How do I apply for a Grad PLUS Loan?

A Grad PLUS Loan is a loan from the federal government to graduate students. Grad PLUS loans are credit based using the borrower’s financial information to determine if the loan will be approved. Students who are not approved for the Grad PLUS Loan may appeal the credit decision or apply with a co-signer (also called an endorser).

To be eligible to apply for a Grad PLUS Loan an individual must be:

• A degree seeking Graduate, Law, or Doctoral student enrolled at least half-time.
• A student must also have a FAFSA on file for the financial aid year. Ex: for Spring 22 a 2021-2022 FAFSA must be filed.

The following individuals are not eligible to apply for a Grad PLUS Loan:

• An Undergraduate Student
• A Student-at-Large
• A Post-Baccalaureate Student
• A Visiting Student
• A student enrolled less than half-time
• A Parent of the student

To apply for a Grad PLUS loan the Student borrower must go to studentaid.gov and “Log In” using their FSA ID and password.
Move your mouse to the top of the page and hover over the “APPLY FOR AID” dropdown. Click on the link that says: “Apply for a Grad Plus Loan” when it appears.

Click the “Start” button under Apply for a Plus Loan.

Select the award year that you will be attending. For example, if you are starting in the Fall of 2021, Spring of 2022, or Summer of 2022, the award year will be 2021-2022.
Check the box if you want to authorize the loan to pay for additional charges.

Search for the school by selecting “Illinois” as the state and “Northern Illinois University” as the school name. When the school has been selected your screen should look like the one below on the right. Once the Grad Plus Loan application has been submitted the US Department of Education will send the results to NIU in a few days.
If this is your second plus loan application for the aid year you need to select if this is a new loan or if you are trying to change the previous loan. (Please note, it may be significantly easier to email the financial aid office if you want your loan adjusted)

If you previously completed a Direct PLUS Loan application for the same school and award year, you'll be presented with this option.

Specify a reason for submitting this Direct PLUS Loan Application

- New (I am submitting a new Direct PLUS Loan Application).
- Change (I am requesting a change to the loan amount specified in a previously submitted Direct PLUS Loan Application).

Select the Direct PLUS Loan Application you want to modify:

Previous Loan Reference Number and Loan Amount Requested

Select the “Loan Amount Requested” as either:

- “I want to borrow the maximum Direct PLUS for which I am eligible, as determined by the school.”
- “I would like to specify a loan amount” then type in the loan amount you want. (You can contact the financial aid office for a recommended amount based on your other aid and charges.)
  
  Note: An amount must be specified, or the application process will be delayed while the school requests this information.
- “I do not know the amount I want to borrow. I will contact the school.”

  Note: If you choose this option, it is important you contact the school or the application process will be delayed while the school requests the information.
Select the Loan Period from the drop-down list:

- For most borrowers we recommend choosing a full year loan if the student will be enrolled in both the Fall and Spring semesters.
- If you are graduating in Fall 2021 or you only want a Fall semester loan — select Fall only.
- If you are starting in the Spring 2022 or you only want a Spring semester loan — select Spring only.

Note: Contact the Student Financial Aid Office if you are unsure when you will be attending.
Click “Continue” at the bottom to move on to the next step.

Enter your information into the Borrower section. Some of the data fields may be populated with information that is already on file for you. Verify the information is correct before moving on.
Click “Continue” at the bottom to move on to the next step.

Review the information and update if necessary, then click “Continue.”

Review all information provided and verify that it is correct.

Award Year Information

Award Year

If you have placed a security freeze on your credit file, you must lift or remove the freeze at each credit bureau before you continue. Your application will not be processed if you have a security freeze.

Your Direct PLUS Loan Application cannot be processed unless you authorize the U.S. Department of Education to check your credit history. One of the eligibility requirements for receiving a Direct PLUS Loan is that you must not have an adverse credit history, unless you meet certain other requirements. The credit decision resulting from your credit check will be sent to the school that you have selected.

Review the “IMPORTANT NOTICES” by selecting each drop down then click the box to confirm you understood the information.

- Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act Notice
- Privacy Act Notice
- Financial Privacy Act Notice
- Paperwork Reduction Act Notice

I have read and understood the following Important Notices:
Certify the accuracy of the information on the application by checking the first box. Authorize the Department of Education to check the credit of the borrower by checking the second box.

Upon selecting “Continue” the results of the PLUS application will be displayed.

Loan funds are disbursed to the Bursar account after the add/drop period is closed. If the Federal Direct Grad PLUS disbursement generates a refund after University charges are paid, the refunded amount will be mailed to you.

You have the option of signing up for direct deposit. Direct Deposit offers a timely, reliable, and safe way to deliver your refund to your checking or savings account. For more information on refunds, please see the Bursar Office Website.
What happens if the Grad PLUS Loan is denied?

If the Grad PLUS Loan is denied, there are two options available if you still want to get the loan:

• **Apply with an endorser**—allows the borrower to reapply with a co-signer. An endorser is someone who agrees to repay the Grad PLUS Loan if the borrower becomes delinquent in making payments or defaults on the loan.

  The endorser will need to go to [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov) and know the student’s name and the Endorser Code.

• **Appeal the credit decision**—allows the borrower to provide documentation to the Department of Education to prove extenuating circumstances that may override the initial credit decision. More information on the appeal process can be found at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov)

---

Based on the results of the credit check, we are unable to approve your request for a Direct PLUS Loan.

You may still be eligible to receive a Direct PLUS Loan.

To become eligible, you must:

• Obtain an endorser and complete PLUS Credit Counseling OR
• Document extenuating circumstances to the satisfaction of the U.S. Department of Education and complete PLUS Credit Counseling.

All other eligibility requirements must also be met before your loan can be awarded and your school will tell you what loans, if any, you are eligible to receive.

---

How would you like to proceed?

*Indicate how you want to proceed by checking the appropriate box below and then clicking "Submit". Your response will be reported to the school that you selected when completing the Direct PLUS Loan Request Application.*

- [ ] I want to obtain an endorser.
- [ ] I want to provide documentation of extenuating circumstances.
- [ ] I do not want to pursue a Direct PLUS Loan at this time.
- [ ] Undecided.

[Continue](#)