

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY



Office of Financial Aid Policies and Procedures Manual

College Code: 001005

Last update March 13, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Federal regulations mandate that institutions have written policies and procedures. The purpose of the Policies and Procedures manual is for the purpose of informing and fostering an understanding of the complexity and operation of the Office of Financial Aid. This manual will be used by staff as a referral guide to assist in maintaining consistency in the problem-solving process, a clear understanding of policy, authority, and responsibility in matters relating to operational and as an important component of a comprehensive training program.

COVID 19 UPDATE

The Department of Education recognizes that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created many unique challenges for postsecondary institutions. The Department has provided a variety of special guidance and regulatory flexibilities due to the President's declaration of the COVID-19 national emergency on March 13, 2020. In addition, Congress has passed legislation offering relief from certain statutory requirements related to the Title IV, HEA programs. Generally speaking, the COVID-19 flexibilities and waivers remain in effect until the COVID-19 national emergency is declared over.

ASU OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Financial Aid strives to provide its students with high quality customer service. We strive to provide financial services to students and their families and encourage each member of a diverse student body to achieve his or her financial obligations and educational goals to the University. We will challenge students to seek the best in themselves, while we expect the best of ourselves. This service is a joint venture among students, their families and the Office of Financial Aid.

PHILOSOPHY

Alabama State University Office of Financial Aid is committed to providing the highest level of service to its students and their families. We believe that the foundation of our service to students is grounded in the adherence to strict ethical and professional standards. It is our objective to administer the various financial aid programs in accordance with all governmental regulations and Alabama State University policies and procedures.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Alabama State University is a participant in the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. Direct Loans are low-interest loans for students and parents to help pay for the cost of a student's education. The lender is the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) rather than a bank or other financial institution. Though the majority of aid recipients receive loans through the federal programs, private (also called alternative) student loans can be a valuable tool in meeting your educational goals. In processing private student loans, the Financial Aid Office adheres to the following principles:

1. No fee or material benefits are received from lenders in exchange for the promotion or processing of its loans.
2. No employee of the financial aid office may receive gifts from a lender, guaranty agency or loan servicer.
3. No employee of the financial aid office may enter into a contracting arrangement with a lender or affiliate that provides a fee, payment, or compensation for any type of consulting arrangement or contract to provide services to or on behalf of a lender relating to education loans.
4. The financial aid office will not refuse to certify, or delay certification of any private education loan based on the borrower's selection of a particular lender or guaranty agency.
5. The financial aid office does not request or accept any staffing assistance from lenders.
6. Financial aid employees are prohibited from receiving advisory board compensation, excepting reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred.

All terms and their usage are as defined in Section 493 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of August 14, 2008.

UPDATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Updated policies and procedures for all programs are communicated through the Financial Aid sections of the university website. New policies or changes will also be communicated through emails made directly to students, faculty, and/or staff. All policies are subject to change as seen fit by the governing entity by which each individual policy is derived.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID UPDATES

The Office of Financial Aid staff keeps abreast of federal regulations through a variety of resources. This includes the Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook, Dear Colleague Letters, NASFAA newsletters, the IFAP website, online webinars and monthly meetings led by the Director of Financial Aid.

The following operating policies are designed to assume that the Office of Financial Aid is effective in carrying out its responsibilities:

1. Students must complete a FAFSA at studentaid.gov (School Code 001005). All students seeking federal student aid must submit the FAFSA to Alabama State University.
2. All financial assistance available to ASU students shall be administered through the ASU Office of Financial Aid.
4. The Office of Financial Aid shall maintain adequate records to ensure proper administration of aid funds. This includes ensuring that aid given is not in excess of need and/or the cost of attendance and that aggregate awards do not exceed total expenditures of funds under each program.
5. Selection of students to receive financial aid will be made without regard to ***age, sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or marital status.***

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

Dr. K. Michael Francois

Associate Vice President of Student Affairs/Director of Financial Aid

kfrancois@alasu.edu

Mrs. Michelle Parks

Associate Director/ Financial Aid Student Affairs

miparks@alasu.edu

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

Associate Vice President Student Affairs/Director of Financial Aid

Associate Director/ - Financial Aid Systems

Data Analyst

Assistant Director of Operations

Assistant Director of Customer Service

Default Prevention/ Financial Literacy Manager

Work-Study Coordinator

Scholarship Coordinator

Loan Coordinator

Financial Aid Counselor (4)

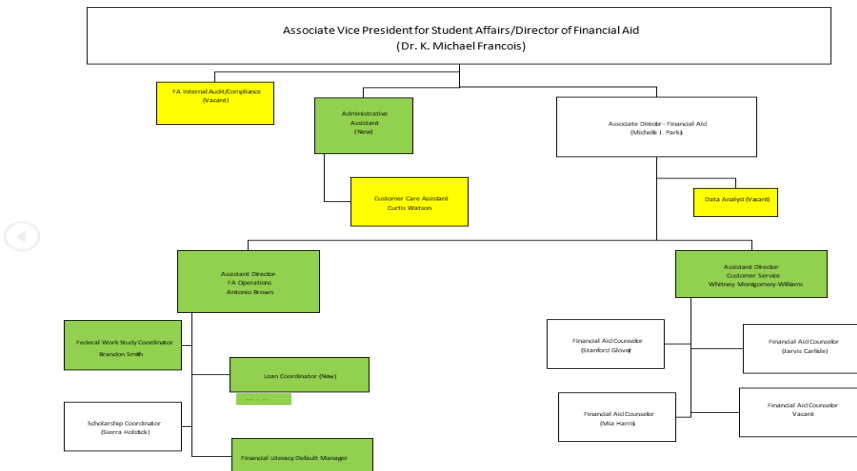
Administrative Secretary to the Director of Financial Aid

Customer Care Assistant

***Job Descriptions are available in the Office of Human Resources.**

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Office of Financial Aid - Proposed Organizational Chart - Alabama State University



OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID OPERATIONS

The ASU Office of Financial Aid is in the J. Garrick Hardy Student Center Suite C2.48. The Office of Financial Aid is open and available to service student Monday through Friday 8:00am-5:00pm Parents and students can reach the office by via email or phone at 334-229-4862 or finaid@alasu.edu. General financial aid forms are available within the Financial Aid section of the Alabama State University [Financial Aid Forms | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#). Emails are responded to within 24-48 hours. Every attempt is made to return calls the same business day, and no later than the next business day. Telephone calls are answered in a friendly and professional manner. Typically, each staff member answers his or her own incoming calls and emails. Students are ***not required*** to make appointments to meet with Financial Aid Staff. If a staff member is responding to a specific complaint, it is typical procedure for the staff member to have the Assistant/Associate Directors overview the correspondence. This allows the Directors to be aware of potential problems.

Office Address:

Alabama State University

Office of Financial Aid

PO Box 271

Montgomery, AL 36101-0271

Phone Number: (334) 334-4862

Fax: (334) 229-4924

Website: [Financial Aid | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#)

Office hours: Monday - Friday, 8AM-5PM

STAFF MEETINGS

Office of Financial aid staff meetings are held weekly on Thursdays and when needed as determined by the Director.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE

A student must complete and submit a written Authorization for the Release of Information form authorizing the release of information to any person or agency.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN FINANCIAL AID AND FISCAL OFFICES

There exists a clear and separate division of responsibility for the administration of financial aid programs which are divided between the OFA and the Bursar/Cashier's Office. In order to maintain this division, each office is accountable for the following responsibilities.

The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for the following:

- Collect supporting documentation for the determination of aid eligibility
- Determine student eligibility for financial assistance
- Award federal aid in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies
- Notify students of aid eligibility (loans and scholarships/grants)
- Assist students with creating personal student budgets
- Federal checklist completion
- Collecting documents to completed FAFSA verification
- Assist students with sponsored/external scholarship payments and private loan certification
- Administer the Title IV program
- Compile and complete financial aid institutional, state and federal reports including FISAP
- Prepare a master list of scholarships awarded for the current year and update as appropriate Fund Management (Scholarships and Endowments)
- Reconciliation

The ASU Bursar's office is responsible for the following:

- Maintain and disburse accurate accounts
- Collect payments for student's accounts
- Disburse funds to students
- Report outside scholarships received to the FAO
- Compile and complete financial aid institutional, state and federal reports including FISAP Fund Management (Scholarships and Endowments)
- Reconciliation

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Financial aid documentation is kept in hard copy files securely in the Office of Financial Aid. FAFSA's are stored electronically in PeopleSoft. PeopleSoft checklists are utilized to track receipt of financial aid application materials. Students are notified of required documents via email. All records and conversations between an aid applicant, his/her family and the staff of the OFA are confidential and entitled to the protection ordinarily given a counseling relationship. ASU assures the confidentiality of student educational records in accordance with institutional,

state, and federal laws including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. The Office of Financial Aid maintains a file folder of records for each student receiving financial assistance. All financial aid folders are retained for five years after submission. Any records involved in any claim or expenditure which has been questioned by federal audit are retained until the question is resolved. The OFA keeps inactive records of graduated students for five years. Records retention for loans are kept on file for five years. After this time period Financial Aid Office records are now shredded. Files are kept in a secured file room located in the office.

