

# Financial Aid Guide to Frequent Questions

Northwest State Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or age in its programs or activities.

## 1. How do I apply for financial aid?

To apply for financial aid, you must complete the following:

- An FSA ID & Password may be created by students and their parents at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>
- File your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) electronically at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> (approximate processing time is 3-5 business days). If you have any questions when completing the FAFSA, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243.
- Northwest State Community College's Federal School Code is 008677
- Use the Data Retrieval Tool on your FAFSA to link your IRS/tax information to the FAFSA

## 2. What do I have to do to be eligible for financial aid?

- Have a high school diploma, GED, or complete a high school education in a home school setting approved under state law
- Be enrolled in an eligible program as a degree-seeking student
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Have a valid social security number
- Register with Selective Service as required of male students
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Cannot be in default on any past student loans

## 3. When should I apply for financial aid?

You may apply as soon as October 1 or as soon as you complete your federal income taxes. The FAFSA needs to be completed one time for the academic year.

- For **summer** classes the FAFSA should be submitted no later than **May 1**
- For **fall** classes the FAFSA should be submitted no later than **July 1**
- For **spring** classes the FAFSA should be submitted no later than **December 1**

Applications submitted after these dates may not be processed in time for semester payment and the student will need to make payment on their own to the Business Office.

## 4. What happens after I submit my FAFSA?

When you submit your FAFSA it is sent to the U.S. Department of Education. Then in 3 to 5 business days it is sent to the school(s) you selected on your FAFSA. You will receive a confirmation e-mail that your FAFSA has been processed. The Financial Aid Office may request additional forms from you once your FAFSA is received. After all requested forms are received, your financial aid file can be processed. The college will send you a Financial Aid Award Notification to your student email account explaining your eligibility for grants and/or student loans. You will need to follow the steps in this notification to accept your Financial Aid Awards.

## 5. What is verification?

After completing the FAFSA the U.S. Department of Education randomly selects applications that require verification. This is a federal requirement and is the school's responsibility to complete. In this process, your school will be comparing information from your FAFSA with the verification forms and tax transcripts. Financial aid will not be awarded until the verification process is complete. You will need to complete one of the following for your tax transcript: use the data retrieval tool on the FAFSA at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>, request online at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or submit a *signed* copy of the Federal Tax Form 1040 and appropriate Schedules.

**6. How is financial aid calculated?**

- Your financial aid package is determined from the results of your FAFSA. The U.S. Department of Education calculates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) based on the financial information that you submitted.
- Financial need is defined as the difference between the Cost of Attendance and your EFC.
- Cost of Attendance includes tuition, fees, books, supplies, transportation, and living expense estimates as determined by the Financial Aid Office in accordance with Federal Regulations.

**7. What types of financial aid may I qualify for?**

By completing the FAFSA you may qualify for: grants, student loans, scholarships and federal work study.

**8. Can Part-Time students receive financial aid?**

**Yes.** Part-time students (those with less than 12 credit hours per semester) may be eligible for financial aid. Pell eligible students should review the Pell Grant Chart to see the amounts per credit hours enrolled and attending. Federal Direct Loan recipients must be enrolled and attending at least 6 credit hours each semester to be eligible.

**9. What amount of student loans can I borrow for the awarding year?**

The Federal Direct Loan amount listed below is the total amount that students may borrow for the entire Financial Aid Awarding Year (the amount is then divided equally depending on the number of semesters enrolled):

First year students (less than 30 earned credits)	\$3,500 per year
Second year students (30+ earned credits earned)	\$4,500 per year
Additional Unsubsidized for Dependent Students	\$2,000 per year
Additional Unsubsidized for Independent Students	\$6,000 per year

\*students with a high EFC may only qualify for unsubsidized

**10. What amount of student loans can I borrow overall for my undergraduate (certificate, associates, and/or bachelors)?**

The aggregate limit for dependent students is \$31,000 (up to \$23,000 may be subsidized) and for independent students it is \$57,500 (up to \$23,000 may be subsidized). There is a maximum eligibility period for the Direct Subsidized loan: It is measured in academic years and equals 150% of the published length of the borrower’s current educational program.

**11. What is the difference between a subsidized and an unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan?**

Students with computed financial need may be eligible for a subsidized loan (where the federal government pays the interest on the loan while the student is enrolled). Students with no computed financial need may borrow an unsubsidized loan (where the student is responsible for interest that accrues on the loan while enrolled.)

