

# Office of Student Financial Aid

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The mission of the Office of Student Financial Aid is to serve prospective students and currently enrolled students by providing information, assistance and guidance on ways to plan for and meet the costs of education at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. This office administers a full range of federal, state, university, and private aid programs.

Financial aid is provided to supplement the amount the student and parents can contribute toward the costs of the student's education. The federal government and UNCSA believe the primary responsibility for paying for education rests with the student and his or her parents, who are expected to meet as much of the cost as possible.

## Instructions for Applying for Financial Aid

Undergraduate students wishing to be considered for financial aid should complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Priority consideration will be given to students whose FAFSA applications are received at the Central Processing Service (CPS) by March 1. Students who submit applications after the priority deadline will be considered as time and funds permit.

**Note:** Students wishing to be considered for need-based financial aid must submit a FAFSA each year.

North Carolina residents who wish to be considered for the UNC Need-Based Grant and the NC Education Lottery Scholarship should have their FAFSA filed no later than March 1. Out-of-state students who are interested in receiving funds through their state grant program should be aware of their state aid deadlines; these dates are provided in the FAFSA instruction booklet and at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/deadlines.htm>.

## Types of Financial Aid

The financial aid program at UNCSA offers federal and state grants, loans, employment (Federal Work Study), and scholarships. Financial aid is awarded on the basis of a student's "Expected Family Contribution" (based on the FAFSA calculation) and demonstrated need. Demonstrated need is determined by subtracting the Expected Family Contribution or "EFC" from the "Cost of Attendance" or Financial Aid Budget (a budget determined by the institution, according to federal guidelines). A student who demonstrates financial need and applies in a timely manner can expect to receive a financial aid award letter from UNCSA, which may include funds from one or more of the following sources.

## Grants (Gift Aid)

The Federal Pell Grant Program is designed to provide financial assistance to needy undergraduate college students pursuing their first Bachelor's degree, based on their Expected Family Contribution, as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Pell Grants for the 2011-12 academic year range from \$555 to \$5,550 for full-time attendance. Awards for each academic year depend on federal funding.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) awards are reserved for undergraduate students with exceptional financial need who are eligible for the Federal Pell Grant. The award amount varies, depending on the student's financial situation and federal appropriations.

North Carolina state grants may include the UNC Need-based Grant and the NC Education Lottery Scholarship. Eligibility is determined by information provided by the FAFSA. The programs are administered through the College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC). Final appropriation decisions depend on the North Carolina General Assembly.

Other states award grants, and some allow students to use the grants to attend colleges outside their state. In addition to the FAFSA, a separate state application may be necessary to receive the grant. Students should contact their state education department for complete information.

### **Federal Work-Study Employment (Self Help)**

Federal Work-Study (FWS) is a federal program through which undergraduate college students are provided with jobs, so that they may earn money to meet expenses. Students participating in this program at UNCSA work an average of four to five hours per week. New students awarded FWS must attend an orientation program during the first week of fall semester.

Undergraduate students who want to work on campus but do not qualify for the FWS program may be interviewed and hired by specific departments. These positions are not administered by the Office of Student Financial Aid; students should contact the specific departments directly regarding openings.

### **Loans (Self Help)**

The Federal Perkins Loan is a low interest (5 percent) loan awarded to undergraduate college students. Students must sign a promissory note but do not have to start repayment until nine months after leaving school or dropping below half-time status.

The Federal Direct Loan Program provides low-interest loans directly from the U.S. Department of Education to college students. Students may qualify with at least half-time enrollment. There are a variety of loans available for the student borrower and the parent borrower. Federal Direct Subsidized student loans are based on demonstrated need, but Federal Direct Unsubsidized student loans and PLUS loans for parents are available regardless of need. Grace periods, interest rates, will be provided at the time the student receives his or her award letter.

Subsidized Federal Direct Loans are federally insured loans available to the student borrower. Interest is covered by the federal government during the in-school period and for a six-month grace period. The interest rate is fixed on an annual basis. For 2011-12, the interest rate is 3.4%.

Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans require the student to be responsible for paying the interest, which begins accruing from the date of the first disbursement. Quarterly interest

statements will be sent from the Federal Direct Loan Program. Any unpaid interest will be capitalized when the student goes into repayment. Interest is fixed at 6.8 percent. This loan can be used to replace EFC or for students who do not demonstrate eligibility for need-based aid based on the FAFSA, up to the maximum allowed per grade level.

Under the Federal Direct Loan Program, the maximum Subsidized annual loan limits are \$3,500 for freshmen, \$4,500 for sophomores, and \$5,500 for juniors and seniors. Undergraduates may borrow an additional \$2000 in Unsubsidized loans. Students classified as independent according to FAFSA guidelines may be eligible for additional Unsubsidized loan amounts not to exceed \$4,000 for freshmen and sophomores and \$5,000 for juniors and seniors.

The Federal Direct PLUS Loan is a federal loan available to provide additional funds for educational expenses to parents of dependent undergraduate students at a fixed 7.9 percent interest rate. A parent of a dependent undergraduate may borrow up to the Cost of Attendance Budget minus estimated financial aid per academic year. No demonstration of need is necessary to borrow under this program. However, a credit check will be performed, and the borrower must be creditworthy.

First-time student-loan borrowers of Federal Direct Loans and Federal Perkins Loans at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts are required to complete Entrance Counseling.

Students who borrow under any of the loan programs offered at UNCSA are also required to complete Exit Counseling before leaving campus at the time of graduation or withdrawal from the institution. Any student who fails to complete Exit Counseling can expect to have a “hold” placed on his or her academic record, pending completion of this federal requirement.

### **Scholarships (Gift Aid)**

All undergraduate students who apply for financial aid with the FAFSA are considered for scholarships based solely on demonstrated financial need. Other scholarships may be awarded by the arts dean, based on talent determined at the time of audition or evaluations. Students who want to apply for talent scholarships may wish to complete the FAFSA, since the arts dean may use this information in combination with talent qualifications to make scholarship awards. All scholarships are packaged as part of a student’s financial aid award by the Office of Student Financial Aid.

The following scholarships are provided in conjunction with the University of North Carolina:

*The C.M. and M.D. Suther Scholarship* is awarded annually to a full-time North Carolina resident undergraduate student on the basis of academic standing and financial need. The recipient is chosen by the Office of Student Financial Aid. The award is nonrenewable and varies in amount according to income available from the trust.

*The A.P. and Frances Dickson Scholarship* is awarded annually to a full-time undergraduate student whose permanent residence is in Hoke County, North Carolina. The recipient is chosen by the Office of Student Financial Aid on the basis of academic standing and financial need. The award is nonrenewable and varies in amount according to income available from the trust.

*The James Lee Love Scholarship* is awarded annually to a full-time North Carolina resident undergraduate student. The recipient is chosen by the Office of Student Financial Aid on the basis of academic standing and financial need. The award is nonrenewable and varies in amount according to income available from the trust.

### **Outside Scholarships**

Scholarship information may be available from private foundations, religious organizations, community organizations, and civic groups, as well as professional organizations related to your field of interest. Be sure to explore these opportunities in your community.

The Internet offers a wide range of free information and resource listings for students and prospective students in all areas of study. In addition, students can find free information in the reference section of local libraries (usually under “student aid” or “financial aid”). These materials typically include information about federal, state and institutional resources, as well as private scholarships.

**NOTE:** Students awarded any scholarships from sources outside of UNCOSA are required to report the amount and source to the Office of Student Financial Aid. If your financial aid package includes need-based aid, it is possible that a reduction in previously-awarded aid may be necessary.

### **Other Resources**

- **Department of Veterans Affairs**
  - A student who is a veteran or a dependent of a deceased or disabled veteran may be eligible for benefits. Students should contact the Department of Veterans Affairs for more information.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**
  - Students with a handicap may wish to contact the Vocational Rehabilitation Office in their state for more information.