STUDENT CONSUMER INFORMATION

The Office of Financial Aid recognizes that to understand the complications of Financial Aid, accurate and timely dissemination of information to consumers is vital. Several policies have been implemented to ensure appropriate dissemination is achieved. The consumer information policies are developed and maintained by the Alabama State University Office of Financial Aid. For more information, please visit: [Consumer Information | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/consumer-information)

Additional resources and links:

www.studentaid.gov

<https://nsls.ed.gov/>

[Internal Revenue Service | An official website of the United States government \(irs.gov\)](https://www.irs.gov/)'

[Scholarships.com Free College Scholarships Search for High School and College Students 2022-2023](https://www.scholarships.com/free-college-scholarships-search-for-high-school-and-college-students-2022-2023/)
[Financial Aid Grants Scholarships for College Find and Apply Online for Free](https://www.tmcfaid.org/)

www.tmcfaid.org

www.uncf.org

FERPA – Family Education Rights and Privacy Act- [Privacy Act \(FERPA\) | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/ferpa)

Financial Aid Policies and Procedures-

Financial Aid Forms- [Financial Aid Forms | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/financial-aid-forms)

Cost of Attendance- [2022-2023 Cost of Attendance.pdf \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/cost-of-attendance)

Net Price Calculator- [Net Price Calculator | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/net-price-calculator)

Financial Literacy- [Financial Literacy | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/financial-literacy)

Refund Policy- [Credit Balance Release | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/credit-balance-release)

Official Catalog- [Academic Catalogs | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/academic-catalogs)

Please refer to the current term's academic calendar for corresponding dates for each percentage withdrawal. [Academic Calendar | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#)

INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY

The Office of Financial Aid participates in financial aid programs funded through a variety of sources. Types of assistance include scholarships, grants, loans, and work opportunities. Grants are based on financial need. Scholarships and grants are gift awards, which generally do not have to be repaid. Scholarships may be merit or need based. Work programs provide on-campus and off-campus employment with hourly pay meeting \$10 hr. (on campus) and 12 hr. (Off Campus). The type of aid awarded depends upon the student's financial need and is generally a combination of gift and self-help assistance. Alabama State University has been authorized by the United States Secretary of Education to participate in financial aid programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended. The programs listed below are those in which Alabama State University bears some responsibility in administering. The Program Participation Agreement between Alabama State University and the Department of Education entitles the Financial Aid Office to participate in the following federal programs:

- *Federal Pell Grant Program.*
- *Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program*
- *Federal Work Study Program*
- *TEACH Grant*
- *Federal Direct Loan Program –Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loan*

Individual donors also provide numerous Donor Trust scholarships. The link to the Donor Trust Scholarships is below: [Donor Trust Scholarships | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#)

Unique circumstances often qualify students for financial aid from a special agency or group. Awards from other sources are used in computing the total aid package for students. Those agencies also include but are not limited to Veterans' Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation, civic organizations and churches.

FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Federal Pell Grant

The Federal Pell Grant is the foundation of all need based undergraduate financial aid. It is determined by filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Schools use the information on the FAFSA[®] form to determine your eligibility for a Pell Grant. The US Department of Education will use the parent's income date to determine student Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Recipients of this grant are selected by the Department of Education and are awarded through the Office of Financial Aid.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

FSEOG is awarded to those students who will receive the Federal Pell Grant, and has a zero EFC (Estimated Family Contribution) as indicated on the Student Aid Report (SAR) to be given top priority. Students must be enrolled at least half time. Based on the amount allocated by the Department of Education, up to \$1,000 per academic year will be awarded to eligible students. The award amount will be determined by the Director of Financial Aid and distributed until the funds are exhausted. Awarding of SEOG is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program The Federal TEACH Grant provides funds for students pursuing a degree in specific education programs. The program provides grant funds for postsecondary students who are completing coursework in a federally designated critical-need area of education and agree to serve for at least four-years as a full-time, highly qualified teacher in a low-income school. Eligible students may receive up to \$4,000 per year in TEACH Grant funds. Students must complete one four-year service obligation for all TEACH Grants you receive for undergraduate study, and one four-year service obligation for all TEACH Grants you receive for graduate study. Failure to complete the four-year service agreement will result in the grant being converted to a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan that you must repay in full, with interest accruing from the time of disbursement.

To receive a TEACH Grant, students must meet the following criteria:

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must have been filed for the application year.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements.
- Receive TEACH Grant counseling that explains the terms and conditions of the TEACH Grant service obligation. You must complete counseling each year that you receive a TEACH Grant.
- Sign a *TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve or Repay*.

If an Undergraduate Student (2nd undergraduate students ARE NOT eligible):

- Be enrolled in the College of Education in an eligible TEACH Grant major.
- A final high school GPA of 3.25 for new first year students or a cumulative ASU GPA of 3.25 for continuing students.
- Teacher candidacy in an eligible ASU major. Contact the Advising Office in the College of Education for eligible majors.
- Maintain a cumulative ASU GPA of at least a 3.25
- **Eligible ASU Undergraduate Majors:**
- Special Education: K-6 Teacher Education, Collaborative Teacher Education 6-12
- Secondary Education 6-12 (with a double major in Education and Arts & Sciences); Biology, Chemistry, *English Language Arts, General Science, Mathematics, Physics

If a Graduate Student (NOT eligible if received TEACH for previous degrees in the same teaching field):

Be enrolled in the College of Education in an eligible TEACH Grant major.

An overall undergraduate GPA of at least 3.25 documented on the transcript at the time of graduation for new graduate students or a cumulative ASU graduate GPA of 3.25 for continuing graduate students:

Maintain a cumulative ASU graduate GPA of at least a 3.25.

Eligible ASU Graduate Majors:

English for Speakers of Other Language

Reading Specialist (Ed.S. Only)

Special Education: Collaborative Education K-6, Collaborative Education 6-12

Secondary Education 6-12: *English Language Arts, Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish), General Science, and Mathematics

(*): 2019-2020 Eligible. TEACH Grant for this major is dependent upon official Alabama teacher shortage areas for award year.

Subsidized Loans- *Direct Subsidized Loan* are available to undergraduate students **ONLY** with ***financial need***. The U.S. Department of Education pays the interest on a Direct Subsidized Loan

- while you're in school at least half-time,
- for the first six months after you leave school (referred to as a grace period*)
- During a period of deferment (a postponement of loan payments).

Unsubsidized Loan- *Direct Unsubsidized Loan* are available to ***undergraduate and graduate students***. There is no requirement to demonstrate financial need. You are responsible for paying the interest on a Direct Unsubsidized Loan during all periods. If you chose not to pay the interest while you are in school and during grace periods and deferment or forbearance periods, your interest will accumulate and be capitalized.

The amount of loans a student can receive is based on their grade level.

- ***1st Year Freshman [1-31 Hours] Subsidized - 3,500 Unsubsidized - 2,000***
- ***2nd Year Sophomore [32 - 62 Hours] Subsidized - 4,500 Unsubsidized – 2,000***
- ***3rd & 4th Year [63- 120 Hours] Subsidized- 5,500 Unsubsidized – 2,000***
- ***5th Year [121- 180 Hours] Subsidized- 5,500 Unsubsidized - 2,000***

If a parent is denied a Parent plus Loan, they can receive additional unsubsidized loan.

*Freshmen and sophomores will have received additional unsubsidized in the amount of \$4000 for the year. Juniors and seniors will receive an additional unsubsidized loan in the amount of \$5000 for the year. **Students must be at least half-time (6 Hrs.) to receive loans.***

- **Graduate Students \$20,500 Unsubsidized loan**

Federal Work Study (FWS)

The Federal Work Study (FWS) Program is a federally funded part-time employment program used to assist students in meeting their financial obligations to the University and to encourage community service involvement. The Federal Work Study Program is intended to off-set the costs of the student's education. It is awarded to students who have completed their FAFSA's first until funds are exhausted. Award amounts are determined by the Director of Financial Aid. Students may work a maximum of 20 hours per week under the Federal Work Study Program. If your offer of financial assistance includes employment under the Federal Work Study Program, it must be understood that the amount of money you may expect to earn during the academic year because of work performed. Students may range from \$10.00 to \$12.00 per hour. Paychecks are available around the second week of the month for work performed during the prior month. As part of federal work study requirements, we are required that a percentage of our budget for work study students be used in a community service aspect within the community by placing our students at off-campus locations that are designated as FWS Community Service sites. Some of the duties for our work study students would include tutoring, student mentoring, crime and safety prevention, literacy training, student development, family support, reading programs, after school care programs, office administrative duties, and other areas of community service that lead to community involvement and improvement. The Office of Financial Aid will host a Work Study Mixer in the fall semester for students who are interested in work-study. Students will have the opportunity to meet various department and participate in on site interviews. *The work-study mixer is mandatory.* Students will be notified about the mixer via email 1 week prior.

