



Southwestern College

Guide to Financial Aid
2022-2023

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This guide is available for download on the Master's degree program application. All financial aid recipients are responsible for knowing and understanding the information contained in this guide. Any questions regarding student financial aid should be directed to the Financial Aid Office at (505) 467-6806 or finaidadvisor@swc.edu. Information in this guide booklet is subject to change.

I. Student Financial Aid at Southwestern College

Southwestern College (SWC) offers a variety of financial aid programs for our degree seeking students. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to obtain their masters, regardless of their financial situation. As a college, SWC promotes financial assistance opportunities in the form of institutional scholarships, graduate assistantships, and federal financial aid. We also encourage all students to apply for outside sources of funding, such as scholarships and grants. SWC also participates in external funded educational support programs, such as the Department of Veteran's Affairs GI Bill, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, AmeriCorps, 529s, private loans, and Tribal Funding.

II. Financial Aid Policy

To qualify for institutional scholarships and graduate assistantships, you must:

1. Be accepted into one of our M.A. or PhD programs
2. Be in good academic standing per the guidelines in the Student Handbook

To qualify for Federal Financial Aid, you must:

1. Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen*
2. Be enrolled at least half-time (4 units for M.A., 3 units for PhD) in an eligible degree program
3. Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
4. Be in good standing with current federal financial aid
5. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application online at studentaid.gov and use our federal school code: **030761**. You will need to provide tax information from two years prior (for the 2022-23 FAFSA, you'll use 2020 tax information). Students are encouraged to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer their tax information directly from the IRS to the FAFSA.

*More information regarding who is considered an eligible non-citizen can be found at <https://studentaid.gov/help/eligible-noncitizen>

III. Financial Aid Programs

Scholarships

Southwestern College offers various scholarship programs. The amounts vary and depend upon date of enrollment. The financial aid office publicizes these scholarships to students through postings, campus email, and on our website. We also accept scholarships from

outside sources and encourage students to apply for outside scholarship opportunities throughout their program.

We have some outside scholarships listed on our website:

<https://www.swc.edu/outside-resources/>

Several websites that provide scholarship search engines:

<https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx>

<https://www.salliemae.com/about/scholarship-opportunities/>

<https://www.fastweb.com/college-search/articles/the-latest-and-greatest-for-grad-students>

SWC does not endorse or promote any particular scholarship or organization, it is the student's responsibility to verify the validity of scholarships they are applying for. A scholarship award can be distributed for one quarter or spread across multiple quarters depending on the specific award.

Graduate Assistantships are also typically awarded once per year. GA's offer administrative support and can work from 5-13 hours per week. Students applying for GA positions are required to file the FAFSA. For more information regarding GA positions, contact the Director of Enrollment Services, Dru Phoenix, at DruPhoenix@swc.edu.

Angel Fund

Students that are experiencing a true and immediate financial emergency may request an award from the Angel Fund. These awards can range from \$25-\$400, depending on the situation and funding availability. All grants awarded through this program are considered financial aid.

Criteria to award:

- Student must be enrolled during the quarter that the need arises.
- Funds are for a one-time emergency.

To request funds:

- Submit in writing or via email to the Financial Aid Advisor (FAA) stating the amount and reason for the request.
- A copy of utility bill, overdue rent notice, documentation proving loss of personal items due to theft or fire, a quote of repair cost for a car in the student's name, or any other documentation showing the reason for the emergency.

The FAA will forward the request to the Financial Aid Director and if approved, will forward to the Business Office to submit to Executive Council. The student will be contacted by the FAA about the outcome.

If you would like to donate to this fund to help students in need, please contact Allison Frank in the Business Office allisonfrank@swc.edu or 505-467-6839. Donations of any amount are welcome.

Student Emergency Loan (SEL) Request Policy

Short term emergency loans can be requested for students experiencing financial hardship if the hardship negatively impacts their ability to pay for housing, utilities and other necessities. The SEL request was created to help students through these financial hardships. The loan is an advance of a portion of the student's financial aid.

Eligibility Criteria for Students

To be eligible to borrow a short-term loan, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be FAFSA eligible and have available financial aid to cover the SEL and the following quarter's tuition and fees.
- Be enrolled in a degree seeking program and registered for the quarter
- Have a zero-dollar balance

Maximum Amounts and Cost of Borrowing

The maximum a student can borrow is \$1,500. The allowable loan amount can be 50% of the projected financial aid disbursement less cost of tuition or \$1,500, whichever is less. There is not a service fee or interest charge.

