



# MONTCLAIR STATE

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## UNIVERSITY



# Student Handbook for Financial Aid



## 1) COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS:

### **Montclair State Email:**

As a student, it is very important that you check your Montclair e-mail daily, even when classes are not in session. All correspondence from University offices will be sent to your e-mail address and professors often use this e-mail to notify students of class cancellations.

Your student e-mail can be accessed through your NEST (Network Engagement and Student Transactions) or by:

- 1) 'Menu' on [www.montclair.edu](http://www.montclair.edu)
- 2) 'About Montclair'
- 3) 'Quick Links'
- 4) Select 'Gmail/Webmail' in the drop down box and then
- 5) log into your email with your NetID and password.

Your NetID is usually your last name, first initial, and a numeric character. You created your password when you first logged into your NEST account. Set-up information was provided in your acceptance packet.

### **NEST (Network Engagement and Student Transactions):**

NEST is Montclair State University's administrative web portal. You can access your student e-mail, view/pay bills, view academic transcripts, and access other important Montclair State information. Students must check their NEST account regularly (even when classes are not in session) for changes in financial aid, including requirements that may need to be completed in order for aid to disburse.

## 2) FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

FERPA (a federal law enacted in 1974) protects the privacy of student education records. Once a student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, he or she becomes an "eligible student," and all rights formerly given to parents under FERPA transfer to the student. Generally, FERPA prevents a school official from discussing specific student information with anybody other than the student.

If a student wants to allow a Montclair State office to discuss specific details with any person, including a parent, the student must provide permission to allow a family member, spouse or guardian access to view your Educational Record through **NEST** for seven (7) days. Once set up, they become your "Proxy." They can view the records that you allow access to, but they may not update or take any action on your behalf. Proxy at Montclair State permits you to set up access for a maximum of seven (7) days.

Requests from students for disclosure to third parties that are sent by e-mail or by the Internet using student identification numbers and PINs is not considered valid written consent for disclosure. Typically, you have to submit the necessary form for completion and submission to the third party.

The Montclair State University FERPA policies are located at <http://www.montclair.edu/policies/student/ferpa/>.

### **3) ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID**

#### **Who is Eligible for Financial Aid?**

Eligibility for federal aid is based on a federal formula which produces an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which is calculated from the information provided on the FAFSA. The Federal Processor sends the student a Student Aid Report (SAR) which includes their Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Your status at the University will determine the extent to which you are eligible for various financial aid programs. Your enrollment as a full- or part-time student, undergraduate or graduate are key factors in determining your eligibility for government programs, and determines what types and how much you can receive.

Additionally, you must:

- ❖ be a U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident
- ❖ have a valid Social Security number
- ❖ have a high school diploma or GED
- ❖ register with Selective Service System for all males between 18-26
- ❖ be enrolled as a regular student in an eligible program
- ❖ make satisfactory academic progress
- ❖ not be in default in any loan program or owe any federal refund
- ❖ not exceed the allowable limits (i.e.: completion of credits in a timely manner) for your program

#### **Undergraduate Students:**

Undergraduate students pursuing their first four-year undergraduate degree (Bachelors) may be eligible for the full array of financial aid programs from the federal and state governments. Those students wishing to obtain a second four-year degree or a program certificate may only qualify for federal loans.

#### **Graduate Students:**

Federal and state funding for graduate students is limited to loans, fellowships or assistantships from the Graduate School and outside/private scholarships.

In 2018, Governor Murphy signed legislation which provides undocumented students access to NJ State Financial Aid. This bill expands upon the New Jersey Tuition Equality Act, also referred to as the “New Jersey Dream Act” to provide NJ Grants and Scholarships to make college more affordable. Students who qualify can receive funding beginning in the 2018-2019 academic school year.

**Eligibility Requirements for [DREAMers](#):**

- Attended a New Jersey high school for three or more years;
- Graduated from a New Jersey high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in New Jersey;
- Be entering student or currently enrolled in an accredited New Jersey college or University;
- In the case of a person without lawful immigration status, file an **affidavit** each year with the institution of higher education stating that states the student has filed an application to legalize the student’s immigration status or will file an application as soon as the student is eligible to do so.
- To receive state aid, you must be enrolled full-time at a four-year institution or at least half time at a two-year institution.
- If you are a male, age 18-25, you are required to be registered for Selective Service. If you are not registered, complete the **Selective Service Registration Form**. You may download the form online or obtain one at the local post office and mail it. For more information on Selective Service for Immigrants and Dual Nationals, please visit the **Select Service System Website**

**4) APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

**General Application Procedures:**

A student interested in applying for financial aid at Montclair State University must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for each academic year. You can apply online at Montclair State University's Federal School Code number is **002617**.

**The following deadlines apply for the FAFSA and NJ state information:**

	<b>Deadline Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>FAFSA</b>	<b>MSU – February 1 every year</b>	Priority deadline for full consideration of all aid types
	NJ Grants – April 15	Continuing students for Fall and Spring term enrollment
	NJ Grants – September 15	First time students – Fall and Spring term enrollment
NJ Grants – additional questions and incomplete tasks	November 1	All students to complete their NJ Grant record

For the 2021-22 FAFSA, students will use the 2019 federal tax return information to file their

FAFSA application. We recommend that you use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to complete your FAFSA. This ensures the accuracy of federal tax data and can eliminate additional documentation later in the process.

### **Dreamer students:**

To apply for NJ financial aid go to the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (NJ HESAA) website to complete The **New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application**.

