



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK

2015-16

PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY

Discover. Educate. Care. Lead.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS
STUDENT FINANCIAL PLANNING
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015-16

PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY
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College of Physicians and Surgeons
FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK
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PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY

THE OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL PLANNING administers financial aid for the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Dental Medicine, the Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Programs in Occupational and Physical Therapy. We serve as a resource and as a link to your funding sources. Keep in mind that financial aid programs are subject to change due to legislative and regulatory changes.

All of our staff are prepared to answer your questions. In addition, each class is assigned to a Financial Aid Officer who will determine need and award financial aid packages and work closely with that class throughout school.

Check our website periodically for up-to-date information and helpful links www.cumc.columbia.edu/student/finaid.

We are located in Room 139 of the Black Building. We are open from 9am to 5pm, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Wednesdays we are open from 12pm to 5pm.

WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID? Financial aid is any grant, scholarship, loan, or work-study award offered to help you meet educationally related expenses. Such aid is usually provided by or through the school, federal and state agencies, foundations or corporations, etc.

WHAT KIND OF FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE? Students in the Physical Therapy program are eligible for "external loans" (Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, Federal Graduate PLUS, private alternative loans), Federal Work Study and Federal Perkins loans. There are also some low cost institutional loans available for the "neediest" students. Merit Scholarships may be awarded by the Physical Therapy Admissions Committee but our office has no "need-based" scholarships or grants to award.

HOW DO I APPLY? To establish eligibility for Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, and Federal Graduate PLUS, Federal Work Study and Perkins loans, **complete the FAFSA**, student sections only. No parental information is required. If you are **married**, your spouse's financial information is also required.

International students do not need to complete a FAFSA. An **international student** in the United States with an F1 or F2 student visa, with a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or with a G-series or H-series visa **is not eligible for need-based student aid from federal or state sources**. If you acquire permanent resident status prior to graduation, you will become eligible for state and federal assistance. Please note that a "Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence" (I-171 or I-464) does not make you eligible for federal student aid.

International students are eligible for private alternative loans if you have a credit worthy cosigner, who is a US Citizen or Permanent Resident.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY? – Incoming and returning students should submit the FAFSA by **March 20th** (or within 2 weeks after acceptance, whichever is later if you are an entering student). If all of your application materials are complete, you should expect to hear from us in June. See the chart on our [website](#) for a complete list of deadlines.

In addition, you must notify us about any new income (scholarships, personal loans, etc.) that becomes available after you file your applications, change in marital status, or if your spouse was reported as expected to enroll as a full-time student for the academic year and did not do so. This obligation extends throughout the entire academic year.

Your Financial Aid Officer will review changes in your financial circumstances throughout the year to determine if there is a change in your eligibility for funds.

No awards will be made to students whose application materials are incomplete.

A **PLICATION MATERIALS** - Please keep copies of all your application materials!

All forms, with the exception of the FAFSA, should be submitted to our office. Forms with a (*) next to them are available on our website in "fill-in" PDF format.

Once you receive your CU ID, you will be able to log into NetPartner to check the status of your application materials and also see if any additional documents have been requested.

1. The **Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA)** - This is the federal application required for all applicants who are US citizens or permanent residents and who wish to establish eligibility for financial aid offered by the United States Department of Education (Title IV)- Stafford and Graduate PLUS loans.

FAFSA on the Web is a free US Department of Education website where you can complete and submit a FAFSA online. The website is www.fafsa.gov. You can also apply by using a paper form, but we recommend that you do the web application because the reject rate is <2% compared to about 14% for the paper application.

At this same website, you can complete a **Renewal FAFSA** if you applied for federal student aid last year. Most of the information you entered last year will appear on the screen, and you will only have to add some new information and update information that has changed since last year (for example, family size or income). Be sure to print out a copy of your **FAFSA on the Web** application before you submit it.

If you do not already have a federal financial aid PIN, you can [request a PIN](#) online. This is your electronic signature for FAFSA and Renewal FAFSA on the Web. It can also be used to access your Title IV federal student aid history [online](#) (select "Financial Aid Review").

Please select the option to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool when asked.

Read the instructions carefully when you complete your FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA. Most mistakes are made because students fail to follow instructions. Pay special attention to any questions on income as most errors occur in this area.

If you have already submitted your FAFSA, and **Columbia University Title IV Code 002707** was not one of the schools you originally listed, go online to www.fafsa.gov to add us.

Note: *There is a private company whose website is fafsa.com. They charge a fee if you complete the FAFSA on line with them. There is no charge for filing a FAFSA, so be sure to go to the correct website.*

2. Complete the **Aid Type Request** form if you have never applied for aid with us before. This form asks you to indicate the type of financial aid for which you would like to be considered. The type of financial aid you indicate on this form will determine which documents you need to complete for the financial aid application process.
3. **Permanent Resident Card** - If you do not hold US citizenship but have been accorded "permanent resident" status, you must submit a copy of both sides of your Permanent Resident Card (I-151, I-551, or I-551C) to our office. If you have an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94), you may be eligible for Stafford loans. Please check with us. If you have a Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence (I-171 or I-464), you are not eligible for federal student aid.
4. If you are interested in a **Federal Work-Study** award, you should contact our office for further information.
5. **Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS (Grad PLUS) Applications** - All new students should complete a **Master Promissory Note (MPN)** for the Stafford Loan. If you will also be applying for the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loan you will need to do a separate MPN. Go to the Direct Lending website at www.StudentLoans.gov to complete the MPNs online. You will also need to complete the Entrance Counseling online at the same website. You do this once for both loans. If you are a continuing student who borrowed from these programs last year you will not have to complete another MPN or redo the Entrance Counseling.

