Financial Aid, Scholarships and Student Employment

Scholarships, Grants and Loans
Warren Hall, MSC 3519
Phone: (540) 568-7820
Web site: http://www.jmu.edu/finaid/

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships helps qualified students secure a financial aid package designed to meet their financial needs. The award package may consist of grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study.

Students interested in information on financial assistance programs should contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships at the above address or send e-mail to finaid@jmu.edu.

Application Procedures and Deadlines
All financial aid applicants must undergo a standardized federal “needs analysis” by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Because of intense competition for scholarships and grants at JMU, it is essential that applicants ensure their FAFSA has reached the federal government by March 1 prior to the academic year for which you are seeking financial assistance. To receive priority consideration for the coming school year. Failing to file by the priority filing date may cause delays in receiving aid, and can result in lower aid packages.

A student must complete a FAFSA before financial aid eligibility can be determined for the following sources of aid:
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
- Commonwealth Award
- Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program
- College Scholarship Assistance Program
- Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Parent Loan for undergraduate students
- Federal Work-Study Program
- Need-based Foundation Scholarships

When a student files the FAFSA, the federal processor calculates their Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is an estimate of the family’s ability to contribute to the student’s overall educational expenses for one year. The student’s financial aid “need” is JMU’s computation of educational expenses (Cost of Attendance described later) minus the EFC. Due to limited funding, state and federal grants must be awarded to students who have the highest financial need, and in many cases who met the priority FAFSA filing date.

Financial aid recipients must complete the FAFSA each school year. Amounts and types of assistance may vary from year to year. If funds are available, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships continues to assist students who meet the following conditions:
- Complete the FAFSA, with priority given to those who apply by the priority filing date of March 1, prior to the academic year for which you are seeking financial assistance.
- Meet the general eligibility requirements for aid as defined by the FAFSA
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (described later)

Students who are offered financial assistance by JMU will receive a financial aid award notice indicating the source(s) and amount(s) of assistance. The aid notice has important information, so the recipient should read it very carefully before returning the appropriate copies to the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. If any of the information is not correct, the student should immediately notify the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Financial aid is awarded based on FAFSA information, as well as the student’s status at JMU (e.g. class status, enrollment level, and residency). Federal and state regulations also require the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships to consider any outside sources of aid when awarding financial aid. These outside sources can be JMU scholarships, private
scholarships, veteran’s benefits, tuition waivers, etc. It is possible for a student’s financial aid award to fluctuate throughout the year if any of the FAFSA information, JMU status’, or outside aid status changes. Financial aid notices are usually sent to returning students during the spring. New students may receive aid notices in the spring prior to enrollment.

Cost of Attendance
An important part of determining a student’s eligibility for financial aid is determining a Cost of Attendance. In accordance with federal regulations, JMU has developed a Cost of Attendance (i.e. budget) for anticipated expenses a student may incur during the current school year. These expenses include tuition, room, board, books and supplies, travel expenses, and personal expenses. Room and board can be residence hall or off-campus housing expenses depending a student’s response on the FAFSA. Expenses are also considered for students who live at home with parents or relatives, but it’s a lesser dollar amount than for those living elsewhere. Travel expenses include items such as gasoline, vehicle maintenance, and insurance. Personal expenses include things such as laundry, entertainment and clothing. Many of the items in the Cost of Attendance are estimates, so it’s possible for a student to spend more or less than we anticipate during any given year.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

To be academically eligible to receive financial assistance, students must be making satisfactory progress toward graduation as defined by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships and federal regulations. Institutional, state and federal aid programs are included under this policy. For a complete description of the policy, please refer to our Web site.

Understanding Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
According to federal regulations, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships must assure students have met both qualitative and quantitative requirements before certifying eligibility for financial aid. Qualitative requirements include GPA and other academic standards (see Academic Standards). Quantitative requirements include credit hours and time frame. Credit hours information is listed under Earned Credits. Time frame is the amount of time the student is allowed to receive financial aid (see Maximum Time Requirement).

Students who have not completed the required number of hours or achieved the required cumulative grade point average (GPA), by the end of spring semester, are not eligible to receive financial aid until such time that they meet the requirements.

