

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to assist you with understanding important information about the financial aid application process, your awards, procedures for finalizing your financial aid, and policies that may affect your eligibility. We encourage you to utilize this valuable resource by reading through the information. This Guide should not be construed as a contract, but should serve rather as a reference to use throughout the year, as *you are responsible for complying with these policies and procedures.*

We also encourage you to visit our website at www.midlandu.edu for other aid related information.

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCESS

Note: Federal and state programs require completion of the FAFSA each year. Students who choose not to complete a FAFSA must notify the MU Financial Aid Office of that decision.

1. Apply for and be accepted for admission.
2. Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
TIPS:
 - Complete the FAFSA by March 1 to receive priority processing.
 - Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (data available 2 weeks after filing an electronic tax return)
 - List MU's school code 002553 in the school section.
 - Make sure all information is entered correctly, particularly your Social Security number.
3. Promptly respond to any request by the Financial Aid Office for additional documentation. Missing or incomplete data will delay finalizing your aid.
4. Complete the additional requirements described in the Finalizing Your Awards section of this Guide.

VERIFICATION

Due to federal regulations, some financial aid applicants will be required to verify the accuracy of information reported on their FAFSA. If you are selected for verification, you will receive notification from MU through mail and email. You will be instructed to complete a verification worksheet, which will require you to do one of two options; use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool online through FAFSA (preferred) OR print a tax

transcript from the IRS. Additional documentation may be requested along with the verification worksheet.

Federal aid will not be disbursed until verification is complete. You will be notified of any changes in your financial aid resulting from verification.

TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE

Graduate students may be eligible for the following types of financial aid.

- **Grants.** Some special program grants may be available from Midland University and will be awarded if you are eligible. MU grants do not need to be repaid.
- **Loans.** Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Graduate PLUS Loans, or private loans may be available to graduate students.

PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS OR FUNDING

Assistance received from a source other than MU must be reported to the MU Financial Aid Office. When possible, we will reduce a loan before reducing any other grant or scholarship assistance. Failure to report aid in a timely manner may result in the student being overawarded, which could require that the student repay funds already received.

FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Education provides financial assistance for graduate students in the form of Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans or Graduate PLUS Loans. To qualify for federal assistance, students are required to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year, be enrolled in a degree program, and meet citizenship or residency requirements.

Students entering certain professions may have part or all of their loans forgiven by the U.S. Department of Education. Please refer to the U.S. Department of Education website for details.

For more information on Federal Financial Aid, visit <http://studentaid.ed.gov>. Federal regulations can change at any time, affecting all aspects of Federal financial aid.

William D. Ford Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan
Only direct loan available to graduate students. Repayment begins six months (grace period) after the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time. Interest is

fixed for each loan each academic year and will begin accruing from the disbursed date. Students may choose to let the interest accrue while in school. MU recommends that student's make interest payments to the lender during this time. The limit for an Unsubsidized Loans is \$20,500. Find the latest loan fee and rate information at www.studentloans.gov.

Direct PLUS Loan for Graduate Students

Credit-worthy students can borrow up to the cost of education minus all other financial aid offered to the student, including outside scholarships. Interest accrues at a fixed annual rate each academic year as determined by the U.S. government. The latest loan fee and rate information can be found at www.studentloans.gov. The funds are received electronically by MU and are credited directly to the student's account. Repayment usually begins 60 days after the final disbursement for the year. Borrowers may defer payments until six months after the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time by requesting the deferment through the lender annually.

Students are required to complete an application and a Master Promissory Note (MPN) through www.studentloans.gov. While a new loan application is required each year, the MPN can be used in subsequent years for the same PLUS borrower.

PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL LOANS

Students can borrow in their own name through a non-government loan. Students typically must have a credit-worthy co-signer since lenders assume more risk. Lenders may charge a higher interest rate, larger loan fees, or have more stringent credit requirements. Private loans should be considered only as a *last resort*. They cannot be combined with federal loans if a student wishes to consolidate his or her loans after graduation with the U.S. Department of Education.

VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

MU accepts all VA educational benefits. They will not reduce a student's federal aid eligibility. Institutional awards may or may not be available depending on the type of benefits for which the student qualifies. Students who are eligible for the Post 9/11 and Yellow Ribbon programs are generally not eligible for other Midland University scholarships and will be repackaged as needed. MU's VA certifying official may be contacted at 402-941-6201.

