Office of Financial Aid (OFA)
Frequently Asked Questions

Who should apply for Financial Aid?
The USD OFA recommends that every eligible* student apply for financial aid. Even if you believe you won't qualify for need-based aid, there are still good reasons to have an application on file.

*To be eligible to apply for financial aid, a student must:
  • Be a citizen or eligible non-citizen
  • Be enrolled at least half time
  • Not currently in default on any Title IV loan
  • Not owe a refund to any institution for any Title IV grant
  • Not have an overpayment status on any Title IV aid
  • Not be classified as a “Special Student” (i.e., the student must be admitted as a regular student to a degree/certificate/credential program)
  • Not be auditing classes
  • Not be enrolling for continuing education units

How do I apply?
You will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.gov, which becomes available each year on January 1st. Make sure to include the USD school code (010395). DO NOT wait until your taxes are done. Estimate your income. You will have an opportunity to correct errors later. If you wait too long, you might miss the Priority Deadline. For detailed instructions, please review A Guide to Applying/Reapplying for Financial Aid on the USD web site in the Guides section at www.sandiego.edu/financialaid.

What is the Priority Deadline?
The priority deadline is the date you must have your FAFSA completed, and submitted to the Federal Processor with USD’s school code (010395), in order to be considered for priority funding. For Undergraduates, the date is March 2nd, and for Graduate/Credential students it is April 1st.

What happens if I miss the priority deadline?
Students who do not meet the FAFSA application priority filing deadlines or do not provide all supporting documentation within the indicated time frames, will be considered for remaining funds if funds are still available. If you miss the priority deadline, you will need to complete your FAFSA, have it sent to USD as soon as possible, and send a letter of appeal to the Office of Financial Aid, explaining why
your FAFSA was received after the priority deadline. Make sure to include your name, ID and the academic year, for which you are appealing.

**Why did my EFC change after I submitted my FAFSA?**
Corrections to information you submitted on the FAFSA can result in a change to the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).
There are many reasons an EFC could change. If you submitted your FAFSA based on estimates and later updated it with actual figures that were different, your EFC would change. Any additional financial information or documentation that is received by the Office of Financial Aid can affect a student’s EFC.

**The FAFSA said I was eligible for a Pell Grant and now the portal says I’m not eligible, what happened?**
Corrections to FAFSA information based on submitted documentation requires recalculation of a student’s eligibility.
If you submitted your FAFSA based on estimates and then updated it with actual figures that were different from the estimates, then your eligibility for need based aid would change. Any additional financial information or documentation that is received by the Office of Financial Aid can affect a student’s eligibility for need based aid.

**May I attend part-time and be eligible for Financial Aid?**
Yes. Some forms of financial aid do not require a minimum course load. Award amounts are determined by the number of units for which a student is enrolled. For federal funds, a student must be enrolled at least 1/2 time. USD Scholarships/Grants/Merit Scholarships and USD Trust Loans require full time enrollment. USD Scholarships/Grants/Merit Scholarships can only be used for direct University expenses, such as tuition, fees and on-campus room and board. Cal Grants may be prorated for less than full-time enrollment, but the student must be at least half-time. Cal Grants may be used for tuition and fees.

**Why did I not receive a merit award?**
All USD merit based scholarships are awarded by Undergraduate Admissions. Please contact Admissions for additional information and/or criteria.

**What is the GPA minimum to keep my merit award?**
Please note that the Terms & Conditions for undergrad merit scholarships require the recipient to achieve a Cumulative Grade Point of 3.0 for renewal of the merit scholarship for the following academic year. The cumulative GPA is measured after the January Intersession grades post. If at that time the cumulative GPA is 3.0 or higher the merit scholarship is renewed for the next academic year. The only exception to this is during a recipient’s freshman year. During the freshman year, a merit scholar’s cumulative GPA is reviewed after the Intersession grades post and if the cum GPA meets the 3.0 requirement the merit scholarship is renewed for the following academic year. If a freshman’s cumulative GPA falls short of the 3.0 at that time, the freshman’s cumulative GPA is reviewed again after the spring semester grades post. If the cum GPA is 3.0 or higher at that point, the merit scholarship is renewed. If not, the student is not eligible for the merit scholarship.
How is Eligibility Determined?
Financial aid eligibility is the difference between the total cost of attendance at USD and the amount your family is expected to contribute (EFC), as projected on your Student Aid Report. This total cost includes tuition, fees, room and board, an allowance for books, supplies, and other incidental expenses, and a travel allowance when warranted.

