FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK

2016-17 MD PROGRAM
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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 your time in the program.

Check our website periodically for up-to-date information and helpful links.

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

Grants/Scholarships are generally regarded as "gift" assistance and need not be repaid. Loans are borrowed monies, offered at various interest rates, which are repaid over an extended period after you graduate or leave the institution.

The primary responsibility to pay for medical school rests with you and your family, to the extent that you are determined able to do so. While we will do everything possible to assist, the school should be expected to assist only when you and your family are unable to meet the full cost of attendance. Since we have limited need-based funds available for low cost loans, scholarships and grants, if you need financial aid you may have to finance much of your medical education with student loans.

How Do I Apply? If you wish to be considered for need-based aid you must complete certain application materials. The Need Access application along with the FAFSA application is used to determine eligibility for institutional aid. If you wish to be considered only for Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loans (pending funding for this program), and Federal Direct Stafford and Graduate PLUS Loans, only the FAFSA is needed. Once we have your information, we can determine your eligibility. It is your responsibility to file the appropriate application forms and to follow up if the aid you expected to receive is not awarded or has not been disbursed.

Remember to keep copies of all of your application materials.

You must promptly notify our office throughout the academic year should any change occur in your family's financial circumstances from those you originally reported, and which are used as the basis for the determination of your eligibility for various types of financial aid. This includes a
change in your marital status prior to or during the award period.

In addition, you must notify us about any new funds (scholarships, personal loans, etc.) that become available to you after you file your applications, or if siblings or spouse reported as expected to enroll as full-time students do 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.

**GUIDELINES TO DETERMINE WHOSE FINANCIAL INFORMATION MUST BE REPORTED**

- **IF YOU ARE SEEKING ONLY external loans** such as the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, Federal Direct Graduate PLUS (GradPLUS), private/alternative loans, and/or Federal Work Study, or Federal Perkins Loans (pending funding for this program), complete the FAFSA student sections only. No parental information is required. If you are married, your spouse’s financial information is required.

- **IF YOU ARE SEEKING P&S GRANT/SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN ASSISTANCE** (a.k.a. "institutional funds"), you must complete the FAFSA (providing parental financial information as well as your own and your spouse's), and the student/spouse and parent sections of the Need Access Financial Aid Application. International students do not have to complete the FAFSA but should complete the Need Access Application, the P&S International Students - Parents' Supplemental Form and the Certification of Finances Form.
  - **IF YOUR PARENTS ARE DIVORCED OR SEPARATED**, information is required from both of your parents and their current spouse(s).
  - **IF YOU ARE MARRIED or INTEND TO MARRY DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR**, your spouse's (or prospective spouse's) financial information is required.

We will assume if you do not complete a Need Access application, you wish consideration only for Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loans – pending funding for this program, or external loans such as Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, Federal Direct Graduate PLUS, or private loans.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WHO DO NOT HOLD A PERMANENT RESIDENT Visa CANNOT RECEIVE**

**FINANCIAL AID FROM FEDERAL OR STATE SOURCES.** 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, but you may qualify for and receive need-based school loans, “alternative loans” from outside sources, and grants from funds which are not federally or state-sponsored. If you acquire permanent resident status prior to graduation, you will become eligible for "external" 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.
When Should I Apply?  New students should submit the FAFSA and the Need Access application by February 29th (or within 2 weeks after acceptance, whichever is later if you are an entering student). The deadline for returning students is March 21st. No awards will be made to continuing students whose application materials are not complete. See our website for a chart with the complete list of deadlines.

Application Materials - Please keep copies of completed materials.

All forms, with the exception of the FAFSA and the Need Access application, should be submitted to our office. Do not email tax returns. Tax returns that are 20 pages or less can be faxed to us at 212-305-0221. Any that are more than 20 pages must be mailed.

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 to see if any additional documents are needed.