STATE RESOURCES

Alabama Student Assistance Grant (ASAP)

Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP) is a need-based, state grant per academic year. Eligible students are undergraduate students who are *Alabama residents* attending eligible Alabama institutions. It is awarded to students on first come, first serve bases. Students must be enrolled at least half time. Based on the amount allocated by the Department of Education, up to \$600 per academic year will be awarded to eligible students. Students will need to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the federal government. This form should be filed beginning October 1 each year and is available at studentaid.gov.

Alabama National Guard Educational Assistance Program (ANGEAP) Alabama National Guard Educational Assistance Program (ANGEAP) is an award to be used for tuition and educational fees for Alabama National Guard members to attend a public postsecondary educational institution in Alabama. The award is based on financial need. This award is for students who are active members in good standing with a federally-recognized unit of the Alabama National Guard. Participants also may receive federal veteran's benefits, but must show a cost less aid amount of at least \$100. Applications are available from Alabama National Guard units, Office of Financial Aid, and also can be found at www.ache.edu. Funds are limited, so students who are Guard members are encouraged to apply early. Forms must be signed by a representative of the

Alabama Military Department and the financial aid officer at the college or university the student plans to attend.

Annual Loan Limits

The amount of money you can borrow in federal student loans depends on the loan type and your student status (undergraduate or graduate). For Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans, there are limits on the amount you can borrow each academic year (annual loan limits) and the total amounts you can borrow for undergraduate and graduate study (aggregate loan limits).

****Only \$23,000 can be subsidized loans.**

	Dependent Undergraduate	Independent Undergraduate	Graduate or Professional
Aggregate Limits	\$31,000	\$57,500	\$138,500

You could reach the maximum borrowing amount before you've finished your program. If that happens, you'll have to find other financing options to pay for school. If you would like to check your aggregate limit, click the link for more details. [FSA ID | Your Account for Federal Student Aid](#) You will use your FSA ID and password to log in and view your status.

INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Alabama State University Director of Financial Aid works with the Director of Admissions and Recruitment in administering policies related to merit scholarships awarded in the ASU Letter of Admission. The Financial Aid office works in conjunction with the Business Office, the Admissions Office, the Student Services Offices, to develop policies and procedures related to institutional scholarship awarding. The Vice President of Business and Finance and the Director of Admissions have oversight of all financial aid policies and procedures to ensure they are aligned with the school's mission. The selection of students to receive certain designated scholarships shall be submitted by the Department to the Office of Financial Aid for processing. Merit scholarship inquiries should be made to the Director of Admissions and Recruitment. Academic scholarships are awarded prior to the student's first semester and carried throughout the student's career at Alabama State University. Students must maintain GPA requirements based upon the scholarships awarded. These scholarships must be applied toward tuition. There is no appeal process if a student loses his Academic Scholarship. Academic scholarships are opening to high school senior.

Academic Incentive

Academic Excellence

Presidential/Diversity Presidential Scholarship

The Promise

Black & Gold

Donor Trust Scholarships - [Donor Trust Scholarships | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#)

Link to Academic Scholarships- [ASU Academic Scholarships | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#)

DEPARTMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Department Scholarships are submitted from various departments located on campus. In order to process department scholarships, the department will need to submit a scholarship recommendation form to the budget office for budget approval. Once the budget office signs the recommendation form, the department will need to send the form to the financial aid office for processing. Each department have the authority to make their own departmental scholarship awards every semester. Department head MUST sign off on the scholarship recommendation form. No signature, NO AWARD. Students cannot receive refunds from any Institutional Scholarship.

PRIVATE/ OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from outside resources. It is required that all outside assistance be reported to the Office of Financial Aid. Student aid including outside resources, may not exceed the student's cost of attendance. Therefore, if a student has been awarded funds by the aid office and receives an outside award, an adjustment to the original award letter may be necessary. If an adjustment is necessary, the outside aid will replace self-help aid if possible.

Private/ Outside scholarships can be sent to:

Alabama State University
Office of Financial Aid
PO Box 271
Montgomery, AL 36101-0271

TITLE IV STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to receive Federal assistance, a student must:

- *demonstrate financial need for need-based federal student aid programs;*
- *be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen;*

- *have a valid Social Security number (with the exception of students from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau);*
- *be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student in an eligible degree or certificate program;*
- *be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible for Direct Loan Program funds;*
- *maintain satisfactory academic progress in college or career school;*
- *sign the certification statement on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form stating that you're not in default on a federal student loan, you do not owe money on a federal student grant, and you'll only use federal student aid for educational purposes; and*
- *Show you're qualified to obtain a college or career school education.*

Additional eligibility requirements can apply in certain situations including for non-U.S. citizens, students with criminal convictions, and students with intellectual disabilities.

PROOF OF INDEPENDENCE

Based on the results of their FAFSA, a student may also be asked to submit proof of their independence.

For the **2022–23** award year, an independent student is one of the following:

- Proof that you were born before Jan. 1, 1999
- Proof that you are married
- Proof that you are a graduate or professional student
- Proof that you are a veteran
- Proof that you are a member of the armed forces
- Proof that you are an orphan
- Proof that you are a ward of the court
- Proof that you are someone with legal dependents other than a spouse
- Proof that you are an emancipated minor
- Proof that you are someone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

DEPENDENCY OVERRIDES

We will consider documented extreme circumstances only. Once documentation is submitted, we will review the information and reprocess the FAFSA and the financial aid package to reflect the student's independence. This information will be kept confidential in the student's file. We WILL NOT process a dependency override for any of the following reasons:

- Parents' refusal to contribute, parent's unwillingness to file the FAFSA,
- A parent not claiming the student on their tax return, or a student who can demonstrate full self-sufficiency.

UPDATING DEPENDENCY STATUS

The Office of Financial Aid can update a student's dependency status and the associated FAFSA information during the award year. Documentation must be submitted to support the change in status. If the change pertains to marital status, it will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For students who are Dependent, and the subsequent change will make them an Independent student, then the Office of Financial Aid will proceed with making the change if it's in the student's best interest.

PROCESSING STUDENT AID REPORTS

Student information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the processed results, the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) containing the official EFC are imported on a bi-weekly basis. Correction of a data element requested by students or required because of verification or other review, is processed at FAA Access to CPS Online for reprocessing. Within seventy-two hours, a new official EFC is delivered back to the Office of Financial Aid and an award, if eligible is made.

STUDENT BUDGETS

Student Budgets are an integral component in the financial aid process. Standard student budgets reflecting the average student population cost of attendance at a modest, but adequate standard of living are used to award financial aid. The Director of Financial Aid collects information to prepare standard costs on an annual basis. All costs are based on limitations to the amounts and other criteria set forth in the federal regulations. All indirect costs began with surveys to determine the average amount spent by students on various categories of expenses.

BUDGET COMPONENTS

The Director of Financial Aid collects information on an annual basis to prepare standard budgets by academic career and residency status. The budget components are as follows:

Tuition and Fees

Tuition rates are approved by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis in late June. Tuition and fees information is available on the ASU Financial Aid Website under the Cost of Attendance link.

Books and Supplies

Reflects an average book/supply allowance determined by the College Board Trends in Higher Education

Food and Housing/Living Expenses

Food and Housing (living with parents or off-campus) or (living on- campus) based off actual university costs.

Transportation

Transportation expenses include transportation between campus residences and a student's place of work. The costs consist of an average costs for car insurance, maintenance, and gasoline and bus fares.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Miscellaneous expenses include costs for clothing, toiletries, recreational, and other personal expenses. This amount is used for all Alabama State University undergraduate and graduate student budgets.

****Special Budget Considerations***

Upon requests, the Director of Financial Aid may review, and if appropriate, adjust a student's budget. Students must submit supporting documentation.

Examples of changes to standard budgets include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Child care** - the cost of day care with dependent children may be added to a standard budget with appropriate dollar specific documentation. Allowance is for costs incurred by the student during the months of enrollment in the aid year ONLY.
- 2. Special needs** - disabled students or students with special problems may be allocated funds to cover reasonable costs associated with disabilities or problems that are not already covered by other resources.

VERIFICATION

Verification is the process of confirming the accuracy of student reported data on financial aid applications. 30% of students are selected for verification at random. Students are notified that they are selected for verification on the FAFSA Student Aid Report (SAR). In addition, the student is notified via email that he/she has been selected for verification.