FINALIZING YOUR AWARDS

Once we receive your FAFSA results, we will package your aid and send you an Award Offer. Please review it carefully and pay particular

attention to special forms and procedures that may be required.

1. On the Award Offer, indicate whether you accept or decline each award and return a signed copy to the Financial Aid Office.
2. Notify the MU Financial Aid Office of **all** scholarships and grants you have been awarded by non-MU sources, including the award amount and scholarship name.
3. *First time borrowers* of a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan or Graduate PLUS Loan will need to complete a Master Promissory Note and Entrance Counseling at www.studentloans.gov.

To ensure timely processing, we encourage you to complete the respective steps outlined above **within two to four weeks** of the date you receive your Award Offer.

DISBURSEMENT OF AID

The first disbursement of funds to a student's account for each semester is usually about ten days prior to the start of the term. Additional disbursements occur throughout the semester as requirements are finalized.

REFUNDS

Refunds are normally issued approximately 10 days after the term's census (enrollment lock) date.

Students who have a credit balance on their account after *student* aid has been disbursed can 1) have funds deposited to the account on the Warrior ID card, unless a different account is designated through Warrior Central or 2) leave the credit on the account. If option number one is chosen, the student will first need to add their name to the refund list in the Student Billing Office.

HOW ELIGIBILITY IS DETERMINED

Each semester of the academic year, a graduate student must be enrolled at least half-time (3 credit hours) to receive federal financial aid. To receive institutional aid, graduate students must meet the specific requirements of the program. Federal and institutional need-based aid is based on the student's financial need, described below.

Need is defined by the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} & - \text{Cost of Attendance (COA)} \\ & \quad \underline{\text{Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)}} \\ & = \text{Need} \end{aligned}$$

Cost of Attendance is referred to as a student budget, including **estimated** allowances for both a student's direct costs (tuition, fees, room and board) and indirect

costs (books, transportation and living allowances), as set forth by the specific program.

The combined total of institutional, federal, state, and third-party assistance may not exceed a student's cost of attendance.

Estimated Family Contribution represents, in theory, the amount a family could pay toward the student's educational expenses, determined by the FAFSA results.

NOTE: A variety of factors could impact a student's eligibility for any specific award, such as changes in Congressional or state laws, funds available at MU, the student's academic performance, living arrangements, changes in enrollment level, receipt of outside resources, or changes to the FAFSA information, etc.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

To receive or renew financial assistance from MU, students are required to make academic progress toward completion of a degree. Satisfactory progress is evaluated once each year at the end of spring semester.

Federal financial aid recipients must meet the following criteria in addition to any program-specific criteria:

- A. Complete at least 67% of the credits attempted each academic year,
- B. Maintain a minimum CGPA of at least a 1.80 at the end of the spring enrollment if a first year student,
- C. Maintain a minimum CGPA of at least 2.0 at the end of the spring enrollment as a second, third or fourth year student,
- D. Complete a course of study within 150% of the published time it takes to complete a degree (i.e. six years or 12 semesters if enrolled full-time in a traditional semester program). Time limits differ for part-time enrollment, and graduate programs.

Any student who does not meet these will be placed on financial aid suspension and are ineligible for federal financial aid. If extenuating circumstances exist, students have the right to submit an appeal form, available on the MU website at the bottom of the Financial Aid page. Additional documentation may be required. In addition, an educational success plan must be determined and approved by the student's academic department and/or the Registrar's Office.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on financial aid probation for one semester. While on probation, a student must successfully complete the coursework for that term.

The calculation considers hours attempted vs. hours completed, with no duplicates. A student may complete a previously passed course once and may repeat a failed course until it is passed. After that term is completed, the student's progress is reviewed and the probation status determined.

Students must meet the following cumulative GPA requirements:

Term of Attendance	CGPA
First	1.70
Second	1.80
Third	1.90
Fourth (and later terms)	2.00

Students applying for readmittance to MU will be reviewed to determine their SAP status, based on the coursework previously completed at MU. If the standard is not met, a SAP appeal is required and must be approved before federal aid can be offered. Entering transfer students are considered making SAP. The hours accepted by MU are counted as both hours attempted and hours completed.