1. The Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) - This is the federal application required for all applicants that are U.S. citizens or permanent residents who wish to establish eligibility for financial aid offered by the United States Department of Education (Title IV), the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Title VII), and for any school funds.

FAFSA on the Web is the U.S. Department of Education website where you can complete and submit your FAFSA online. The application is free.

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 FSA ID, you can create a FSA ID 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. Remember, you will have to include parental information if you are applying for school funds. When completing your FAFSA, you will notice that the website will tell you that parental information is not required - but for health professions students, it is necessary for consideration of certain funds and you should include your parents’ information.

If you want consideration for school funds and your parents are divorced or separated, information is required from both of your parents and their current spouses. Information from you and one parent must be entered on the FAFSA and officially processed by the federal processor.
If you have already sent in your FAFSA, and Columbia University Title IV Code 002707, was not one of the schools you originally listed; go online and add us.

**Note:** There is a private company whose website is fafsacom. 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: FAFSA.ed.gov.

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.* The Need Access application is a fee-based online financial aid application which collects supplemental information for us (the fee for first time applicants is $28). Since some of the information that you provide on the FAFSA is also required on the Need Access application, you may want to complete both applications at the same time. You can apply online at www.needaccess.org.

If your parents have separate households (separated/divorced) then you must provide complete financial information for each parental household before submitting the information, using passwords for each section if desired. If you have questions about completing or submitting the application, contact Access Group at 800-282-1550 or at NeedAccess@accessgroup.org.

4.* U.S. citizens and permanent residents with parents living abroad should download, from our website, the Supplemental Questionnaire for Families with Income and/or Assets in Foreign Countries if your family has foreign earned income or assets. This form is required in addition to the FAFSA and the Need Access application.

5.* **International Students** should also complete the Need Access application in addition to downloading from our website the P&S International Student – Parents’ Supplemental Form and the Certification of Finances Form.

6. **IRS Tax Forms** - We require signed and dated copies of the 2015 IRS tax forms, the 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ form, W-2 forms, and all supporting schedules and statements for all persons supplying information on the FAFSA and the Need Access application. **New students** should submit them to our office no later than April 8th. **Returning students** should submit them by April 15th. If you have a Partnership or S-Corporation listed on Schedule E, we need copies of the 1065, 1120S or K1 as well.

7.* If you do not have to file a tax return for 2015, please go to our website and download “Why I Did Not File a Tax Return,” complete it and return it to our office.

**Note:** We will make **tentative** aid offers to entering students without complete IRS information. However, they are subject to change based on a Financial Aid Officer’s review when complete 2015 IRS tax forms and any additional requested documentation are received.

**We will not make any financial aid offers to returning students without complete 2015 IRS tax forms.**

8. **Permanent Resident Card** - If you do not hold U.S. 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 federal financial aid. 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.

9.* The Request To Be Classified “Disadvantaged” helps us identify eligible candidates for Loans for Disadvantaged Students (LDS). LDS loans have very favorable repayment terms. Please review the eligibility criteria on the Form and submit it to us if you think you may be eligible.

10.* Activity Questionnaire – All applicants for P&S Grant/Scholarship and CU Loan assistance must complete this form. We use the information you provide both to report to our donors on scholarship & loan recipients and to identify eligible students for targeted funds. There are two versions on our website, one for first-time applicants, and one for renewals. If you choose to email this form please be sure to save it by clicking “Print to PDF” and save it on your computer first, to make sure all informationfilled in gets saved.

11. If you are interested in a Federal Work-Study award, you should contact our office for further information.

12. 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 Grad PLUS loan you will need to do a separate MPN. Go to the Direct Lending website 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.

We will transmit Stafford originations to the Department of Education if all required documents have been received by our office at the beginning of June for 3rd and 4th year students and in mid-July for 1st and 2nd year students. If you haven’t submitted the Financial Aid Acceptance Form by the time we are ready to transmit originations for your class year, 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. You have the right to cancel these loan amounts or to subsequently change them. However, please be advised that changes may cause a delay with disbursement.

b)* If you decide to replace what we calculate to be the “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.

