Financial Aid FAQs

**How do I apply and when?**

Starting on October 1 of each year, students can access the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online or in paper format, but the U.S. Department of Education encourages students to use the online version. [Apply online](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) and remember to add **UNO's school code 002554** to have it sent to us.

If you want to be considered for federal aid (e.g. grants, loans, and work-study) you must complete the correct FAFSA for the school year you will be enrolled and would like to receive aid in. You will need to renew your FAFSA each year to be eligible for aid for the new school year.

You should complete the FAFSA before **April 1st** in order to receive priority consideration for all types of aid at UNO. We encourage you to contact the EducationQuest Foundation at [402.391.4033](tel:402.391.4033) if you desire assistance filing your FAFSA.

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2. **Am I eligible to apply?**

You are eligible to apply for and receive federal aid as long as you meet the following requirements:

* U.S Citizen or eligible noncitizen (more info on eligible noncitizens [here](http://fafsa.ed.gov/help/fftoc03a.htm))
* Have a valid Social Security Number
* Have a HS diploma or equivalent (or will have one by the year you are receiving aid)
* Must be enrolled/planning to enroll in a degree seeking program
* Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (more info on that in question #15)
* Not owe a refund on a federal student grant or be in default on a federal student loan
* Register/be registered with the Selective Service System for males
* Cannot have a conviction for the possession or sale of illegal drugs while receiving federal aid

The only way to see what type of aid you are eligible for is to complete the FAFSA. Students of all income levels may qualify for federal student loans, so we encourage any student who believes they will need assistance to apply.

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3. **Should I wait until my taxes are done to file my FAFSA?**

The FAFSA requires income information from 2 years prior to the academic year that you are applying. Please review the following chart to see which year's income you need to report:



Because of the "prior prior" year tax information requested on your FAFSA, the idea is that you will have already filed taxes so that you do not have to wait until after you file the current year's taxes. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is available as a fast, secure, and easy method of reporting tax information on the FAFSA by directly transferring data from the IRS into your FAFSA. We encourage all students to use this tool.

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4. **I have not been admitted to UNO yet, should I wait to apply for Financial Aid?**

You do not have to be admitted to UNO in order to file your FAFSA. You should complete your FAFSA as soon after October 1 as possible and be sure to include UNO on the application if you are considering applying or attending. Please note that you are not eligible to receive an aid package from UNO if you have not applied for admission to a degree-seeking program.

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5. **I only want a loan. Do I need to file a FAFSA?**

Yes. There are different types of Federal loans and it is important that we receive your FAFSA to determine which types of Federal loans you ar eligible to receive. The Federal Direct Subsidized Loan is need based and does not accrue interest while the student is in school. The Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan and the Federal Direct Parent PLUS loan are loan programs available to students who do not demonstrate financial need.

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6. **What happens after I apply?**

After you complete your FAFSA, you will receive a Federal Student Aid Report (SAR) which is a summary of your application along with several notifications, including your eligibility of a Pell Grant. If you do not receive a SAR within a reasonable amount of time, contact the Federal Processor at [1.800.433.3243](tel:1.800.433.3243).

Processing will look different for incoming freshmen and current students:

Incoming Freshmen: Awarding process begins mid-December. You will be notified via your personal email address.

Current Students: Awarding process begins in February after Fall grades are finalized. You will be notified via your UNO email address.

Ultimately, you are responsible for following up on your application. You will see confirmation that we received your FAFSA on your MavLINK To-Do List. Your To-Do List may also list additional documents that our office is requesting. Please submit these documents promptly to avoid delays in processing your aid. We cannot process or send you an award notification until all additional documents are submitted and reviewed.

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7. **I've missed UNO's April 1 priority deadline. Is it pointless to file an application now?**

You are still encouraged to file the FAFSA. Even though some funding may be exhausted, there are some federal funds, such as Pell Grants and Federal Direct Loans for which you may still qualify.

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8. **Do I have to apply for financial aid every year?**

Yes. You must reapply for financial aid each year by completing the FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA.

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9. **If my parents are separated or divorced, who should complete the parents section of my FAFSA application?**

You should answer the questions on the form about the parent you lived with the most in the last 12 months. If you did not live with one parent more than the other in the last 12 months, answer in terms of the parent who provided the most financial support during that time. If neither parent provided greater financial support during the last 12 months, answer in terms of the parent who provided the greater support during the most recent calendar year that you actually were supported by a parent.

If the parent you counted above has remarried, you must also include information about your stepparent on the FAFSA. Your stepparent must be included, regardless of the marriage date or the stepparent's intent to provide financial support for you. If you also receive financial support from the other parent, you should report this as 'Other Untaxed Income' amount on the FAFSA.

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10. **My parents have a lot of debt. Isn't there a place to report their expenses on the FAFSA?**

No. The formula used by the Federal Processor to calculate the 'Expected Family Contribution' assumes that a certain amount of income is needed to support a family. Also it is based on the household size and the number of family members in college. The Federal financial aid methodology does not make allowances for different lifestyle choices, which often influence the amount of a family's living expenses.

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11. **I'm going to be married during the school year. Can I fill out my FAFSA as 'married' now, since I will be in a few months?**

No. You must indicate your marital status as of the date you are completing the FAFSA. If you get married before August 1st, contact the Office of Financial Support and Scholarships for information regarding the change of your marital status.

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12. **What is verification?**

Some students may be selected for a process called verification. Students are randomly selected by the Federal Processor or may be selected for verification by our processor based on conflicting information. The purpose of verification is to confirm that the information reported on your FAFSA is accurate and that the student is receiving the full amount of aid they are eligible for.

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13. **What happens to my financial aid if I drop a class?**

If you drop a class before the semester starts or during the first week of classes, aid that has been awarded or already disbursed to you may have to be adjusted. Contact our office before you drop the class to find out how your aid may be affected.

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14. **What happens to my financial aid if I withdraw from all my classes?**

Depending upon when you withdraw from school, you may be required to repay a portion of any aid you have received in the term in which you are withdrawing. Contact our office before you withdraw to find out if you will have to repay a portion of your aid.

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15. **What is Satisfactory Academic Progress?**

You must be meeting 'Satisfactory Academic Progress' to retain your financial aid eligibility. This means you must successfully complete ('D' grade or higher) at least two-thirds of your total credit hours attempted with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. Undergraduate students cannot exceed more than 180 attempted credit hours. Graduate students cannot exceed more than 70 graduate credit hours. Professional students cannot exceed more than 125 doctoral credit hours.

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16. **After I receive my electronic Financial Aid Notification, is there any reason my aid package might change?**

Yes. Initial financial aid awards are our best estimate of what you are eligible to receive. Most changes in awards involve factors which are under your control, or of which you should be aware. Your award may be increased, reduced, or even canceled if:

* You receive any additional outside resource, such as privately awarded scholarships, which was not on your award letter.
* You provide incorrect data on your FAFSA.
* You do not enroll for the required number of hours to receive aid through the programs awarded to you.
* Your family financial circumstances change dramatically.
* You do not maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.