Please note the following: there is no place on the MPN to request loan amounts:

a) Your financial aid award letter will include **recommended** amounts to borrow from the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan.

You should review your financial aid award letter and download the **Financial Aid Acceptance Form** from our website, complete and return it to our office within two weeks after receipt of the letter.

If you haven't submitted the Financial Aid Acceptance Form by the time we are ready to transmit originations in August, your information will be electronically submitted for the Stafford loan amount shown in your award letter. We cannot, however, originate Grad PLUS loans until you tell us how much you want to borrow and you've completed the GradPLUS Credit Authorization Form. You have the right to cancel these loan amounts or to subsequently change them. However, changes may cause a delay with disbursement.

b)* If you decide to replace the FAFSA "expected family contribution" or need funds to cover additional expenses, or if you will not need all of the loans in your package then you must indicate the loan amounts you wish to take on the **Financial Aid Acceptance form**. You can work with your Financial Aid Officer to make the necessary adjustments if you need help determining the proper amounts.

- 6.* **Married Students** should complete the **Married Student Budget** and contact their financial aid officer to discuss any budgeting concerns.
- 7.* **Single students with expenses greater than the published budget** should submit itemized budgets to our office for review. **Rents that exceed our average budgets may be approved for extra borrowing BUT only to a maximum of \$1,400 a month. "The Rent Adjustment Form" (found on our website) and a copy of your lease will be required before any adjustments to your budget are made.** Check with your Financial Aid Officer before committing to additional housing expenses that you cannot cover with personal funds.
8. **Commuting students** must submit information separately about both commuting and living expenses.
9. **Verification Worksheet** - To confirm the accuracy of data reported by financial aid applicants and their families, the federal government has a regulatory process called **Verification**. Verification applies to applicants for the Federal Perkins Loan and Federal Work-Study programs.

If you are selected for Verification, our office will contact you with the appropriate Verification Worksheet for the academic year. It must be returned to our office no later than **three weeks** from the date you are notified that you must complete the form (see below for late penalties). The completed Worksheet plus all required documentation must be reviewed by your Financial Aid Officer before you can be awarded any funds.

If you submit subsequent applications for additional federally-regulated aid after you have filled out a Verification Worksheet, federal regulations require that you "update" your household size, and number of household members in a postsecondary school.

Important: If the required information has not been submitted by the stated deadline then:

- Our office will consider your application for aid **withdrawn**. You may reactivate it by supplying the information.
- In any case, if you miss the deadline and your financial aid is delayed because of this, you will be responsible for all late charges assessed on your school account.

H **OW DO WE DETERMINE FINANCIAL NEED?** Financial "need" is defined as the difference between anticipated expenses and financial resources which include any scholarships, grants or loans awarded to the student by sources outside of our office.

D **ETERMINATION OF ACADEMIC YEAR EXPENSES** - Student budgets are divided into two areas: **direct costs** (tuition, fees, books, instruments, lab coats, transportation to clinical courses, and board exam fees), and **indirect costs** (living expenses such as food, housing, clothing and miscellaneous expenses). The budgets are used to calculate eligibility for all types of financial aid. You can refer to the student budget on our website.

A student's budget is computed only for enrolled periods - August between each year is not an enrolled period, so plan your finances carefully.

Adjustments to student budgets may be made for the following items, where applicable:

- ✓ Student Health Service and/or Medical Insurance Premium for married students/students with dependents.
- ✓ If you waive the "Medical Insurance Premium" your budget will be reduced by an equal amount and your financial aid package will be adjusted accordingly.
- ✓ Medical/dental care costs - Medical care costs in excess of the benefits provided by the Health Sciences Student Health Service Program or non-elective dental costs that exceed \$200 per year will be considered, if documentation is provided.
- ✓ Educational debt repayment - consideration is given if repayment of principal and/or interest is compulsory during enrollment. (No adjustments will be made for in-school interest on "unsubsidized" loans or for voluntary payments on loans from individuals).
- ✓ Life insurance premiums - for students with dependents.
- ✓ Child care for a single parent or when spouse is working outside the home.
- ✓ International Student Fee - \$50 assessed each semester by the International Affairs Office.
- ✓ Married student expenses are reviewed on an individual basis. Factors given consideration in estimating costs are spouse's educational status (is he or she a full-time or part-time student?), spouse's employment status, and spouse's expenses (including spouse's educational debt repayment). Be sure to discuss your situation with your financial aid officer when applying for financial aid.
- ✓ Rent – if it exceeds the rent in our "Average Student Budget", up to a maximum of \$1,400 a month.
- ✓ Monthly metro card expense if living outside of Washington Heights.

