



2006-2007

## Financial Aid Handbook

# UWM



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN  
**MILWAUKEE**

*Your guide to the Financial Aid Process*



## *Guide to Your Financial Aid Award Letter*

*Congratulations* on your decision to pursue your academic career at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee! The Financial Aid Office is here to help you with the important task of financing your education.

Now that you have completed the application process and have been offered financial assistance, you may have many new questions. We hope that you will find the answers to those questions in this 2006-2007 Financial Aid Handbook.

The following pages will explain in greater detail what steps you may still need to take and how to ensure that the financial aid you are eligible to receive is disbursed in a timely manner. To ensure continued success with the financial aid process, we ask you to carefully read this handbook, as well as your financial aid award letter, which lists your aid eligibility. Review all of the information thoroughly. Notify us of any changes via **ONE** of the following methods (notifying us more than once may cause delays):

- E-mail at [finaid@uwm.edu](mailto:finaid@uwm.edu) -- please include relevant subject line
- In person at Mellencamp Hall, room 162
- Telephone at (414) 229-4541
- The back of your award notice

### **Determining Your Eligibility**

The following equation was used in determining your financial aid eligibility:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Cost of Attendance (COA)} \\ & - \text{Expected Family Contribution (EFC)} \\ & = \text{Financial Need} \end{aligned}$$

The Cost of Attendance (COA) is an estimate of what it will cost for you to attend UWM, including tuition and fees, room and meals (meals only if you are living with a parent,) books and supplies, personal/miscellaneous expenses, and transportation. Please keep in mind that this is an estimate and you should develop your own personal budget/cost of attendance. A worksheet is included with your award letter to help you with this process.

Your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) reflects your (and your family, if you are considered a dependent student) ability to contribute to the cost of attendance. The

calculations used to determine the EFC are based on the federally mandated formula known as federal methodology. The formula uses the information you supplied on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The actual offer of financial aid is based on both your demonstrated financial need as well as the availability of funds. It is not unusual for us to run out of campus-based funds early in the processing cycle. As such, if you filed your FAFSA by the priority filing date of March 1, your file was given maximum consideration for all funds available.

Most financial aid programs require that you have financial need to be eligible to participate. However, there are a few programs that don't require financial need. Students are evaluated for [Grants](#), [Loans](#), and [Student Employment](#). We encourage you to visit these links for more detailed information on the programs that you have been offered.

### ***Eligibility Requirements***

To receive federal, state, or institutional funds administered by UWM's Financial Aid Office, you must:

1. Be admitted to UWM in a degree-granting program or as an eligible [special student](#).
2. Be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen.
3. Be enrolled for a minimum of six credits as an undergraduate (except for Pell Grant consideration), four credits as a graduate student, or three credits as a dissertator.
4. Be meeting the [Academic Progress Standards](#) as defined by the Financial Aid Office. Review the link or the back of the yellow copy of your Award Letter.
5. Establish and maintain eligibility for the programs for which aid is received.
6. Not be receiving federal or state financial aid from another institution for the same enrollment period.
7. Be registered with [Selective Service](#) (male students only).
8. Have a valid Social Security Number.
9. Not be in default on a student loan.
10. Not owe a refund on any federal (Title IV) aid.
11. Not have aid eligibility suspended or terminated due to a drug-related conviction that occurred while receiving Title IV assistance.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

- Students working on a second degree will be evaluated for a Federal Carl D. Perkins Loan, Federal Work-Study funds and Federal Stafford Loans.
- Graduate students will be evaluated for a Federal Carl D. Perkins Loan, Federal Work-Study funds and Federal Stafford Loans.
- Second majors (with prior baccalaureates) are not eligible for grants, loans, or federal work-study—a second degree must be pursued.
- Special Students and non-degree Graduate Students that are eligible for financial aid will only be offered Federal Stafford Loan assistance.

## Understanding Your Award Letter

Your award letter lists all the aid that we have determined you are eligible to receive.