The Office of Financial Aid verifies only those applicants identified by the Department of Education (DOE) or if there is a discrepancy or a condition which is unusual and warrants investigation. ASU systematically verified only those data elements required by the federal government. However, the Director of Financial Aid will request additional information from the student to resolve the discrepancy. ISIR files are loaded in March. Upon receipt of the electronic ISIR, a Document Tracking Letter is automatically generated for any student who is selected for verification according to the federal selection criteria. For students selected for verification, an automated process assigns a PeopleSoft checklist and email communication is sent to the student. This email informs the student of additional information, which is **required** to complete the financial aid application (verification form, student and parent tax transcripts/signed tax return, etc.). If student and/or parent use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA and tax data is transferred onto the FAFSA, no Tax Transcript is needed. A reminder email is sent to the student in April of the specific items needed and to let the student know the information must be *submitted electronically*. Tentative award letters are processed in May. Because the Office of

Financial Aid is liable for disbursements made prior to verification, it is the policy of the office not to award nor disburse funds until verification is complete. **Verification documents must be submitted to the Office of Financial Aid no later than August 1st of each year so that students can be awarded before the fall semester. Students must complete the verification process before aid is disbursed.**

****No federal student aid can be offered until acceptable verification documents are submitted and processed.**

Incarcerated students- *Incarcerated students will only be required to verify their Identity and Statement of education purpose. They will only be required to verify their identity and submit a statement of educational purpose.*

VERIFICATION EXCLUSIONS

In the circumstances below, student verification is not required. The Director of Financial Aid documents the specific reason within PeopleSoft if any of the following applies:

1. An applicant who died during the award year
2. A student who does not receive Title IV funds
3. Student was selected for verification after ceasing to be enrolled at the school and after all Title IV aid has disbursed.

Counselors must identify and document in the aid folder why the student is not required to complete verification.

Adjusted Gross Income and Taxes Paid

The adjusted gross income, federal taxes paid, and most untaxed income is verified through IRS Data Retrieval, which imports tax information from the IRS directly to the FAFSA. This may be completed during the initial FAFSA filing or as a FAFSA correction. If a student and/or parent cannot or will not use IRS Data Retrieval, s/he must provide an IRS tax transcript for the student, spouse, and/or parents, if applicable. If a student or parent did not file a tax return, s/he must submit all W-2's as well as a signed verification worksheet listing any income for which a W-2 was not received.

Household Size

Household size is verified by comparing the Verification Worksheet to federal data. Discrepancies must be corrected before further processing.

Number in Postsecondary Institutions

Number of family members enrolled at least half-time in postsecondary institutions is verified by comparing the Verification Worksheet to federal data. Discrepancies must be corrected before further processing. Parents of dependent students enrolled in at least half-time in a postsecondary institution, must be excluded from the overall number.

Child Support

If a student or spouse (if applicable) or parent indicated receipt of child support, the student must provide this information as part of the signed Verification worksheet.

Family size

Number of family members enrolled in a postsecondary institution. If corrections are needed after verification is completed, the student will be required to update the incorrect FAFSA information. This will result in an additional FAFSA being received. Once received, verification will be completed on the updated FAFSA information.

Notification to Students

Students are notified of the results of verification by email, either through financial aid award notification or revision communication generated through PeopleSoft.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Entering students are encouraged to complete an application for admissions at the earliest possible date. No student will be considered for assistance until he or she has been officially admitted to the university. ***Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*** is the primary application requirement for financial aid and the federal EFC is the basis for determining financial need. Students should submit their FAFSA at studentaid.gov. The Application opens for each academic year on October 1st. Students must complete/renew their FAFSA each academic year. Alabama State University School Code is 001005. Instructions can be located here: [Financial Aid | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](http://Financial Aid | Alabama State University (alasu.edu)) Students and parents are encouraged to file federal tax returns at least six months prior to completing the FAFSA so that IRS information may be imported into the FAFSA via IRS data retrieval. Deadlines are communicated to new cohort and returning students by email and during Orientation week. Verification instructions are listed here: [Verification Portal instructions.pdf \(alasu.edu\)](http://Verification Portal instructions.pdf (alasu.edu))

If the student is selected for verification, the student will be notified via email. The verification documents will appear on the student's account as a to-do item until **it** has been completed. Additional documents may be requested to complete processing of the aid request. Notification of these additional required documents are sent to students by email.

Below is a list of documents which may be required:

1. Federal Tax Transcript - students and parents selected for federal verification and not able to use the IRS data retrieval must request an official federal tax transcript from the IRS.

2. Verification Worksheet - an electronic document which collects updated information submitted on the FAFSA. Dependent students must obtain a parent's signature. Independent students must obtain a spouse's signature, if applicable. An Aid Administrator may request a Verification Worksheet to resolve conflicting documentation. Worksheets can be located here: [Financial Aid Forms | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](#)

3. Citizenship/Residency Verification - a document which collects proof that the student has citizenship status eligible for financial aid purposes. For eligible noncitizens, Document Verification Request Form G-845 will be required, along with copies of the student's Department of Homeland Security documentation.

4. Certification of Separation - a document which verifies that the parents of a dependent student and/or a married student is separated and living separately from his/her spouse.

5. Employment Verification - a letter which verified a student, spouse, or parent's change in employment status. This letter must be written by the current or former employer, whichever is appropriate.

A PeopleSoft checklist and communication is generated through an automated PeopleSoft process when a student is selected for federal verification or when a C flag appears on the FAFSA. Once additional information is received, the Office of Financial Aid finalizes the award(s). If the information is incomplete, the student is notified by the Financial Aid Counselor via e-mail. Once federal verification is completed, the flag indicating verification status is flipped accordingly in PeopleSoft. The Financial Aid Counselor reviews the information and follows-up with the students. When all required documents are received, the student is considered complete and ready to be packaged. The Financial Aid Counselor gathers all documentation and creates a student folder for new students and returning students.

Additional resources are below:

<p>2023–24 Academic Year</p> <p>The FAFSA form must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CT on June 30, 2024. Any corrections or updates must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CT on Sept. 14, 2024.</p> <p>Tax Year: 2021</p>	<p>Studentaid.gov</p>
<p>Help filling out the FAFSA form</p>	<p>1-800-433-3243</p>
<p>Loan Servicers</p>	<p>Who's My Student Loan Servicer? Federal Student Aid</p>

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Data Analyst runs a query for students who are selected for verification. If the student has made an error on the FAFSA, the student is instructed to go to www.studentaid.gov and correct this information. If the student has submitted FAFSA and we did not receive it in our system, the student is notified to check their FAFSA to make sure they listed Alabama State University school code.

DEADLINES

All students are asked to complete their FAFSA no later than April 1st for priority. The new FAFSA application is available every year on October 1 for the next school year. However, FAFSA information and any additional documents required for federal verification or to resolve FAFSA comment codes must be received by August 1st in order to process the financial aid before the semester starts. The financial aid will not disburse until all documentation is received.

AWARD LETTER AND ACCEPTANCE OF AWARDS

All students receive an automated email created by PeopleSoft generated through the CommGen process when an award is made to the student's financial aid package. Students must accept or decline their awards via self-service.

Each student received an award letter manually that includes: instructions on how to accept or decline awards, Satisfactory Academic Progress policy information, entrance counseling and master promissory note information, and financial aid office contact information (phone number, email address, and website). Information is included regarding the process for receiving loans, namely that they must be accepted through Hornet's Web and the required paperwork for approval disbursement.

All active, matriculated students can view their full financial aid panel on Hornet's Web. This lists the aid by individual source, specific cost of attendance, and award amount broken down by term. This includes any issued federal aid or private loans. Students may also accept or decline their awards through HornetsWeb here:

New students: [Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](http://alasu.edu)

Returning students: [SSO: Alabama State University \(quicklaunch.io\)](http://SSO:Alabama State University (quicklaunch.io))

Students will need to contact Office of Technology Services (OTS) if they cannot access the portal.

REVISION OF FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

There may be instances, which warrant a change to the original notification. Office of Financial Aid may review a student's circumstances, adjust an award, and release a revised award letter.

This revised award invalidates the original award notice. Enclosures with the award letter acknowledge the right of the Financial Aid Office to make a change to any award.

LOAN ENTRANCE COUNSELING AND MPN

First-time Federal Direct Loan borrowers must complete a Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Entrance Counseling session. Both of these items can be completed online at www.studentaid.gov. Both must be on file before funds can be approved and sent to Alabama State University. They ensure that a student fully understands their rights and obligations as a student loan borrower.

Returning borrowers (students who have borrowed a Federal Direct Loan within the past 12 months) do not need to complete another MPN or Entrance Counseling session.

EXIT COUNSELING

Once a student has graduated, dropped below a part-time enrollment status, or has withdrawn from Eastern, the Office of Financial Aid (Default Prevention Manager) will send the student notification to complete Exit Counseling at www.StudentAid.gov.

SUMMER AID

Funds remaining from the fall and spring semesters may be available. Students will need to speak to a Financial Aid Counselor before enrolling/registering for summer classes.

CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

A student may receive Title IV aid if he/she is taking coursework at two or more schools, if the participating institutions enter into a consortium agreement. A consortium agreement specifies that courses from the host institution will transfer to the home institution and that the home institution will process and disburse student aid. The institution that disbursed the aid funds is responsible for record keeping and the returning Title IV funds in cases involving over awards or withdrawals. When the Agreement is approved by Alabama State University, the credit hours will be included as hours attempted for the term. The hours will be used, along with the hours from Alabama State University for that term, to determine if the student has completed at least 50% of the coursework attempted. If the transcript is received from the host school, the course will be counted as not completed. Student can receive the agreement application from the Office of Financial Aid.

TRANSFER MONITORING

Students that transfer to Alabama State University from another post-secondary institution will be monitored by the Office of Financial Aid using the National Student Loan Database for a

period of 90 days once the student's enrollment begins to ensure that no other school is trying to disburse Title IV funds for that student. If another school does disburse Title IV funds during that time period and the student's financial aid eligibility is impacted, the student will be notified.

UNUSUAL ENROLLMENT HISTORY (UEH)

UEH notifications are sent to the Office of Financial Aid via the FAFSA. The Office of Financial Aid is required to review the student's enrollment and financial aid records to determine if, during the four award year review period, the student received a Pell Grant or Federal Loans at the institution that is performing the review. If so, and if the student is eligible for the Pell Grant or Federal Direct Loans, then they can receive it. If not, then the Office of Financial Aid must review the student's academic records. In order for the office to complete the review, we may request academic transcripts or grade reports for each of the previously attended institutions to determine if academic credit was earned or not. If academic credit was not earned, the office must obtain documentation from the student explaining why the student did not earn academic credit. The office must determine whether the documentation supports (1) the reasons given by the student for the student's failure to earn academic credit; and (2) that the student did not enroll only to receive credit balance funds. If approved for additional Pell Grant funds, the student will need to establish an academic plan. If denied for additional Pell Grant or Federal Direct Loan funds, the student will be notified of the decision as well as what steps must be taken in order to regain Pell Grant and Federal Direct Loan eligibility. The student does have the opportunity to appeal the decision. A checklist will be generated via PeopleSoft and the student will be notified via email to complete the Unusual Enrollment form. The form can be completed here: [Nintex Automation Cloud \(workflowcloud.com\)](https://www.workflowcloud.com)

OVERAWARDS

The Office of Financial Aid runs queries on a monthly basis to check for students who are currently over awarded. Over awards can be due to change in the student's financial aid package, due to new external funding/scholarships or to receipt of a subsequent FAFSA. If a potential or actual over award is discovered, U.S. Department of Education guidelines regarding over awards will be followed. An adjustment is made to the student's financial aid award, reducing private loans first, then Parent/Grad plus, Unsubsidized and Subsidized loan. If possible, the over award is resolved by reducing future loan disbursements. If the additional resources must be applied toward tuition only, other funds that are specific to tuition may need to be reduced first - this includes any institutional funds. If federal aid has been disbursed the aid must be returned. ***The student is notified via email regarding the change to the award and the reason.*** There are several causes of an over award:

1. Student wages - the student earns more than the awarded FWS funds.
2. Change in the enrollment status.
3. Additional resources - the student has resources greater than those originally used to calculate the award.

4. Administrative error - the aid administrator inadvertently makes an error.
5. Fraud - the student intentionally deceives or misrepresents information to obtain funds.

PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

The Higher Education Act of 1992 allows financial aid administrators to make professional judgment decisions when there are special or unusual family or student circumstances that may call for adjustments in determining a student's eligibility for financial aid. Circumstances requiring professional judgment must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. These circumstances must be documented. Professional judgment adjustments may increase or decrease a student's EFC or cost of attendance. Students may submit documentation for professional judgment based on change to financial income, such as involuntary loss of employment by the student's parents, or spouse or based on additional cost of attendance, such as child care, study abroad or computer expenses. Professional judgment situations are unique. Circumstances other than those listed may be considered and will require documentation specific to that situation. The Director of Financial Aid has the final authority to make professional judgment decisions. All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

The professional judgment process is as follows:

1. Request for professional judgment is communicated to the Financial Aid office.
2. Professional judgment form is located on the Alabama State University webpage here: [Financial Aid Forms | Alabama State University \(alasu.edu\)](https://www.alasu.edu/financial-aid/forms)
3. Student will submit Professional Judgement along with supporting documents to the Office of Financial Aid.
4. Professional judgment request is reviewed by Director of Financial Aid.
5. Any applicable changes to the FAFSA, cost of attendance, and/or financial aid award are made by the Director only.
6. Professional Judgement is documented in PeopleSoft.

REFUND POLICY

For students receiving financial aid who officially withdraw from the college and are eligible for a tuition refund, the refund must first be applied to the financial aid programs. Federal Funds (Pell, SEOG, Loans) – Repayment of a portion of the funds received will be required if a student stops attending classes before the 60% point of the term. Scholarships, State Grants, Institutional Grants – Repayment is pro-rated based on the percentage of aid earned. Work study funds are paid for work performed and no repayment is required. If a student has an outstanding account - Students are not allowed to complete the registration process if they have an outstanding account balance. If an exception is made within the same academic year, and the student is eligible to receive assistance from any type of funds, the financial aid funds would be applied through credit to the student's account (in compliance with federal guidelines regarding this issue, if federal funds are involved).

DISBURSEMENTS & ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION

Financial aid disburse to the student's account no later than 14 days after the start of classes. First time borrowers must wait 30 days before loans can be disburse to their account. Awards made during the semester disburse within 3-5 business days through an automated process through PeopleSoft. Regular class attendance **is required** for students receiving federal financial aid. Students establish eligibility for federal aid when you actually **SHOW UP** for your classes. Your instructor will document your presence in class through taking roll. This will be done during class meetings within the first two weeks of class for the Fall/Spring semester. **ALL COURSES** must be verified. (This polices applies to online classes)

Financial aid is affected by non-attendance in the following ways:

- Once the semester starts, disbursement of Title IV aid will be held **UNTIL** the University confirms that you have attended at least one class.
- Special rules apply for Pell, SEOG, TEACH because the award amounts are based on your enrollment level. They are subject to being adjusted if your enrollment changes
- Disbursed Federal Direct Loans and PLUS loans are subject to being reduced or paid back if the student does not have confirmed attendance on record for at least half-time enrollment in the combined term.

In compliance with federal regulations, financial aid and scholarships will be disbursed only after all attendance (every course) has been confirmed for the term of enrollment.

RETURN OF TITLE IV FUNDS

Federal law requires an institution to return all unearned Title IV funds to the appropriate Title IV programs when a recipient of Title IV aid withdraws on or before completing 60 percent of the period of enrollment. If a recipient of Title IV funds withdraws during a period of enrollment, the university must calculate the amount of Title IV Aid the recipient did not earn, must return it to the Title IV Programs. This action may require the recipient to repay funds issued directly to them prior to the calculation. The non-payment of Title IV aid will also be reported to U.S. Department of Education for collections and the overpayment of grants reported to the National Student Loan Data System as required by Federal Law. Once the withdrawal date has been determined, the refunds and R2T4 calculations and all associated transactions are generally completed within 30 calendar days, but never longer than 45 days. The waiver, provided by the CARES Act, allows Alabama State University to not return the funds or, if the college already did so, to re-disburse the aid to the student's accounts. If there is an open balance, Office of Financial Aid will apply the aid to that first. Any remaining credit will be refunded to the student. The May 15, 2020 guidance clarified the timeframe for R2T4 waiver eligibility. This means that students who withdrew from Alabama State University 2020-2021 and forward (***until the national emergency is canceled***), are potentially eligible for the R2T4 waiver.

This interim policy is based on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Pub. L. No. 116-136, (CARES Act), and guidance provided by the US Department of Education (USDOE) on March 5, 2020 (updated March 20, 2020), April 3, 2020 and May 15, 2020 (updated June 16, 2020).

Federal law requires that refunds on behalf of student financial assistance recipients must be returned in the following order:

- Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Direct PLUS Loan (Graduate Student)
- Federal Direct PLUS Loan (Parent)
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Teach Grant

Students must withdraw from the University by submitting a “Withdrawal Form” to the Registrar’s Office or submit a written statement including their name, Social Security number, date of withdrawal and the last date of attendance. Calculation of refunds or tuition adjustments shall be based on the last date of attendance.

STEPS IN FEDERALLY MANDATED PROCESS

1. Determine the withdrawal date. If the student officially withdraws, the withdrawal date is the date ASU determines the student either began the withdrawal process, or the date the student provided official notification to ASU, in writing or verbally, of his or her intent to withdraw. If the student does not provide official notification of his or her intent to withdraw, the withdrawal date will be determined as the date ASU became aware the student was not attending class. If a student does not return from an approved leave of absence, the withdrawal date is the date ASU determines the student began the leave of absence. If a student takes a leave of absence that does not meet the requirements of an official leave of absence, the withdrawal date is the date the student began the leave of absence.