*After you submit your FAFSA or Alternative application, your record may be selected for Verification:*

### **Federal Verification:**

If you are selected by the Federal processor, there will be a message on your Student Aid Report (SAR). In this process, Montclair State will compare the information on your FAFSA with copies of your and your parents' or your spouse's (if you are married) Federal tax return, W-2 forms, and other financial documents. You must submit this information before your Federal aid is disbursed. If there are differences between your application information and your financial documents, the Financial Aid office will submit corrections and adjust your aid accordingly. All verification documents are submitted via StudentForms ([montclair.verifymyfafsa.com](http://montclair.verifymyfafsa.com)).

### **State Verification:**

If you are a New Jersey resident receiving state aid (NJ Tuition Aid Grant [TAG] or any other state program), the state may select you for state verification. If you receive an email requesting additional documentation from the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA), you must **forward all requested information and financial documents directly to HESAA**. In some cases, HESAA may request the same or similar information that was requested by the Financial Aid Office. To ensure that your financial aid funds disburse, please submit all required documentation to HESAA before the state deadlines.

## **5) TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID:**

Financial aid is any funding for your college education that comes from outside sources. *Gift aid* and *self-help aid* are two categories of financial aid. Gift aid comes in the form of grants and scholarships and does not have to be repaid. Self-help aid comes in the form of student or alternative loans and work-study. Loans must be repaid. Because financial aid at Montclair State is awarded based on financial need, students may receive a combination of gift and self-help aid in their financial aid package.

*Note: The following information on the student aid programs is current as of the publication date of this guide. MSU reserves the right to change or cancel awards because of regulatory changes, revised allocations, or additional information concerning a student's financial aid eligibility. Awarding is dependent upon program requirements and the availability of funds.*

## **Federal Title IV Programs:**

### **Federal Pell Grant Program**

A Federal Pell Grant is gift aid that does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are limited to qualifying students pursuing their first undergraduate degree and are prorated if a student is enrolled in fewer than 12 credits each semester. A student may not receive a Pell Grant from more than one college at the same time. Funding for the Pell Grant program is subject to Congressional appropriations; specific grant amounts may change each academic year.

### **Federal Supplemental Educational Grant (FSEOG)**

Institutions are given a limited amount of SEOG funds each academic year by the U.S. Department of Education. Montclair State University awards undergraduate students SEOG based upon exceptional financial need as demonstrated through the results of filing the FAFSA. Priority must be given to students who receive Federal Pell Grants. Since funds are limited, the University's priority filing deadline for FAFSA is February 1st. Amounts may vary for commuter and on-campus resident students.

### **Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)**

Federal Work-Study provides job opportunities for undergraduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay educational expenses. If you are offered a Federal Work-Study award, the aid notification will state the amount you are able to earn for the academic year. It is the student's responsibility to find employment on campus to earn these funds. If a student does not find employment by the end of October for Fall or March for Spring, this fund will be cancelled.

Earnings from Federal Work-Study do not help pay your semester charges. You are paid bi-weekly from the Payroll Office for hours worked. These funds can be used to pay for items such as books and supplies, travel or other educational incidentals.

### **Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program**

A federal grant for students who intend to teach in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves students from low-income families in designated fields. Students must be admitted to the Teacher Education program and meet certain academic requirements to qualify. Award amounts are based on government funding levels.

Students seeking a TEACH Grant must complete a FAFSA annually. If you would like to discuss a teaching career and eligibility for the TEACH Grant, please contact the [Center of Pedagogy](#).

*If you receive a TEACH grant, but do not complete the required teaching service, you will be required to repay the grants as a Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, with the interest charged*

from the date of each TEACH Grant disbursement.

### **Federal Direct (Stafford) Loan Program**

Federal Direct Stafford Loans are available to students enrolled at least half-time and are the major form of self-help from the U.S. Department of Education. Loans must be repaid once the student leaves school or drops below half-time.

### **Federal Direct PLUS Loan Program**

Federal PLUS loans are available to parents of dependent undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time. The parent borrowing through this program must be a U.S. Citizen or an eligible non-citizen and must not have an adverse credit history. The interest rate is fixed each year. Please be advised there is an origination fee (approximately 4%) which may include an up-front rebate on these loans. Repayment options vary based on the choice made by the parent at the time of application.

*Note: For Parent PLUS loans, forbearances and deferments are available if you qualify; contact DL Servicing at 1-800-848-0979 for more information.*

### **Graduate PLUS Loan**

Federal PLUS loans are available to graduate students enrolled at least half-time. The graduate student must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and must not have adverse credit history. Qualifying students may only borrow up to the cost of attendance minus other financial assistance. The terms and conditions applicable to Parent PLUS Loans (above) also apply to Graduate and Professional PLUS Loans. This program requires a separate application and a signed Master Promissory Note (MPN); go to [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov).

*Note: For Graduate PLUS loans, forbearances and deferments are available if you qualify; contact DL Servicing at 1-800-848-0979 for more information.*

### **Annual and Aggregate (lifetime) Loan Limits:**

<b>Annual Loan Limits – Direct (Stafford) Loans Undergraduate</b>			
<b>Dependent Students</b>	<b>Annual Loan Limit – Subsidized</b>	<b>Annual Loan Limit - Unsubsidized</b>	<b>Combined Amount</b>
First Year (Freshman)	3,500	2,000	5,500
Second Year (Sophomore)	4,500	2,000	6,500
Third Year and Beyond (Junior and Senior)	5,500	2,000	7,500
<b>Annual Loan Limits – Direct (Stafford) Loans Undergraduate</b>			