What types of Financial Aid are there?
There are three basic types of financial aid. Scholarships and grants are forms of financial assistance which do not have to be repaid. Loans, offered to both students and parents, must be repaid, and student employment, students who work part-time earn throughout the academic year. Financial aid comes from different sources including USD, private agencies, donors, and from State and Federal governments.

How long does it take to process a Financial Aid application?
Prospective Students:
After the student is accepted to USD, the Office of Financial Aid (OFA) downloads the student’s completed FAFSA information. The student is sent an email that his/her initial Financial Aid Award is available and can be viewed on the MySanDiego portal. Awards will start going out in mid-March. If the OFA needs more information from new students, additional documentation may be requested. This subsequent information may affect the student’s eligibility for financial aid. If this occurs, a revised Financial Aid Award will be made available to the student and the student will receive an email directing him/her to the MySanDiego portal.

Continuing Students:
A continuing student must re-apply for financial aid each year by completing the FAFSA by the March 2nd Priority Deadline. If a student is selected for verification, he/she will not be awarded until all requested documents have been received and reviewed. Students not selected for verification will begin receiving their Financial Aid Awards beginning April 1st.

*Remember that the processing time depends on the length of time taken by the student to return information and the volume of applications in the process at that time.

What if I don’t turn in the requested documentation?
An award cannot be determined and funds cannot be disbursed. If a student submitted the FAFSA with the USD school code, but did not complete the application process by turning in the required documentation (either verification or follow-up forms), then he/she will not receive Financial Aid for that academic year.

Is this award for all four years?
Students must re-apply for financial aid each year. The amount of the USD Scholarship or USD Grant received your first year at USD is the maximum amount you may receive in any given year while attending USD. The actual amount may decrease if your family’s financial need (as determined on the FAFSA) decreases. You also

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need to meet the minimum renewal GPA of 2.00 each year, maintain full time enrollment, and meet all priority deadlines.

Where can I obtain my password for the MySanDiego portal?

Prospective Students:
The username and password for the MySanDiego portal was sent to prospective students in the mail from the Office of Admissions after the prospective student’s application for admission was received. If the student is not able to locate their username and password, he/she may contact the Office of Admissions. Only the prospective student may obtain the password. Due to security and privacy issues, the username and password cannot be released to parents of the prospective student.

Continuing Students:
Students who experience problems logging into the MySanDiego portal should call Tech Support Services at (619) 260-7900. If the student has forgotten his/her password, he/she should click “Forgot password?” Instructions will be emailed to the student’s USD email account.

Where can I see my Financial Aid Award?

Prospective Students:
A Financial Aid Award will only become available after a student has been admitted. The Financial Aid Award is located in the Torero Hub under the My Financial Aid tab on the MySanDiego portal. Go to the Financial Aid Status section, select the academic year, and click on, Your Financial Aid Ward-Click here. You will be able to view your Financial Aid Award under the Award Overview tab.

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I applied for a loan, when will I receive the money?
Per federal financial aid regulations, aid cannot be disbursed any earlier than 10 days prior to the start of the semester (i.e., classes begin). The actual disbursement date can vary by student and will depend upon the status of the student’s file (e.g., if actual enrollment matches the enrollment for which financial aid was processed and there are no outstanding document requests).

I need to know my award so I can make a decision about attending, but I (or my parents) have filed for an extension on our taxes?

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The award made available will remain estimated until the final tax information is available and eligibility for financial aid is confirmed. Prospective students should have an estimated award based on the initial information from the FAFSA. It will not be finalized until all information, including taxes, has been received. Please note that your award could change if the tax information is different from what was on the FAFSA.

Continuing Students will not receive a Financial Aid Award until all information, including tax information, has been received by the Office of Financial Aid.

**Where do I accept or decline my awards?**
The student may accept or decline his/her awards after selecting the aid year and after entering the Financial Aid Award. Go to the “Accept Award Offer” tab. Students have the option of accepting, declining, partially declining or deciding later from the drop down menu next to each individual award.

**Why did my award change? Why is it different from last year?**
Eligibility is re-assessed each year based on each year’s FAFSA information. If a family’s financial situation changes each year, the student’s eligibility for aid can change.

**Where can I see if there are any Financial Aid Requirements?**
Prospective Students:
The Financial Aid Requirements is located in the *Torero Hub* under the *My Financial Aid* tab on the MySanDiego portal. To see your Financial Aid Requirements, go to the box titled *Financial Aid Requirements* and select the appropriate academic year from the drop down menu. The Financial Aid Requirements will appear with a red flag if there are any necessary forms or applications to be completed. Please print, complete and return any necessary forms to the Office of Financial Aid. If the form or application has been completed and returned, there will be yellow triangle next to the name of the form or application, showing that it has been received.