PLEASE NOTE!

Other expenses will be considered if they are necessary and related to attendance at physical therapy school, **BUT**, you should not incur expenses that exceed the standard budget unless: a) you can cover them with assistance from family or friends, or b) if you will need financial aid to cover them, you have **first** cleared the expenditure(s) with your Financial Aid Officer. Be prepared with itemized documentation of any additional charges. If you do not get Columbia owned housing, we may be able to approve broker's fees and higher rent, **BUT** only to a predetermined maximum. Potentially refundable deposits cannot be covered.

In most cases you will have to pay for additional expenses by accessing higher cost alternative loans, so it is to your advantage to **"think frugally"**.

HOW YOU CAN FACILITATE THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS

- Apply in a timely manner. Meet all deadlines.
- Follow up quickly if what you expect to occur doesn't occur as planned.
- Respond promptly to any communication from our office.

- Carefully review your Financial Aid Award Letter and promptly confirm the amounts recommended for Stafford Loans. Contact our office if there is anything you do not understand or if your financial situation has changed and this change is not reflected in your award.
- Promptly complete the appropriate application(s) or forms for any Federal Direct Stafford, Grad PLUS, or alternative loan programs you intend to use.
- **You should come to campus with enough money to cover expenses until financial aid funding is available to you for educational and living expenses.** Even if your total cost of education is covered by financial aid, you may not have immediate access to these funds upon arriving on campus. All Federal Direct Loans are transmitted electronically to your student account. Loan disbursements **must** be processed through your student account before you can receive a refund.
- **BE PROACTIVE!** Our office can help you understand the financial aid process and provide information about the best programs available to you. But, **it is your responsibility to:**
 - a) apply on time and complete all necessary paperwork;
 - b) respond promptly to any requests from our office, outside agencies, or lenders;
 - c) learn enough about how the financial aid process works to know what to expect from all players;
 - d) follow up with our office, lenders, or outside agencies if there is something you don't understand or if you experience an unusual delay or suspect a problem of any kind.

THE FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE AND AWARDING POLICIES - Once your demonstrated financial need is ascertained, a Financial Aid Officer will construct a "package," or list of funds you can use to supplement the "expected family contribution" in order to pay for school. The relative amount of each component of the package (grants/scholarships, and loans) is determined by the availability of funds and eligibility guidelines within each program.

To meet demonstrated need, a financial aid package is developed using institutional, federal, and private loans and scholarships, prioritized in the following order:

1. A Merit Scholarship Award, if awarded to you by the Admissions Committee of the Physical Therapy Program
2. Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford
3. Federal Perkins Loan
4. Supplemental Loan Sources (Grad PLUS or private/alternative loans)
5. Federal College Work-Study (optional)

MERIT BASED SCHOLARSHIPS — These scholarships are awarded to students based on outstanding undergraduate academic achievement. The Program's Admissions Committee determines the minimum grade point average for the scholarship on a yearly basis. The amount of the scholarship award varies from year to year depending on program support, Alumni giving, and other donations by friends of the program. The scholarship is

renewed yearly under the condition the recipient maintains both a 3.350 semester and cumulative average in the DPT program.

I**NTERSCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS** - A number of scholarships are awarded directly by the University Provost's Office and are available only to students who meet specific criteria. **If you meet any of the following criteria, please write to our office explaining how you qualify, no later than June 1, 2015. If you are accepted after this date and feel you are eligible for these scholarships, please contact our office to see if we can still submit nominations.**

Ellis	Residents of the state of Vermont, or graduates from a college or university in the state of Vermont.
Hollingworth	Graduates of the University of Nebraska, with preference given to women.
Nichoplas	Male students of Greek extraction or male students born in Greece and graduated from any Greek college or university.
Poder	Candidates must speak Estonian.
Upton	Children of employees of the Houghton Mifflin Company, Lexington, Massachusetts.

E**TERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS** - We encourage you to look at the outside scholarship opportunities on our web site to assist in your efforts to obtain support for your studies. Other good sources are the websites [Foundation Grants to Individuals online](#) and www.finaid.org.

We expect that **all** eligible students will apply for grants that are administered by their states of legal residence. You should investigate the availability of scholarship programs in their home state.

S**ERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS –**

The [New York City Board Of Education](#) provides scholarships for both first and second year students. This service scholarship pays for one year of tuition in exchange for twenty-four months of service after graduation as a Physical Therapist in a public school at the regular salary. These service scholarships are renewable for the second year of study contingent upon funding. Further information may be obtained by calling the Board of Education at (718) 391-8391, or in writing:

NYC Department of Education
Office of School Health/Office of Related and Contractual Services
28-11 Queens Plaza North, Room 502
Long Island City, NY 11101

F**EDERAL WORK-STUDY PROGRAM (FWS) –** This program provides an opportunity for full time students who are US citizens or Permanent residents to earn a part of the cost of their

educational expenses. Funds provided to the University by the Federal Government subsidize a portion of the wages paid to the students.

