

Appendix A

General Financial Aid Information

The Application Process

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin encourages students who wish to attend college and who do not have the financial resources available to pay the cost of higher education to seek assistance through The University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Office of Student Financial Aid. The Office of Student Financial Aid operates to assist students seeking a degree or certification from UT Permian Basin in obtaining the necessary resources from federal, state, and private sources.

To obtain financial assistance, the University requires all financial aid applicants, both graduate and undergraduate, to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is required for all need-based aid programs, including Federal Title IV grants and loans, Federal Work-Study, and state grants, loans and work-study. Some local scholarship funds also rely on data provided through the FAFSA. The Office of Student Financial Aid strongly encourages all students to complete the FAFSA each year. Federal requirements also stipulate that a person applying for financial assistance funded by state revenue must register with the Selective Service Office or file a statement that he is exempt from the registration requirement in accordance with the provisions of Section 51.9095, Texas Education Code.

Because availability of funds in most programs is limited, applications should be completed as early as possible each year beginning in February. Applications completed prior to April 15 will be given priority consideration for available aid. After April 15, applications will be considered for remaining available aid on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications are not considered complete until all required forms are properly filled out and are in the Office of Student Financial Aid. In some cases, students may be required to submit supporting documentation to verify aid eligibility. When students are selected for verification, their applications will not be considered complete until the required supporting documentation is in the Office of Financial Aid and all data is correct.

The Awarding Process

The Office of Student Financial Aid notifies students of what aid is being made available and how it will be disbursed by means of an award letter.

The award letter will list one or more programs of assistance in which funds are available to the student. Availability does not guarantee actual release of money. The student must complete any additional program applications (i.e., a student loan application), and meet enrollment and academic progress requirements before any checks can be released.

The award(s) listed on the award letter are referred to as an award "package." The number of awards in the package and the amount of each award are determined by the availability of funds at the time the student completes the application for aid and, for need-based aid, the results of the federal need analysis of the FAFSA application. Any student receiving non-need-based aid should notify the Office of Student Financial Aid as soon as possible so that the award can be included in the student's package. Failure to notify the office of all sources of assistance could result in an overaward and require the repayment of money already received. Repayment demands can create a severe financial hardship so it is advisable that the student report accurately all sources of assistance.

The University participates in a number of assistance programs to provide an optimum availability of help for students. These programs can be divided into four basic types of financial aid: grants, scholarships, loans, and employment. Grants and scholarships are gift awards that do not have to be repaid. Loans are monies that have to be repaid with interest, usually after completion of the program. Employment is part-time work, usually on campus, that is scheduled around the student's class schedule. Earnings from employment do not have to be repaid.

Listed below are brief descriptions of some of the programs in which the University participates. Funding of the different programs varies from year to year as do eligibility criteria and even the name of programs. Federal and state programs are subject to frequent regulatory changes which supersede the information in this bulletin. For further information about these programs and other available assistance, contact the Office of Student Financial Aid.

Scholarships are gift aid that does not have to be repaid. The basic criterion for scholarship eligibility is academic success, although some scholarships also consider financial need or other qualities. Scholarships are often provided through the generosity of persons who have chosen to aid students through the establishment of an endowed scholarship or annual scholarship and eligibility for scholarship awards may be based on criteria outlined by the donor at the time the gift was made.

Grants are publicly funded programs that provide gift aid which does not have to be repaid. Grants are usually awarded on the basis of information received by UTPB when the student completes the Federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The **Federal Pell Grant Program** is the largest of the gift aid programs under the Federal Title IV codes. It provides the foundation for all need-based assistance. Financial need is the single criterion used to determine the amount of the award, but students must also meet certain other stipulations to receive a Pell Grant. Pell grants are available only to undergraduates working on their first baccalaureate degree. To determine eligibility for the Pell grant, the student must first complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and have the information sent to the Office of Financial Aid. Graduate students are not eligible for the Pell Grant.