2. Calculate the percentage of enrollment period completed. The percentage of enrollment period is determined by dividing the total number of calendar days in the enrollment period into the number of calendar days completed in that period as the withdrawal date. The total number of calendar days in a payment period includes all days (including weekends) within the period. Scheduled breaks of at least five consecutive days are excluded from the total number of calendar days in the enrollment period and the number of calendar days completed in that period.

3. Calculated the amount of Title IV earned. If the withdrawal date is equal to or greater than 60 percent of the enrollment period (semester), the student has earned 100 percent of the Title IV

funding disbursed for that semester. If the withdrawal date is less than 60 percent of the semester, the amount of Title IV funding the student has earned is calculated by using the federally mandated calculation to determine the percentage of Title IV funds that have been earned by the student for that semester. This percentage is then applied to the total amount of Title IV funding that was disbursable for the semester as of the withdrawal date.

4. Determine the amount of Title IV aid unearned. The amount of Title IV funding the student has not earned is calculated by subtracting the amount of Title IV funding the student earned from the total Title IV funding disbursed/ or was disbursable.

5. Allocate unearned aid. ASU is required to return the lesser of the total amount of Title IV funds the student has not earned or an amount equal to the charges if the total amount to be returned exceeds the charges incurred by the student. Charges include tuition and fees, and can include other education-related expenses assessed by ASU.

6. Unearned Title IV funds be returned within 45 days of the student's withdrawal. ASU will return the student's unearned Title IV funding on his or her behalf and consider and returned funds as the student's debt to ASU. Student must make arrangements with the Bursar's office for repayment of the debt. Consequences of non-payment include blocks on re-enrollment, transcript and diploma holds, and student account placement in Collections. Title IV amount to be credited to the appropriate programs in the following order: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Stafford Subsidized, Federal Stafford Unsubsidized, Federal Parent Plus, and Federal Grad Plus loans received on behalf of the student. If amounts to be returned remain after repayment of all outstanding aid amounts, the remaining excess must be credited to any amount awarded for the semester for which a return of funds is required. Federal Work Study is excluded from this policy.

7. Communication of return of funds. Students for which a portion of Title IV aid must be returned will receive a communication from the Office of Financial Aid sent to their ASU email address and permanent address indicating an adjustment has been made and funds have been returned on the student's behalf. This communication further instructs any resulting balances on the student account must be paid by the student and arrangements for payment must be made directly with ASU Bursar.

WITHDRAWAL DATE

The withdrawal date is determined by the Registrar and is the date the student began the withdrawal process, or the date the student provided official notification to the Registrar, in writing of his or her intent to withdraw. If the student does not provide official notification of his or her intent to withdraw, the withdrawal date will be determined as the date the Registrar became aware the student was not attending class.

Formula Calculation

Upon receipt of attrition notice from the Registrar, the Financial Aid Office performs a return of Title IV funds calculation using the web based application provided by COD Online: [Return of Title IV Funds | Financial Aid Delivery \(ed.gov\)](#)

The school calendar is determined by:

1. Calculating the days in the particular term/semester, from the first day of classes to the last day of finals.
2. Weekend days are included in the total number of days.
3. Breaks of five or more days are excluded.
4. When counting the number of days attended, the date of withdrawal is counted as a day attended.

Institutional costs are used to determine the amount of refund due from the school versus the student but do not change the amount of aid earned by the student. These costs refer to the original amounts charge to the student for educational expenses for the term of withdrawal and not pro-rated amounts used by the University based on the date of withdrawal. Required fees included. Parking permits, parking tickets, housing fines and similar non-academic expenses are not included.

Aid disbursed or aid that could have been disbursed is determined by:

1. Counting the aid accepted for the term/semester in question only.
2. Aid that could have been disbursed refers to aid accepted by the student and for which all paperwork and verification have been completed by the student.
3. If loan fees are taken out, the net amount disbursed **or** that could have been disbursed is used.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Withdrawal notices are received by the Loan Prevention/Default Manager. The Default Manager performs the Return of Title IV calculation on the web. The Manager saves a copy of the withdrawal to "Comments" in PeopleSoft. Once the calculation is completed, the Counselor adjusts the student's aid according to the calculation, a PDF copy of the calculation and notice are placed in the student's financial aid file.

UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS (STOP ATTENDING ALL CLASSES)

For students who stop attending all classes prior to the end of the term without officially withdrawing, a return of federal financial aid will be calculated according to the same guidelines. Students who do not receive any "earned" grades are considered to be unofficial withdrawals. For Title IV purposes, the Return to Title IV calculation will be based upon the mid-point of the term, or the last documented date of attendance in an academically-related activity. A student who fails all classes in a term may be subject to a Return to Title IV calculation. If a student "earned" at least one F grade (i.e. participated in class until the end of the semester and received an F for poor performance), then no calculation is required. However, if the student failed all

classes because of non-attendance at some period in the semester, then a Return to Title IV calculation is required based on the last documented date of attendance. If the last date of attendance cannot be determined, then the 50% point of the term will be used as the withdrawal date, and the unearned aid will be 50%.

POST-WITHDRAWAL DISBURSEMENTS

If an amount of Title IV aid a student has earned is greater than the amount of Title IV aid that has been disbursed, the difference is treated as a post-withdrawal disbursement to the student. Any post-withdrawal disbursement must be made within 180 days of the date the institution determines that the student withdrew. Aid for which all requirements (paperwork and federal verification) have been satisfied is disbursed to the student account 14 days after the start of classes.

If a student has undisbursed aid for which all requirements have been satisfied, a Return of Title IV calculation must be performed to ensure that funds for which a student was eligible and had earned at the time of withdrawal but had not been disbursed are offered as a post-withdrawal disbursement. The institution must disburse any amount of a post withdrawal disbursement of grant funds that is not credited to the student's account as soon as possible but no later than 180 days after the date it is determined the student withdrew. Written notification will be sent to the student within thirty (30) days of the date it is determined that the student withdrew and confirmation received before making any post-withdrawal disbursement of loans funds. The notification will include:

1. A request for confirmation.
2. A confirmation deadline of fourteen (14) days or more.
3. The type and amount of the aid it wishes to credit to the student's account or disburse directly.
4. An option to accept or decline the post-withdrawal disbursement.
5. A notice of obligation to repay loan funds.
6. A notice the student may not receive, as a direct disbursement, loan funds that the institution wishes to credit to the student's account unless the institution agrees to do so.
7. A post-withdrawal disbursement must be made from available grant funds before available loan funds.

RETURNING UNEARNED FUNDS

The amount of Title IV funds the student has not earned is calculated by subtracting the amount of Title IV funds the student earned from the total Title IV funding disbursed/disbursable. Unearned Title IV funds must be returned to the applicable Title IV program within 45 days of the date of the students' withdrawal. If the amount earned is greater than the amount that has been disbursed, the difference is treated as a post-withdrawal disbursement to the student. Unearned funds are returned to the Title IV programs within 45 days of the student's withdrawal

by ASU Office of Financial Aid on behalf of the student and consider the returned funds as the student's debts to ASU. Students are notified via their ASU e-mail account that, as a result of withdrawal and pursuant to the Return to Title IV calculation, adjustments have been made to their aid package which may create a balance on the student account. Student must make arrangements with the Bursar's office for repayment if the debt **if** returned funds create an account balance. Unearned Title IV funds are returned to the Title IV programs in the following order:

- Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Direct PLUS Loan (Graduate Student)
- Federal Direct PLUS Loan (Parent)
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant

PACKAGING PHILOSOPHIES

U.S. Citizens and permanent residents are offered financial aid (scholarships, grants, and loans) to cover a portion of the program (via the FAFSA), this includes a Parent Plus and Graduate Plus loan offered for graduate students enrolled at least half-time. The student may seek an outside private loan, which the Director of Financial Aid will certify and post to the students' account. Packaging guidelines are evaluated by the Director of Financial Aid on an annual basis. Merit-based scholarship awarding procedures are reviewed at least annually, and often prior to the beginning of each application cycle, by the Director of Admissions.

PACKAGE CONSTRUCTION

The ASU financial aid packaging policy is to offer assistance to cover the cost of attendance. Cost of attendance is defined as tuition and fees plus a standard allocation for books and living expenses.

Pell grant and outside resources are considered first, then federal loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, Parent Plus and Graduate Plus loans), followed by institutional scholarships and work-study. If grants, scholarships, and federal loans do not cover the total cost of attendance or if the student is not eligible for federal aid, the remaining gap may be covered by a private loan. The student is responsible for seeking any outside loan opportunities.

The Financial Aid Counselors pulls the student folder and verified receipt of any other documentation that the student may have submitted. If the student is selected for verification or if additional information is needed, the Counselor emails the student. If the file is complete, the officer reviews the FAFSA and application.