How to Apply and Documentation Needed

To apply, students should come into the Financial Aid Office no earlier than 2 weeks prior to the start of quarter. The SEL Request application must be completed and include a copy of documentation for the request such as overdue utility bill, overdue rent notice, police or fire department report for loss of personal items due to theft or fire, or quote of repair cost for a car in the student's name.

Applications must be received by Monday at 12:00 PM for Thursday processing. This gives the Financial Aid Office time to get the request to the business office. SEL payments will be processed via direct deposit on Thursdays of each week.

Restrictions

- A student may request only two SEL's per school year.

Awarding Policy

Important Reminder: Students must apply for financial aid every academic year. The new year's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) becomes available on October 1st annually (for the upcoming Fall) at www.studentaid.gov. A financial aid offer can include a combination of self-help (non-need based federal and/or private loans) awards, as well as any internal scholarships or external student resources acquired. Graduate-level students do not qualify for federal grants (per federal regulation).

Federal Loan programs require MA students to be enrolled in a minimum of 4 units per quarter (3 units for PhD students). Loan amounts are based on the number of units the student takes for credit and are subject to each student's Cost of Attendance limit.

Student Interviews

Each student is required to have an individual aid discussion prior to any aid offer. Each financial aid offer is generated on an individual basis dependent upon the type of aid the student qualifies for and the amount the student requests and is dependent upon their eligibility for each federal aid program. There is no priority deadline (except for SWC Honorary Scholarships) for federal aid, other than the annual June 30 FAFSA submission deadline for the current year. Once a student completes their FAFSA, they should reach out to the SWC Financial Aid Advisor (finaidadvisor@swd.edu) to discuss aid requests/needs, options and packaging. A student is required to submit loan Entrance Counseling and sign their Master Promissory Note online at www.studentaid.gov (if federal loan funds are requested). **Students do not have to take out loan maximums and are advised to only request what they need each quarter (if any loan funds are needed) based upon their individual tuition, fees and living expenses.**

If deemed eligible for Federal Aid by annual online FAFSA at <http://www.studentaid.gov>, a student can request up to \$20,500 annually in Federal Unsubsidized Loans. The loan must first cover tuition and required fees before any living expense refunds can be generated. If the Federal Unsubsidized Loan amount is not sufficient to cover tuition and required fees and/or additional living expenses, the student can apply for the Federal Graduate PLUS Loan, which is a credit-based application. The student can request loan funds up to their individual Cost of Attendance. All student aid, including all student loans, internal/external scholarships and other deemed resources considered Estimated Financial Assistance, cannot exceed the student's established COA (Cost of Attendance).

Scholarship amounts can reduce loan amounts and loan amounts can always be adjusted according to student wishes and prior to each scheduled disbursement. Satisfactory Academic Progress is monitored each quarter (see Policy) and also all withdrawals for any Return to Title IV calculation (see RT4 Policy).

Note: Living expense refunds can only be considered after sufficient aid is applied to cover direct costs (tuition & required fees) for all terms (quarters of enrollment). After all aid (federal, institutional, external) is applied, a living expense refund can be requested. Quarterly living expense refunds cannot exceed the maximum allowed for the term. Each quarter maximum is dependent upon the student's number of quarters enrolled in, total aid, and financial aid budget (Cost of Attendance). Any living expense refund amount exception requests may be presented to the Financial Aid Advisor for review, in consultation with the Financial Aid Director, in which a "Cost of Attendance Adjustment" may be requested (see below).

Cost of Attendance Adjustments

Federal financial aid regulations allow SWC to adjust a student's cost of attendance if education-related expenses exceed the student's set/established cost of attendance. If approved, an increase to the cost of attendance ONLY increases any remaining loan eligibility. Requests are handled after the 1st week of the start of each term. Please contact the Financial Aid Advisor for any questions.

Verification Process

Verification is a process in which the U.S. Department of Education selects a financial aid applicant's FAFSA to be audited. This may entail a review of federal income tax return transcripts from the IRS and other documentation. Once verification documents are received and processed by the Financial Aid Office, we may be required to make corrections to your FAFSA. If your FAFSA is selected for verification by the U.S. Department of Education, you will not be awarded financial aid until you submit the required documentation, and it is processed by our office.

