

Financial Assistance Awarding Policy for 2016-2017

The Office of Financial Assistance (OFA) attempts to meet 100% of each student's financial need with an awarding philosophy based on guidelines set forth for the Federal financial aid programs authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended. The minimum number of credit hours required to receive full-time financial aid awards at FMU is twelve (12) credit hours for each semester. FMU defines an academic year for the purpose of administering federal Title IV financial aid as two 15-week semesters during which the average undergraduate student completes a minimum of thirty (30) credit hours. Once analysis of the student's financial assistance application is complete, an award can be made.

- I. Upon the completion of the file, the student is first assigned a cost of attendance based on his or her residency status (in-state or out-of-state), self-reported living situation (not with parents or with parents), program of study, and full-time enrollment status.
- II. Once the cost of attendance is determined, the expected family contribution as calculated using the Federal Methodology is deducted from the cost of attendance to determine the student's financial need for Title IV assistance.
- III. Assistance is awarded in this order as need is met: Federal Pell Grant, Scholarships and Outside assistance, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, South Carolina State Need-Based Grant, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Stafford Loans, and Federal Work-Study. Federal PLUS and alternative loans are not awarded up front. PLUS and alternative loan applications are processed as received.

A. FEDERAL PELL GRANT

Once a student has been determined eligible for Federal Pell Grant, the Federal Methodology Expected Family Contribution for 9 months and the payment schedule provided by the U.S. Department of Education are used to determine the amount of Federal Pell Grant to be awarded. Federal Pell Grants may exceed the student's need.

B. SCHOLARSHIPS AND OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

Scholarships and outside assistance that OFA is aware of at the time of awarding are deducted from the remaining need after Federal Pell Grant has been deducted.

C. FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (FSEOG)

If the student has a prior Bachelor's degree, FSEOG is not awarded. Historically, FSEOG funds have been fully expended or nearly fully expended with applicants for federal assistance with an EFC of 0. Given this fact and the intent of SEOG to assist the "neediest of the needy", FSEOG awards will be limited to students with an EFC of 0. The FSEOG award cannot exceed need after deduction of Federal Grants, Scholarships and Outside Assistance. The maximum initial FSEOG award will be \$1000. SEOG awards may be increased up to \$4000 if unusual circumstances arise. The minimum initial FSEOG award will be \$200. FSEOG awards may be reduced to less than \$200 if an adjustment to aid has to be made after the initial award. FSEOG Program Budget must be considered as well.

D. S.C. NEED-BASED GRANT (SCNBG)

If the student has a prior Bachelor's degree, SCNBG is not awarded. Students who are applicants for federal assistance will be ranked by expected family contribution (EFC) and SCNBG will be awarded from the lowest EFC to the highest EFC in award date order. Continuing students who attended full-time must have completed 24 hours in the previous Fall and Spring semesters, not including hours earned in summer school. Federal Grant eligibility is not required. The SCNBG award cannot exceed need after deduction of Federal Grants, Scholarships, Outside Assistance, and FSEOG. The maximum initial award of SCNBG is \$1000 unless the student is listed by CHE as being in foster care which increases the award to \$2500.

SCNBG awards may be increased up to \$2500 if there is a negative balance in the SEOG account and there are NBG funds available or if other unusual circumstances arise. The minimum initial SCNBG award is \$500. SCNBG awards may be reduced to less than \$500 if an adjustment to aid has to be made after the initial award. SCNBG budget must be considered.

E. FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN

Students with a need greater than \$1000 are considered to be of exceptional need. Federal Perkins Loans will be awarded to students with exceptional need in this priority order:

1. Continuing students who are prior recipients of Federal Perkins Loans from FMU. (Information available from FA History and current year record).
2. Students that have maximized their Direct Loan eligibility for the year, are determined to have have need, and have a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA.

Federal Perkins Loans are awarded to meet remaining financial need after Federal Grants, Scholarships, Outside Assistance, FSEOG, and SCNBG have been deducted. The maximum initial Federal Perkins Loan is \$2750, and the minimum initial Federal Perkins Loan is \$1000. Federal Perkins awards may be reduced to less than \$1000 if an adjustment to aid has to be made after the initial award. Federal Perkins awards may vary on a case-by-case basis. Federal Perkins Loan Program budget must be considered as well.

F. FEDERAL DIRECT LOAN

Subsidized Federal Direct Loan funds will be awarded to the meet the least of:

1. Remaining financial need after Federal Grants, Scholarships, Outside Assistance, FSEOG, SCNBG, and Federal Perkins Loans have been deducted,

or
2. \$3500 for freshmen

\$4500 for sophomores

\$5500 for juniors and seniors.

Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan funds will be awarded to the meet the least of:

1. Cost of attendance after Federal Grants, scholarships, outside assistance, FSEOG, SCNBG, Federal Perkins Loan, and Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan have been deducted,

or
2. \$5500 for dependent freshmen minus any subsidized Federal Stafford Loan eligibility,

\$6500 for dependent sophomores minus any subsidized Federal Stafford Loan eligibility,

\$7500 for dependent juniors and dependent seniors minus any subsidized Federal Stafford Loan eligibility.

\$9500 for independent freshmen minus any subsidized Federal Stafford Loan eligibility,

\$10,500 for independent sophomores minus any subsidized Federal Stafford Loan eligibility,

\$12,500 or the student's cost of attendance, whichever is lower, for independent juniors and independent seniors minus any subsidized Federal Stafford Loan eligibility.

\$20,500 or the student's cost of attendance, whichever is lower, for graduate students.

G. FEDERAL WORK-STUDY PROGRAM (FWS)

FWS is awarded to meet the remaining financial need after Federal Grants, Scholarships, outside assistance, FSEOG, SCNBG, Federal Perkins Loans, and Federal Stafford Loans have been deducted. The maximum initial FWS award is \$2000, and the **minimum initial FWS award is \$1000**. FWS awards may be reduced to less than \$1000 or increased to more than \$2000 if an adjustment to aid has to be made after the initial award. FWS awards may vary outside of this criteria on a case-by-case basis.