Coronavirus and Forbearance Info for Students, Borrowers, and Parents from Federal Student Aid

Federal Student Aid (Links to an external site.) are actively monitoring the new coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak. If you’re concerned about your studies or loan repayment, they can help you understand what to do in certain circumstances.

Currently interest on all federal direct loans has been reduced to 0% effective March 13, 2020 through September 30, 2021. For students/graduates that are currently in repayment, payments will automatically stop from March 13, 2020 through September 30, 2021. No action is needed on the part of the borrower.

FSA will be adding information for students, borrowers, and parents to their page on a regular basis, so please check their website (Links to an external site.) frequently.

Expanded SNAP Benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Gov. Whitmer announces expansion of food assistance to many low-income students who are attending college; As state recovers from pandemic, temporary measure allows Michiganders to stay in school while also getting help buying food.

LANSING, Mich. - Michigan will expand eligibility for food assistance benefits on Thursday, April 1 so that college students struggling financially during the pandemic can get help buying food and stay in school, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced.

"College students should not have to choose between furthering their education and putting food on the table - especially during a pandemic," Gov. Whitmer said. "I am pleased that we are able to work with the Biden administration to help college students in Michigan who are working hard to pursue their dreams."

Under a temporary change approved by the federal government, college students may be eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits if their families are estimated to be unable to contribute to their
college costs or if their college or university considers them eligible for a federal or state work study program - regardless of whether they are enrolled in such a program. This could make approximately 200,000 more Michigan college students eligible.

Students are considered to have no family contribution to their college expenses if they have an estimated family contribution of $0 on their federal student aid determination through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students also must attend college at least half-time and meet income and other requirements for food assistance. Prior to the change, college students would not be eligible for food assistance unless they were working 20 hours a week or meet certain exemptions.

"Many Michigan college students lost their jobs due to no fault of their own as a result of the pandemic," said MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel. "Expanding access to food and making it easier for our residents who are in need to apply for help are priorities of the department. Even before the pandemic, many students struggled to afford enough food while paying for college. These new changes will help students complete their education and reduce their food insecurity.

Expanded eligibility will last until 30 days after the expiration of the federal public health emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Benefits could be as much as $234 per month for college students who buy and prepare their food alone. Under the federal rules that are temporarily being set aside, college students ages 18-49 who are enrolled in college at least half time are not eligible for SNAP unless they meet certain exemptions, including working an average of 20 hours or more per week, participating in a state or federal work study program, having a disability, or being a parent of a child under age 6. Even if students live at home with parents who qualify for and receive food assistance, they are not counted in the household unless they meet one of the exemptions.

Eligible students will receive Bridge Cards, which are Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards that are similar to debit cards and can be used to buy food at stores, farmers markets and online from Amazon, Walmart and Aldi. A list of participating retailers is available on the retailer locator website.

To be eligible, students must have filed a FAFSA and have documentation of an estimated family contribution of $0 on their federal student aid determination or eligibility for work study. **

College students and others can determine if they are eligible and apply for food assistance at www.michigan.gov/MiBridges.

**Medical students are considered independent for federal aid, therefore it is the student EFC that will be used to determine eligibility for SNAP benefits. The EFC can be found on the Student Aid Report which is emailed to the student shortly after submitting the FAFSA. We are currently in the 2020-2021 academic year, so the EFC from the 2020-2021 FAFSA would need to be presented with the application.

Internal Revenue Service – COVID-19 Emergency Aid Grants to Student Are Not Taxable

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in a notice posted this week made clear that emergency financial aid grants received by students due to the coronavirus pandemic will not be counted as taxable income. This applies to any grant a student receives from a federal agency, state, Indian tribe, higher education institution, or scholarship-granting organization. Additionally, if a student used a portion of their emergency aid grant for qualified tuition and related expenses in 2020, they may be eligible to claim a tuition and fees deduction or receive the American Opportunity Credit or Lifetime Learning Credit on their tax return, according to the IRS. Institutions also won’t be required to send additional tax forms to the students or to the IRS to report these grants due to the fact the funds won’t be included in taxable income, the IRS added.

New IRS Scams

The news recently reported about a scam that is affecting students, staff and faculty aimed at .edu email addresses. The scammers are targeting you by acting like the IRS, asking for information related to tax returns. It is one of the better planned scams using official language and the IRS official logo. It would be good to look at the below article from the IRS.
If you have been personally targeted, please follow the instructions from the link (official address) to notify them and to get an official identity protection PIN (IP PIN). Also note that the IRS has confirmed it will never ask for personal information using an email.

2021-2022 Financial Aid Notification Process

The Financial Aid processing for the 2021-2022 application year will begin in mid-June, once we have final tuition values for the upcoming year. Award notices will begin to go out in late June and will continue on a daily basis after that. You will receive an email message to your umich email account when your 2021-2022 Financial Aid Notification is available for you to view/print on Wolverine Access.