SAP VS. ACADEMIC SUSPENSION

A student may be suspended academically, and have a successful appeal, but still may not meet SAP. At that time, a second appeal may be required and/or the student may continue to be on SAP probation, depending on the circumstances.

WITHDRAWAL & REFUND POLICY

The U. S. Department of Education requires that institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs must have a fair and equitable refund policy. In the event that a student finds it necessary to withdraw or fails to complete the period of enrollment for which federal aid was intended, MU refunds unearned tuition, fees, room and board and other charges in accordance with the policies below. The policies may be revised at any time to comply with changes to federal, state or institutional rules and regulations.

If the student ceases enrollment at MU prior to the end of a semester or term, depending on the date the student ceases studies, he/she may be entitled to a partial refund of those charges. The refund may be applied to an outstanding balance on the student's account. If the refund results in a credit balance on the account, the credit will be refunded to the student.

Withdrawal Before Beginning of Term

Students, not faculty or staff, are responsible for registering, dropping or withdrawing from classes at MU in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. This is the sole responsibility of the student. If a student does not attend classes, the courses will remain on the student’s record and the student will owe all tuition and fees for the courses.

If a student registers for classes and decides to attend another institution, the student must drop the MU class before the 100% refund deadline or he/she will be responsible to pay the appropriate tuition and fees. No exceptions will be made.

Withdrawal Date

The withdrawal date is critical in determining the student's charges and refunds.

- **Official.** The official withdrawal date is the date that the student began the withdrawal process prescribed by the institution, or the date the student officially notified the institution, in writing or orally, of his or her intent to withdraw.
- **Unofficial.** For an unofficial withdrawal, the withdrawal date is the last date the student either attended classes or completed an academic-related activity, as determined by the faculty teaching the coursework.

No accrediting agency requires that attendance be taken. However, faculty are required to verify class attendance or non-attendance by the census date each term to determine enrollment. Faculty may choose to use various methods to document attendance and to evaluate student progress throughout the year.

Process

Any student who intends to withdraw from all classes at MU shall notify the Student Success Center. An exit review of the student's enrollment at MU will be conducted, consisting of the reason for withdrawal, the last date the student either attended classes or completed an academic-related activity, as determined by the faculty teaching the coursework, and a review of any unusual or extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from officially withdrawing.

Special Circumstances

Students called to active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, or leaving MU because of illness or other causes beyond their control, may receive special consideration. Each case will be considered individually.

The MU President may authorize tuition, room and board refunds on a pro-rata basis or other adjustments as considered necessary in the circumstances. The decision of the President is final. Exceptions apply only to the refund of institutional charges and do not affect the outcome of the federally mandated recalculation of eligibility for recipients of federal financial aid.

Voluntary Withdrawal

Students who withdraw voluntarily receive no refund of the application, matriculation, university or special fees. The first "week," as used for refund purposes, starts on the first day of the term as published in the term calendar.

Dismissal/Suspension

Students dismissed from MU for inattention to their studies or infringement of MU rules are allowed no refunds of any kind, other than those provided by the withdrawal policy applicable to them. The student’s financial aid eligibility will be based on his/her last date of attendance and will be adjusted accordingly.

Incomplete Aid Processing

Any student not completing the financial aid process as of the last date of attendance may forfeit eligibility for financial assistance during that period of enrollment.

Additional Charges

Students may incur other expenses for which they will be personally responsible and no refund is required. These may include, but are not limited to, any fines, insurance fees, damages, charges for storage, shipping or incomplete checkouts.

Tuition Refund Determination

Withdrawal Date	Refund Percent
Prior to the start of the first day of the term as published in the term calendar	100
Between calendar days 1-6 of the term	75
Between calendar days 7-13 of the term	50
After calendar day 13 of the term	0

**Deposits are always non-refundable.

Return of Federal Title IV and/or Institutional Funds

Federal law specifies how MU must determine the amount of Title IV assistance a student has earned if he/she withdraws from school. The Title IV programs that are covered by this law are: Direct Loans and PLUS Loans. In calculating the days enrolled, all calendar days

in an enrollment term are used, except any scheduled breaks of at least five days in length.