<b>Independent Students (and dependent students with parent(s) denied a PLUS loan)</b>	<b>Annual Loan Limit – Subsidized</b>	<b>Annual Loan Limit - Unsubsidized</b>	<b>Combined Amount</b>
First Year (Freshman)	3,500	6,000	9,500
Second Year (Sophomore)	4,500	6,000	10,500
Third Year and Beyond (Junior and Senior)	5,500	7,000	12,500
<b>Annual Loan Limits – Direct (Stafford) Loans Graduate and Professional Students</b>			
<b>Graduate and Professional Students</b>	20,500		

<b>Aggregate Loan Limits – Direct (Stafford) Loans Undergraduate</b>			
	<b>Subsidized Loans</b>	<b>Unsubsidized Loans</b>	<b>Combined Amount</b>
<b>Dependent Students</b>	23,000	8,000	31,000
<b>Independent Students (and dependent students whose parent(s) were denied a PLUS loan</b>	23,000	34,500	57,500
<b>Aggregate Loan Limits – Direct (Stafford) Loans Graduate and Professional Students</b>			
	<b>Subsidized Loans</b>	<b>Unsubsidized Loans</b>	<b>Combined Amount</b>
<b>Graduate and Professional Students</b>	65,500 (including undergraduate loans)	73,000	138,500

Federal student loans provide students with a number of borrower benefits including Deferment and Loan Forgiveness options. This information is available in detail on the Direct Loan Master Promissory Note which you must read and sign. More information can be found at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

### **Federal Loan Disbursement Policy:**

Montclair State notifies a borrower of each disbursement made to their account via email. Under the U.S. Department of Education regulations, you have the right to cancel all or part of the loan(s) within 14 days of the date of this notice. If you wish to cancel all or part of the loan(s) **prior** to a refund being generated (if eligible), please do so via your NEST account by selecting Change/Decline Award. If you decide to cancel all or part of the loan(s) **after** you received a refund check or direct deposit (if eligible), we recommend you contact your loan servicer. You can find your servicer at [www.nsls.ed.gov](http://www.nsls.ed.gov).

### **State of NJ Programs:**

The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) is the NJ State Agency that runs the Tuition Aid Grant program (TAG), Education Opportunity Fund Grant (EOF), and various scholarship programs.

They also have online services, tools and other resources at <https://www.hesaa.org/Pages/NJGrantsHome.aspx>.

In addition to the basic eligibility requirements for financial aid, full-time undergraduate students may be eligible for state grant funds if they are a resident of NJ for at least 12 months prior to the initial disbursement. The parent(s) of a dependent student must also be New Jersey Residents for the prescribed period of time. In addition, state grant recipients must meet the New Jersey State deadlines for the submission of additional information requests, such as:

- ❖ Verification documents
- ❖ College choice changes
- ❖ Corrections to ineligible conditions
- ❖ State Deadlines for Submitting the FAFSA – see chart on page 5
- ❖ State Deadlines for Submitting Additional Information to HESAA:

### **The Tuition Aid Grant (TAG)**

Students are notified of their grant amount by NJ HESAA directly. The amount listed on your Montclair aid notification is an estimate until you complete all state requirements. TAG awards range from \$1718 to \$7,474 at Montclair State for the 2020-21 year.

You may receive an award for up to nine (9) semesters if you are eligible. You must reapply for funds each year by submitting a FAFSA by April 15 for renewal students and September 15 for new students or February 15 for spring only applicants.

### **Educational Opportunity Fund Grants (EOF)**

Established by the New Jersey Legislature in 1968, Educational Opportunity Fund Grants (EOF) are awarded to undergraduates from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who also demonstrate financial need. Applicants must apply to the program when they are applying to the University. Undergraduate students in this program can receive grant funds which range from \$1,300 to \$1,550 a year.

Graduate students may also be eligible; please contact the EOF Office for more information regarding Graduate EOF.

### **NJ STARS II**

The NJ STARS II program is a continuation of the county college NJ STARS program. It provides funding to students who transfer to a New Jersey four-year public college or university to earn a bachelor's degree. The amount of the NJ STARS II award for the first two semesters at a New Jersey four-year public college or university is based on the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) upon graduation from a community college. Funding for this program is contingent upon the availability of funds from NJ HESAA.

## NJ STARS II Requirements:

- ❖ Must be continuously enrolled full-time.
- ❖ Must meet all admission or application requirements established by the four-year public institution.
- ❖ Must meet all institutional deadlines for admission and financial aid.
- ❖ Once admitted, students must submit to the New Jersey four-year public institution a final county college transcript that reflects a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher.
- ❖ Must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually within established State deadlines: [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).

[Read more about the NJ STARS II program from HESAA.](#)

## Other Types of Financial Assistance:

### Alternative/Private Student Loans

Students can consider an Alternative Student Loan to supplement their student aid. The borrower applies directly with the lender. The applicant or co-signer (if applying with one) must be credit-worthy. The borrower or cosigner does not have to be a parent. Once the application is approved, the lender will request certification of eligibility from the school. This process can take up to six weeks. [Read more about private student loans.](#)

### Montclair State Resident Grants

The University has limited discretionary funds which are utilized to assist on-campus students with the cost of their housing charges. Awards vary and funding is based on institutional support. Your FAFSA must be submitted before our priority deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup> to be considered for these funds.

### Scholarships

All scholarships are awarded by the Admissions Office to incoming freshmen students or by the student's academic department. Most departments advertise their scholarship availability in early spring for the following year. Please contact those offices if you have questions regarding scholarships.