IV. Federal Loan Programs (Title IV)

The Unsubsidized Direct Loan

An Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan is a non-need-based loan available to degree students who maintain satisfactory academic progress and are enrolled with at least half-time status. During the period a student remains enrolled with at least half-time status, the interest is accruing, and payments are deferred. At the end of the program or if the student attends less than half-time the interest will be capitalized

<https://www.salliemae.com/student-loans/manage-your-private-student-loan/understand-student-loan-payments/learn-about-interest-and-capitalization>.

Repayment of the loan by the student begins six months after completing the program, upon early withdrawal, or when enrollment status changes to less than half-time (minimum of 4 units per quarter for MA programs and minimum of 3 units per quarter for the PhD program).

For the 2022-2023 academic year, the maximum amount potentially awarded to a student in Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans is \$20,500. The total limit including undergraduate loans is \$138,500. An origination fee is a percentage charged by the lender and guarantee agency and will be deducted from the loan proceeds. The origination fee is 1.57% on unsubsidized loans accepted on or after 10/01/20 and before 10/01/23. The fixed interest rate is at 6.54% for the 2022-23 award year.

Students who expect to use Federal Direct Loan funds to cover all or part of the cost of tuition must have a loan guarantee in place at the time of registration to have funds to cover their tuition. This requires the submission of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other documentation that can take as long as six weeks to process. For more information on the FAFSA, visit <https://studentaid.gov>. **SWC's federal school code is 030761.**

Grad PLUS Loan

Grad PLUS loans are also non-need based. To be eligible, students must be enrolled at least half-time in a degree seeking program, meet the general eligibility requirements for the FAFSA, and not have an adverse credit history. The annual limit for a Graduate PLUS Loan is the student's Cost of Attendance (COA) minus any other financial assistance the student is receiving. Graduate PLUS loans do not have a grace period, but for students who received a PLUS Loan as a graduate student, there is an automatic six-month deferment after the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time enrollment in a degree-seeking graduate level program.

The origination fee is 4.228% on PLUS loans accepted on or after 10/01/20 and before 10/01/23. The fixed interest rate is 7.54% for the 2022-23 award year.

The Graduate PLUS loan application can be found on the Federal Student Aid website at <https://studentaid.gov/plus-app/grad/landing>

A separate Master Promissory Note for PLUS loans must be completed before funds can be disbursed, Entrance Counseling for PLUS loans is also required.

To complete the Master Promissory Note for PLUS loans, go to:
<https://studentaid.gov/mpn/grad/landing>

To complete Entrance Counseling, go to (select “I am a Graduate or Professional Student”):
<https://studentaid.gov/entrance-counseling/>

Private Loans

SWC does not have a preferred Private Student Loan lender. Students are encouraged to use a private loan comparison tool, such as <https://choice.fastproducts.org/FastChoice/loan/options> or <https://studentloanhero.com/marketplace/private-student-loans/>

The annual limit of a private student loan is the student’s cost of attendance (minus any other aid). The interest rates vary. These loans are approved based on credit history and can have a co-signer. It is the student’s responsibility to apply to the lender of their choosing and to inform the financial aid office. Grace periods for private loans are determined by the lender.

V. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Federal regulations require all federal financial aid recipients to comply with definitive academic standards to maintain eligibility for Financial Aid. The Financial Aid Office will review all financial aid recipients for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) four times per year (end of Fall quarter, end of Winter quarter, end of Spring quarter, and end of Summer quarter).

The review will measure both qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (completion rate) standards, as well as maximum timeframe review. When evaluating SAP, all quarters of enrollment will be evaluated regardless of whether the student received Financial Aid during those quarters or not. For transfer students, only those credits that are transferred to SWC, and all credits attempted while attending SWC, will be counted toward the time frame. All Title IV SAP standards for students applying for and receiving Federal Financial Aid are established and monitored by the Financial Aid Office.

Qualitative Progress (Cumulative GPA):

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75.

Quantitative Progress (Completion Rate):

Students must pass and complete a minimum of 67% percent of all course work attempted at SWC. Any course with a grade of withdraw (W), (F), or incomplete (I), is considered attempted but is not considered completed course work. A course is counted as completed only once, regardless of how many times attempted or the grade earned. Transfer credit is counted as attempted and completed, thus increasing a student's completion rate.

Maximum Time Frame (Pace of Progression):

Students receiving Financial Aid must complete their program of study within a reasonable timeframe. The maximum timeframe is 150% of the published length of the academic program (to include all transfer credit hours) as measured in units. *For example, for a MA Program that requires 90 units, once a student attains 135 units (90x150%=135), they have met the maximum timeframe.* A student who reaches the maximum timeframe without completing his/her degree requirements is not eligible to receive federal financial aid. The timeframe calculation counts all attempted hours including repeated courses, ineligible courses and transfer hours accepted by SWC. This also includes hours taken under previous major and hours for which a student did not receive financial aid.