**12. What is Loan Entrance Counseling?**

The Entrance Counseling is a federal regulation that must be completed to receive a student loan. It is intended to help you understand your rights and responsibilities. Students must complete Entrance Counseling after accepting a student loan. You may complete the entrance counseling online at <https://studentaid.gov/>.

**13. What is a Master Promissory Note (MPN)?**

The MPN is a legal document in which you promise to repay your student loans and any accrued interest and fees to the Department of Education. It also explains the terms and conditions of your loans. The MPN will remain valid for 10 years unless you file for bankruptcy or do not borrow a loan for 12 consecutive months. The MPN will need to be completed online at: <https://studentaid.gov/>.

**14. What is a Parent PLUS Loan?**

It is a loan for a parent of dependent students who are enrolled at least 6 credit hours. PLUS loans help pay for educational expenses up to the cost of attendance minus all other financial aid assistance. A credit check is completed on the parent applying for a PLUS loan; if a parent is denied this PLUS loan a student may qualify for additional unsubsidized student loans. Your parent may request a Parent PLUS loan at <https://studentaid.gov/>.

**15. What can I use my financial aid for?**

Financial Aid is typically used for tuition, fees, books, and supplies (which can include a computer). You may also use your financial aid for living expenses, transportation, and other educational related costs.

**16. How do I view my Financial Aid and Account information?**

- Log into your MyNSCC account and click on the Student tab. Click Financial Aid from the drop down arrow.
- The My Account section displays your Financial Aid Awards & the Current Due net of Authorized Financial Aid.
- If your financial aid is less than your total fees, you must pay the remaining balance to the Business Office by the due date for that semester.
- If the total amount of your financial aid exceeds your tuition and fees, you may elect to use your financial aid in the bookstore for the purchase of books and supplies. These charges will be added to your account balance within two business days.
- Any remaining balance from your financial aid will generally be disbursed to you as a refund during the seventh week of the semester.

**17. How does financial aid pay my account balance?**

At the beginning of a semester your account balance will show your tuition and fees, and as you start to buy books with your financial aid your account balance will increase accordingly. When the college receives the funds from the federal government during disbursement, your account balance will be paid with your financial aid and anything left would get sent to you as a refund (which is generally the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the semester).

**18. How much does it cost to attend Northwest State Community College?**

The in-state tuition is \$177.33 per credit hour (out-of-state tuition is \$338.66 per credit hour). Lab fees apply and are assessed dependent on what classes are enrolled. There is a \$41 student fee each semester, along with a Career Advantage fee and Career Service fee. (These rates are subject to change, for current rates please see tuition and fees on our website: <https://northweststate.edu/tuition-fees>.)

**19. What should I do if my family income will be less this year than it was last year?**

If you can document (with check stubs, etc.) a projected loss of income for this year, you may submit a Special Condition Request Form to the Financial Aid Office. If your request is approved, we will resubmit your FAFSA using projected income for this year rather than last year's income to determine your aid eligibility.

**20. What happens if I don't attend class or I completely withdraw?**

Class attendance is required for all financial aid recipients. Failure to attend classes will result in loss of financial aid (grants and/or loans). **If you are considering withdrawing from all classes, you must first contact the Financial Aid Office to discuss the financial implications of withdrawing from all classes.** You will be required to repay a portion of aid received if you withdraw from or stop attending all classes prior to the 60% point of the semester. The calculation for the return of these funds will result you owing money to the Business Office. Students who withdraw from or stop attending all courses may also be placed on **Financial Aid Suspension** for the following semester.

**\*The withdrawal dates for each class can be found on the Refund and Withdrawal Calendar available online.**

**21. What happens if I drop a course during the semester?**

Dropping a course prior to the freeze date may result in a reduction of financial aid depending on the number of credit hours you are enrolled.

**22. What is a financial aid freeze date?**

The actual amount of aid a student receives will be based on the enrollment as of the financial aid census date. This date usually falls at the beginning of the 7th week of classes (See Academic Calendar). On that date, the financial aid office will 'freeze' your enrollment and adjust your Financial Aid Award to the correct amount based on actual credit hours enrolled on that date. If your award includes a 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week class, and you drop that class after receiving aid, you may be required to return a portion of the aid you received.