Students interested in FWS opportunities should complete the FAFSA form and check with us regarding eligibility.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

ENTRANCE AND EXIT SEMINARS - We are required to provide an "entrance seminars" for all first-time borrowers at our school, even if you have previously borrowed from the same program(s) at another school. This session is conducted during Orientation Week each year for new students.

During your final year, attendance at an "exit seminars" will be required before graduation if you have taken **any** educational loans while in attendance in the Physical Therapy Program.

The purpose of both entrance and exit seminars is to provide a framework for debt management. Debt management helps you understand how student loans will affect finances, goals, and lifestyle, now and in the future. The exit seminar will also include review of various topics in personal finance.

New students and first-time borrowers can complete the required "Entrance Counseling" on-line after receiving detailed instructions with your award letter. You are still required to attend the Entrance Seminar during Orientation. Similarly, students who have borrowed federal or institutional loans must complete the required "Exit Counseling" prior to graduating, dropping below part-time status, or withdrawing from the University, and will still be required to attend the in-person seminar prior to graduation.

NATIONAL STUDENT LOAN DATA SYSTEM - The National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) is the US Department of Education's central database for student aid. It receives data from schools, agencies that guaranty loans, the Direct Loan program, lenders and loan servicers. NSLDS provides a centralized, integrated view of Title IV loans, tracked through their entire cycle - from aid approval through final payment. Title IV loans include Federal Stafford (subsidized and unsubsidized), Federal Perkins, Federal Consolidation, Federal Direct Consolidation, and Federal Grad PLUS loans.

If you are a US Citizen or Permanent Resident and have borrowed any Title IV loans, we strongly recommend that you log on to the NSLDS web site at www.nsls.ed.gov. If you filed your FAFSA electronically, you already have a PIN. This website requires the same PIN. You can also log on to request a PIN if you have forgotten it or never received one.

The NSLDS site is a particularly useful tool if you are not sure who owns or services educational loans taken prior to your matriculation here and you will need to file "student" deferments for these loans. The website shows the type of each federal loan you've borrowed, such as a Stafford loan or Perkins loan. For each loan listed, you'll see the date you took out the loan, the amount originally borrowed, the amount you owe now, the interest rate and the amount of interest that has accumulated. You'll also find the status of each, such as whether the loan is in repayment, paid in full or in default.

Please note that this web site will not include any private loans you may have borrowed while enrolled at your college or university, nor will it include other "alternative" loans. In addition, it will not include any federal loans administered by the Department of Health & Human Services (HPSL, LDS, NSL or HEAL).

Other educational loans not tracked on NSLDS may be found on your credit reports. Once a year you are entitled to free credit reports from each of the three major credit bureaus, Experian, Equifax, and Trans Union. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com and follow the instructions.

CREDITWORTHINESS - Good credit often determines who can borrow and who cannot. The Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford loan is not credit-based. To borrow in excess of the annual Stafford limit, you must apply for a Federal Graduate PLUS, or a private "alternative" loan, and these loans require that you be "credit ready" or "creditworthy." Without good credit and access to the Federal Graduate PLUS or alternative student loans, you may not be able to finance a career in the health professions.

The Federal Grad PLUS program and all lenders of "alternative loans" (non-federal external loans) use creditworthiness as one of the criteria for determining eligibility. Therefore, if you have a poor credit rating, it is imperative that you rectify past problems before matriculation. This is particularly true if you will be borrowing in excess of the maximum available from the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan program. **If you are denied access to loans because of bad consumer credit or problems with prior educational loans, you may not be able to finance your medical education.**

In addition, certain "alternative" loans may require creditworthy co-makers. Lenders may apply two tests before approving a co-maker: (1) does he or she have a good credit rating, and (2) does he or she have an appropriate debt to income ratio that would lead a lender to assume that if called upon, your co-maker could afford to repay the loan. Co-makers are only called upon for repayment if you do not repay.

Good credit requires a continuous pattern of prompt payments, no current payment delinquencies, and no negative items such as collections, repossessions or foreclosures. A good credit history means that you are "creditworthy." Some students have not yet established a credit history, and, for educational loans, this is equal to good credit. It is known as "credit-ready." Future health service professionals are considered to be very good credit risks.

Bad credit, on the other hand, reflects delinquent or slow payments, current delinquencies or other negative items. The credit criteria used to review/approve student loans can include the following: (1) absence of negative credit; (2) no bankruptcies, foreclosures, repossessions, charge-offs, or open judgments; (3) no prior educational loan defaults unless paid in full or making satisfactory progress in repayment; and (4) absence of excessive past due accounts, i.e. no 30-, 60-, or 90-day delinquencies on consumer loans or revolving charge accounts within the past two years.

Since lenders are required to report student loans to at least one credit bureau, your credit could be bad because of failure to keep deferments current or to make required payments. Bad credit will not only deny you access to loans for education, you will not be able to finance a car, a home, a practice, or much of anything else. Your credit rating must be protected at all costs, and that means making wise decisions and knowing where problems might arise.

If you feel there is even a slight chance that you may have a credit problem, you should discuss the situation with your financial aid officer and immediately take whatever steps necessary to improve your record.

Please see our website for more information about the importance of good credit and how to check your credit rating.