FAFSA information is used to verify eligibility for federal aid, and federal Pell and loan annual fiscal limits are monitored automatically. Outside scholarships or tuition benefits are manually awarded, as are Alabama State University's merit-based scholarships.

We have an automated process that runs weekly in PeopleSoft to assign and send an initial financial aid award notification email to students. For matriculated students, the award information is also available for view on the Hornet's Web accounts beginning early May.

RECONCILIATION

To eliminate any discrepancies between the Office of Financial Aid and finance offices, both offices will have monthly meetings to reconcile each Title IV program and compare the reports produced through COD system with the accounting's subsidiaries. A four step process is required to ensure that federal accounts have been reconciled. All reconciliations provided by Accounting, Office of Financial Aid, and Grants & Contracts must have a social security and/or student's identification numbers as well as an academic term.

Financial Aid

Determine the amounts disbursed each month (according to Financial Aid Office records). Compare the awards to the actual disbursement based on disbursement query. Correct any discrepancies discovered from the aforementioned process and note them as reconciling items. Then, reconcile the disbursements to the COD authorizations to ensure that the awards correspond to the authorizations. Once again, note reconciling items and correct all discrepancies.

Provide Grants and Contracts with a listing of authorizations that may be drawn that corresponds to the Financial Aid award/disbursement files. Typical reconciling items between Financial Aid records and General ledger include: timing differences between items disbursed per GL versus COD authorizations or any adjustments made by Financial Aid that are not yet reflected on the GL.

The Finance office will confirm if actual disbursements posted to student accounts are consistent with Office of Financial Aid records of student award and amount of funds that will draw down from G5 to cover the funds disbursed to students. Following the "Procedure for Processing Disbursements to Students" the Finance office will send an email with the total amount of students and funds posted by payroll. It will eliminate returns of cash due to withdrawals performed by the financial aid office and are not applied by the finance office; or adjustments made by the finance office are not noted in the financial aid office.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Alabama State University is required by the Federal Student Aid Policy **34 CFR 668.34** to establish Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving assistance through the following Title IV programs: *Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational*

Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, Federal Direct Loan programs (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, PLUS, and Graduate PLUS), and Federal College Work Study Program, as well as other State and Institutional Programs.

Alabama State University has adopted the following as its official policy governing all students' satisfactory academic progress:

Satisfactory progress is not to be confused with "**good standing**". A student can meet the Alabama State University standards of "good standing" and be allowed to enroll but may not meet the minimum standards of "**Satisfactory Progress**" to receive financial aid while enrolled. Satisfactory Academic Progress status will be determined at least once each year, generally at the end of the spring semester OR for Undergraduate students, after the first 24 credit hours completed at ASU.

MONITOR OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students' progress will be reviewed after grades are final at the end of the fall and spring semester. A determination of eligibility to receive financial aid for subsequent enrollment periods will be made at this time. Although Alabama State University will send a notification to the student, the student is fully responsible for monitoring their own academic progress as it relates to financial aid eligibility. The student should review their grades on an on-going basis and compare it to the standards set forth in this SAP policy to determine if they are meeting (or failing to meet) the established criteria. The SAP policy for Title IV aid recipients is aligned with the School's academic policy, and more information regarding academic policy may be in the handbook. Evaluations will be completed in a timely manner; however, the next term may be in progress at the time we are able to notify students of their *ineligibility*. Should the student be concerned that they may not have met the requirements, they may contact the Alabama State University Office of Retention (ACES). ***Students will be notified via their ASU email address if they have failed to meet satisfactory academic progress.*** Students may appeal the decision. The appeal form and directions are located on our website. The appeal form is located here: [Nintex Automation Cloud \(workflowcloud.com\)](https://www.nintex.com/workflowcloud.com)

ASU's Standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress is to encourage the completion of degree/certificate programs within a reasonable timeframe and to comply with federal and state requirements, financial aid recipients attending Alabama State University (ASU) must maintain satisfactory academic progress as a condition for receiving financial aid. Satisfactory academic progress requires financial aid recipients to do the following:

1. *Meet minimum cumulative grade point averages as listed below (Qualitative);*
2. *Complete their degree or certificate within the maximum allowable timeframe (Quantitative)*
3. *Complete and earn credit for a reasonable number of credit hours (at least 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted) towards a degree or certificate, measured*

incrementally; and complete courses at an overall “pace” which will, once again ensure graduation within maximum allowable timeframe, measured in total cumulative hours attempted. In determining the 67% earned/pursued ration, hours will be rounded up to the nearest whole number (Quantitative).

All students must successfully complete a minimum of 67% (Rounded up to the nearest whole number) of the cumulative credit hours attempted. This calculation is done by dividing the total cumulative earned credits by the total cumulative attempted credits.

A student must earn a minimum number of credit hours each semester to complete requirements for graduation. The following shall be considered as credits completed: “A through D” grades.

The following shall not be considered as credit completed:

- a. “F”
- b. “W” – Withdrawal
- c. “I” or “P” – Incomplete (may be counted after the “I” or “P” is changed to another letter grade).
- d. Audit – No Credit

Students with withdrawals, incompletes, failing grades, repeated classes, and transfer

Classification	Minimum GPA	Financial aid suspended
Undergraduate Degree		
24-31 credit hours	1.60 or greater	1.59-Below
32-62 credit hours	1.80 or greater	1.79-Below
63-120 credit hours	2.00 or greater	1.99-Below
MAXIMUM Time Frame (MTF)		
180 credit hours	2.00 or greater	1.99-Below
181+Ineligible for Financial Aid		
Graduate Degrees		
Masters Degree		
Program hours X 150% credit hours	3.00 or greater	2.99-Below
Doctoral Degree		
Program hours X 150% credit hours	3.00 or greater	2.99-Below
151%+ Ineligible for Financial Aid		

credits that exceed 30 hours will count toward the number of hours attempted.

Maximum Time Frame Requirement:

A reasonable length of time for the completion of a program is defined as no more than 150 percent of the normal time to complete a degree program.

****Example: If your degree requires that you complete 120 credit hours, a reasonable length of time will be 120 credit hours x 150% = 180 credit hours. Your maximum time frame to receive financial aid is your first 180 attempted credit hours (15 semesters)***

PROBATION PERIOD

SAP Warning:

Students who fail to meet the SAP standards for their classification will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the subsequent semester and assigned to an Advisor in the Academic Center for Educational Success (A.C.E.S.). UG students on FA warning must earn the minimum overall GPA for their classification and a completion rate of 67% on all coursework attempted to be cleared of the warning status. In alignment with the Graduate School's probation policy, GR students will not be afforded warning semesters.

Probation Period:

Students who fail to meet the conditions of Financial Aid Warning may be granted financial aid probation upon successfully appealing their financial aid suspension. Undergraduate students granted probation will continue to meet with their ACES Advisor and must achieve a minimum 2.0 GPA and complete 100% of all classes attempted each semester during their probationary status. Additionally, Undergraduate students must meet the conditions of their Academic Improvement Plan prescribed by their ACES Advisor.

Graduate students who do not meet SAP standards at the end of a semester may be granted Financial Aid probation upon successfully appealing their financial aid suspension. GR students who are granted a Probationary semester must achieve a minimum 3.0 GPA and complete 100% of all classes attempted for the semester.

Any student (undergraduates and graduates) who fail to meet the conditions of their probation or who have unsuccessfully appealed their SAP will have their federal aid terminated for the subsequent semester.

A probationary semester may be granted at the discretion of the Financial Aid Office. Conditions under which a student may receive a probationary semester may include but not be limited to family circumstances, medical concerns, work circumstances, death, emotional concerns, accidents and any unusual circumstances. During the probationary period, the student is required to successfully complete a minimum of 67 percent of registered hours during that semester, with the required GPA based on student's year in college (according to the chart above).

Students who are placed on Financial Aid probation will be referred to the Academic Center for Educational Success (A.C.E.S.) and assigned to an ACES advisor. Additionally, probationary students will have a Retention/ACES hold on their Hornet's Web account and must adhere to prescribed services as determined by their ACES advisor. Students who fail to meet all of the above-mentioned conditions will not be considered for reinstatement of their Financial Aid funds.

Major Change: *Undergraduate students will be allowed to change their Academic Major one (1) time and exempt up to 30 credit hours of their original major courses from the MTF. Students who change majors must present the new curriculum plan to the financial aid office immediately upon officially changing their major in the Records office.*

FORMER ASU STUDENTS RETURNING TO COMPLETE THEIR DEGREE:

Former ASU students who were not enrolled at ASU for the most recent regular semesters (fall or spring) will re-enter at the SAP status earned at the end of their last ASU semester. Complete academic transcripts for work attempted at other institutions since their last ASU enrollment are expected to be submitted to ASU's Registrar's Office.

CONDITIONS FOR REINSTATEMENT

Conditions of Reinstatement: All students who have been granted probationary status will remain on probation until their overall (cumulative) GPA for their classification has been achieved AND a completion of 67% of all courses attempted. Additionally, students on probation are subject to SAP evaluation of progress at the end of every semester.