### **Financial Aid Determination and Award**

Awards are made to students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment for the purpose of obtaining a degree or “Undergraduate Arts Certificate” during the regular academic year. (Special students are not eligible for need-based aid. Degree or arts certificate students taking academic course(s) in the summer session at UNCOSA will only be eligible for need-based aid if they have remaining academic year 2011-12 eligibility for Federal Pell Grant or Federal Direct Loans; other summer session students needing assistance should contact their arts dean.)

In general, students enrolled in courses that do not count toward the specific program to which they have been admitted cannot use enrollment in those courses toward their enrollment status for financial aid purposes. (Examples of various enrollment statuses include full time, three-quarter time, half time and less-than-half time.) In a specific example, students in the undergraduate arts certificate program taking academic courses that are not required for obtaining the arts certificate cannot use the credit hours of the academic courses to increase their enrollment status for financial aid purposes. The financial aid award must be based on a student's enrollment in required courses only, and this enrollment status will be the basis of determining the cost of attendance budget for financial aid purposes. This enrollment status will also be used to determine eligibility for awards including student loans, Pell Grants or any aid based on a specific enrollment status. A student's school bill, however, will be based on their actual course enrollment, rather than their enrollment status for financial aid purposes.

Because of limited funding, financial aid will be awarded to part-time students only after full-time student needs have been met. Students wishing to be considered for federal financial aid must be U.S. citizens or "eligible" non-citizens (see FAFSA instructions for an explanation). Financial aid is awarded without discrimination against a student's race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, handicap, or sexual orientation.

It is important that students understand that all financial aid awards are dependent upon institutional, private, state and/or federal funding. Although UNCSA fully intends to be able to adequately fund offers made and provide accurate information, there is always a possibility that a program may be discontinued, funds may not be appropriated to UNCSA, or a computational error may be made. If this happens, students will be notified immediately regarding any change in an award.

### **Verification of Student Aid Application Information**

The U.S. Department of Education may select a student's application for a process called "verification." This process requires the student to submit certain documents to verify the information supplied on the FAFSA. If selected, the student may be asked to submit copies of federal income tax returns, W-2 forms and other documents. The Office of Student Financial Aid will contact the student regarding these forms. Prompt responses are helpful in order to maximize eligibility.

Failure to provide verification information means the student will not receive aid from the U.S. Department of Education and may not receive need-based aid from other sources. Also, any person who intentionally makes false statements or misrepresentations on a federal aid application is violating the law and is subject to fine or imprisonment or both.

### **Renewal of Financial Aid**

Applicants must file a new FAFSA each year of enrollment. Applicants can complete the FAFSA online at the following Internet address: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

Awards may vary from year to year based on changes in family circumstances and availability of funds. To be eligible for ongoing assistance, a student must continue to have demonstrated need and be maintaining satisfactory academic progress at UNCSA. A student

is not eligible for financial assistance if he/she owes a refund of federal grant aid or is in default on a federal loan.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

To be eligible for federal aid programs, a returning college student must maintain “satisfactory academic progress.” Satisfactory academic progress is determined using the three areas listed below:

### **Qualitative (Grade Point Average)**

To be progressing satisfactorily, students must meet UNCSA standards for minimum Grade Point Averages (GPAs), as detailed in the *UNCSA Bulletin*. The achievement of acceptable GPAs will be monitored and administered by the arts schools and University Programs (Academics), in conjunction with the University Registrar, according to each applicable standard. Although standards vary, all students must achieve a minimum GPA of 2.0 for satisfactory progress according to this policy. GPAs include all course work at UNCSA.

Students on Arts Probation and/or Academic Probation may retain financial aid eligibility, if their cumulative GPA is 2.0 or above, and they meet both of the Quantitative Measures outlined below when SAP is reviewed. Students dismissed, suspended, expelled or not invited to return will not be eligible to receive financial aid.

### **Quantitative**

To be progressing satisfactorily, a student must meet two types of quantitative measures.

### **Completion Ratio**

Students must achieve and maintain a cumulative Completion Ratio of at least **67%** to remain eligible for financial aid. The Completion Ratio will be calculated by dividing the cumulative number of total credit hours **completed** by the cumulative number of total credit hours **attempted**. Credit hours successfully **completed** at UNCSA are for all courses in which a student receives a non-failing letter grade (A – D), S (Satisfactory), or P (Passing). Credit hours **attempted** at UNCSA include credit hours for all courses in which a student was enrolled on the tenth day of class each term. Credit hours from other institution(s) accepted toward a student’s program at UNCSA are added to both **attempted** and **completed** hours.