L OANS - After you apply for financial aid, your Financial Aid Officer will notify you in an award letter about your eligibility for specific loans. Upon request our office can provide information on loan terms and repayment options.

A monthly loan repayment calculator can be found on [our website](#).

We strongly urge you to seek loans from family members and from other outside sources, since more favorable interest rates and repayment schedules may be possible. Loans described below include Federal Loans and Private Alternative Loans.

T RUTH IN LENDING ACT (TILA) & REGULATION Z- Regulation Z implements Title X of the HEOA (Higher Education Opportunity Act) which amended TILA. It has disclosure and timing requirements that apply to creditors making private education loans, which are defined as loans made for postsecondary educational expenses. The only loans exempt from these requirements are Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, Federal Perkins, Federal Direct Graduate PLUS (Grad Plus), and Federal Consolidation Loans. Thus it applies to all CU Loans other than Federal Perkins, and will also apply to any private, alternative education loan.

The amendments to TILA, as implemented by Regulation Z, require that creditors (banks extending private, alternative loans):

- Provide a number of new disclosures to borrowers, which must be given at several different times in the loan origination process;
- Permit the borrower the right to accept the loan at any time within 30 days after receiving the approval disclosures;
- Allow the borrower the right to cancel the loan without penalty for 3 business days after receiving the final disclosures; and
- Obtain a signed 'self-certification form' from the borrower before consummating the loan.

If you plan to borrow any private, alternative loans, you can expect the lender to ask you for a 'Private Education Loan Applicant Self-Certification Form' prior disbursement. The Form will request your cost of attendance, financial aid received and the gap between them. We can assist you in completing the Form.

C OOLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (CU) LOANS - By filing the FAFSA you are automatically given consideration for all loans awarded directly by the College: Federal Perkins and "named" CU Loans. These loans are released one-half each semester, and are applied towards your bill. Please note that the recent federal regulations have identified institutional loans, other than Federal Perkins loans as "private loans" and as such, the University must follow the Regulation Z requirements, from the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) as previously mentioned.

The **Federal Perkins Loan** program provides long-term, low-interest (5%) loans to students demonstrating exceptional need. The aggregate amount of Perkins funds a graduate student may receive from all undergraduate and graduate institutions is \$60,000; the annual maximum is \$8,000. No interest accrues while you are in school or during grace and deferment periods. Once grace and deferment periods have expired, the maximum repayment period is ten years, or longer if "consolidated."

Other "named" Columbia University Loans are low-interest (5%) loans available to students who demonstrate financial need. Repayment is usually required to begin six months after graduation. Thereafter principal and interest are repayable over a maximum of ten years.

E XTERNAL LOANS-

Federal Direct Stafford Loan

The Federal Direct Stafford loan program is designed to make low-interest loans available to US Citizens or permanent resident students to help you meet your educational expenses.

If you received a **Subsidized** Federal Direct Stafford Loan prior to July 1, 2012, the federal government pays the interest on the loan to the lender (i.e. "subsidizes" it) while you are in school, in grace (depending on the year you took the loan), and during deferment periods.

At this time, all newly originated graduate Federal Stafford Loans are unsubsidized loans. With **"Unsubsidized"** Federal Direct Stafford Loans, the borrower will be responsible for interest during in-school, grace, and deferment periods, although you may postpone paying the interest. **You can check with Direct Lending regarding the frequency of interest capitalization.**

The lender for William Ford Federal Direct loans is the US Department of Education.

The annual loan limit for graduate students is \$20,500. The total debt allowed for graduate or professional study is \$138,500 (of which no more than \$65,500 may be in Subsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans). The graduate debt limit includes any Federal Direct Stafford loans received, prior to matriculation here.

An origination fee will be withheld from each disbursement. As of October 1, 2014 the fee is 1.073%. It is usually adjusted annually on October 1st.

Stafford Loans for graduate students disbursed prior to 7/1/06 continue to have a variable rate. The rate is subject to change each July 1st with an 8.25% interest rate cap. Stafford loans for graduate students disbursed between 7/01/06 – 6/30/13 have a fixed rate of 6.8%.

The interest rate for Stafford Loans for graduate students originated from 7/1/13 – 6/30/14 is 5.41% fixed and 6.21% for loans originated from 7/1/14 – 6/30/15. The rate for new loans disbursed on or after each July 1st will be fixed and based on a formula with an interest rate cap of 9.5%.

If you borrowed Stafford Loans as an undergraduate student, your loans may have different rates than those described above.

Repayment of Staffords is **"deferred"** if you meet any of the following criteria : 1) in school at least half-time; 2) unemployed, for up to three years; 3) can document economic hardship, for up to three years; or 4) are enrolled in a graduate fellowship program or rehabilitation training program for disabled individuals (no time limit). The College Cost Reduction & Access Act of 2007 changed the formula on 7/1/09 used to calculate eligibility for the economic hardship

deferment so that most residents and fellows will no longer qualify. However, It also added two new repayment options, "Income-Based Repayment" (IBR) and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) which include a "partial financial hardship" calculation to determine eligibility and may provide an affordable repayment amount based on your income and family size. If you are ineligible for a deferment, you may wish to ask about IBR or PAYE before looking into forbearance options.

