

## HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students do not have to wait for an acceptance decision from the Office of Admissions to begin the financial assistance application process. Students should begin the financial assistance application process as early as possible.

1. A student must complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible after Jan. 1. A new FAFSA or renewal FAFSA must be completed for each academic year. A FAFSA is required for most types of financial assistance. The FAFSA is on the web at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Francis Marion University must be designated as a school to which the student wants results sent by placing code 009226 on the FAFSA. Priority processing will be given to students who file a FAFSA prior to March 1 and complete his/her FA file by March 29.
2. New freshmen students who wish to be considered for scholarships should submit a scholarship application to the Admissions Office by March 15. The scholarship application is available online under the banner, "Admissions – Scholarship Forms."

Continuing students who wish to apply for institutional scholarships should submit the FMU scholarship application to the Office of Financial Assistance by March 1. Students interested in institutional scholarships are also encouraged to file a FAFSA. For scholarship purposes, a FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for need-based scholarships. The application can be downloaded from Jan. 1-March 1 by selecting "Financial Assistance" under "Quick Links" at [www.fmarion.edu](http://www.fmarion.edu) and then choosing "Download Forms."

3. After the student files a FAFSA, the federal processing center will generate a Student Aid Report (SAR). This SAR will be emailed to the student. Also, if FMU was listed on the FAFSA, the University will receive the same data electronically from the U.S. Department of Education. Requests for additional information will be sent to the student. Once all requirements are met and the student's file is complete, an offer of financial assistance will be made.

### AWARD CRITERIA

Financial Assistance awards are based on the following requirements; non-compliance with these requirements may significantly alter or eliminate eligibility for assistance.

- Final acceptance by the University into an eligible program.
- Full-time enrollment. Financial assistance may be available at reduced levels to those enrolled less than full-time.
- The applicant is not in default on any federal student loan.
- The applicant does not owe a repayment on any Federal Pell or Federal SEOG grant.
- Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined by the University for financial assistance purposes. See "Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy" later in this chapter.
- The Office of Financial Assistance has been informed of all awards expected by a student from parties outside the University.

### ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

For financial assistance purposes, an undergraduate or graduate student must generally be enrolled in a degree program at least half-time (six credit hours for undergraduates, three credit hours for graduate students). Some programs are limited to students who are full-time (12 or more undergraduate credit hours in a fall or spring semester or six or more graduate credit hours). Please check individual program descriptions for enrollment requirements.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The University offers a comprehensive program of student financial assistance in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and part-time employment to assist both undergraduate and graduate students in meeting educational expenses. FMU administers financial aid without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

### INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are made available in varying amounts to students through the generosity and outstanding commitment of businesses, organizations, and individuals, including the Francis Marion University Foundation.

All institutional academic scholarships are renewable provided the student earns 30 semester hours a year and a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.

**Distinction Scholarships** – This award is granted to first-year students with a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average and a 1100 combined SAT (CR + M) or 24 ACT Composite. Students are awarded this scholarship soon after being admitted.

**Fellows Scholarships** – These awards are granted to first-year students ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 a year. Students must complete an on-campus interview conducted by faculty. The deadline is March 15.

**Konduros Scholarships** – This scholarship is awarded by the University to first-year students. The award is for \$6,000 per year. Applications are available online. Students must complete an on-campus interview conducted by faculty. The deadline is March 15.

**Robert E. McNair Scholarships** – The McNair Scholarship is awarded to two or three students in each first-year class. The scholarship guarantees a student a full grant award to include tuition, room and board. Students must complete service learning while enrolled and a study abroad experience. First-year students will apply online and must apply prior to the third Friday in November.

Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships are awarded on a limited basis to members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society who transfer to FMU. Students must have at least a 3.25 cumulative grade point average from the two-year institution where they are members of Phi Theta Kappa.

## STATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Other scholarship opportunities that students should consider include:

**S.C. HOPE Scholarships** – The South Carolina HOPE Scholarship, established under the South Carolina Education Lottery Act, was approved by the General Assembly during the 2001 legislative session and signed into law on June 13, 2001. Act 356 authorizes funding for scholarships in the amount of \$2,800 per year to eligible students attending four-year public and independent institutions in South Carolina. The purpose of the S.C. HOPE Scholarship program is to provide funding to students who graduate from high school with a 3.0 cumulative grade point average but are not eligible to receive the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows scholarships. Act 356 authorizes the Commission on Higher Education to promulgate regulation for administration of the S.C. HOPE Scholarship program. There is no application for the S.C. HOPE Scholarship. All students who are accepted to the University will be automatically considered.

**S.C. LIFE Scholarships** – The South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation authorizing the creation of the Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarships in June 1998. This scholarship is valued at \$5,000 per year and is available to qualified S.C. residents who have

two of the following three at high school graduation: 1100 on the SAT (critical reading/math), 24 ACT, a 3.0 grade point average, and/or are in the top 30 percent of high school class. LIFE Scholarships are renewable as long as a student maintains a 3.0 grade point average and earns an average of 30 non-remedial hours per academic year. There is no application for the LIFE Scholarship. All students who are accepted for admission to the University will be automatically considered. Students cannot receive both the LIFE Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. For more information refer to the CHE website at [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov).