### *Important Details on your Award Letter:*

- If you decide to accept all of the offered aid, and all the information in the letter is correct, you do not have to return a copy to us. We will assume you want all of the funds unless you tell us differently.
- If you are declining or reducing some of your aid and/or have corrected or noted additional information on the back of your award letter, you need to notify our office. Decline the funds you do not want by circling the letter “D” after the total. If you want to reduce the amount of the fund, cross out the total and write the reduced amount next to it. You may drop off the white copy of the award letter in Mellencamp 162, mail it to the address at the top of your award letter, or fax the front and back of your award letter to (414) 229-5699. You may also email the information to us at [finaid@uwm.edu](mailto:finaid@uwm.edu).
- If you were offered a Federal Perkins and/or Nursing Loan for the first time, you will need to complete the [electronic master promissory note \(MPN\)](#) which can be found in the “Online Loan Processes” area of our website. Read the message on the back of your award letter for details.
- If you will be borrowing a Federal Stafford Loan for the first time, you will need to complete the [electronic master promissory note \(MPN\)](#) for this loan type. The “New Borrower” link will direct you first through Entrance Loan Counseling, which must also be completed by first-time borrowers. Read the message on the back of your award letter for details.
- Awards are tentative pending confirmation of fund availability.
- Be sure to review the reverse side of the white copy of your award letter. Complete any of the applicable sections and return the letter to the Financial Aid Office.
- Read all messages that are printed on the back of the award letter.
- Review the back of the yellow copy of your award letter and keep it for your records. It contains an abbreviated version of the [Academic Progress Standards](#) you must meet to remain eligible for financial aid.
- If you are enrolling at UWM for one semester only, but have received an award letter for two semesters of aid, notify our office and your eligibility will be re-evaluated.
- The award letter reflects your eligibility for fall and/or spring semester. If you have not been offered aid for a semester that you will be enrolled, and you believe you are eligible to receive financial aid, please contact us.
- If your status has changed from undergraduate to graduate, notify our office immediately.
- If your status will change during the academic year, notify our office, as your award will need to be revised.
- Your aid will be canceled 30 days after the beginning of the semester if you have not registered for classes, you are in an ineligible status, or you have not completed your promissory note(s).
- Your fall and spring aid will be cancelled if you do not attend the fall semester for a minimum of six credits as an undergraduate or four credits as a graduate student. Please

notify us if you want to be re-evaluated for a spring only award. You will need to notify our office as to whether or not you attended a different college during the fall semester.

### ***Revised Award Letter***

Making revisions to your FAFSA, or receiving assistance from outside sources, may affect the amount, as well as the type(s) of assistance you are eligible to receive. When a revision to any of your aid is required, you will be sent an email notification telling you to check your awards via PAWS. If you wish to decline or reduce a fund on a revised award, you should notify us either in writing, via phone, email, or in-person.

## **PAWS**

PAWS stands for Panther Access to Web Services. Students are encouraged to check their PAWS account often. You should frequently review your TO DO List, which will list various tasks you need to complete. In the Finance section you will find billing information as well as Financial Aid information. You can confirm here if your funds have disbursed. If your funds have not disbursed by the due date, it is your responsibility to find out why in order to avoid finance charges. See additional information in the Disbursement Section of this handbook. At this point in time, you are not able to decline awards online. This is an important enhancement we will be working on. As such, you must still notify us of any adjustments in writing, via phone, email, or in-person.

We stay in touch with you through correspondence in the mail and through email. Please be sure these are both current on PAWS. You should also check your email often—even during the summer months—as we often try to contact you via this method.

## **Credit Level**

Regardless of how you answered the FAFSA, your awards are based on the assumption you will enroll at UWM for either twelve or more credits as an undergraduate student or eight or more credits as a graduate student. The tuition component of your cost of attendance assumed this level of enrollment and your aid will not disburse if our information does not match your enrollment status. This is true regardless of your program of study. If you will enroll for less credits, you must notify us and your awards must be re-evaluated based on a change to your cost of attendance. You should allow two weeks for your file to be reviewed based on a different credit level.

- Please indicate the range of credits you will register for on the bottom of your award notice and return it to us or notify us via email.
- You must be registered for the range you listed in order for your aid to be disbursed. Please notify us if you change the range of credits you are enrolled for before your aid is disbursed.

- You must be enrolled at UWM for a minimum of: six credits as an undergraduate or special student in prerequisite classes, four credits as a graduate student, or three credits for dissertator status to be eligible for any type of financial aid. Exception: A Pell grant may be available for less than six undergraduate credits. Audit credits do not count for financial aid purposes.

## **Federal Work-Study**

This program allows a student to earn money for educational expenses while attending college. If you have been offered work-study, you need to find a job that allows you to earn these funds. For help in locating employment, please go to the Career Development Center web site, [www.uwm.edu/Dept/CDC](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CDC), and click on MonsterTRAK. Follow instructions for locating work-study employment.

If you know that you will not earn the funds offered to you, please notify our office as soon as possible so that we may offer the opportunity to another student. UWM has a limited amount of Federal Work Study available to offer students. If you have not earned any work-study funds within 30 days of the start of the fall semester, your work-study award will be canceled.

Visit the [Student Employment](#) section of our website for additional information and details.