Borrowers who do not qualify for deferment are eligible for various forbearance options, some types which must be requested in writing in a "timely" manner. Forbearance is unlike deferment in one critical area - interest continues to accrue during forbearance periods, so there is a cost associated with it. Payments may be postponed during forbearance.

Following a six month grace period and any authorized deferments or forbearance periods, you may have up to ten years to repay both principal and interest. If you owe at least \$30,000 in federal loans you can request a 25 year extended repayment plan. If you refinance Staffords via Federal Loan Consolidation, you may extend your repayment up to 30 years, depending on your total educational debt. There are also income derived repayment plans.

Federal Direct Graduate PLUS (Grad PLUS)

The Federal Direct Grad PLUS loan allows you, not your parents, to borrow up to the cost of attendance less any other financial aid you receive. This loan has a fixed interest rate of 7.9% and no aggregate limits. You must be a US citizen or permanent resident to qualify. Credit checks are also required to determine eligibility, but the credit criteria are much less stringent than for most private alternative loans. If you don't meet the credit criteria you may still obtain the loan with an "endorser" who does meet the credit requirements.

PLUS applicants cannot have adverse credit based on a review of at least one credit report from a national credit reporting agency. You have "adverse credit" if you meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Federal Student Aid loans in default or delinquent status
- ✓ Accounts that are 90 days or more past due
- ✓ Evidence of default, foreclosure, tax lien, repossession, wage garnishment, or judgments in the last 5 years
- ✓ Accounts in collection
- ✓ Accounts that were "write-offs" or never able to collect upon

A lack of credit history or insufficient credit history is not considered adverse credit. Credit-worthiness is not based on a FICO score, debt to income ratio, or annual salary. To be eligible, you must complete a FAFSA and have first applied for your maximum annual loan eligibility under the Stafford program. You will also have to complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) for this loan.

An **origination fee** will be withheld from each disbursement. As of October 1, 2014 the fee is 4.292%. It is usually adjusted annually on October 1st.

Federal Direct Grad PLUS Loans disbursed prior to 7/1/13 have a 7.9% fixed interest rate. Federal Grad PLUS Loans disbursed prior to 7/1/10 lent by a bank or financial institution (FFEL loans) have an 8.5% fixed rate.

The interest rate for loans disbursed between 7/1/13 – 6/30/14 is 6.41% fixed and 7.21% for loans originated from 7/1/14 – 6/30/15. The rate for new loans disbursed on or after each July 1st is based on a formula with an interest rate cap of 10.50%.

Grad PLUS loans taken on or after 7/1/08 will have a 6-month post enrollment deferment period. If you have both Staffords and Grad PLUS loans from 7/1/06-6/30/08, you can request that the start of the repayment period for Grad PLUS be "aligned" with the end of the 6 month Stafford grace period.

When comparing Federal Direct GradPLUS to "alternative" loans, an alternative loan currently may have a lower rate; but if an alternative loan's interest rate is not fixed, and if inflation drives interest rates up, then over the life of the loan - which could be 20-25 years - the alternative loan could be more costly. Also, alternative loans may not have as flexible postponements options as Federal Direct Graduate PLUS for future education or post-graduate training. Graduate PLUS Loans are eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness, while alternative loans are not.

GradPLUS loans have the same repayment plan options as Staffords.

A LTERNATIVE LOANS -

We refer to some loans as "alternative loans" or "private loans" because they are neither institutional based loans nor are they federal loans. These loans can replace the family contribution or allowable expenses which exceed the standard budget. If you need an "alternative" loan, consult your Financial Aid Officer for more information.

Many of the alternative loan programs allow you to apply by phone or on-line, and give you "approval" for a specific period of time (for example the approval may be good for 60 or 90 days before they would re-check your credit). Therefore, if you want to check your eligibility, particularly if you are unsure about the status of your credit history, you may want to follow this route.

Columbia has a suggested lender list. This is not an exhaustive list of available lenders. You have the right and ability to select the education loan provider of your choice, are not required to use any of these suggested lenders and will suffer no penalty for choosing a lender that is not included on [Columbia's suggested lender list](#). For more information regarding Columbia's lender selection process, please see the disclosure on their website.

Please also note that there are other lenders available that offer loans for students who meet specific criteria, such as loans to students from certain states, for example the New Jersey CLASS loan.

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST WITH LOAN REPAYMENT

FEDERAL LOAN CONSOLIDATION – A Federal Direct Consolidation Loan (FDCL) is a loan that you can borrow to pay off some or all of your existing eligible federal student loans, both graduate and undergraduate. The FDCL has a fixed interest rate with a repayment term of up to 30 years, depending on your total student loan debt. Loans eligible for consolidation include Federal Direct Stafford (subsidized and unsubsidized), Grad PLUS, and Federal Perkins, Loans to Disadvantaged Students (LDS), Nursing Student Loans (NSL) and Health Professions Student Loans (HPSL).

There are no fees for Federal Consolidation Loans. The interest rate is fixed and is the weighted average of the interest rates of the loans being consolidated, rounded up to the nearest 1/8th of

one percent, and capped at 8.25%, if the application was submitted prior to 7/1/13. There is no cap for applications submitted on or after 7/1/13.