### Student Employment Programs

Students who file FAFSA, but do not qualify for federal work-study may look for a Student Assistant job on campus. Students can work up to 12 hours a week during the academic year and are paid out of the department/office operating budget. A student's supervisor determines their work schedule based on their academic commitments, scheduling needs, and availability of

funds. A variety of jobs are available in various offices and department on campus. **Read** more about student employment opportunities [here](#).

## **Unemployment Waiver Program**

### **What are the rules for registration?**

- ❖ Enrollment is limited to available courses subject to space-availability. Permits of any kind at any time are not allowed and will forfeit your Waiver/Referral.
- ❖ Students must meet with their academic advisor prior to the registration date.
- ❖ Registration before assigned dates will result in automatic forfeiture of the Waiver.
- ❖ Students are to schedule their appointment with their Employment Counselor in a timely fashion to receive a signed unemployment Certificate/Tuition Waiver (workforce NJ Certification/Referral) within the timelines above. Counselors can only sign a Referral between the program's opening date and before its closing date each semester.
- ❖ All documentation and requirements must be met by the deadline date.

Find more information [here](#).

## **6) UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE**

### **Aid Offered on the Basis of Hours Enrolled:**

Your first financial aid package will be calculated assuming you will be full-time (12 or more credits undergraduate, 6 credits graduate) each semester. Your actual financial aid amounts will be finalized based on the number of credits for which you are registered at the end of the add/drop period. Some types of aid will be adjusted to reflect your enrollment status (Federal Pell Grant, NJ TAG, and Federal Loans). Federal Loan programs require at least half-time enrollment; Federal Pell Grant is prorated and the NJ State programs require full-time enrollment. Most students are not eligible for aid for less than half-time enrollment, although some private loan options may be considered as well as prorated Pell Grant, if eligible.

### **Enrollment Status is defined as:**

	Full-time	Three quarters-time	Half-time
<b>Undergraduate</b>	12 credits or more	9 – 11 credits	6 credits
<b>Graduate</b>	6 credits	4 - 5 credits	3 credits

### **Financial Aid Notification:**

For entering new students who complete their FAFSA on or before February 1, an initial financial aid notification is emailed beginning in late November. This process continues as

FAFSA's are received. Continuing students receive their initial aid notification in June after spring grades are posted. All financial aid can also be viewed on NEST.

Please review the financial aid notification carefully. It indicates the types and amounts of aid for which you are eligible at Montclair State University and any additional action required on your part. It also provides important guidance for receiving and maintaining your financial aid.

All financial aid is subject to enrollment, commuter/on-campus living arrangements and verification requirements and may be adjusted based on actual data once the semester begins. Please refer to our [Verification Procedures](#) if you are notified that you have been selected. You can review your Financial Aid Requirements on NEST.

The availability of funds from federal and state programs is subject to Congressional and NJ Legislative appropriations and changes in federal and state legislation and regulations each year. Montclair State awards are based on institutional funding levels.

### **Understanding Your Aid Notification/Definitions:**

The Aid Notification on NEST displays the financial aid you are eligible to receive for the academic year. Typically, financial aid awards are divided into two equal semester amounts and will be applied as estimated aid to your semester bill.

If you are eligible for a Direct Student Loan, you must accept, reduce or decline your loans on NEST. All first-time borrowers must sign a Master Promissory Note, complete the Entrance Counseling and the Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement (ASLA) at

### **Adjustments to Financial Aid Awards/Overawards:**

Receipt of outside financial aid (scholarships, waivers, reimbursements) will result in a review of your financial aid package to ensure that over-awarding of federal or state funds does not happen. In accordance with Federal, State and University policy, any student who receives a combination of outside, government and institutional gift aid assistance that exceeds the cost of attendance for the academic year will have student loan or institutional funds reduced or canceled so that the total award does not exceed the cost of attendance.

## **7) FINANCIAL AID FOR OTHER TERMS OR SITUATIONS:**

### **Transfer Information:**

If you are an incoming transfer student to Montclair State University, please be aware that *financial aid does not transfer from institution to institution.*

- o You must complete or update an existing FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). List Montclair State as one of your college choices. Montclair State University's Federal School Code is **002617**. No other application is required.
- o If you received a New Jersey Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) or State scholarship,

you must notify the Higher Education for Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) of your plan to transfer. This will allow your State awards to be sent to Montclair State. You may notify them by accessing your account at njfams.org or by calling 1-800-792-8670 Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

- o If you received a Direct Student Loan at your prior school, you should contact them to complete Exit Counseling. Additionally, if your previous school gave you a Perkins Loan, contact their loan collections office to complete an in-school deferment form.

- o If you were chosen for federal verification, you will need to complete that process at Montclair State even if you did so at your prior college. Instructions will be posted to your NEST account if applicable.

### **Aid for the Summer Term(s):**

Special admits, visiting or non-matriculated students are not eligible for funding from Montclair State.

To be eligible for summer aid, students must be meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements at the end of the spring term. Since all campus-based funds are usually exhausted during the academic year, summer term awards consist primarily of student loans and Federal Pell Grant.

**Students who only want to receive additional Pell Grant funds (and DO NOT want a summer loan) do not need to complete the Summer Loan Request form. Your aid will be added to your NEST when you register for summer courses.**

Typically, unused Pell Grant funds will be applied first. If you are eligible for Year-Round Pell (enrolled in six credits or more), those funds will be determined and added to your awards if you meet eligibility criteria.

*To apply for summer loans, you must complete the following:*

- o Montclair State University Summer Loan Request form ([available in late March](#)).
- o FAFSA (if not already on file).
- o Register for at least six (6) credits as an undergraduate or 3 credits as a graduate.

Summer aid will not be processed for files that are still incomplete as of July.