Students who unsuccessfully appealed their SAP or did not meet the terms of their probation may choose to pay out of pocket or through a private lender for a minimum of 6 credit hours. Under these conditions, students must achieve a minimum GPA of 2.0 and complete 100% of all classes attempted for the term. Once the conditions have been met, students may appeal for reinstatement.

APPEAL OF FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION

Students who desire to appeal the termination of their financial aid eligibility must submit an appeal online via the University Nintex Automation Cloud (workflowcloud.com). The appeals submission must include the following: A letter to explain mitigating circumstances that affected the student's ability to make satisfactory academic progress accompanied by official documentation to substantiate the circumstances explained in the letter.

Acceptable mitigating circumstances include death in the immediate family (e.g. mother, father, sibling, child, or grandparent), medical emergencies (student or immediate family), severe psychological/emotional distress, and/or military deployment. Mitigating circumstances must occur during the time in which the students failed to meet SAP. Official documentation includes a copy of an obituary (no web links to online memorials, funeral announcements, etc.), medical documentation from a physician's office to include dates of medical treatment or length of stay in

a hospital facility, letter from a professional counselor, and/or military orders. Students must also show proof of obtaining a University Excuse for excessive absences due to mitigating circumstances.

APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Appeals Committee shall meet at the end of the Appeals submissions' deadline to determine if the student's federal aid should be reinstated. The student shall be notified in writing via their ASU email of the Committee's decision. The student may appeal the Financial Aid Appeals

Committee's decision to the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management within five working days. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management has five working days to render a decision and respond to the student in writing. The decision of the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is final, unless an appeal is made to the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs/Financial Aid. Any student who fail to meet the conditions of their probation after their first appeal will have their federal aid terminated for the subsequent semester. Students who have unusual mitigating circumstances, i.e. circumstances that are not similar to the previous circumstances from the first appeal, may appeal their suspension of aid for the second time. Students' who successfully appeal their financial aid suspension will be placed on probation and must meet the conditions of their probation until their overall GPA for the classification is achieved and have completed at least 67% of all coursework attempted. No student will be granted an opportunity to appeal for a 3rd time in the event the conditions of the second reinstatement are not met.

ASU's Office of Financial Aid shall determine and publish deadline dates for appeal submissions and a timeline for appeal notifications each semester.

Students who are denied probation at any time based on the final decision of the appeals committee can choose to pay out of pocket or seek financial support from one of the preferred private lenders found at the following link: [PRIVATE EDUCATION LOANS \(1\) \(1\).pdf \(alasu.edu\)](#) . A student who desires reinstatement of their Title IV funds, must adhere to an Academic Plan for Improvement as prescribed by an Academic Center for Educational Success (ACES) Advisor.

SAP NOTIFICATION

Students who meet or exceed SAP requirements will not be notified. Students who do not meet SAP requirements or the terms of their probation will be notified via students' ASU email from the Office of Retention (ACES)

AUDITS AND PROGRAM REVIEWS

Federal regulations require the Office of Financial Aid to have its records and student files audited at least once a year. Each audit must cover the time period since the last audit. Auditors review a sample of student files to ensure the Office of Financial Aid is in compliance with

federal, state, and institutional polices. Any exceptions found during the audit will be addressed. Federal reviews are conducted by the U.S. Department of Education on a basis determined by them. Institutions are notified ahead of time when the review will take place. Preparation for the audit is in cooperation with the auditor's requests. Typically, the auditors will randomly select a specific number of students from each of the Title IV programs. The files are retrieved and provided to the auditors. Any additional assistance requested is responded to promptly. A complete listing of financial aid audit guidelines is listed in the Audit Guide published by the U.S. Department of Education.

FRAUD

There are difficult situations where students and/or parents purposefully misrepresent information in hopes of obtaining aid or obtaining additional assistance. The Office of Financial Aid is required to have a policy of referral when confronted with actual or suspected cases of fraud and abuse. Students and parents who willfully submit fraudulent information will be

Investigated to the furthest extent possible. All documented cases of fraud and abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

PROCEDURES FOR FRAUD

If, in an aid administrator's judgment, there has been intentional misrepresentation, false statements, or alteration of documents, which have resulted or could result in the awarding or disbursement of funds for which the student is not eligible; the case shall be referred to the Director for possible disciplinary action. After investigating the situation, if the Director believes there is a fraudulent situation, all information must be forwarded to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Education. The Director of Financial Aid reviews the student's aid file with the appropriate aid administrator and if the decision is made by the Director to pursue the possibility of denying or canceling financial aid, a written request to make an appointment is to be sent to the student. If the student does not make an appointment, the Director may:

- Not process a financial aid application until the situation is resolved satisfactory.
- Not award financial aid
- Cancel financial aid
- Determine that financial aid will not be processed for future years.

All processing of the application or disbursement of funds shall be suspended until the Director has made a determination as to whether the student shall be required to make an appointment.

OIG Address and Phone Numbers

Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-1510

Phone Number: 1-800-MIS-USED
 Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 9–11 a.m.
 Tuesdays & Thursdays 1–3 p.m.

To submit a complaint online at any time, go to <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html> and click on the appropriate link

Email: oig.hotline@ed.gov

Web: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html>

Regional Offices Telephone No. National Hotline -Atlanta, GA 404-974-9430

IG Referrals 34 CFR 668.16(g) / IRS Publication 17

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID CALENDAR

January	<p>Spring term classes begin 40% of Spring Balance due to Student Accounts office Spring Financial Aid Disbursements begin *Trio Workshop (9th-12th grade) Mia Harris 11:00am Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30th Fall financial aid awards are available for review online</p>
February	<p>Financial Aid Awareness Month *Let's Talk Scholarships! Spring 2023 Workshop Presented by: Sierra Holstick 11:00am *BHM: Program for Teens: FAFSA, Loans, And Grants: UNLOCKED! Montgomery Public Library 4:00pm Presented by: Whitney Montgomery-Williams & Sierra Holstick Financial Aid LOVE Awareness Table 10:00am-12:00pm Draft Cohort Default Rates *I Have Been Awarded Financial Aid, What's Next? Presented by: C. Watson & S. Glover 11:00am Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 28th</p>
March	<p>Spring Graduation Candidates Complete Exit Counseling End of 60% for Return of Title IV Aid Verification 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 Webinar Total Spring balance due to Student Accounts Office Registration for Summer semester begins *Got Money? Renew your FAFSA for 2023-2024! Presented by: Mia Harris & Jarvis Carlisle 11:00am Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30th *Everyday I'm Hu\$tin-Workstudy 101 Presented by: Brandon Smith 11:00am Quarterly FA website review</p>
April	<p>Spring Graduation Candidates Complete Exit Counseling Spring Connection Day! FAFSA NIGHT! (Local High schools) National Financial Literacy Month Federal Update(Webinar) 1-3pm ET Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30th Exit Counseling 101: What you need to know-before you go 11:00am Presented by: M. Bruce Campus based funding allocations eCB Website</p>

	Summer financial aid awards available for review online
May	Spring semester ends Spring Commencement Satisfactory Academic Progress is evaluated Summer classes begin Federal Direct Loan borrowers must complete an Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note 40% of Summer Balance due to Student Accounts office Summer Financial Aid Disbursements begin Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th Fall 2023 financial aid awards are available for review online
June	Federal Direct Loan borrowers must complete an Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note Summer Bridge Workshop! Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th NSO (New student Orientation) Quarterly FA website review
July	End of 60% for Return of Title IV Aid Summer semester ends Total Summer balance due to Student Accounts Office NSO (New Student Orientation) New federal verification regulations published for upcoming year Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th
August	Fall semester begins 40% of Fall Balance due to Student Accounts office All About FEDERAL LOANS\$ (Workshop) Freshman* Fall Financial Aid Disbursements begin Federal Direct Loan borrowers must complete an Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note Federal Work-study Mixer Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th Town Hall Meeting
September	Constitution Day and Citizenship Day Official Cohort Default Rates made available to school Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th Quarterly FA website review FISAP due 9/30
October	Financial Aid Day (3rd Wednesday) Celebrate FA Administrators! FAFSA application for the next academic year available 2024-2025 *Renew your FAFSA awareness table! Fall Connection Day! End of 60% period for the Return of Title IV Aid Total Fall balance due to Student Accounts Office Fall Graduation Candidates Complete Exit Counseling Registration for Spring semester begins Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th Next academic year Federal Pell Grant Payment and Disbursement Schedules available
November	Fall Graduation Candidates Complete Exit Counseling Exit Counseling 101: What you need to know-before you go 3:00pm Presented by: M. Bruce Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30 th Written Title IV Policies and Procedures Review and Update

December	TG Number Confirmation for Staff and Designated Vendors due to ED Fall semester ends. Fall Commencement Title IV Monthly Reconciliation by the 30th FISAP Final Edit Corrections due December 15
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