Academic Standards
Students must fulfill academic requirements including GPA as described by the retention policy in the current JMU catalog. For further information, please refer to the section in this catalog titled “Academic Policies and Procedures.”

Earned Credits
Undergraduate students must be making satisfactory progress toward degree requirements by earning passing grades in at least 85% of the classes attempted.

Maximum Time Requirement
Undergraduate students who have more than 150 credit hours are not eligible for financial aid.

Evaluation Process
The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships reviews satisfactory progress requirements after the fall and spring semesters. Students may receive warning letters after the fall semester, but no aid will be cancelled at that time. However, after the spring semester, letters denying financial aid for the following academic year are sent to students who are not in compliance with the above requirements.

Appeals Process
Students who fail to meet the requirements stated above, by the end of the spring semester, will be considered NOT making satisfactory academic progress. To become eligible for future assistance, you may attend summer classes without financial aid. Additionally, a written appeal may be submitted to the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships requesting a re-evaluation of your transcript based on extraordinary circumstances.

Grants
Federal Pell Grant
Pell grants are awarded to undergraduate students who are seeking their first bachelor’s degree, and whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) falls within the federally prescribed range.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant**
The SEOG is awarded to Pell eligible students with the highest financial need as long as funds continue to be available.

**Commonwealth Award**
The Commonwealth Award is a need-based grant for Virginia residents who are seeking their first undergraduate degree. The maximum award will not exceed the cost of tuition and fees. Awards will be made as long as funds are available, with priority given to those who met the FAFSA priority filing date.

**Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program**
The VGAP is a need-based grant for undergraduate, full-time, dependent, Virginia residents who graduated from a public Virginia high school with at least a 2.5 GPA. The maximum award will not exceed the cost of tuition and fees. Awards will be made as long as funds are available, with priority given to those who met the FAFSA priority filing date.

**College Scholarship Assistance Program**
The CSAP is a need-based grant for Virginia residents who are first degree seeking undergraduate students. Awards will be made as long as funds are available, with priority given to those who met the FAFSA priority filing date.

**Student Loans**

**Federal Perkins Loan**
Perkins is a need-based federal loan, which is awarded to students with the highest financial need. The interest rate is fixed at 5 percent and the student does not begin repaying the loan until nine months after he or she graduates or drops below half-time status. Awards will be made as long as funds are available, with priority given to those who met the FAFSA priority filing date.

**Federal Stafford Loan Program**
Web site: http://www.jmu.edu/finaid

The Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized) is a long-term, low-interest loan, for which undergraduate, graduate and professional students may apply. The interest rate is variable, but is capped at 8.25 percent. For a subsidized loan, the government will pay the interest while the student is in school. For an unsubsidized loan, the student can either pay the interest in school or have it capitalized (i.e. added into the principle). Payments on the principle amount do not begin until the student graduates or drops below half-time status.

Dependent undergraduate students may borrow no more than $2,625 during their freshman year, $3,500 during their sophomore year, and no more than $5,500 each junior and senior year. Independent undergraduate students may borrow no more than $6,625 during their freshman year, $7,500 during their sophomore year, and no more than $10,500 each junior and senior year. Graduate students may borrow no more than $18,500 per year. Applications for the Federal Stafford Loan are available on our Web site.

**Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students**
Parents or legal guardians of dependent undergraduate students may borrow through the PLUS. The borrower must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States. The student must also be making satisfactory academic progress and be enrolled at least half-time for the enrollment period covered by the loan. Applications for the parent loan are also included with the aid notices.

PLUS borrowers may apply for an amount up to the Cost of Attendance minus any other financial aid received by the student for that academic year. The interest rate on the PLUS is variable, but is capped at 9 percent. Potential borrowers should consult lenders for the most current interest rate. The repayment period for parent loans begins the day the loan is disbursed; interest begins to accrue that day. The first payment is due within 60 days of the last disbursement.

**Alternative Loans**
Many banks are now offering credit-based alternative loans to students and parents who either don’t qualify for the Stafford or Parent loans, or who cannot receive enough money through these loan programs to cover their educational expenses. Terms of these private loans vary, but interest rates are normally higher than the Stafford loan or Parent loan. Undergraduate borrowers are typically required to have a credit-worthy co-signer. The financial aid office strongly encourages students and parents to
exhaust other sources of aid before pursuing an alternative loan; however, brochures and applications are available in our office for those needing more information on these types of loans.