## **Promissory Notes & Loan Issues**

A promissory note is required to borrow a loan. Most Federal loans now have a master promissory note (MPN), which means that once this note has been completed, you should not have to complete a new MPN for future years. (But a renewal FASFA must be completed each year in which you want to be considered for federal student loans.) You will need your Department of Education PIN to electronically sign all promissory notes. [Don't know your PIN?](#)

### ***Perkins and Nursing Loans***

If you have been offered a Perkins or Nursing loan for the first time at UWM, you need to complete an [electronic master promissory note \(MPN\)](#). See the message area on the back of your award letter for additional information on completing the Perkins/Nursing MPN. Details on [Perkins/Nursing programs](#).

### ***Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program***

For the 2006/2007 academic year, UWM will once again partner with Student Loan Xpress as our preferred lender and Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation as the guarantee agency/servicer to provide FFELP loan funds to UWM students and parents.

An active [FFEL master promissory note \(MPN\)](#) is required in order to borrow from the Federal Stafford Loan program. The link above will direct you to the online loan processes. If you are completing a FFEL MPN for the first time, you should then select the “New Borrower” link. This will direct you first through the Entrance Loan Counseling requirement. If you have previously borrowed a Federal Stafford Loan but need to complete a new MPN, you can select “Existing Borrower” which will bypass the Entrance Loan Counseling, which you would have already completed. Details on [Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans](#).

## Additional Resources

Financial aid is provided to help bridge the gap between your resources and the amount needed to pay for the cost of attending college. Financial aid administered by UWM may only be used for educational purposes.

Your financial aid award was calculated especially for you based on your financial need as determined by the FAFSA. However, for some students and their families, the funding offered will not be sufficient to allow them to attend college. If you/your family have special circumstances that you believe should have been taken into consideration—for example an income source is no longer being received or a significant change in income is expected for 2006—you should send a letter detailing these circumstances to our office. We will review your letter and let you know what additional documentation is required and give you an expected timeline on how long the review will take.

In the case where you/your family need additional resources to help pay for college, we refer you to two different loan programs:

***The Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) Program*** will have a fixed interest rate of 8.5% for loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2006. The PLUS is available to parents of Undergraduate students. UWM parents will need to borrow their PLUS funding through the FFEL program. **If the parent borrowed during the 2005/2006 year, although a MPN would be on file, the parent will still need to complete the PLUS application/credit preapproval process.** Eligibility must be determined on an annual basis. All parents wishing to borrow PLUS funds for the first time will need to complete a [FFEL PLUS MPN](#). Select this link and then scroll down to the Parent Loan. Select “Parent Loan,” which is a link that will direct you to the online PLUS application/credit pre-approval and then to the PLUS MPN. To complete the online PLUS application, the parent needs a PIN (personal identification number) issued by the Department of Education. The parent may already have a PIN from filing the FAFSA, but if not should request one online at <http://www.pin.ed.gov>. Select this link for [Additional PLUS Information](#).

***Alternative Loan Programs*** are loans offered by some of the larger financial institutions that have their own loan programs. These are called Alternative Loans. The student is typically the borrower and required to apply with a credit-worthy cosigner. Many lenders have their own alternative loan programs. Click here for [details and online application process](#) using our Preferred Lender list.

## Graduate Students

Graduate student awards are automatically packaged using in-state tuition and assuming enrollment in eight or more credits. If you are a non-resident and are not receiving a non-resident tuition remission, you may contact our office to request a review of your financial aid for a possible revision.

If you are taking less than eight graduate credits for any semester, you must notify our office. Although graduate school may consider your enrollment full-time with six credits if you are receiving a Tuition Assistant (TA) Waiver, our office needs to adjust the tuition component of your cost of attendance based on your actual credit level.

You may only receive financial aid for credits that are required for your graduate degree. You must take a minimum of four graduate level credits to be eligible for graduate level loans. **If you take a three credit graduate level course and a one-credit sport and recreation course to bring your enrollment up to the required four credit minimum, you will not qualify unless the one-credit course is required for your degree.**

Tuition remission/waivers affect the need-based aid in your package. If you are receiving a tuition remission/waiver, fellowship, or research assistantship from the university, and it does not appear on your offer letter, please notify our office immediately. Your financial aid eligibility will need to be adjusted. For example, if your tuition will be paid-in-full with a tuition waiver, you may only receive financial aid for your living expenses—review the insert with your Award Letter for our estimated cost of attendance.