13.* Sibling/Spouse Enrollment Verification is required if you have indicated on the FAFSA or Need Access that you will have one or more siblings or a spouse who will be enrolled full-time in college or graduate school during the academic year. This form should be
completed by each sibling’s/spouse’s school and returned to our office no later than September 30th of the academic year.

14.* Married Students should complete the Married Student Budget and contact their financial aid officer to discuss any budgeting concerns.

15. Commuting students must submit information separately about both commuting and living expenses.

16.* 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.

17. Limited scholarship funds are available for travel expenses for 3rd year clerkships and 4th year electives taken at Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, New York. Requests for these costs for all students should be submitted or itemized separately from other travel requests.

18. Senior Elective Travel - Fourth-year students should note that expenses incurred for away electives are not covered in the standard fourth-year budget. These expenses may be covered by some external loans. You will need to submit a separate itemized budget with documentation in order to add these expenses to your budget and qualify for additional loans. We expect you to use the least expensive transportation options, i.e., use ground transportation to Boston and Washington, DC and public transportation, not car service, to local airports. Consult beforehand with your Financial Aid Officer if you have any questions about allowable expenses.

   All requests for additional funds for senior elective travel, including Cooperstown, should be made in writing to the Office of Student Financial Planning by January 15 of the academic year.

19. Residency Interview Expenses – Some expenses for residency interviews may be added to your financial aid budget. This is done on an individual basis. You will need to submit a separate itemized budget with documentation in order to add these expenses to your budget and qualify for additional loans.

20. 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. 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 Federal Work-Study and Federal Perkins funds can be awarded.

   Please note also that if you or your spouse receives untaxed benefits, the Verification process requires documentation from the appropriate agency.
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.

- Our office will then give you consideration for school funds, if they are still available, and/or certify Federal Direct Stafford loan applications. This will be done only following a review of all on-time applications.

- 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.

**HOW DOES P&S DETERMINE FINANCIAL NEED?** Our financial aid program is designed to help meet the demonstrated need of our students. "Need" is defined as the difference between anticipated expenses and family financial resources. Every application is individually reviewed by a Financial Aid Officer. Students with special family circumstances are encouraged to discuss their situation with a Financial Aid Officer.

**DETERMINATION OF A FAMILY’S FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONAL FUNDS** - We use the federally-approved needs-analysis system called Federal Methodology (FM), as well as Institutional Methodology (IM), to calculate your family’s ability to contribute towards educational expenses. We evaluate the information you provide on both the FAFSA and Need Access to get a comprehensive picture of your family’s relative financial strength. The result of this calculation is used as a rationing index to determine eligibility for institutional need-based funds.

**Assessing Parent Contribution for Institutional Aid**
Financial information from parents is **required** of all applicants for institutional aid regardless of marital status or length of time a student has been self-supporting. P&S does not recognize "independence" when determining eligibility for school-based scholarships and grants and low-interest loans, unless you are age 35 or older by the start of the academic year. This means that **parents who are divorced** must each provide the information requested on the Need Access. They can use passwords to complete these sections, if they so desire to ensure privacy. Please be aware that stepparents must also provide their financial information.

**Waiver of Parental Information**
Parental information may be waived only in very rare cases should extreme circumstances warrant it. The family situation must be well documented. Such documentation should include third-party verification, i.e. attorney, social worker, member of clergy or family physician who has personal knowledge of the family situation. There is a form on our website that you can submit along with the required supplemental materials. Please contact your Financial Aid Officer if you wish to pursue this.

**Parent Contribution Are Not Assessed for Certain Funds**
Financial information from parents is not required if you are applying only for Federal Work-Study, or Federal Perkins Loans (pending funding), and external loans such as the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, Graduate PLUS, or other “alternative” loans.