**NOTE:** *Your summer application will remain unprocessed until you register for all of your summer classes.*

### **Aid for the Winter Session:**

Most federal and state financial aid is typically not available for the Winter Session. In some

cases, enrollment in a winter class may be combined with the subsequent spring term to permit aid eligibility. Typically, determination of aid including winter enrollment is calculated after the spring term begins.

### **Enrollment at Another Institution:**

Occasionally, students want to spend a semester or academic year at another domestic institution or a student may enroll simultaneously at Montclair State and a community college and want to combine the hours at both institutions for financial aid purposes. It is possible to receive financial aid under these circumstances as long as certain requirements are met:

- *You cannot receive financial aid at two institutions.*
- The school where you are matriculated is considered the “home institution” for financial aid eligibility purposes. For example, if you plan to have the additional credits transferred back to Montclair State, MSU is the home institution.
- If you have been approved to attend another institution during a semester for part or all of your educational requirements, you can receive financial aid for that semester *if approved in advance* and if a consortium or contractual agreement is executed between Montclair State and the other institution. For more information regarding this topic, contact the Financial Aid Office directly.

To be reviewed for financial aid as a Montclair State student while attending another institution, please complete the Consortium Agreement form, available on the [Red Hawk Central Forms](#) page. Completing this form does not guarantee eligibility, but a full review of your account will be conducted.

### **Enrollment for Study Abroad:**

You may be eligible to receive financial aid funds for attendance in a Study Abroad program. Please visit the [Global Education office](#) for additional information.

## **8) PROCESSING SCHEDULE & DEADLINES:**

You can file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the coming academic year any time on or after October 1<sup>st</sup>. If you miss our priority deadline, you are still eligible for most aid programs, depending on available funds and specific deadlines. In addition to the processed FAFSA, **our office must receive all requested documentation.** The deadlines allow processing and authorization of disbursements within timeframes defined by regulations pertaining to federal and state aid programs. Failure to apply for or to submit required documentation by the indicated deadlines may result in a loss of financial aid eligibility for all student aid programs.

### **Processing Timeline:**

**October - February** Complete the FAFSA. We recommend that you use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to guarantee accuracy of income information. For priority consideration and maximum funding, the form must be received by the federal processor by February 1.

You will receive FAFSA results on the Student Aid Report (SAR) within a week of submission. Review the SAR to verify all information is correct. If corrections are required, make the changes online. If the SAR indicates that you have been chosen for verification, a signed copy of your and your parent(s)' or spouse's (if married) tax returns and the Verification Worksheet must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office via StudentForms ([montclair.verifymyfafsa.com](http://montclair.verifymyfafsa.com)). You will receive an email about this process.

**November - May** Financial Aid Notifications are emailed to incoming new students indicating estimated eligibility for all federal, state and institutional aid including the Direct (Stafford) Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans. You may reduce or deny any of the loans via NEST. If a student wishes to decline a grant they must submit this request in writing via mail, e-mail or fax to the Financial Aid Office. First-time Direct (Stafford) Loan borrowers are required to sign a Master Promissory Note and complete Entrance Counseling online at

**June** – Continuing student awards will be posted on NEST accounts after Spring grades are posted and, if your FAFSA was selected for verification, once your file is complete.

**July** – Your e-billing statement will be posted by the Office of Student Accounts and can be viewed on NEST – see Section 9 below.

**August** - Federal loan promissory notes must be signed and completed online. Be sure your bill is satisfied to avoid cancellation of your classes, holds on your account or late penalties. If a Parent PLUS or alternative loan is being considered, the application should be submitted now so the funds can process before classes begin.

**September** - Student enrollment and housing status are verified prior to disbursement. Students are notified of any changes or adjustments to aid via a follow-up aid notification on their NEST account. Students with a credit balance can move money to their Red Hawk Card as [Red Hawk Dollars](#) to purchase books in the campus book store. Students planning to use their credit balance for off-campus expenses should plan accordingly; refunds for the credit balances are not issued until after the drop/add period and verification of enrollment in your classes by professors. This can take several weeks.

**November - December** Registration for spring classes begins.

## 9) THE BILLING STATEMENT:

Your e-billing statement will be posted by the Office of Student Accounts and can be viewed on NEST. You will receive notification via your MSU email address when available. All Fall bills are due in early August. E-billing statements will be generated on a weekly basis as students complete the registration process between July and September.

All financial obligations must be satisfied by the payment due date. Spring semester bills will be available in late November; payment is due the first week of January. For questions regarding bills, you may contact the Student Accounts office in [Red Hawk Central](#). Students should



continue to check NEST regularly for updated information.

The e-billing statement lists the amount of tuition and fees for the semester, room and board charges for students living in residence halls, and other miscellaneous charges you owe to the University. As long as you have met all program requirements, financial aid to be received for that semester will be posted as *estimated aid* on the bill.

***NOTE:** If you are a continuing student and you decide not to return to Montclair State, you must cancel your registration in NEST and complete a 'Withdrawal/Leave of Absence' form. See <https://www.montclair.edu/registrar/withdrawal-refund-policy/>.*

*If you decide not to attend Montclair State as an incoming student, you must notify the Admissions Office of your decision.*

### **Excess Credit Balance (refund):**

Any remaining financial aid due to you after all of your University charges have been satisfied will be sent to you by the Office of Student Accounts after the add/drop period. Disbursement generally begins after the second full week of classes for each semester and once faculty completes attendance verification for each student.

### **Payment Options:**

Payments for tuition and fees and room and board are due each semester by dates determined by the Office of Student Accounts. You can pay the portion of your bill that is not covered by financial aid for the semester in [one payment via credit card, check or cash](#), or you can use one of the University's [payment plans](#).