Since the consolidation interest rate is a weighted average of all interest rates on your loans, you can contact us to see if consolidation is to your financial advantage.

Depending on the amount of your outstanding student loan balance, you can have up to 30 years to repay, and you have a choice of the same repayment options offered for Federal Direct Stafford Loans. There is no prepayment penalty, and deferment and forbearance are available.

If you want to pursue the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) you may first need to consolidate any non-Direct Stafford loans (such as loans taken out under the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL) into a FDLC.

L OAN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS - This information is included to alert you of future opportunities. When you are near completion of your training, you may want to investigate these programs.

There are three main types of loan repayment programs: (1) sponsored by the federal government, (2) sponsored by state governments or municipalities, and (3) the "Is There a Community or Employer Who Would like to Adopt Me?" type of deal.

Federal programs include the) Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program, and the US Navy Health Professions Loan Repayment Program

For the "Is There a Community or Employer Who Would Like to Adopt me?" type of deal, check availability with state Departments of Health, individual counties, individual hospitals, and individual rehab centers.

PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS (PSLF)-

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 established a new public service loan forgiveness program. PSLF discharges any remaining debt after 10 years of full-time employment in public service. The borrower must have made 120 payments on their Direct Stafford, Consolidation or PLUS loans while employed in public service in order to obtain this benefit. This contrasts with the loan forgiveness of the remaining balance after 25 years of repayment under the Income-Contingent and Income-Based Repayment plans, and 20 years of repayment under the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) plan, for borrowers who are not employed full time in public service jobs.

You may qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness if:

- You have federal student loans in the Direct Loan program. Covered loans include Staffords, Grad PLUS, or Consolidation loans through the Direct Loan program.
- If your federal loans are not in the Direct Loan program, you must consolidate them under the Federal Direct Consolidation Loan Program. Perkins loans can also be included if refinanced under a Direct Consolidation Loan.
- You work full time in a qualifying public service position.
 - "Full-time means an annual average of 30 hours per week or the standard for full-time used by the employer, **whichever is greater**.
- While working for an eligible employer, you make 120 qualifying payments (which do not have to be consecutive). These payments can be made through the Standard (10-year) repayment, Income Contingent Repayment (ICR), and/or **Income Based Repayment (IBR), or Pay As You Earn (PAYE) plans**. IBR or PAYE would be the best choice from

medical and dental grads. Were you to pay for 10 years under the Standard 10 year plan, there would be no balance left to forgive; however, you may pay the 120 payments through a combination of the above eligible repayment plans.

- You must be working full time in an eligible job at the time you apply for cancellation.

FINANCIAL AID AND SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS - To be eligible for federal sources of financial aid, you must maintain satisfactory academic progress. You can find this information on the Physical Therapy Program [website](#). The standards are the same as those required of non-financial aid recipients.

You are evaluated at the end of every term. If deemed to not be making SAP, then you will receive a Financial Aid Warning, but may continue to receive Federal funds in the next term. If you fail to make SAP after that term, you will not be eligible for additional federal aid unless you successfully appeal to have your aid reinstated.

PAYMENT OF TERM BILLS AND DISBURSEMENT OF AID - **You should be prepared with adequate personal funds to meet out-of-pocket expenses at the start of the academic year. All materials required to complete your application for financial aid** must be submitted to our office before monies will be released to you or credited to your account. If you do not have direct deposit, you can pick up the check from the Cashier Division of Registration & Student Financial Services (R&SFS @ CUMC) (Black Bldg., Room 127).

The **Fall Term Student Account Statement** is usually generated in early-August. Payment for all charges not covered by financial aid will usually be due in early September. Specific billing information and due dates will be included in the August mailing. If you do not pay by the bill due date, a **Late Payment Fee of \$150** will be assessed. Thereafter, late fees will accrue on the unpaid balance of the account at the rate of 1.5% per billing cycle.

The E-bill Notification (**Electronic Student Account Statement**) will be sent to you via your official Columbia University email address. It is your responsibility to activate your UNI no later than early July so that you can access your Columbia University email. Instructions on activating your UNI (email accounts) will be sent out by the Admissions office in June along with your unique University ID number. For any additional questions, you can visit Registration & Student Financial Services (R&SFS @ CUMC) via their website <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sfs/index.html> or via email at cumc-rfs@columbia.edu.

The University will also have a payment plan available which would enable you and your family to pay tuition and fees billed through the University over several months, rather than in one payment. The payment plan is not a loan. While there is an application fee, there are no interest charges or credit checks. The details about the terms for the payment plan are usually available on the University's website after May 1st.

Failure to submit all financial aid forms and loan applications in a timely manner may result in a delay in the disbursement of your funds and an assessment of late fees.

The spring semester payment is usually due the third or fourth week of January. You will not be registered as a student for the spring semester, unless the entire fall bill is paid in full by the payment due date in December. Unregistered students may not attend school.