**23. What is Pace of Progression?**

You must maintain a pace of progression of 67% or higher to remain eligible for any form of federal financial aid. Grades of F, W, I, U, P, UC, WF, WM, WP, NP, and NR do **not** count towards successful completion. To calculate your completion rate you will take your cumulative hours passed or earned divided by your cumulative hours attempted. You may come to the financial office for assistance with this figure. **\*Please read the SAP policy for further information.**

**24. Do I need to maintain a certain Grade Point Average (GPA) to keep my financial aid?**

Yes. Students receiving any form of federal financial aid (grants and/or loans) must maintain **Satisfactory Academic Progress** toward a degree objective. Satisfactory Academic Progress is checked at the end of each semester and an email is sent to the student’s college email account. **\*Please read the SAP policy for further information.**

<u>Cumulative Credit Hours Attempted</u>	<u>Cumulative GPA</u>
1-15	1.4
16-30	1.6
31-45	1.8
46+	2.0

**25. How long can I receive Financial Aid?**

Eligibility for federal financial aid may not exceed 150% of the length of an academic program as outlined in the college catalog. This is called a student’s Maximum Time Frame. Once a student reaches the maximum time frame, he/she is not eligible to receive additional federal financial aid. A student may request an extension of his/her maximum time frame. Contact the Financial Aid Office for appeal procedures and forms. **\*Please read the SAP policy for further information.**

**26. What is Financial Aid Warning?**

If you have not maintained Satisfactory Academic Progress, you will be placed on financial aid warning for your next semester. Your next semester is your only chance to put yourself back into good standing. You will remain eligible for federal financial aid while on financial aid warning, but will not be able to use your money in the bookstore until one week before classes begin. **\*Please read the SAP policy for further information.**

**27. What is Financial Aid Suspension?**

If you do not reach Satisfactory Academic Progress while on financial aid warning or have reached maximum timeframe you will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. Financial Aid will then be suspended until Satisfactory Academic Progress has been reestablished. Students may continue to take courses at their own expense until reaching the minimum GPA and/or the number of successfully completed credit hours required to re-establish Satisfactory Academic Progress. Students may appeal their Financial Aid Suspension status or request an extension of their Maximum Time Frame; however remember that not all appeals are approved. **\*Please read the SAP policy for further information.**

**28. How do I appeal?**

- 1) Login to Sakai and click **SAP Appeals**. If not enrolled at NSCC for the last three years, email the Financial Aid Office with your full name and N number (if known) to get registered for the workshop.
  - 2) Watch the **SAP Appeals Process** video on the SAP Workshop homepage.
  - 3) Click *Satisfactory Academic Progress Overview* and watch the **SAP Overview** video.
  - 4) Take the **SAP Quiz**. Students must pass the quiz with a score of at least 70%.
  - 5) Complete the **Questionnaire** by clicking on *Review your Circumstance and Plan* at the bottom of the *SAP Workshop* page.
  - 6) Include **third party documentation** (if applicable) to support the reasons stated in the questionnaire by clicking on *Assignments*, then *Documentation*, and follow the instructions to upload files.
  - 7) Meet with an advisor to complete the **Plan of Study**. Your advisor must enter your Plan of Study in DegreeWorks.
- \*Please read the SAP policy for further information.**

**If your appeal is approved:**

- 1) You will be placed on probation for at least one semester with the required conditions that you must receive C’s or higher and not withdraw from any classes.
- 2) Your financial aid will continue for subsequent semesters upon Satisfactory Academic Progress being attained.

**29. Other information needed:**

The Financial Aid Office will contact you through your student email account so please check it often. You can find information and forms on our website: [www.northweststate.edu](http://www.northweststate.edu), click on tab Admissions or Resources, and click on financial aid. You can contact us by walk-in, email, phone, or fax:

**Email:** [finaid@northweststate.edu](mailto:finaid@northweststate.edu)  
**Phone:** 419-267-1333  
**Fax:** 419-267-5587

**30. Federal Student Aid Ombudsman:**

To resolve disputes and solve other problems associated with federal student loans, contact:

<b>FSA Ombudsman</b>	<b>Phone: 1-877-557-2575</b>
<b>830 First Street, NE 4<sup>th</sup> Floor</b>	<b>Fax: 1-202-275-0549</b>
<b>Washington, DC 20202-5144</b>	<b>Website: <a href="http://www.ombudsman.ed.gov">www.ombudsman.ed.gov</a></b>