When a student withdraws during a payment period or term, the amount of assistance that is earned up to that point is determined by a specific formula. A student who received less assistance than the amount earned may be able to receive additional funds. If a student received more assistance than was earned, the excess funds must be returned by MU and/or the student.

The amount of federal assistance that is earned is based on the following pro-rata calculation:

Days Attended in the Period ÷ Total Days in the Period

For example, if a student completed 30% of the term, he/she earned 30% of the federal assistance that was awarded. Once at least 60% of the term is completed, the student is considered to have earned 100% of the funds awarded for that period.

If the amount of aid disbursed exceeds the amount of earned aid, the unearned portion of the funds must be returned to the Title IV programs first in the following order: *Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan, Federal or Direct PLUS Loan.*

Students who withdraw from a Master's program are not entitled to any institutional aid that may have been awarded for that term. Those funds will be refunded 100% to their respective programs. Any additional refunds will be returned to any outside agency programs first, followed by the student.

A student who did not receive all funds that were earned may be eligible for a post-withdrawal disbursement, depending on their aid status at the time of the withdrawal. Any post-withdrawal disbursement of funds will be automatically credited toward any unpaid charges for tuition, fees, room and board.

If the amount to be returned exceeds the amount that MU is required to return, the student has an obligation to return the remaining amount. Any loan funds that must be returned by the student are repaid according to the terms of the promissory note. If a repayment is due to a grant program, the student is required to pay only half of the remaining unearned amount.

Upon notification that a student has withdrawn, the Financial Aid Office will calculate the student's earned and unearned aid. The student will be notified of any funds returned by MU to the aid programs, as well as any repayment for which the student is responsible.

Special Circumstances: The MU president or vice president may, depending on the situation, make an exception to the standard refund policies. No exceptions may be made to the Federal aid requirements.

STUDY ABROAD

A student participating in an approved study abroad program may continue to receive federal and state aid, but will *not* receive institutional aid or employment awards for that term.

SUMMER FINANCIAL AID

Summer financial aid is very limited. Federal Direct Loans may be available to eligible students enrolled at least half-time.

COMMUNICATION

It is the student's responsibility to check his/her MU email account and campus mailbox to stay informed of important MU-related information.

Prompt responses to requests by the Financial Aid Office for additional documentation will help eliminate any delay in finalizing your aid and posting federal funds to your student account. This may include copies of Federal Income Tax Transcripts, a Verification Worksheet, or other items that are missing or incomplete.

Keep financial aid documents you receive and make photocopies of all forms before mailing. A record of when you mail them is also helpful.

A student's financial aid offer may be adjusted any time the Financial Aid Office receives new information affecting the student's eligibility. MU's financial aid policies and procedures may be revised at any time to comply with changes in federal, state or institutional rules and regulations. When such change is necessary, we will notify students.

Student loan borrowers are responsible for notifying the loan servicer of any changes in enrollment status, name or address. Information pertaining to the Student Right-to-Know Act is available upon request from the MU Registrar's Office. Campus crime statistics are available upon request from the MU Student Development Office.

EXIT INFORMATION

At the time of graduation or if a student chooses to withdraw from MU, exit procedures are required by both the institution and government.

FEDERAL EXIT COUNSELING

The U.S. Department of Education wants to ensure students review the terms of their loans and understand their rights and responsibilities as they enter repayment. Therefore, all students who have borrowed Direct Loans must complete an exit loan counseling session at www.studentloans.gov.

REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

If you are unable to make payments on your Student Loans, it is IMPORTANT to contact your servicer for assistance. There are many options for you, instead of falling past due and/or default on your loans.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

National Student Loan Data System www.nslds.ed.gov
NSLDS allow you to track your loan status, total loan debt and identify the servicer for your loans. You will need your FSA ID to access this information.

Loan Consolidation

www.loanconsolidation.ed.gov

The Department of Education is the only place that you can consolidate your student loans. A benefit of consolidating your loans is only having one federal student loan payment.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Midland University complies with federal regulations for students who wish to file a formal complaint under certain circumstances. Students wishing to file a complaint must have first exhausted all options available to them at the University. Details of the types of circumstances and processes can be found at:
www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/Ccpe/Complaint.asp.