**Donald E. Gardner Memorial Loan Fund**

The Donald E. Gardner Memorial Loan Fund is a short-term loan program named in memory of Donald E. Gardner, who served as university comptroller for nine years. The program provides students with a resource to meet short-term financial needs. These short-term loans, which range from $200 to $600, are available to undergraduate and graduate students who meet the following criteria:

- Are currently enrolled
- Are degree-seeking
- Are full- or part-time (taking at least six hours of course work)
- Are making satisfactory academic progress
- Can repay the loan within 90 days

Tuition must be paid in full prior to applying for the Donald E. Gardner loan. Loan applications and other eligibility information may be obtained in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.

**JMU Scholarships**

Web site: www.jmu.edu/finaid

Many scholarships for students are established through the JMU Foundation and other individual departments. All scholarships are awarded through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships or by the appropriate college or division according to criteria set by the scholarship donor. Scholarships are awarded based upon either merit and/or need. To be considered for need-based scholarships, students must complete the FAFSA.

A listing of scholarships is available through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. For information on specific scholarships, we encourage you to visit the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office or check the Web site.

**Private Off-Campus Scholarships**

Private off-campus scholarships include those scholarships awarded to specific students by outside (non-JMU) organizations. These scholarships are credited to the student's account upon receipt of the funds. If this type of scholarship is to be used to pay tuition and fees, the funds must be received prior to the semester due date for payment of fees. Please mail all off-campus scholarships to:

Office of Student Financial Services, MSC 3516
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

The student is responsible for compliance with the provisions of the scholarship (i.e., grade reporting, notification of attendance, etc.).

**Student Employment**

JMU employs both graduate and undergraduate students in academic, administrative or service oriented areas. Students must be degree seeking and currently enrolled to be employed in these positions. They receive payment for their services via direct deposit twice a month. There are two work programs at JMU.

**Federal Work-Study Program**

Federal Work-Study jobs can be part of the financial aid package for students who demonstrate high financial need as determined by their FAFSA. This is an opportunity for students to have a meaningful work experience; however, employment is not guaranteed. The student will still need to interview with the appropriate employers to secure a position. These jobs provide a student with the opportunity to earn a paycheck throughout the year, and the money earned through this program is not counted as income when the student applies for financial aid next year.

**Institutional Employment**

Institutional Employment is also available to students at JMU. These jobs are very similar to the FWS jobs with two main exceptions. A student does not have to establish financial need to apply for an institutional job. Secondly, these jobs are not awarded to students. Students must apply for an institutional job through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.

**University Withdrawal**
If you withdraw from the university, Student Financial Services may adjust your charges based upon your withdrawal date and the JMU Refund Policy. For the university refund policy, please refer to the Student Financial Services Web site at http://www.jmu.edu/stufin.

Regardless of any adjustment to your charges, if you withdraw from the university, your financial aid may be adjusted based on the percentage of the semester you completed before withdrawing. In some cases, Federal Return of Title IV Funds regulations may require that aid be returned to the federal government for students who completely withdraw from JMU before 60% of a term has been completed. Financial aid is awarded for the entire term, which is generally a 15 week period. If a student does not complete the entire 15 weeks, then the Return of Title IV Fund rules will determine how much financial aid has been earned. The student can keep that amount for the term, but the unearned part must be immediately returned to the federal government. In some situations, this will leave the student with a balance owed to the university. Funds are returned to the federal government in following order: Unsubsidized Stafford, Subsidized Stafford, PLUS, Perkins, Pell and SEOG. See the terms and conditions of Financial Aid at www.jmu.edu/finaid for a sample calculation.

Additionally, certain state grant programs cannot exceed tuition, or the cost of tuition and books. So, if a student's tuition is reduced based on the JMU Refund Policy, it's very possible that state grant funds will be reduced by the same amount. In most cases, this will not impact a student's bill, as the reduction to state grants is generally equal to the remaining tuition balance.