End of Quarter Review

Following every quarter, the three (3) SAP components will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Office. SAP is measured cumulatively and include all periods of the student's enrollment, even periods in which the student did not receive Federal financial aid. Transfer credit hours are also included.

Financial Aid Warning

A student is automatically placed on a one-quarter Financial Aid Warning after the first quarter they fail to meet qualitative (2.75 GPA) and/or completion rate requirements (67%) for satisfactory academic progress. ***A student can continue to receive aid during this period.***

Students on warning must meet all cumulative standards by the end of the warning quarter to be eligible for financial aid the next quarter they attend. Note: Students who were on a prior approved appeal or appeal probation and do not meet all cumulative standards will not be eligible for another warning status and will be placed directly into suspension for purposes of financial aid.

Financial Aid Suspension

Continuing students are suspended from receiving financial aid if they do not meet the SAP by the end of their warning quarter. ***Students on financial aid suspension will not receive any federal financial aid.*** Financial aid eligibility may be reinstated when all requirements of SAP are met. This suspension pertains only to financial aid and does not prevent a student from enrolling and paying for classes on their own. A student on Suspension status has the right to Appeal.

Financial Aid Probation

A student who has submitted an appeal and has financial aid eligibility reinstated will be placed on Financial Aid Probation. At the end of the 1st probation quarter, the student is required to meet SAP standards. If a student does not meet SAP standards at the end of the 1st probation quarter but demonstrates an increase towards SAP requirements, the student may appeal for a 2nd (extended) probation quarter.

Appeal Process for Students on Financial Aid Suspension

Students who fall below SWC's SAP requirements have the right to appeal their ineligibility for Federal Financial Aid. All appeals are reviewed for extenuating circumstances by the Financial Aid Office (Appeal Review Committee). Appeals must contain the following documentation:

The student must submit a Letter of Appeal, describing the extenuating circumstance(s) that prevented the student from meeting the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements and describe all actions the student has taken to prevent a repeat occurrence. If the student's academic transcript indicates that the student had more than one difficult quarter, the student must address the circumstance(s) for each quarter.

Students should attach any documentation that is relevant to their circumstance(s). For example, if the student had an illness that prevented them from attending classes, the student may provide a doctor's note or medical billing statement as verification of illness.

The Financial Aid Office will review the appeal and may request additional verification paperwork from the student in order to further document the appeal. The student will be notified of the Committee's decision within 10 days of the Committee's receiving the appeal letter.

Exit Loan Counseling

All students who borrowed funds through the Federal Direct Unsubsidized and /or PLUS Student Loan Program that leave the College, regardless of the reason (graduation, leave of absence, withdrawal, suspension, or expulsion) are required to complete Exit Loan Counseling at studentloans.gov. Populi records will be locked and access to transcripts will be blocked until Exit Loan Counseling is completed.

VI. Refund Policy

Refund Policy for Financial Aid Borrowers (Return to Title IV)

Regulations governing refunds of Title IV government loans require schools to refund all unearned tuition to the lender rather than the student. This will lower the amount of the borrower's loan. Refunds of government loans are determined on a pro-rata calculation based on the last date of attendance. When the College's refund policy differs from the Federal policy and the College is required to refund unearned tuition to the lender, the student may be required to pay the College any tuition due, based on the College's refund policy.

Financial Aid Refund Checks and Electronic Deposit to Students

Disbursement is the process of applying federal loans, scholarships and private loans that the student has accepted to their account.

Any remaining loan funds (after tuition & required fees have been paid) are refunded to the student according to the following schedule below. The first refund is posted to the student's bank account on Thursday the first week of classes and is limited to \$2,500 maximum.

Financial Aid Disbursement and Refund Schedule for 2022-2023

2022-23 Disbursement/Refund Dates (MA Programs):

Fall 2022

9/23: First Day of Classes. Loan funds disbursed to student bill to pay tuition costs only

9/29: #1: Refund for living expenses issued (1st refund cannot be more than \$2,500).

10/27: #2: Refund for living expenses issued.

11/24: #3: Refund for living expenses issued.

There is not a December living expense refund date as the quarter ends 12/11/22. Please plan ahead for the Fall Quarter by ensuring you have determined your Fall 2022 Quarter budget correctly to include any December living expenses.