***New PLUS Loan Program for Graduate Students***—Effective July 1, 2006, graduate students will be able to borrow under the PLUS program. Graduate students are encouraged to consider this program instead of borrowing an alternative loan. PLUS Loans disbursed after July 1, 2006 will have a fixed interest rate of 8.5%. Because this is a federal loan, you will be able to consolidate this loan with your other federal loans. This loan does require that the borrower be able to pass a credit check. If you are interested in this program, please check our website for details after May 1, 2006.

## ***Non-Degree Grads and Special Students***

Students in these classifications are not generally eligible for financial aid. Exceptions can be made for those enrolled in eligible certification programs or those taking prerequisite courses for admission to a UWM degree or certification program. In those cases, students must document eligibility on a Special Student Enrollment Verification form. If you are a non-degree or Special Student and have not submitted the verification form, please submit the [Special Student Verification Form](#) to our office immediately

## Students Rights and Responsibilities

As a financial aid recipient you have rights as well as responsibilities. A complete list of these can be viewed on our website, [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

### Disbursement

Prior to the tuition due date, you will receive a tuition statement that will not reflect your financial aid. However, if you have completed the financial aid process, as well as all steps necessary to finalize your file (see A—D below), your aid will be applied to your tuition by the due date. Payment of your financial aid will first be applied to current tuition charges on your account. To have your aid applied to your tuition balance the week before classes start you must:

- A. Be registered for classes.
- B. Have notified us if you are registered for less than twelve credits as an undergraduate or less than eight credits as a graduate student.
- C. Have completed the [Entrance Loan Counseling and FFEL Master Promissory Note \(MPN\)](#) if you are borrowing a Stafford Loan for the first time. The loan counseling is a tutorial and a quiz done online, followed by the MPN which is the actual loan application.
- D. Completed all other necessary paperwork (including promissory notes), and have a correct address on PAWS.

You may or may not have been offered enough financial assistance to pay for your tuition plus other educational expenses. If you have been awarded aid in excess of tuition, an excess cash check will be mailed to you from the Bursar's Office. To determine whether you will receive an excess cash check or if you will have a balance due, use the worksheet found on the back of the Estimated Cost of Attendance form. You are encouraged to do this as early as possible.

- 1. If your balance is negative, you will need to make that payment to the Bursar's Office by the tuition due date to avoid any finance charges. You can review payment plans and sign up for the installment plan on the [Bursar's Office website](#).
- 2. If the balance is positive, the remaining balance is what you have available to use for housing, books, food and other costs of attendance during the semester.
- 3. You may not receive all of your funding at one time. This will depend on the funding source.

4. The earliest you will receive your excess cash check will be the weekend before the first week of classes. If you wish to purchase books before this, you will need to purchase them using your own funds and reimburse yourself if you have excess financial aid.
5. Checks are mailed from the Bursar's Office approximately three days after the funds have been posted to your account.
6. You should review your financial aid disbursement status and your tuition account status on PAWS on a regular basis.

### ***Census Date***

Federal regulations allow us to disburse your aid up to ten days before classes begin. If your aid is disbursed before classes begin, your registration will be confirmed again on the first day of classes to make sure you began each of the classes for which you received financial assistance. If you did not start all classes, your aid may be adjusted. Your registration will also be reviewed on the tenth day of classes each semester. If you receive a Federal Pell Grant, this award amount will be based on the number of credits you are registered for on the tenth (census) day of classes. Your Pell Grant award will be increased or decreased based on this credit level. For example: You were registered for twelve credits on the first day of classes and received a \$2,000 Pell Grant. By the tenth day of classes you had dropped two classes and were registered for six credits. Enrollment in six credits is considered half-time attendance so half of your Pell Grant would be canceled and returned to the Department of Education.

### ***Housing Payment***

The earliest day that financial aid funds can be disbursed is ten days before the start of the semester. Funds will not be disbursed in time to make any housing payments that are due before then. If you will reside in Sandburg Hall and have been offered enough financial aid to cover your tuition as well as your housing, you should sign an agreement with University Housing to have your excess cash disbursed to them when it does become available.

### ***Common Causes for Delay in the Disbursement of Financial Aid***

To avoid any delays in the disbursement of your aid, make sure you have done all of the following, preferably no later than August 1<sup>st</sup>:

- If you are not registered for the semester as an undergraduate taking twelve or more credits or a graduate student taking eight or more credits, notify our office as to the number of credits you plan on taking. If you are waiting to see if you can add a class, your aid should disburse within 5 days of your adding the class (assuming this is after

- August 25). Do not request that your financial aid be adjusted based on part-time enrollment unless you want it disbursed based on part-time enrollment.
- If you are borrowing a Stafford Loan for the first time, make sure you have completed [Entrance Counseling and the FFEL MPN](#) online by selecting the “New Borrower” link through the “Online Loan Processes” section on our website.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

Academic progress will be monitored using the credit level you were registered for when your financial aid was disbursed. If you drop classes, it could affect your academic progress, which would also affect your eligibility to receive financial aid. Please read the reverse side of your yellow award notice for an abbreviated version of our academic progress standards. You should also view a detailed copy of the [Academic Progress Standards](#) via this link for additional information on how many semesters you may receive aid as well as how to regain eligibility.