If you are required to submit additional application materials, you will be sent an email regarding missing documents. This email will direct you to the View Financial Aid Documents Section on Wolverine Access, which will provide links for further information or to PDF documents for you to print and submit to our office. All additional application materials must be received by May 1 to consider your application for all aid programs. This DOES NOT include GradPLUS applications.

Scholarship Thank You Letters

It is important to remember, if you have received a scholarship from a living donor, you are expected (required) to write a thank you note to the donor of your scholarship EACH YEAR that you receive the funds.

If you are receiving a scholarship from a living donor, you will receive a letter in the early fall from Development giving you specific information on submitting your thank you letter. You will have ample time in the fall to write a thoughtful and informative thank you letter to your benefactor. A later deadline will be given and submission of your thank you letter will be required prior to winter disbursement.

This only refers to scholarships for which the donor is still living. If you receive a scholarship and the donor of those funds is deceased, a thank you letter is not necessary.

Electronic Promissory Notes

Please read this section carefully

If you are being offered a Loan for Disadvantaged Students (LDS) for the first time as part of your financial aid package, you will be given instructions to electronically sign your promissory note. When you view your Financial Aid Notification on Wolverine Access, you will be provided with a link that will take you to “eSign Loan Documents” within Wolverine Access. Instructions for electronically signing your promissory notes (s) are explained in this section. In addition, the note that you will be signing is a “Master Promissory Note” similar to the Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN). You will not have to sign another LDS promissory note as long as you are receiving aid from the University of Michigan Medical School. If you receive subsequent LDS loans, you will be required to sign a Rights and Responsibilities Statement each year.

If you are a first time Direct Loan borrower, you will be required to sign a Master Promissory Note (eMPN) as well as do Entrance Counseling on-line. You will receive instructions for signing the eMPN and doing the On-Line Entrance Counseling when you view your Financial Aid Notification on Wolverine Access.
**Spring/Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 Financial Aid Disbursement Schedule**

Financial Aid disbursements the upcoming Spring/Summer and Fall terms are scheduled to be delivered according to the schedule below. Funds over and above the amount of tuition and fees will be refunded to you. If you have a direct deposit authorization on file the funds will be deposited directly into your designated account. This will provide you with the quickest access to your living expense funds. You can set up direct deposit in the Student Business section of Wolverine Access. Select Direct Deposit. If you have a direct deposit authorization on file from previous years it is not necessary to complete a new one, unless you have changed financial institutions. If you do not have direct deposit, the funds will be mailed to your local address as listed in Wolverine Access. Please be sure that this address is accurate and up to date.

*Note: You must be registered receive financial aid. All negative service indicators must be resolved before registration can be completed. Any payments due should be made as soon as possible, electronically through the Student Business section of Wolverine Access.*

### Sp/Summer 2021 Term Disbursement

- **M1** 5/14/21
- **M2** 5/7/21
- **M3** 5/7/21

### Fall Term 2021 Disbursement Dates

- **M1** 7/23/21
- **M2** 8/27/21
- **M3** 8/27/21
- **M4** 8/27/21

*Note: You must be registered for at least 6 credit hours before financial aid can be disbursed.*

**Please note** – Wolverine Access does not allow us to evenly split institutional aid (scholarship, need-based grant, LDS and other institutional loans only) across three terms. Please plan accordingly.

- The percentage split for **Clinical Trunk and Branch 1 students** is 33% in Fall, 33% in Winter and 34% in Sp/Summer term.
- The percentage split for **Branch 2 students** is 33% in Sp/Summer 33% in Fall and 34% in Winter term.
- Federal Direct Loans (Unsubsidized and GradPLUS) are not affected and are split even across all three terms.

The three terms for the **Scientific Trunk** are not quite even in length and we have tried to accommodate that through the disbursement percentages.

- Scientific Trunk students will see 37% of their institutional aid disbursed in Fall term, 36% in Winter term and 27% in Sp/Summer term. Federal Direct Loans should also be disbursed using these same percentages.

*The yearly tuition charge will be split evenly across the three terms and will occur at the beginning of each term. Tuition charges will be deducted from financial aid awards first, before funds are released for living expenses.*

**2021-2022 Tuition Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year 2020-2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sp/Summer 2021</td>
<td>5/31/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M1 – M3 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year 2021-2022</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Term 2021</td>
<td>8/31/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Winter Term 2022 (tentative) 
1/31/22 all students

Sp/Summer 2022 (tentative) 
5/31/22 M1 – M3 students

The process for viewing bills in Wolverine Access will remain the same. For information regarding the payment schedule and for answers to frequently asked questions, please see the Student Financial Operations website at [www.sfo.umich.edu/faqs.html](http://www.sfo.umich.edu/faqs.html).

