

# FINANCIAL AID

## Office of Student Financial Aid

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The Office of Student Financial Aid provides a variety of services to help students finance their education; including, financial aid advising, exploring funding resources, and financial assistance. Student financial aid awards may consist of grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. Awards are based primarily on financial need, although there are some alternative financial aid sources available for those who may not qualify for need-based financial assistance.

The Office has a comprehensive listing of various scholarship opportunities for students to research on the Office of Student Financial Aid's website. Students are encouraged to review the scholarship information often due to the listings being updated continuously and apply early in order to meet deadlines.

The Office is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Financial Aid Counselors are assigned to students alphabetically based on students' last names and are available daily by phone, e-mail or personal appointment. Students can view the list of Counselors on the Office's website.

Each year, to apply for financial aid, both new and currently enrolled students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). **George Mason University's Federal Title IV school code for the FAFSA is 003749.** Priority consideration for all sources of financial aid is given to those students whose financial aid applications are on file with the Office of Student Financial Aid by **March 1**. To meet this priority filing date, students should file the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1st of the previous year (e.g. October 2017 for the 18-19 academic year). The FAFSA is filed online (<http://www.fafsa.gov>).

Financial aid for summer is generally limited to students who have remaining Federal Pell Grant or Federal Loan eligibility for the year. Summer is considered a "trailer" term at the university. Contact the Office of Student Financial Aid for specifics regarding eligibility.

## Financial Aid Programs

The University administers the following federal, state, and other aid programs:

### Federal programs

These include the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study (FWS), Federal Subsidized Direct Loans, Federal Unsubsidized Direct Loans, Federal PLUS Loans for parents of dependent students (DPLUS) and Federal Grad PLUS Loans for Graduate students (DGPLUS). For more information, go to the Office of Student Financial Aid home page (<http://financialaid.gmu.edu>).

## State financial aid programs for undergraduate Virginia residents

Eligibility for all state programs is determined based on the student's FAFSA and financial need. State grant funds are limited, so adherence to the March 1 priority filing date is critical.

### Virginia Commonwealth Award

This program is open to undergraduate students who have demonstrated financial need, are enrolled at least half-time, and are domiciliary residents of Virginia.

### Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program (VGAP)

This program is a component of the Virginia Commonwealth Award Program that is open to dependent students only who demonstrated academic achievement in high school and have graduated from a Virginia high school. VGAP awards are renewable for up to four years.

## Graduate student assistance

Assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships exclusive of the federal financial aid programs identified earlier are administered by the individual graduate programs. Students interested in pursuing graduate assistantships, fellowships, or scholarships should contact their graduate program directly.

All financial aid recipients are responsible for becoming familiar and complying with applicable federal and state regulations, and university policies.

All students receiving financial aid must be enrolled in an eligible degree or certificate program; maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as defined by the Office of Student Financial Aid in accordance with federal guidelines (see below); be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen as defined by the U.S. Department of Education and all male students must be registered with Selective Service.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards

Federal legislation governing the administration of federal programs requires colleges and universities to define and enforce standards of academic progress for students receiving or applying for financial aid. To comply with this legislation, the Office of Student Financial Aid has established a formal satisfactory academic progress policy. For detailed information, go to the Office of Student Financial Aid home page (<http://financialaid.gmu.edu>) or contact the Office of Student Financial Aid directly.

## Return of Title IV Funds

The Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to re-calculate federal financial aid eligibility for students who completely withdraw from all classes, drop out, are dismissed, or take a leave of absence prior to completing 60% of a payment period or term. According to the regulations, the amount of Federal Title IV awarded to a student must be re-calculated in these situations and any portion of the financial aid received that is considered to be "unearned" must be returned to the Title IV Program(s) from which it was received. Any student considering dropping or withdrawing from all courses, should contact their assigned

Financial Aid Counselor immediately regarding possible adjustments to their financial aid.

## **Emergency Loan Programs**

George Mason University has established an emergency loan account funded by the Gerson Trust.

This emergency loan is designed for enrolled students that encounter unexpected emergencies and is not meant to pay for tuition and fees. This is a short-term, interest free loan and students may borrow up to \$1000. Repayment is due in 90 days. Applications may be obtained from the Office of Student Financial Aid.

## **Certificate Programs that Qualify for Financial Aid (Gainful Employment)**

For more information about program graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program, and other important information, please visit the University's disclosure information website (<https://irr2.gmu.edu/gedt>).

The qualifying certificate programs include:

- Accounting Undergraduate Certificate
- Advanced Biomedical Sciences Graduate Certificate
- College Teaching Graduate Certificate
- Early Childhood Education PK-3 (Licensure) Graduate Certificate
- Early Childhood Special Education (Licensure) Graduate Certificate
- Forensics Graduate Certificate
- Geospatial Intelligence Graduate Certificate
- Higher Education Administration Graduate Certificate
- Nutrition Graduate Certificate
- Secondary Education Licensure Graduate Certificate
- Students with Disabilities who Access the Adapted Curriculum Graduate Certificate
- Students with Disabilities who Access the General Curriculum Graduate Certificate
- Teaching English as a Second Language Graduate Certificate