Assessing Your (and your Spouse’s) Contribution for Institutional Aid
We expect that you will pay for a portion or all of your educational expenses. Thus an evaluation is made of your (and your spouse’s) ability to contribute from income and assets. P&S expects all first and second year students who are applying for institutional funds to contribute a minimum of $1,200 from earnings. Most students will find summer to be the best time to work. On an individual basis, a Financial Aid Officer may reconsider this required “contribution” where a student’s academic schedule or circumstances preclude working.

If you are employed in a research or medically related program with limited remuneration, an adjustment may be made. You must provide a letter describing the nature of employment, income from the position, other resources for this period, and a list of expenses for the period covered by employment. If this pertains to a summer period, you should submit the request and itemization at the end of the summer, but no later than September 30th. A revised award will be made where appropriate.

In determining your (and if applicable, your spouse’s) contribution (for institutional funds only) towards school costs, the “standard” needs analysis uses the “base year” data. This means if you worked before coming to medical school, the analysis will assume a continuation of that income during the academic year. Therefore, be sure to complete the Need Access applications questions about academic year income, if that assumption is wrong. Second-year students who previously worked during much of the “base year” should also be aware of this.

We expect spouses to work outside the home unless they are full-time students or caring for young children. For institutional funds, students whose spouses have an income, FM will also calculate a contribution from your spouse towards your budget. Since the “Income Protection Allowance (IPA),” which represents the cost of basic necessities for all family members other than the student, is a fixed amount prescribed by FM, married students will need to itemize their family budget on a separate sheet of paper for individual review. Only student and “dependent/child care” costs can be included in the student’s budget on the award letter. Other dependent and spousal expenses are accounted for in the IPA.

A contribution is also expected from any assets you and/or your spouse hold, including assets where you and/or your spouse are the taxpayers of record.

DETERMINATION 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.

A student’s budget is computed only for enrolled periods - the summer between first and second year is not an enrolled period, so plan your finances carefully. The length of the academic year varies from class to class. Once you begin your second year, your academic periods run consecutively.

Adjustments to student budgets may be made for the following items, where applicable:
✓ If you opt in to the “Medical insurance Premium Plan” your budget will be increased by an equal amount and your financial aid package will be adjusted accordingly.

✓ Transportation home - Varies with final destination, to a maximum of $600 per year. No more than two round trips will be included.

✓ Medical/dental care costs - Medical care costs in excess of the benefits provided by the CUMC Student Health Service Program or 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.

✓ MCY Clerkships outside of New York City and D&I away electives - consideration can be given for ground and air transportation, and for lodging expenses, if applicable.

✓ Residency interview expenses – consideration given on an individual basis.

✓ International Student Fee - $60 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 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.

Federal regulations require that the budget shown on an award letter reflect only the student’s expenses, with some adjustment for dependents. Thus, separate calculations made for expenses relating to a spouse, and/or dependent(s) will not be shown on the award letter. Married students and those with dependents should therefore meet with their Financial Aid Officer at the start of each year to confirm the total considered for their family’s living expenses.

**PLEASE NOTE!**

Other expenses will be considered if they are necessary and related to attendance at medical 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 expenses. 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.”
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 family contribution in order to pay for medical 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.

LOANS - The first portion of a student’s need is met by loans. We have a graduated loan level which means our recommended loan package will be smallest in the first year and the loan portion of your package will increase each year. We cannot predict the loan portion of our future packages, but keep in mind that it may increase each year.

The amount of CU Loans varies with your year in school. Each year we look at the availability of our funds. There can be changes from academic year to academic year.

It is important to keep in mind that as you progress in medical school, the loan portion of the recommended package increases. The initial $8,500 of each loan package will be Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford. We try to postpone recommending additional Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford loans in the standard loan packages as long as possible, but it may increase beginning in your second year. This is done to reduce the amount of interest borrowers will accrue by graduation.