A student who does not maintain the minimum Completion Ratio of 67% will be placed on Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension for the next academic year. The student will not be reinstated for aid until satisfactory academic progress is established. A student has the right to appeal Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension using the appeal process discussed later in this policy.

## Maximum Timeframe

Undergraduate students must complete their program within the maximum timeframes outlined below.

<b>Normal Length of Program:</b>	<b>Maximum Time-Frame:</b>	
	<i>Full-Time</i>	<i>Part-Time</i>
Undergraduate 4-year program	5 years	8 years

At UNCSA, successful completion of the core arts curriculum is the basis by which students progress toward completion of their program. The arts curriculum requires a mastery of topics acquired through successful completion of a prescribed set of courses in a specified order, in order to obtain and demonstrate proficiency in the art form. Due to the strict structure of the UNCSA arts curriculum, transfer work must demonstrate proficiencies equal to a certain level in the arts curriculum to allow the student to be classified higher than C1 for undergraduates when they enter the program. Therefore, Maximum Timeframe begins with the level assigned at the time the student enters UNCSA.

This policy applies only to students who have been asked to return officially by the arts dean and who are applying for federal financial aid. A complete copy of the “UNCSA Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy — College Title IV Financial Aid Recipients Only” is available at the following link: <http://www.uncsa.edu/financialaid/policies.htm> or from the Office of Student Financial Aid upon request.

## Student Responsibilities

Students have the responsibility to:

- Apply for admission;
- Complete all financial aid forms accurately and submit them in a timely manner;
- Reapply for financial aid each academic year;
- Provide any additional information as requested by the Office of Student Financial Aid or any other UNCSA office;
- Inform the Office of Student Financial Aid of any personal changes (increase or decrease in your financial resources, change in name, address and/or Social Security number, withdraw or transfer from UNCSA);
- Enroll for the necessary number of credit hours;
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress;
- Honor the policies and procedures set forth in the UNCSA Bulletin and the College Life Handbook;
- Request any information you feel is necessary;
- Perform the work that is agreed upon in accepting work-study; and
- Attend required loan counseling and repay your loans in accordance with your repayment schedule.

## **Student Rights**

Students have the right to:

- Obtain information about the student aid programs available at UNCSA;
- Apply and be considered for assistance;
- Request an explanation of any phase of the financial aid process;
- Request special consideration if your family's financial circumstances change significantly (students/families must take the initiative to notify the Office of Student Financial Aid of these changes);
- Request an appointment with the Director of Student Financial Aid concerning financing your education;
- Request information concerning academic programs, costs and refunds, physical facilities, student retention, etc.; and
- Appeal financial aid awards or denials based upon academic progress.

### **Refunds of Charges and Return of Financial Aid Due to Withdrawal from UNCSA**

If a student withdraws from UNCSA during a term, a refund is calculated according to UNCSA policies. These policies vary according to whether or not the student is a recipient of Title IV Federal Aid such as the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Perkins Loan, and Federal Direct Loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, and PLUS). A determination is then made as to whether any aid must be returned to the Title IV Federal Aid Program, any state program or any institutional fund. Required return of funds to all financial aid programs must be made prior to the refund to the student.

Therefore, if a student withdraws or stops attending UNCSA after receiving funds from a Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Perkins Loan, and Federal Direct Loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, and PLUS), the student may be required to repay all or a portion of the financial aid provided to the student from a credit balance on the student's account. The repayment amount will be calculated on the basis of the calendar days remaining in the semester at the time of the student's withdrawal from or failure to attend UNCSA. The student will be notified of any repayments for which the student is responsible, if the student withdraws or leaves during a semester at UNCSA.

A copy of the "Withdrawal from UNCSA – Refund of Charges and Return of Financial Aid" is available at the following link: <http://www.uncsa.edu/financialaid/policies.htm> or from the Office of Student Financial Aid upon request.