Continuing Students:
The Financial Aid Requirements is located in the *Torero Hub* under the *My Financial Aid* tab on the MySanDiego portal. To see your Financial Aid Requirements, go to the box titled *Financial Aid Requirements* and select the appropriate academic year from the drop down menu. The Financial Aid Requirements will appear with a red flag if there are any necessary forms or applications to be completed. Please print, complete and return any necessary forms to the Office of Financial Aid. If the form or application has been completed and returned, there will be yellow triangle next to the name of the form or application, showing that it has been received.

**Why are there so many red flags on my portal?**
Red flags are additional requirements needed to complete your financial aid. It could be because additional information is required, or an application needs to be completed.
in order to finish the loan process. In the case of loans processed before the beginning of the Fall Semester, the red flag will remain until the loans are processed in mid-July.

I've accepted the wrong loan amount on my portal, how can I change it?
Submit a signed letter to the Office of Financial Aid. Include your name and ID number, list which loans you want to accept, the dollar amount and if it is for the whole academic year, or just one semester.

How long do I have to submit requested documents? When are the forms due?
If the USD Office of Financial Aid (OFA) requests any information from you, the forms and/or information must be submitted to the OFA within (3) weeks of the date the documents have been requested. Priority status may be lost if requested information is submitted after 3 weeks, which could mean a loss of certain funds.

Why did my award change after turning in verification forms?
The initial award was based on estimated FAFSA information. Once documentation confirming data is used, eligibility for financial aid may change.

Where can I see a breakdown of the Cost of Attendance?
The Cost of Attendance is located in the Torero Hub under the My Financial Aid tab on the MySanDiego portal. To see your Cost of Attendance go to the box titled Financial Aid Requirements and select the appropriate academic year from the drop down menu. Then you will click where it says “Your estimated cost of attendance is: $XX,XXX.”

This contains a breakdown of your cost of attendance based on your housing and enrollment status. If you are unsure of your housing or enrollment status is, you can view that information on your Award Overview.

My parent recently lost his/her job, how can I get more financial aid?
Students whose family experienced a change in financial circumstance that will lower the student’s family resources may be eligible for a re-evaluation of their federal and/or state aid eligibility after federal verification has been completed. In order to be considered for a special circumstances calculation, the student must meet specific guidelines, explain the circumstances in a letter, and provide documentation of the change. The Special Circumstances Appeal form is located on the financial aid website at www.sandiego.edu/financialaid/forms

How do I apply for the loans offered?
To apply for Federal Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized or PLUS loans, you must accept all or a portion of the loans on your Financial Aid Award. To begin the online electronic process to apply for your Federal Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized or PLUS loans, please log onto www.studentloans.gov using your (the borrower’s) Social Security Number, date of birth, first two letters of the last name and the FAFSA PIN. Click on “Complete Master Promissory Note (MPN)” and select the appropriate loan MPN type you want to complete. You will provide
personal information, school information, two references, and review and sign the MPN with your FAFSA PIN.

For Graduate and Parent PLUS loan borrowers, in addition to completing the Master Promissory Note for a PLUS Loan, you must select and complete the “Request PLUS Loan” application process. To begin the application process, click the appropriate loan type (Graduate PLUS or Parent PLUS) and complete the four step application process. Step 4 of the process is the Credit Authorization and submission of the application. You will be notified immediately whether you have been Credit Approved or not. If you are not approved, the website will give you four options of what to do next.

New student borrowers applying for Federal Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized, or Graduate PLUS loans must also complete Entrance Loan Counseling, if it is required. Click on “Complete Entrance Counseling”, and select the category that best describes you (undergraduate or graduate student) and begin the Entrance Loan Counseling session. This process will take approximately 30 minutes.

What is the difference between the subsidized and unsubsidized loan?

| Direct Subsidized (Stafford) Loan | • For undergraduate students who are enrolled at least half-time* and demonstrate financial need.  
| • Interest is 4.66% for loans made to undergraduate students between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015.  
| • Student is not charged interest on the loan while in school.  
| • Effective July 1, 2012, borrowers will be charged interest during the grace period.  
| • The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is the lender; payment is owed to ED |

| Direct Unsubsidized (Stafford) Loan | • For undergraduate and graduate students who are enrolled at least half-time*  
| • Interest is 4.66%  
| • Student is responsible for interest during all periods  
| • ED is the lender; payment is owed to ED |

Direct Subsidized Loans are available to undergraduate student with financial need. The school determines the amount which can be borrowed; it may not exceed the financial need. The interest for the subsidized loan is paid by the Dept. of Education while the student is enrolled at least half-time, for the first six months after the student leaves school, (referred to as a grace period), and during a period of deferment (a postponement of loan payments).

