employee reimbursement, other scholarships, etc.). Scholarship funds will disburse to your Bursar's Office student account one-half toward the fall semester and one-half toward the spring semester, unless otherwise indicated by the donor.

You are encouraged to apply for as many scholarships as possible. Please refer to the Scholarship Office located adjacent to the Student Financial Aid Office for the current listing of scholarships available. You may also use their online databases to search for scholarships for which you are eligible at <http://www.scholarships.niu.edu>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For additional information regarding the Financial Aid Programs available to you, please visit College Zone at <http://www.collegezone.com/index.htm>

FINANCIAL AID AWARD NOTIFICATION AND DISBURSEMENT:

All students who are eligible for financial aid will have a financial aid award notification posted to their MyNIU account. It is your responsibility to review your award notification. You must access MyNIU to accept, reduce, or decline student loans and Federal Work-Study.

Financial aid funds are disbursed to your Bursar's Office student account on a semester-by-semester basis after the add/drop period. If your student account has a credit balance, after all financial aid funds have been disbursed, you will be refunded the excess balance. You are eligible to receive those excess funds within 14 days from the date the credit balance occurs.

RETURN OF FUNDS:

All students who withdraw from NIU are subject to the Title IV Return of Funds policy. During the first 60% of the enrollment period, a student earns Title IV funds in direct proportion to the length of time he/she is enrolled. The percentage of aid earned is determined by the date the student officially withdraws, the total number of calendar days in the enrollment period, and the calendar days the student completed during the period of enrollment.