### **If your financial aid is not all disbursed:**

If aid is not credited to your account, check the following:

1. You completed a FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) and it is fully processed
2. You have submitted all requested documents per NEST
3. You completed all of the program requirements:
  - a. Loan recipients must complete the correct Entrance Counseling, Master Promissory Note and the Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov)
4. You are registered for the necessary number of credit hours to receive the funds awarded. Most funds require at least 6 credit hours a semester; however, some scholarships and state grants require 12 credit hours a semester.
5. Your faculty have verified your attendance in at least one class session on their NEST.

## **10) EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:**

### **Request for Review based on a Change in Income:**

If your status or your family's circumstances change because of a **marriage, separation, divorce, unemployment, disability or death of a wage earner**, the Financial Aid Office may be able to help. Please read more about [filing a Request for Review](#). The Request for Review form must be submitted with all required supporting documentation.

Any adjustment in aid to federal or state grant funds resulting from this request is contingent upon your eligibility according to program regulations and the availability of funds to the University at the time of the review. In some cases, grants are not attainable but a portion of the student loan may be adjusted to subsidized (no interest while in school).

Please note that students are responsible to pay their balances while this review is pending since additional aid eligibility is not guaranteed. Failure to pay the balance may result in a late fee, deregistration, loss of housing, etc.

### **Determining Independent Status:**

To determine a student as an Independent for financial aid purposes, the Financial Aid Office is required to adhere to the standard definition of independent status as mandated by Congress and outlined by the U.S. Department of Education.

According to this definition, you will be automatically considered independent if you meet one of the following criteria:

- ❖ Are 24 years of age
- ❖ At any time since turning age 13, you were an orphan, in foster care, or a legal ward of the court (this requires documentation)
- ❖ You are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces (this may require documentation)
- ❖ You are married at the time of filing the FAFSA
- ❖ You are enrolled in a graduate or professional program (beyond bachelor's degree)
- ❖ You have legal dependents other than a spouse for whom YOU provide at least 50% support (this requires documentation)
- ❖ Are considered homeless based on the definitions listed on the FAFSA

Students who qualify as automatically independent are not required to provide parental information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify your independent status.

If you believe you have special circumstances that justify being considered independent beyond the reasons above, please access StudentForms ([montclair.verifymyfafsa.com](http://montclair.verifymyfafsa.com)) to submit a Dependency Appeal. Students may also meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss their circumstances. Please note that filing a petition and/or meeting with a counselor does not guarantee a determination of independent status.

## **11) SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY** **(Not the same as Montclair State Academic Standing)**

In order to receive federal, state or institutional financial aid, students must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress toward the attainment of a degree. At Montclair State University, Satisfactory Academic Progress is determined annually after spring grades are posted. All financial aid applicants are subject to the standards outlined here regardless of whether aid was received or not in the past. These standards have been developed in compliance with regulations that govern financial aid programs.

There are three distinct dimensions to the satisfactory academic progress standards:

- ❖ Complete the degree requirements within an established timeframe,
- ❖ Pass a specific completion rate, and
- ❖ Maintain a minimum required grade point average (GPA)

These standards also include an opportunity to appeal the loss of financial aid if the student has faced unusual circumstances which prevented the student from attaining the minimum standards.

Students who have been deemed ineligible in a prior year but who have since improved their performance are encouraged to submit an appeal for the reinstatement of their aid; the Financial Aid Appeals Committee may or may not be able to reinstate a student's academic eligibility for financial aid. It is very important to recognize that this policy is different from the University guidelines regarding academic standing.

### **PART 1: Program Guidelines for Undergraduate Students**

#### **A. Timeframe and Credit Requirements**

The approximate minimum number of credits needed to complete most undergraduate programs at the University is 120. A student is eligible to receive funding up to 180 attempted credits, which includes financial aid received while enrolled at other institutions, if any. Some programs may limit enrollment on a semester basis. Students who attempt/complete only the minimum amount of credits **required each semester may** run out of eligibility for certain financial aid programs prior to degree completion. Each year, a student's progress will be measured by comparing the number of attempted credits (any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the Drop/Add period) with the credits earned (any course with a grade, including a failing grade).

#### **B. Completion rate**

A student must complete sixty-seven percent (67%) of cumulative credits attempted to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Percentages are not rounded up.

#### **C. Grade point average required**

Undergraduate students must maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 Financial Aid GPA. The

Financial Aid GPA will differ from the University GPA when a student has retaken coursework. The Financial aid Office must include all earned grades, even if a course has been repeated.

## **PART 2: Graduate Program Guidelines**

### **A. Credit and GPA requirement**

Graduate students must complete seventy percent (70%) of their attempted credits and maintain at least a cumulative 3.0 Financial Aid GPA after attempting 12 or more credits.

### **A. Timeframe requirement**

Graduate students must graduate within 150% of their program's normal length to completion.

## **PART 3:**

### **General Information**

#### **B. Withdrawal from courses/WD (Withdrawn officially)**

Credits remain in the total number of attempted hours but are not added to the earned credits. This may have a negative effect on the total number of earned credits needed per year. The GPA is not affected by these grades.

#### **C. Incomplete courses INC (Incomplete)**

Credits will be counted when determining the number of credits attempted. When a grade is received, the grade will be added to the number of credits earned.

#### **D. Repeated courses**

These courses are counted each time the course is taken and will be included in the total number of attempted hours. If a course is successfully completed, the credits are added to the total number of earned credits hours. Grades for each attempt are required to be factored into the student's Financial Aid GPA; this can result in a different GPA from the MSU GPA calculated by the Registrar's Office.