Direct Unsubsidized Loans are available to undergraduate and graduate students; there is no requirement to demonstrate financial need. The school determines the amount which can be borrowed by considering the cost of attendance and other financial aid received. The borrower is responsible for paying the interest during all periods. There is the option to not pay the interest while attending school and during grace periods and deferment or forbearance periods, the interest will accrue and capitalize (it will be added to the principal.)
amount of the loan).

**Am I required to complete Entrance/Exit Loan Counseling?**
Yes! Students who are first-time borrowers of a Direct Subsidized or Unsubsidized loans are required to complete Entrance Loan Counseling before their loan funds can be released and Exit Loan Counseling before they leave USD. Loan counseling provides the student borrower with helpful information such as borrower’s rights and responsibilities (including payback requirements and options). You may complete the simple online process at: [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov).

**I am transferring from another school mid-year, may I transfer my aid?**
No. You must apply separately through USD. You will need to update your FAFSA to add the USD school code so that USD can access your FAFSA information. USD’s school code is 010395.

**What if I receive Financial Aid and then withdraw from classes?**
Consult the Office of Financial Aid before withdrawing from classes. You may have to repay a percentage of aid received for the term from which you are withdrawing.

**Why isn’t my Cal Grant showing up on my award?**
Incoming students should check webgrants for students or contact the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to see if they are receiving the Cal Grant. If CSAC confirms you are eligible, please contact the USD Office of Financial Aid to have your award updated. Incoming students, please note that if you are eligible for a Cal Grant, it will directly replace any USD Scholarship or Grant funds you may have been awarded. For continuing students, if the Cal Grant does not appear on your award, contact the USD Office of Financial Aid.

**How will my award change if I am awarded a Cal Grant?**
In general, any USD award or USD scholarship funds awarded will be replaced or partially replaced by the Cal Grant.

**Why does the USDS/G change if I am awarded a Cal Grant?**
Per USD packaging policies, if you are eligible for a Cal Grant, it will directly replace any USD Scholarship or USD Grant funds you may have been awarded.

**I was awarded FWS, how do I find a job on campus?**
Information about available FWS positions will be posted on the Student Employment page of the USD web site on August 1, 2013 ([www.sandiego.edu/financialaid/student_employment/](http://www.sandiego.edu/financialaid/student_employment/)). You are encouraged to apply for open positions prior to arriving on campus. Continuing students may work in the department in which they worked the prior year, if requested by the Supervisor.

**I didn’t get offered FWS on my award, how can I get a job on campus?**
The Federal Work-Study program has very limited funds. You can complete the FWS Wait List – if funds become available later during the fall semester, you may be offered the chance...
to participate in the program. The Wait List is made available on the OFA web site after May 1st.

Several departments on campus hire students who have not been awarded Federal Work-Study. If there is a particular location in which you would like to work, you may contact the department directly to see if they have any openings for students who have not been awarded FWS (sometimes called “Casual Worker” positions). Some of the departments that regularly hire students as Casual Workers include: the Torero Store, Telefunding, Dining Services and Banquets and Catering. There are also USD students who choose to work off campus in positions posted by local employers through the USD Job Location and Development Program in the Student Employment Center, located in Room 313 of the Hughes Administration Center.

What happens if I receive an award from a private source other than USD?
The Office of Financial Aid coordinates all outside awards with your Financial Aid Award from USD. Therefore, it is necessary for you to inform the Office of Financial Aid of all outside awards. Usually, outside agencies make awards with the understanding that your college coordinates all sources of aid. USD recognizes both the honor and the extra effort implicit in these awards, and if possible, will adjust your loan and Federal Work-Study eligibility. If the award(s) exceed(s) the total amount of a student’s combined loan and Federal Work-Study (if the student is working under that program), a reduction in the USD need-based Scholarship or Grant will be made.