RULES FOR REFUND AND RETURN OF FINANCIAL AID FUNDS

REFUND POLICY - If you withdraw, take a leave of absence, leave the University without formal notification, or if you are requested to leave, you may be eligible for a refund of all or a portion of your tuition, fees, and dorm charges based on the earlier of the date of formal withdrawal or the documented date of last attendance. The tuition adjustment schedule is published on the University's Registrar [website](#). All students will be charged a withdrawal fee of \$75.

Withdrawal is defined as dropping the entire academic program in a given term, not a portion of the program. The Director of the Program in Physical Therapy determines the formal withdrawal or date of last attendance to be one of the following:

- The date the student began the school's withdrawal process or officially notified the institution of intent to withdraw.
- The date of last documented academic activity.
- The midpoint of the semester for those students who do not formally withdraw.

The Director of the Program in Physical Therapy also determines the formal start and end date for a **leave of absence**. Students who take a leave of absence greater than 45 days will be subject to the *Refund and Return of Aid Calculation*.

RETURN OF FINANCIAL AID FUNDS - If you have received financial aid, the Office of Student Financial Planning must recalculate eligibility for financial aid, and determine if any financial aid funds must be returned or cancelled.

You will receive a revised award letter based on the new period of attendance and must attend an exit interview with the Office of Student Financial Planning. We must process all award changes to Title IV, and Columbia-administered funds, and determine if a return of financial aid funds is due, within 45 days of the withdrawal date.

Title IV Funds Calculation - Students who received Title IV aid are subject to a recalculation of their eligibility according to the federal "Return of Title IV Funds" formula.

- Title IV funds are the federal financial aid programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended) and include the following programs: Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, Federal Perkins loans and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loans.
- Title VII funds are the federal financial aid programs authorized under the Health Professions Training Act and include: SDS- Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, LDS- Loans for Disadvantaged Students, HPSL- Health Professions Student Loan (DDS candidates only), PCL- Primary Care Loan (MD candidates only).
- Allowable charges include tuition and all "billable" fees (excluding the withdrawal fee) paid directly to Registration & Student Financial Services, as well as rent paid for Columbia owned housing.
- The percentage of Title IV and Title VII aid returned is determined by dividing the number of days of attendance in a semester by the total number of days in that semester. Scheduled breaks of more than five (5) days are excluded.

- The federal formula is applicable up to the 60% point of the semester. After the 60% point, the student is eligible for 100% of Title IV and Title VII aid disbursed or scheduled to be disbursed for that semester.
- Students will be notified of any possible post withdrawal or post leave of absence disbursements. The Office of Student Financial Planning will contact a student one time by both email and letter. The student must confirm whether they wish to accept the post-withdrawal disbursement. If there is no response within 14 days, the disbursement will not be made to the student's account.

School Funds and Private Loans Calculation - Eligibility for school funds (grants/scholarships) and private loan funds will be prorated based on actual costs incurred for the enrolled period.

Columbia University's Responsibility

- Perform Return of Title IV Funds calculation. Funds will be returned in the following order:
 - Unsubsidized Federal Direct Stafford
 - Federal Perkins Loan
 - Federal Direct Graduate PLUS
 - Institutional Aid
- State aid funds will be returned according to state guidelines.
- External scholarships will be returned according to external granting institution guidelines.
- Private Loans

Student's Responsibility

- Repay loans according to the terms of the loan program(s).
- Repay any grant funds required by the calculation.
- Repay any funds released to the student because of a credit balance that now have to be returned by the school as part of the Return of Title IV aid formula.
- You must notify our office in writing if you wish to have more loan money returned to the lender than is prescribed by the formula.

POLICY ON FRAUD AND ABUSE IN FINANCIAL AID - The Office of Student Financial Planning for the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Dental Medicine, the Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Programs in Occupational and Physical Therapy is responsible for overseeing the disbursement of educational funds provided by a number of state and federal programs as well as loans and scholarships from Columbia University. These total over \$66 million dollars.

This stewardship includes validating of submitted information, awarding aid, monitoring students' and their families' changing financial circumstances, and dealing effectively and fairly with instances of suspected fraud and abuse.

Information submitted by students and families must be accurate. Changes in personal and family financial circumstances which may change a student's eligibility must be reported, documented, and financial aid packages reexamined, to give the student all potential benefits and to fairly distribute funds.

Discrepancies in reported information and IRS 1040 forms or other income and asset verification materials must be clarified. The Office of Student Financial Planning must, under the law, award funds only to students who prove their eligibility.

We may declare students ineligible for financial aid if there are significant unexplained discrepancies, if students' applications are delayed beyond the filing deadlines published in the Office of Student Financial Planning Handbook, or if there is intentional misrepresentation on the part of the student and his or her family.

Acts of fraud and abuse will result in loss of financial aid eligibility, and may result in termination of matriculation and/or referral to the responsible agency of the federal or state governments for investigation and potential prosecution.

The information in this HANDBOOK is compiled to help students understand the financial aid process at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, College of Dental Medicine, Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Programs in Occupational and Physical Therapy. It is as accurate and complete as we can make it at the time of printing. We cannot be responsible for subsequent changes to information or programs over which our office has no control; or for inadvertent omission, misinformation, or typographical errors.



**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER**

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(212) 305-4100
<http://cumc.columbia.edu/student/finaid>

Columbia University Medical Center