#### **E. Transfer credits**

Transfer credits, accepted by the University, will be added to the attempted/earned hours in order to arrive at the maximum number of credits a student may attempt and earn.

#### **F. Failing Grades**

These grades have a serious negative impact on the student's academic record: F (Failing), NR (Not Reported, no grade submitted), and XF (Failing, did not complete course).

## **PART 4: Appeal Procedures**

Students identified as not making progress toward the degree will receive correspondence at their campus e-mail address. Students have the right to appeal their status by submitting a SAP appeal

following the instructions and meeting the deadline stated in the initial SAP email. Generally, the Financial Aid Appeals Committee can only consider appeals that involve circumstances **beyond** the student's control that had a negative impact upon the student's academic performance.

In order to appeal, the student **MUST** submit a typed statement by deadline that includes:

1. a narrative of the extenuating circumstances (e.g., the student or an immediate family member suffered a serious illness or injury, death of a close relative, separation or divorce) that prevented the student from meeting the minimum requirements, **and**
2. a reasonable explanation of the expectation that the event/circumstances will not recur **and**
3. A formal academic plan, signed by the student and their professional or faculty advisor that demonstrates their ability to succeed in their program of study. Students with approved appeals are then given a conditional semester of financial aid. Students must adhere to their academic plan by passing these courses. Failure to do so will result in loss of academic eligibility for subsequent semesters of financial aid for the rest of the academic year.

Students are permitted to submit any supporting documentation they deem necessary to bolster their appeal; in some cases, supporting documentation may be required. Students need to be aware that ***late appeals will not be accepted***. The deadline to appeal for the entire award year (fall, spring and summer) will be stated in the e-mail correspondence (typically early July).

The appeal will be reviewed by a committee and all committee decisions are final. The committee will only accept appeals submitted to the Financial Aid Office as long as they are typed and the student's name and student ID number are provided. ***Again, no late appeals will be accepted.***

Any student with an approved appeal will have their aid reinstated; check your NEST account to make sure you have submitted all requested documents. Future aid eligibility will be based on completing and meeting the stated conditions and academic requirements of this policy.

**Students who do not wish to appeal or whose appeal is denied may receive [alternative/private student loans](#) and/or make [out-of-pocket payment](#) arrangements (including [payment plan](#)) to satisfy any due balance owed to the University.**

## **12) WITHDRAWALS OR FAILURE TO ENROLL**

### **Withdrawing from Classes - "Official Withdrawal" Procedures (Undergrads):**

A student who withdraws from all their classes must complete the required [Withdrawal/Leave of Absence form](#) with Academic Advising. Students should be aware that withdrawing from all classes may result in a reduction of financial aid per federal and state regulations.

## **Federal (Title IV) Financial Aid Recipients Refund Policy:**

Consistent with federal regulations, students are entitled to retain only that portion of federal student aid they earned based on the length of time in attendance.

- If a student is suspended, dismissed, withdraws, or stops attending before the first day of classes, all Federal aid is returned to the appropriate program.
- Students who withdraw from some or all of their classes before the University's 50% withdrawal date may have some of their state grant funds prorated.
- Students who withdraw from all classes before 60% of the term is completed are required to return a proportional amount of their federal financial aid received as stated in The Higher Education Act (484) (b)(2)(c). In most cases, this results in the student owing the University more monies. The Financial Aid Office is required to calculate this amount and revise the financial aid package on NEST.
- Students who remain enrolled through at least 60% of the payment period (semester) are considered to have earned 100% of the aid received and will not owe a repayment of Federal Title IV funds.

## **Unofficial Withdrawals:**

Students who complete the semester with zero credits will be assumed to have not completed the term and have Federal Title IV funds returned as per the Federal Requirements, unless they can prove they completed the semester.

## **13) Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

In accepting a financial aid award from Montclair State University, you acknowledge certain rights and responsibilities.

### **You have the right to:**

- ❖ know what financial assistance is available, including all federal, state, and institutional aid programs and what policies or regulations govern these programs.
- ❖ know the deadlines for submission of applications for aid and the procedures to be followed.
- ❖ know the cost of attendance at Montclair State University and the refund policy.
- ❖ know how the Financial Aid Office determines your financial need, including the determination and amount of the expected family contribution.
- ❖ know the source and amount of each type of financial aid offered to you.
- ❖ know the method by which aid is determined and disbursed or applied to your account.
- ❖ apply for additional assistance when increased financial need can be demonstrated and funds are available.

- ❖ expect and receive complete confidentiality about financial aid awarded by the Financial Aid office.

**You have the responsibility to:**

- ❖ complete all application forms accurately and thoroughly. Comply with enrollment requirements related to financial aid eligibility. You must be enrolled at least half-time to receive aid consideration, but you should be aware that some programs require full-time enrollment (see specific program descriptions for more information).
- ❖ know and comply with priority dates for application for aid in order to receive consideration for all programs.
- ❖ know and comply with the University's refund procedures.
- ❖ read and understand all information sent to you and all forms you are asked to sign, keeping copies for your records.
- ❖ accept responsibility for all agreements you sign.
- ❖ use funds awarded to you solely for educational expenses incurred while attending Montclair State University.
- ❖ repay all educational loans according to the repayment provisions agreed upon at the time the loan was accepted and the promissory note signed.
- ❖ return in a timely manner all corrections, additional information, or documentation requested by our office or the agency to which you submitted your application.
- ❖ report any change in your financial situation from that which you reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- ❖ report any wages, loans, grants, or scholarships received from sources external to the university.
- ❖ know and comply with the policies for Satisfactory Academic Progress.