The **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program (FSEOG)** is designated to assist students with exceptional financial need. First preference for these awards is mandated by Federal regulation to go to Pell grant recipients. The FSEOG is available only to undergraduates.

The **Texas Public Educational Grant Program (TPEG)** is a state administered program for students. Eligibility is determined using information from the FAFSA need analysis. Priority consideration is given to full-time undergraduate students, but graduate students are eligible also.

The Texas Education Coordinating Board administers various tuition assistance programs including programs for teachers and vocational nursing students. Further information about these programs may be obtained by contacting the Financial Aid Office.

Student loans are available through a number of federal and state programs. Loans differ in interest rates, terms of repayment, and provisions for in-school deferments. Student loans are not gift aid and must be repaid.

The Family Federal Educational Loan Program (FFELP) is the largest loan program administered by the Federal government. This program consists of several types of student and parent loans including the **Federal Stafford Loan, Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, and the Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)**. The Federal Stafford Loan Program (subsidized) provides guaranteed student loans to students at a low variable interest rate. The Federal government pays the interest on these loans while the borrower is enrolled in school. Eligibility for a subsidized Federal Stafford Loan is determined through the FAFSA need analysis. All other FFELP loans are unsubsidized. This means that the borrower begins paying interest on the loan at the time the loan is made. In most cases, the principal can be deferred during enrollment periods. Unsubsidized loans can be used to meet the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculated in the FAFSA need analysis. The EFC is that portion of the student's family income which should be available to help pay a portion of the student's educational costs.

The University provides a limited number of jobs on campus to currently enrolled students. Eligibility for federal or state programs is determined by the FAFSA need analysis. Earnings are to be used to help pay for the student's education expenses (tuition, fees, books, and living expenses).

The **Federal Work-Study Program** provides on-campus employment opportunities for students to work as professional assistants, in the library, in student services, and in many other locations throughout the University. Because it is a need-based program eligibility is determined from the FAFSA application. The number of hours per week is determined by the student's award amount, but students may not work over 19 hours per week. Pay is based on a sliding scale, but no one receives less than minimum wage. Both graduates and undergraduates may receive Federal Work-Study awards. <http://ss.utpb.edu/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/work-study>.

Regular Student Employment is sometimes available through individual departments. These part-time jobs are not related to the need-based awards, and the employing department has considerable latitude in meeting personnel needs. Application is made at the department level. Students may not work over 19 hours per week.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Although state and national policy has established many objectives for student financial aid programs, one clear purpose is to fund only students who meet certain academic standards. Institutions are therefore required by law to formulate standards to gauge the progress of students receiving federal and state financial aid by applying both qualitative and quantitative measurements to academic work. A maximum time limit for the completion of a degree and a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) are used by the University to measure satisfactory academic progress. Most private and institutional scholarships have specific academic and enrollment standards required for renewal or continuance of the award, if renewal is allowed.

The qualitative standard of satisfactory academic progress is measured by the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of courses taken at UT Permian Basin. Each financial aid recipient's academic record is reviewed at the end of each spring term to measure the student's qualitative academic progress.

Graduate students are required to maintain a minimum CGPA of 3.00 each semester they are enrolled. Students falling below this minimum CGPA will be suspended from financial aid.

The University has established a quantitative measurement of academic progress toward completion of a student's degree or certification program. Federal Title IV regulations state that student eligibility cannot extend past 150% of the stated length of a student's program of study. A student's entire enrollment history is considered when evaluating academic progress within the established time frame, whether or not aid has been received previously. At the end of the semester in which the maximum number of allowed hours has been attempted the student loses eligibility for financial aid.

In addition to the overall time frame, a graduate student must also be making progress toward completing the program by completing the number hours attempted each year. Hours are those semester credit hours which are counted in determining a student's enrollment status. Courses in which a "W", "WP", "WF", "D", "F", "U" or "Z" has been recorded may be repeated once and be included as hours for financial aid (i.e., in the 9+ hours for full-time enrollment).