*Because some financial aid disbursements will not be made until AFTER billing statements are generated, all aid that is ready to be disbursed will appear on your statement as “anticipated aid”. Any balance remaining is your responsibility to pay PRIOR to the due date.*

### 2021-2022 Stafford and Grad PLUS Loan Interest Rates

- **Unsubsidized Stafford Loans**
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2013: 6.8%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014: 5.41%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015: 6.21%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016: 5.84%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017: 5.31%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018: 6.0%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019: 6.595%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020: 6.08%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021: 4.3%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022: TBD

- **Graduate PLUS Loans**
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2013: 7.9%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014: 6.41%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015: 7.21%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016: 6.84%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017: 6.31%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018: 7.0%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019: 7.595%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020: 7.08%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021: 5.3%
  - Disbursed between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022: TBD

Loans disbursed prior to July 1, 2006 will remain variable.

**GradPLUS Loan for Graduate or Professional Students**

If you have exhausted your Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan eligibility for the year, you have the option of requesting a GradPLUS loan to cover your remaining need. In order to apply you must submit an additional form to our office. You can find the Federal Direct GradPLUS Loan Request form [here](http://www.sfo.umich.edu/faqs.html).

Applicants must not have an adverse credit history and must have exhausted all eligibility in Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans for the academic year. The interest rate is 5.3% and begins to accrue once the loan is disbursed. *This is an unsubsidized loan.* Graduate PLUS loans are eligible for in-school deferment.

**Homebuying Webinars**

*Presented by PhysicianLoans*
PhysicianLoans is once again offering the Home Finance Workshops in webinar form. Like the live presentations, they are strictly informational in nature and presented with no sales angle or bias. The schedule for the May webinars is now available. Simply go to PhysicianLoans website and click on the Free Webinar logo to view the current month’s dates and to register to attend.

**Special Needs Fund**

The Financial Aid Office has limited funds available from a number of sources for special needs of students, over and above the standard budgeted expenses. Some of the more common expenses that can be considered are emergencies (family emergencies, medical expenses, etc.), individually arranged clerkships (domestic and international), uninsured medical and dental expenses, USMLE prep course (request in conjunction with Office of Student Programs), research, conference travel, etc. Funding is not necessarily 100% of the request; there are limits on many of these items. **In order to be eligible for Special Needs Funds, students must first submit a financial aid application for the year in which funds are being requested. Students are required to provide parental information for eligibility determination. This is not a requirement if applying for research conference travel.** For further information on this program, please see our website.

**Emergency Help for COVID-19 Unanticipated Expenses**

The COVID-19 Emergency Fund has been exhausted. This program was funded with allocations from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The CARES Act established and funded the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) to provide emergency grants to students. The University of Michigan received an allocation of HEERF II funds recently and HEERF III funds are pending. These funds are intended to further assist with emergency needs of students. The Office of Financial Aid on central campus is responsible for the distribution these funds. At this time we do not have information on how this will occur, but will notify students as soon as we have more information.

Thanks to the generosity of our wonderful and thoughtful donors we still have funds available in the M.D. Emergency Student Aid Fund. These funds, specific to medical students, are to help students struggling with emergent needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before applying for funding from the M.D. Emergency Student Aid Fund:

- In order to be considered eligible for this fund, you must first have submitted a financial aid application for the year in which funds are being requested.
- Although documentation is not required with the initial application, it is strongly encouraged.
- The expenses must be directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The application for applying for the M.D. Emergency Student Aid Fund was sent to all students in September. If you are unable to locate it, please contact our office at med-finaid@umich.edu and we will send one to you. Complete the application and return it via email to med-finaid@umich.edu along with any applicable documentation with “M.D. Emergency Student Aid Fund” in the subject line.

**GradCare Health Insurance Charges**

Please remember, if you borrowed funds to cover your GradCare Health Insurance premiums, you are responsible for making the payments to your Student Account when these charges appear. GradCare charges are billed monthly to your Student Account. These must be paid monthly to avoid late fees. If a negative service indicator is placed on your student account as a result of non-payment of these charges, you will not be able to register for winter term until it is resolved. The 2019 calendar year monthly student premiums are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>2021 rates (your cost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You only</td>
<td>$245.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You+one adult</td>
<td>$538.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You+child(ren) $467.67
You+adult and child(ren) $760.67

If you take a leave of absence, your GradCare coverage is continued. Your account will continue to be billed the monthly premiums and it is your responsibility to make payments. If you go on leave of absence and wish to have your GradCare coverage discontinued, you must contact the GradCARE Student Help Line at 734-615-2000. Remember, before you can return to registration, you must have GradCare or another comparable health insurance policy in place.

Any questions regarding GradCare should be direct to the University of Michigan Benefits Office at (734) 615-2000 or (734) 615-0258.

The University of Michigan Medical School Financial Aid Office
5100 Taubman Health Sciences Library
1135 Catherine Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5726
http://medicine.umich.edu/medschool/education/md-program/financial-aid
(734) 763-4147 (phone)
(734) 764-9473 (fax)
medfinaid@med.umich.edu

Our office will continue working remotely through 9/13/21