### *Dropping Classes*

If you choose to drop classes, please refer to the [Bursar's website](#) or the current schedule of classes for the University’s refund policy. Your tuition refund will be claimed if:

- You drop below half-time enrollment.
- You have been over-awarded or placed in a repayment status due to withdrawal.
- You were awarded as a nonresident and you have been granted residency status.
- You receive a tuition remission, DVR, Veteran’s Benefits, or other funding that was not included in your financial aid notice.

### *Withdrawal from UWM While Receiving Financial Aid*

Withdrawing from classes does affect academic progress. The first time a student fails to complete the minimum number of credits required to maintain progress, they are put in financial aid advisory/warning status. A student is eligible to receive aid while in advisory status, but a second occurrence would make them ineligible for aid.

If you complete at least 60% of the semester, you will have earned 100% of your aid. If you withdraw before this date, we will determine what percentage of aid you earned. Federal regulations require that your aid eligibility be recalculated if you withdraw, are dismissed, or take a leave of absence prior to completing 60% of the semester. The recalculation is based on the equation:

$$\text{Aid for session} - \text{earned aid} = \text{unearned aid}$$

Recalculation is based on the percentage of earned aid using the following formula:

$$\text{(Completed Days / Total Days)} = \text{Percentage of Aid Earned}$$

Unearned aid is returned to the funding source. When unearned aid for institutional costs is returned to the funding source, you may incur a tuition, housing or food service balance with the university. If you need to repay unearned aid for non-institutional costs, our office will contact you.

Aid is returned to the funding source based on the percent of unearned aid using the following formula:

$$\text{(100\% of aid - percent earned)} = \text{Percent of unearned aid.}$$

$$\text{(The percent of unearned aid) x (institutional costs)} = \text{Amount of aid paid to the institution that must be returned to the funding source.}$$

The balance of the unearned aid is used to determine if any funds need to be returned for non-institutional costs.

$$\text{(Unearned aid - return of institutional costs)} = \text{balance of unearned aid for non-institutional costs.}$$

All money returned to the funding source will be returned in the following order:

1. Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
2. Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
3. Federal Perkins Loan
4. Federal PLUS
5. Federal Pell Grant
6. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
7. Talent Incentive Program (TIP) Grant
8. Other Title IV Aid Programs
9. Other Federal, State, Private, or Institutional Aid.

Any amounts attributed to your loans will be repaid in accordance with the terms of your promissory note.

Amounts to be returned to grants are reduced by 50%.

If you need to repay money for non-institutional costs, our office will contact you. A monthly payment plan is available if you cannot pay in full at the time you are billed.

If the Fiscal Manager does not hear from you within 45 days, we are obligated to send your outstanding balance to the federal government for collection.

A hold will be placed on your records until the repayment has been made in full. This hold will prevent you from obtaining an academic transcript.

You will not be allowed to register at UWM or receive additional aid until you have made the repayment in full or are current with your payments on a payment plan.

The federal refund formula is rather confusing. If you need to withdraw from all of your classes, you are encouraged to speak to a financial aid advisor before doing so for information on how it may affect your financial aid and your Academic Progress.

## Contacting Us

If you have any questions or need additional help, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help you. Office hours are 8 am to 6 pm on Mondays and 8 am to 4:30 pm Tuesday through Friday. You may be able to get some of your questions answered simply by listening to the following options when calling our main number, (414) 229-4541:

- Option 1      General Information
- Option 2      To request a paper promissory note
- Option 3      Information on Financial Aid Disbursement
- Option 4      Transfer to Bursar's Office
- Option 5      Information on PLUS, Alternative Loans, and Loan Counseling
- Option 6      Will connect you to a staff member. Your call will be answered in the order received, as quickly as possible. However, during peak processing/awarding periods, you may encounter longer wait times than we would like. We apologize for that and encourage you to contact us via email if you are unable to get through on the telephone.

On occasion, we have limited advising hours. We encourage you to call or check updates on our webpage before your visit. You may also find answers to your questions in other sections of our web site at <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/FINAID>. Another publication you may find helpful is our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section.