Winter 2023

1/6: First Day of Classes. Loan funds disbursed to student bill to pay tuition costs only

1/12: #1: Refund for living expenses issued. (1st refund cannot be more than \$2,500).

2/9: #2: Refund for living expenses issued.

3/9: #3: Refund for living expenses issued.

Spring 2023

3/31: First Day of Classes. Loan funds disbursed to student bill to pay tuition costs only

4/6: #1: Refund for living expenses issued. (1st refund cannot be more than \$2,500).

5/4: #2: Refund for living expenses issued.

6/1: #3: Refund for living expenses issued.

Summer 2023

6/23: First Day of Classes. Loan funds disbursed to student bill to pay tuition costs only

6/29: #1: Refund for living expenses issued. (1st refund cannot be more than \$2,500).

7/27: #2: Refund for living expenses issued.

8/24: #3: Refund for living expenses issued.

Students must sign up to receive refunds via electronic deposit by submitting the *ACH Authorization Form* to the Bursar. The *ACH Authorization Form* can be found in Populi under files/student files/student forms/ACH Authorization Form. It is also available from the Bursar and in the front office. Please allow up to five business days to process direct deposit authorization. The ACH authorization is in full effect for the duration of the student's enrollment unless SWC receives written notification of its termination. Financial aid refunds are only issued via ACH/direct deposit unless an exception is requested from the Bursar at bursar@swc.edu.

After the first week of classes, refund checks and electronic deposits are issued the Thursday following the completion of paperwork. If a check is requested and remains uncashed after mailing, Southwestern College may return the funds to the Department of Education no later than 240 days after the date the original check was issued. Students must contact the Bursar (505-467-6813) to arrange to pick up a check in person. To pick up checks in person, students must come to the front office with a picture ID. If a student is unable to pick up the financial aid check personally, they may designate a representative to pick the check up for them by signing a Waiver to Release Financial Aid Distribution. This form will name the person picking up the check on the student's behalf. The designated person must provide a picture ID for the check to be released.

VII. Managing Student Loans

You can submit payments to your loans at any time, it is best to call your loan servicer and specify where you would like the payment to be allocated. Please review this site: <https://www.salliemae.com/student-loans/manage-your-private-studentloan/understand-student-loan-payments/learn-about-interest-and-capitalization/> regarding how interest is accrued and how to avoid capitalization. This site also discusses forbearance, deferment and payment options. Always avoid default and call your loan servicer if you are struggling to make a payment. Phone number for Direct loan information is 800-433-3243. Before you graduate, please review this link <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/what-is-loan-capitalized-interest>.

VIII. Service-Related Loan Forgiveness Programs

Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

Your student loan balance will be forgiven after 10 years of working in a full-time public service job and making 120 payments according to your payment agreement. Public

service jobs include working for non-profit, government or tribal agency. You are required to submit the Employment Certification form as soon as possible. Review this website for more details <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgivenesscancellation/public-service>.

National Health Services Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program

This program is open to licensed primary care providers in dental, mental and behavioral health that are employed at an NHSC-approved site. To qualify for this program, you must: be a U.S. Citizen or U.S. National, be in an eligible discipline and primary care specialist, have unpaid federal or state loans, and work at a National Health Service Corps approved service. Two years of service allows the opportunity to receive up to \$50,000 in loan repayment. The substance Use Disorder Program offers up to \$75,000 in loan repayment in exchange for a three-year commitment. Refer to <https://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loan-repayment/index.html> and <https://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/eligibility/index.html>.

Indian Health Services (INH) Loan Repayment Program

The mission of the INH is to raise the physical, mental social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest possible level. Health professionals including chemical dependency counselors, clinical psychologists and social workers who are committed to working at an Indian health facility may be awarded up to \$40,000 toward the repayment of your qualified student loans in exchange for an initial two-year service commitment to practice full time at an Indian health program site. Refer to <https://www.ihs.gov/loanrepayment/>.

Allied Health Loan for Service Program

This program is specifically for New Mexico residents who plan to practice as a health professional (behavioral health and social services included) in a designated shortage area within the state. For every year of service, a portion of the loan will be forgiven, penalties will be assessed if the service agreement is not satisfied. **Students must apply for this program before or during school (before graduation).** Refer to http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/alliedhealth_lfs.aspx for more information.

Please note some of these agencies require that you hold a license of a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), a Marriage and Family Therapist or a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor.