FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK

2016-17

PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY

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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 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 (pending funding for this program). 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 (pending funding for this program), you must 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 21st (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
• 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.

Application 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 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 an FSA ID, you can create an 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.

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 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.

Once you review your financial aid award letter, 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 originate Grad PLUS loans until you tell us how much you want to borrow and until 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.
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.

HOW 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 you by sources outside of our office.

DETERMINATION OF ACADEMIC YEAR EXPENSES - You can refer to the single student budgets 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:
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.

- Student Health Service and/or Medical Insurance Premium for married students/students with dependents.

- 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 - $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 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.

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 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”.

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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.

For more information about loan programs, visit our website

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.
  • 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.

THE FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE AND AWARDED 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 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 Perkins Loan
3. Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford
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.

INTERSCHOOL 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, 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.

Nicholas Male students of Greek extraction or male students born in Greece and graduated from any Greek college or university.

Poder Candidates must speak Estonian.


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.

SERVICE 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
FEDERAL 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.

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.
- 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 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 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 $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, 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.