The exact loan level for each class is set annually by forecasting the financial needs of all eligible students in relation to the projected availability of P&S Need-Based Scholarships and CU Loans.

P&S NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS - P&S scholarship/grant funds are awarded to those students whose demonstrated need for the academic year is greater than the loan level set annually for each class. The maximum scholarship is derived by subtracting our recommended loan level from a single student budget for a student with zero resources. If a married student’s demonstrated need is greater than those loan levels plus the maximum scholarship for his or her class year, additional loans will be recommended to meet that need.

Changes to the loan levels in our packaging rules affect the amount of the scholarship/grant award.

REDUCTION OF LOANS BY EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS - You are encouraged to seek scholarships and loans from funds that are not administered by P&S (such as National Medical Fellowships, scholarships offered by county medical societies, private foundations, union, or fraternal organizations, etc.). Please visit our website for a bibliography of reference materials and web sites that provide information about some “external” sources of financial aid.

If you receive externally awarded scholarships or loans, you must notify your Financial Aid Officer. You will be granted a dollar for dollar substitution of the financial aid in the standard package in an amount equal to the “external” award in the following order: Grad PLUS or Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford will be reduced first; the Institutional Loan will be reduced next, then the P&S Grant, if applicable.

Recipients of the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship, the Indian Health Service Scholarship, and full time tuition exemption are not eligible for school need-based grants and loans.
LOANS - After you apply for financial aid, your Financial Aid Officer will notify you, via 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 Institutional Loans, Federal Loans, and Private Alternative Loans.

TUITION EXEMPTION – If you are a spouse, same-sex partner or child of University personnel, you may be eligible to receive tuition exemption benefits. Partial tuition exemption benefits for spouses or children of University personnel are evaluated on an individual basis and may be used to reduce outside loans if you also qualify for need-based school funding. Eligibility guidelines and filing procedures may be obtained through the Office of Human Resources website or in Room 101 of the Black Building.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WHO DO NOT HOLD A PERMANENT RESIDENT VIS A

International students may face special challenges in financing their medical education. There are no fully funded scholarships, no federally guaranteed assistance programs, and private educational loans cannot be obtained without a US cosigner. Therefore, early financial planning is essential. In addition, we request that by July 1st prior to 1st and 2nd year, and by June 1st prior to 3rd and 4th year international financial aid applicants or financial aid recipients provide our office with proof of their approved loan(s) in the amount(s) they will need.

If you will be applying for consideration for school-based scholarships and low-cost institutional loans you must complete the Need Access application and submit the P&S International Students – Parents’ Supplemental Form and the Certification of Finances Form. You will also need to submit additional documents, including tax forms (with English translation, if necessary). These forms must provide parental income and asset information translated into US dollars at official rates of exchange as of the day of filing the form.

All need-based financial aid packages include a significant loan component. We do not provide any institutional funds to replace the “private” loan(s) in your financial aid package or the ‘calculated’ family contribution. Therefore, in such cases you must find other means to pay for your education.

Some lenders offer private educational loans to international students who can provide a credit-worthy cosigner who is a US citizen or, for some programs, a US permanent resident. At a minimum, the cosigner should have at least a two-year employment history, good credit, and the ability to repay the loan in case of default on the part of the student. For more detailed information regarding private educational loan programs, please visit the University’s Student Financial Services Web site. Please be aware that you have the right and ability to select the education loan provider of your choice, are not required to use any suggested lenders and will suffer no penalty for choosing a lender that is not a suggested lender.

For private loan programs, it is your responsibility to secure an eligible cosigner, and it is very important that you do so as soon as possible. It is also vital that you submit applications for private loans well in advance of the July 1st deadline, preferably by May or early June so that you
can find out whether your cosigner meets the credit criteria of the lender you choose. Once you and your cosigner have applied for a loan, the lender will inform you if the loan is approved or denied.

Check with the private loan lender if you are required to have a US Social Security Number (SSN), Individual Taxpayer ID Number (ITIN) or if it’s required only for the cosigner at the time of application. You may need to begin the ITIN or SSN application process as soon as you are considering a private loan. International students should note that you cannot obtain a US Social Security Number unless you are currently living in the United States. The International Affairs Office (IAO) on the CUMC campus can let you know the procedures in applying for a Social Security Number or ITIN.

For the purposes of visa documentation, you should note that loans are accepted as documentation of financial resources only if they have been approved for credit by the lender and certified by us. Therefore, in order to avoid delays with your visa, apply early so that you have your loans finalized by the end of June if you are a 1st or 2nd year student, and by the end of May if you are a 3rd or 4th year student.

Students holding a nonresident visa will be charged an International Services Charge each term (currently $60, but subject to change). This fee supports the University's services to international students.

Completion of the I-20 Form - You will work with IAO to obtain the Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status needed to apply for your F-1 student visa. Whether or not applying for any financial aid, you must complete the online Application for Visa Certificate of Eligibility (AVC). If you are financing part of the cost with alternative loans, we will require approval from those lenders before your I-20 can be issued. If you are awarded a CU Loan, the completed Co-Maker Application must also be reviewed by the University's Office of Student Financial Services. Application materials for the I-20 form should be submitted according to the instructions on the AVC web site. Processing time is usually four weeks after all materials have been submitted; allow at least 3 to 4 months before you plan to enter the United States.

All questions related to the issuance of visa documentation should be addressed to the IAO at 212-305-5455.

Withholding Tax - United States tax law requires the University to withhold tax at the rate of 14% on scholarship and fellowship grants paid to nonresident aliens in excess of the cost of tuition, books, fees and related classroom expenses. Although a P&S Scholarship/Grant awarded to an international student never exceeds this amount, the University's accounting system makes an across-the-board assumption that stipends are only given if other scholarship funds already cover tuition. Therefore, to avoid having stipends incorrectly taxed, a P&S scholarship or grant will be applied towards your bill. This means that you need to be prepared with adequate personal funds to meet out-of-pocket expenses at the start of the year.

Certain countries have entered into tax treaties with the United States that may serve to reduce this rate of withholding. However, even when such a treaty applies, both you and the University must report the full amount of such excess to the Internal Revenue Service. If you claim tax treaty benefits, you must also report this amount to your country of residence.

Because of legal restrictions, our staff and the staff of the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) and the IAO are not permitted to answer individual questions from international students regarding tax liabilities. To assist you in complying with your tax obligations, the ISSO and
IAO offer annual tax workshops for international students in February, March, and early April. You may also wish to consult the consulate of your country of residence or a qualified professional.

**When Will I Hear?** Current students should receive financial aid award letters at the beginning of June, provided all required documents and requested information have been submitted in a timely manner. **Entering** students in the Class of 2020 should receive award letters by April 15th.

All letters will be sent to your Columbia University email address. Prior to matriculation, all notices and letters for entering students will be sent to the email address you provided to the P&S Admissions Office, until you have been instructed to activate your UNI (Columbia email address). Once activated, all mail will go to your UNI.

You should periodically check NetPartner to see if any items are still needed to complete your application.

You can also expect to receive notification from us when the following events occur:

- If you are selected for Verification;
- When loan checks arrive, for example from a private "alternative" loan or "outside" foundation;
- If adjustments are made to your initial award.

**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.
- If you are awarded a CU Loan, you will receive instructions with your award letter about signing the promissory note and Truth-in-Lending (TILA) documents. Please act promptly so funds can be credited to your school account.

Federal regulations have identified school (institutional) loans as “private loans” and as such, the University must issue three distinct disclosures to students receiving institutional loans. The disclosures will be issued at the time of awarding, when you accept the loan and prior to the disbursement of your loan. In addition, you will need to complete a private loan self-certification form. Additional information will be provided with your award letter.