**14) Contact Information/Hours:**

Montclair State University  
1 Normal Avenue  
Montclair, NJ 07043  
Telephone: 973-655-7600  
Fax: 973-655-7712  
Email: [financialaid@montclair.edu](mailto:financialaid@montclair.edu)

**Parents:** Only general information can be provided unless the student completes a FERPA Proxy on NEST.

**Students and Parents:** Please include the student's CWID in all inquiries.

**Office Hours at Red Hawk Central:**

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

*Evening Hours:* Monday and Thursday 4:30 to 6:00 PM during the Fall and Spring semesters

*Summer Hours:* Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM - 5:15 PM (the University is closed on Friday)

For more information please visit the [Financial Aid Office](#) website.



## GLOSSARY

<b>Additional Information Request</b>	The State of New Jersey Higher Education Assistance Authority may request additional information from students and their family to document the information provided on the FAFSA. Check on njfams.org.
<b>Award Notification</b>	An award notification from a school states the type and amount of financial aid for the student who accepts admission and registers to take classes at that school.
<b>Credit Balance</b>	When the total assistance for the semester exceeds the direct charges (tuition, fees, room & board) on your account.
<b>Dependent student</b>	A student who does not meet any of the criteria for an independent student. An independent student one of the following: at least 24 years old, married, a graduate or professional student, a veteran, a member of the armed forces, an orphan, a ward of the court, or someone with legal dependents other than a spouse.
<b>Direct Loan</b>	Loans made through this program are referred to as Direct Loans. Eligible students and parents borrow directly from the U.S. Department of Education at participating schools. Direct Loans include subsidized and unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loans (also known as Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans), Direct PLUS Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans. You repay these loans directly to the U.S. Department of Education.
<b>Disbursement</b>	Payment of financial aid against the students charges for the semester.
<b>Entrance and Exit Interviews</b>	Students with educational loans are required to complete an Entrance or Exit Counseling before they receive their first loan disbursement and again before they graduate or otherwise leave school. During these counseling sessions, the student reviews the repayment terms and schedule of their loans.
<b>Expected Family Contribution (EFC)</b>	Your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is the number that's used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. This number results from the financial information you provided in your FAFSA application. Your EFC is reported to you on your <a href="#">Report (SAR)</a> . See also
<b>HESAA</b>	Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) is the State Agency that runs the Tuition Aid Grants program (TAG), Education Opportunity Fund Grants (EOF), and various scholarship programs. They also have online services, tools and other resources.
<b>Independent Student</b>	An independent student is one of the following: at least 24 years old, married, a graduate or professional student, a veteran, a member of the armed forces, an orphan, a ward of the court, or someone with legal dependents other than a spouse.
<b>Interest</b>	A loan expense charged by the lender and paid by the borrower for the use of borrowed money. The expense is calculated as a percentage of the unpaid principal amount (loan amount) borrowed.

**Master Promissory Note**

A promissory note is a binding legal document you sign when you get a student loan. It lists the conditions under which you're borrowing and the terms under which you agree to pay back the loan. It will include information on how interest is calculated and what deferment and cancellation provisions are available to the borrower. It's very important to read and save this document because you'll need to refer to it later when you begin repaying your loan or at other times when you need information about provisions of the loan, such as deferments or forbearances.

**NEST**

Web Enrollment Services for Students (NEST) is designed to provide students with a convenient method of registering, accessing their schedules, grades and financial accounts.

**Origination Fee**

A processing fee charged by the lender for borrowed funds; reduces the amount of funds received by the borrower and/or payable to the bill.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**

To be eligible to receive federal and state student financial aid, you must meet and maintain your school's standards of satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate.

**Scholarship**

A form of financial aid given to undergraduate students to help pay for their education. Most scholarships are restricted to paying all or part of tuition expenses, though some scholarships also cover room and board. Scholarships are a form of gift aid and do not have to be repaid. Many scholarships are restricted to students in specific courses of study or with academic, athletic or artistic talent.

**Selective Service Registration**

In order to be eligible for federal student aid you must register with the Selective Service if:

- You are a male born on or after Jan. 1, 1960, and
- You are at least 18 years old, and
- You are not currently on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- 

Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands or the Republic of Palau are exempt from registering.

**Student Aid Report**

After you apply for federal student financial aid, you'll get your FAFSA results in an e-mail report by the next business day after your FAFSA has been processed or by mail in 7-10 days. This Student Aid Report (SAR) details all the information you provided on your FAFSA. If there are no corrections or additional information you must provide, the SAR will contain your EFC, which is the number that's used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Your FAFSA data is automatically sent electronically to the schools you listed on your FAFSA.

**Subsidized**

A loan for which a borrower is not responsible for the interest while in an in-school, grace, or deferment status. Subsidized loans include Direct Subsidized, Direct Subsidized Consolidation Loans, Federal Subsidized Stafford Loans and Federal Subsidized Consolidation Loans.

**Title IV aid**

Title IV funds include Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, Federal Pell Grant, and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), TEACH Grant and Federal Work-Study (FWS).

**Unsubsidized**

A loan for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the interest regardless of the loan status. Interest on unsubsidized loans accrues from the date of disbursement and continues throughout the life of the loan. Unsubsidized loans include: Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Consolidation Loans, and Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, and Federal Unsubsidized Consolidation Loans.

**Verification**

Verification is a process where your school confirms the data reported on your FAFSA. Your school has the authority to contact you for documentation that supports income and other information that you reported.