Deadlines: FAFSA and scholarships

It seems like everything in financial aid is predicated by deadlines and those deadlines are very important. One thing you should have noticed in your time at Ohio State is that we have deadlines for everything, and we stick to those deadlines (for the most part). February 1 is a huge deadline for Ohio State Student Financial Aid. February 1 is the deadline to apply for our scholarships and February 1 also serves as our priority deadline for the FAFSA.

We hope that you were able to submit your FAFSA prior to February 1, but if you have not submitted the FAFSA yet, you still can do so, and we would recommend that you do submit the FAFSA. We use the priority deadline as a cutoff date for our University Grant Program (President’s Affordability, Buckeye Affordability, and others). If you file the FAFSA after February 1, you more than likely will not be eligible to receive university grants, but that deadline does not impact your eligibility for federal financial aid. If you complete the FAFSA and you are eligible for the Pell Grant, you will receive your Pell Grant and also have your student loan eligibility as well.

As we move towards the next school year, we will start updating your Buckeye Link accounts. You may notice that we’ve added verification documents to your To Do List for the 2022 school year. You will also notice that there is a deadline for you to submit those documents. We ask you to do your due diligence and complete the forms and submit them online using the secure uploading tool at sfa.osu.edu as quickly as you can. If you miss those deadlines, again, you could be losing grant money from the university. If your FAFSA was selected for verification, it is considered Incomplete. The university cannot disburse any federal financial aid to your account until that verification is completed and the FAFSA is deemed complete. If you are running into problems obtaining any of the requested documents like the tax returns or W2s, please let us know so that we can help you. We do not want you to miss any deadlines and miss out on grant money. Grants are free money and we want you to get as much free money as possible. Do not delay, get your To Do List completed!

Although Ohio State’s deadline to apply for general scholarships has passed, there are still tons of opportunities out there through external sources. One great thing that the new scholarship platform (ScholarshipUniverse) does is that it will help match you with external scholarships, not just Ohio State’s scholarships. You can spend hours online searching through a scholarship search engine or through a plain search engine (like Google) or you can login to the ScholarshipUniverse portal through Ohio State and answer some criteria-type questions and let ScholarshipUniverse find potential matches for you. As some of you know, every little bit helps when it comes to funding your education and we want you to get as much FREE MONEY as possible, because that is less money that you will have to borrow in the form of student loans.

Office Hours
(Subject to change based on university policy)

- The Office of Student Financial Aid is always open. If a question or concern comes to mind in the middle of the night or on the weekend or on a holiday, you have the option to email us your questions or your concerns. As we continue to move through the semester, we will have someone in the office all week. Financial Aid Coordinator Tony Dickman will be on campus in his office in the Student Services Building on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m.-4:45 p.m. Tony will be working remotely on Mondays and Fridays. He is also available via email and/ or phone.

- Please email or call before you make a special trip to campus to meet with someone in the office. If you have class and will be on campus anyway, just stop out. We recommend that you contact the office before making a separate trip to campus as Tony’s days in the office could be adjusted.

- If you would like to set up an appointment, we can do that. Email the office (lima-financial.aid@osu.edu) and we’ll get you on the calendar.
Next steps

As we move through the winter and into spring, hopefully you have applied for scholarships and completed the FAFSA. If you completed the FAFSA, you could see items appear on your To Do List on your BuckeyeLink account. Contrary to popular belief, we do not just place items on your To Do List for no reason. All items on your To Do List have been requested by the Department of Education. Your FAFSA is incomplete until Ohio State can collect and verify the requested information. If you see a form, a document or a request appear on your To Do List, please complete it. We are requesting those items for a reason. The longer it takes you to complete the requirements, the longer the delay in your financial aid awarding process.

The processing for financial aid awards will begin with new, first year (incoming) freshman, and will typically take place in late February into early March. Our returning students who are NOT enrolled in summer classes, but are returning autumn semester will receive their financial aid awards in late May into early June. Those students who intend to take summer classes will be awarded on a rolling awarding basis (weekly or bi-weekly) once the student is enrolled. If you are thinking of taking summer classes please set up an appointment with your academic advisor and then, if you have any questions, let us know in financial aid. For those taking summer classes, or just thinking about it, there are aid options available. As we move further into the spring, we should start hearing from the Department of Education regarding funding for the summer term.

Adjusting your schedule

For financial aid purposes, we ask that if you make the decision to drop or withdraw from a class or classes you contact financial aid prior to actually making the decision. Once that decision is made and the class(es) dropped, there is not much that financial aid can do at that point. No matter when in the term you make an adjustment to your schedule or credit hours, there will be some sort of impact on your financial aid. That impact might be during the current term (owing money back to the university) or the next school year with your Satisfactory Academic Progress (financial aid SAP Suspension). Again, we ask that financial aid not be an afterthought when you are thinking of making an adjustment to your schedule, especially if you are dropping from full-time credit hours to less than full-time credit hours. When you drop classes (make reductions to your credit hours) it will impact your Rate of Completion (one of the areas we are mandated to monitor). Students have a difficulty understanding SAP, especially the Rate of Completion. In theory, you can have a great GPA and still not be eligible for financial aid due to the Rate of Completion, so please check with us first.

What is SAP and why should you care? SAP stands for Satisfactory Academic Progress and you should care because SAP can cause you to become ineligible for financial aid. Federal regulations require that all colleges that administer federal financial aid develop a SAP policy. This policy outlines the minimum requirements that must be met and maintained for students to continue receiving federal student aid. The Ohio State SAP Policy (https://sfa.osu.edu/contact-us/consumer-disclosure/satisfactory-academic-progress-policy) states that there are three (3) areas in which we have to monitor you for academic progress and if you fail to make academic progress, you lose your financial aid eligibility.

- **Rate of Completion**—you must successfully complete (pass) 67% of your credit hours each year.
- **Grade Point Average** (cumulative)—you must earn at least a cumulative grade point average of 1.8 for your first year and a 2.0 after your second year.
- **Maximum Timeframe**—you can use financial aid for up to 150% of your program’s length. Most of our programs require between 120 to 130 credit hours to graduate, which means you can take, on average, 180 credit hours before you reach your maximum timeframe.

When dealing with SAP, which we run after the end of spring semester each year, the Rate of Completion is by far the largest issue for students. It is also referred to %Completion Rate or %comp. The best way to stay on top of the %Completion Rate is to communicate with Financial Aid. If you drop below the requirements for SAP (GPA, %comp) you become ineligible for financial aid and are listed on Financial Aid Suspension. To get off the suspension list, you must pay on your own until you get your GPA or %comp up above the minimum requirements. If you had an extenuating circumstance for not meeting the SAP requirements, you can file an SAP Appeal. SAP Appeals are reviewed by a committee in Columbus on a case-by-case basis. If you would end up ineligible for financial aid and want to file an appeal, we are more than happy to assist you in that process. Typically, students end up having to pay out of pocket to regain their eligibility, so we would like to avoid any SAP issues, so please consult with financial aid prior to dropping any classes.

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**REMEMBER**

Check your Ohio State email account as well as your BuckeyeLink account on a regular basis.

Office of Student Financial Aid
567-242-7520
lima-financial.aid@osu.edu

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The Ohio State University
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