- 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 grants and/or loans, 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.

- Learn enough about how the financial aid process works to know what to expect from all players.
- 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.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**

**INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**— These are awarded to students with “demonstrated need” according to the packaging policies described earlier.

**INTERSCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS** - A number of scholarships are awarded directly by the University Provost’s Office and are available only to students who meet a specific criteria. If you meet any of the following criteria, please write to our office explaining how you qualify, no later than June 1, 2016. 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.

- **Mead**
  Female medical students of Chinese ancestry (open only to medical students).

- **Nichoplas**
  Male students of Greek descent or male students born in Greece and graduated from any Greek college or university.

- **Poder**
  Candidates must speak Estonian.

- **Upton**

**EXTERNAL 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.
**National Medical Fellowships (NMF)**

To qualify for these need-based fellowships, an applicant must be a U.S. Citizen from one of the following underrepresented minority groups as defined by NMF: African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and mainland Puerto Ricans who permanently reside within the 50 U.S. states. NMF is a non-profit organization, which provides grants-in-aid for first-and second-year students judged by NMF to be in need of financial assistance. Applications and additional information on need-based scholarships as well as special fellowships may be obtained from National Medical Fellowships, Inc., 347 Fifth Avenue, Suite 510, New York, NY 10016, by phone at 212-483-8880. Check their website for deadlines.

**SERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS** - A limited number of **Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarships** are available. These scholarships provide full payment of direct (tuition, fees, books, etc.) educational costs and a stipend for living expenses. Each carries a service commitment.

Students interested in applying for these programs are encouraged to discuss these options with us and with Dr. Lisa Mellman, Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs, before making a commitment. You may obtain descriptive brochures and applications for these programs by contacting the following:

LTJG Nick Petti  
**Navy Medical Officer Recruiter**  
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 100-13A  
New York, NY 10278  
Cell: (646) 629-6269  
Email: nicholas.petti@navy.mil

Michael B. Trantham Sr., Staff Sergeant, US Army  
**U.S. Army Health Care Recruiter**  
114 White Ave. Room 260  
Ft. Hamilton, NY 11252  
Cell: (443) 694-1055  
E-mail: michael.b.trantham.mil@mail.mil

TSgt Gregory De La Rosa  
**Air Force Health Professions Recruiter**  
26 Federal Plaza, 13th Fl, Suite 13-100B  
New York, NY 10278  
Phone: (646) 457-1888  
Email: gregory.delarosa@us.af.mil

Scholarships are also available from the **National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program** for students who will become a primary care physician. For more information about scholarship opportunities through NHSC, you can also call 800-221-9393.

The **Indian Health Service Health Professions Scholarship** covers tuition, required fees and other educational and living expenses for qualified American Indian and Alaska Native students (members of federally recognized Tribes only) applying to, accepted by or enrolled in health professions programs. Students incur service obligations.
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 P&S website under Policies – University Policies. All students are 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 Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs 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 Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs 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 and subsequently withdraw during a semester, 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, Title VII, and Columbia-administered funds, and determine if a return of financial aid funds is due, within 45 days of the withdrawal date.

Title IV and Title VII Funds Calculation - Students who received Title IV and Title VII 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: 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 five (5) consecutive days or more 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 loans) 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 and Title VII Funds calculation. Federal funds will be returned in the following order:
  - Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford
  - Federal Perkins Loan
  - Federal Direct Grad PLUS Loan
  - PCL
  - LDS
- State aid funds will be returned according to state guidelines.
- External scholarships will be returned according to external granting institution guidelines.
- Perform Return of School Funds and Private Loan Calculation. Order of the return of funds will be:
  - School Grants/Scholarships
  - Columbia University Loans
  - 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 as part of the Return of Title IV aid formula.
- Collection of any grant overpayments will be handled through Student Financial Services, utilizing the regular student billing system.
- 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 $74 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, the 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.
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Columbia University Medical Center