**Palmetto Fellows Scholarships** are awarded to South Carolina high school students with exemplary academic credentials. The competition for these awards begins when students take the PSAT in their junior year of high school. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education selects Palmetto Fellows based on criteria that include class rank, extracurricular activities, leadership ability, and school recommendations. Palmetto Fellows receive up to a \$6,700 (increases to \$7,500 after first year) per year scholarship from the state, for up to four years of undergraduate study if the student adheres to the provisions of the Palmetto Fellows program. Application should be made via the high school guidance office.

**Enhancement Scholarships** – The South Carolina General Assembly has passed legislation for a new scholarship for certain students who are LIFE or Palmetto Fellows recipients majoring in math and science disciplines. For more information, go to our website by selecting “Financial Assistance” under “Quick Links” at [www.fmarion.edu](http://www.fmarion.edu). Regulations, eligibility requirements, and award amounts are subject to change based on directives from the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The Enhancement Scholarship is based upon availability of funds to be appropriated for the program.

The Army National Guard offers a variety of assistance programs including tuition assistance and student loan repayment programs. Contact your local armory for details.

Information concerning Athletic Scholarships may be obtained from the Director of Athletics at 843-661-1240.

## GRANTS

Federal Pell Grants are available to students seeking a first undergraduate degree. Eligibility is determined by need analysis. Grant amounts vary according to individual student need. Completion of the FAFSA is required annually.

The South Carolina Need-Based Grant is available to needy South Carolina residents who are seeking their first undergraduate degree. Completion of the FAFSA is required annually.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants are available to students seeking a first undergraduate degree. Need analysis is used to award these grants to students demonstrating exceptional need. Completion of the FAFSA is required annually. Priority is given to recipients of Pell Grants.

## LOANS

The University administers a variety of loan programs including federal, state, and institutionally backed loans. The Perkins and Direct Loans programs require student loan entrance interviews before money can be delivered. The Short Term Loan programs (the J.R. Driggs Memorial Emergency Loan Fund and Kappa Alpha Psi Student Revolving Loan Fund) provide small amounts of money to help students in certain emergency situations.

**Direct Loans (DL)** are loans available to students enrolled at least half-time in an eligible program. Repayment begins six months after a student ceases to be enrolled at least half-time. Monthly payments vary according to the amount borrowed but cannot be less than \$50.

DLs may be subsidized or unsubsidized. To qualify for a subsidized DL, a student must demonstrate need according to federal guidelines. For any subsidized DL funds a student receives, the federal government pays the interest while the student is in school. Unsubsidized DLs are available to students who do not or only partially qualify for subsidized funds. With unsubsidized DLs, the student is responsible for paying the interest. Interest accrues immediately, and the student has the option of paying toward the interest while in school or waiting until six months after graduation or withdrawal. The principal payments are still deferred. The accrued interest may be periodically capitalized (added to the loan principal) according to the lender's policy.

A student may apply for and receive funds from both subsidized and unsubsidized DL loans simultaneously as long as the cost of attendance is not exceeded. The maximum yearly borrowing limits for dependent students are \$5,500 for freshmen, \$6,500 for sophomores, and \$7,500 for juniors and seniors. The maximum yearly borrowing limits for independent students are the lesser of the cost of education or \$9,500 for freshmen, \$10,500 for sophomores, and \$12,500 for juniors and seniors. The aggregate borrowing limits for the DL program are \$31,000 for dependent undergraduate students and \$57,500 for independent undergraduate students of which a maximum of \$23,000 can be subsidized loans. The maximum yearly borrowing limit for graduate students is the lesser of the cost of education or \$20,500. The aggregate borrowing limit for the DL program is \$138,500 for graduate students. Graduate students may only apply for unsubsidized DL loans.

**Federal Parent and Graduate PLUS Loan** is a non-need-based loan available to graduate students and to the parents of a dependent student if the student is enrolled at least half-time in an eligible program. Repayment generally begins within 60 days of check disbursement. Monthly payments vary according to loan amount but cannot be less than \$50. The maximum yearly borrowing limit is the student's cost of education as determined by FMU minus any other financial assistance.

**The South Carolina Teacher Loan/Career Changers** is a non-need-based loan in which portions of the loan are canceled in return for teaching in critical geographic or subject areas of need as determined by the State Board of Education. For SCTL, freshmen and sophomores may receive up to \$2,500 per year; juniors, seniors, and graduate students may receive up to \$5,000 per year. For the Career Changers program, students may borrow \$15,000 per year. For more information about this loan or to request an application, call the S.C. Student Loan Corporation at 1-800-347-2752 or go online at [www.scstudentloan.org](http://www.scstudentloan.org).

**Short-Term Loans** – The J.R. Driggs Memorial Emergency Loan Fund was established with the University by the Evening Lions Club. The Kappa Alpha Psi Student Revolving Loan Fund was established with the University by the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Emergency loans in modest amounts to defray expenses incident to education at FMU will be made available to students for brief periods of time (usually 30 days) at an interest rate of 1.5 percent per month, or a fraction thereof, payable by the due date or before with the minimum interest charge being \$2 per month. Students borrowing money will be fully responsible for repayment of the loan.

## WORK-ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Several programs are offered that enable students to work part-time in various departments on campus.

A limited number of Graduate Assistantships are available for students enrolled in graduate programs. For more information, contact the appropriate director of graduate studies in business, education, nursing, or psychology.

The Federal Work Study Program is a federal program designed to expand