A quantitative measurement of academic progress will be made annually for all financial aid recipients. At the end of the spring semester a student must have successfully completed a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of all course enrollments attempted at UT Permian Basin. Any student who falls below the minimum completion rate of 75% will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension until the ratio of completed to attempted hours is again at or above 75%. Courses with a recorded grade of "F", "U", "W", "Z" or "PR" are not considered successfully completed. Students are permitted to use summer enrollments to make up credit hour deficiencies. Only enrollments attempted and successfully completed at UT Permian Basin will be considered in academic progress. Courses repeated or transferred from other institutions are not considered in measuring academic progress except for monitoring the overall time frame for completion of a student's program of study.

Students who have lost eligibility to receive financial aid as a result of Financial Aid Suspension must attain the minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress before becoming eligible for aid.

The University recognizes that students sometimes encounter circumstances beyond their control that can adversely affect their academic progress. Any student subject to probation or suspension of financial aid eligibility may appeal to the Financial Assistance Committee (FAC) for a review of the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing and include in the request an explanation and documentation of the reason(s) why the minimum academic standards required by this policy were not achieved. The Financial Assistance Committee shall have the authority to uphold or overturn the suspension. The FAC shall also have the authority to place conditions upon the receipt of any financial aid for those cases where aid is reinstated. The student will be notified by the Director of Financial Aid in writing of the FAC's decision.

As an institution participating in programs under Title IV of the **Higher Education Act of 1965** as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act"), The University of Texas of the Permian Basin is required to refund unearned tuition, fees, room and board, and other charges to certain students attending the institution who have received a grant, a loan, or work assistance under Title IV of the Act or whose parents have received a loan on their behalf under 20 U.S.C. Section 1087-2. The refund is required if the student does not register for, withdraws from, or otherwise fails to complete the period of enrollment for which the financial assistance was intended. No refund is required if the student withdraws after a point in time that is sixty percent of the period of enrollment for which the charges were assessed. A student who withdraws prior to that time is entitled to a refund of tuition, fees, room and board, and other charges that is the larger of the amount provided for in Section 54.006, Texas Education Code, or a Return to Title IV calculated pursuant to Section 484B of the Act, reduced by the amount of any unpaid charges and a reasonable administrative fee not to exceed

the lesser of five percent, or one hundred dollars. If the student charges were paid by Title IV funds, a portion or all of the refund will be returned to these programs.

Off-campus employment

The PASS Office continually posts employment opportunities off campus. This office provides this as a service to both the student and the employer.

Veterans Education Benefits

The University participates in all aspects of the Veterans Administration programs available to returning veterans enrolling as students. A veteran's advisor under the auspices of the Veterans Administration Program is available for individual consultation and assistance on the UT Permian Basin campus. The advisor is located in the Registrar's Office.

Hazlewood Act for Texas Veterans

The Texas State Legislature established a tuition and fees waiver program to assist Texas veterans who have exhausted their eligibility for educational benefits under the G.I. Bill and are not eligible for Federal Title IV grants-in aid. Veterans who qualify will receive a waiver of all tuition charges and specified fees. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for further information about the Hazlewood Act and other eligibility criteria.

Texas Rehabilitation Assistance for Students

The Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) offers assistance for tuition and nonrefundable fees to students having certain disabling conditions provided their vocational objectives have been approved by a TRC counselor. Examples of such conditions are: orthopedic deformities, emotional disorders, diabetes, epilepsy, and heart conditions. Other services are also available to assist handicapped students in becoming employable. Application for such service should be made to: **Texas Rehabilitation Commission; 419 W. 4th Street, Suite 701; Odessa, Texas 79761**

Graduate Scholarships and Assistantships

A limited number of scholarships and assistantships are available for graduate students. Contact the Graduate Studies office for current information on availability, current funding amounts, and applications.