When will my outside scholarships post to my USD account?
Funding will post within 2 – 3 weeks of the check being received by the USD Office of Financial Aid. To ensure timeliness, please make sure you have returned all information requested by the Office of Financial Aid if you have other funding/loans. Checks must be made payable to the University of San Diego and clearly state the recipients' name and USD ID number. Checks should be sent at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the semester to:

Office of Financial Aid
University of San Diego
5998 Alcala Park Drive
San Diego, CA 92110

What if I need more financial aid than I am awarded? or What if I am not eligible for scholarships or grant assistance, yet my family needs some form of financial assistance?
There are some alternatives for students who do not qualify for scholarships or grant assistance or whose families need help meeting their contribution. The Federal Direct Parent PLUS Program offers parents of dependent students the opportunity to borrow up to the full cost of education each year, less any financial aid. Federal Direct Parent PLUS loans feature low interest rates and various long term repayment periods. For more information contact the USD OFA.

*The Office of Financial Aid “Guide to Alternative Financing” provides options for students and parents (as an addition, or as an alternative to the “need-based” sources of Financial Aid.) The guide is available on the USD OFA website: www.sandiego.edu/financialaid

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Why are the interest rates so high on the Parent Plus Loan?
The Parent PLUS loan is not “need based” but “credit based”, when Congress decided on the Federal Direct Parent PLUS loan rate, the interest rates at the time may have been higher. In the 1990s, the interest rates were at 9%.

Loan limits, interest rate, and loan charges
There are no set limits for Direct PLUS Loans, but you may not borrow more than the cost of your child’s education minus any other financial aid received, such as a Direct Subsidized or Unsubsidized Loan. The school will determine the actual amount you may borrow.

The interest rate for Direct PLUS Loans is a fixed rate of 7.21%. Interest is charged on Direct PLUS Loans during all periods, beginning on the date of your loan’s first disbursement. To find out more information on interest rates for Direct PLUS Loans, contact your loan servicer.

In addition to interest, you pay a loan origination fee that is a percentage of the principal amount of each Direct PLUS Loan that you receive. This fee helps reduce the cost of making these low-interest loans. We deduct the fee before you receive any loan money, so the loan amount you actually receive will be less than the amount you have to repay.

How to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool?
Students or parents selected for verification are required to submit a copy of their Tax Return by using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) on the FAFSA. To use the DRT, a parent or student must log on to the FAFSA website and proceed to the financial section. There will be a box labeled IRS Data Retrieval Tool. Provide the requested information and you will be directed to the IRS’s web site, where you will authorize the IRS to submit your tax information to FAFSA. You will then be directed back to the FAFSA web site, where you can resubmit your FAFSA with USD’s school code (010395). If the FAFSA is not resubmitted after the DRT is used, the tax information will not transfer to USD.

There are three ways of ordering a Tax Return Transcript (TRT) from the IRS besides using the DRT. You can order one online or through the mail by visiting www.irs.gov/individuals/Get-Transcript or calling 1-800-908-9946.

Why can’t we use a copy of our tax return?
Federal financial aid regulations prohibit the use of a copy of a tax return to confirm income information.

The US Department of Education is requiring the use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT). FAFSA filers selected for verification must now use the IRS DRT or provide a Tax Return Transcript. Copies of tax forms 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ can no longer be accepted. Click the link above for more information.

I’ve completed the DRT but it still shows as required, why?
Make sure that you electronically signed and resubmitted the FAFSA after you used the DRT; otherwise the tax information will not transfer to USD. It can take up to a week for the updated FAFSA to be received by USD. Continue to monitor your portal for the update. (CW)
How can I order a Tax Return Transcript if I do not want to use the Data Retrieval Tool or am ineligible to use it?
If you need to order a Tax Return Transcript (TRT) from the IRS because you are unable to use the DRT, then you can order one online by visiting
www.irs.gov/individuals/Get-Transcript or calling the IRS at 1-800-908-9946.
Once you receive your TRT, please submit a copy to the USD Office of Financial with the student’s name and ID number to prevent any delays in processing.
* For San Diego, the local IRS Office is located at 880 Front Street, San Diego, CA 92101.
The hours of business are Monday–Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The local IRS office phone number is 619-615-9555. (CW added in addition to above.)

Is summer and intersession covered in my award?
If those terms were included, you will see units included in the email award notification and funds by terms will display on the portal.
Separate applications for Intersession and Summer Sessions must be completed for the funds available for those academic periods. Assistance is generally limited to loans and Federal Pell Grants. Loan sources vary from year to year and an acceptable credit history may be required. The application forms are available on the Financial Aid web site in early October for the Intersession and in early February for the Summer Session(s).

What about next year?
Yes! You must reapply EVERY year by the priority deadline.

For more detailed information, please visit the Office of Financial Aid web site at: www.sandiego.edu/financialaid

Follow the Office on Social Media:

facebook.com/usdofa
instagram.com/usdofa
twitter.com/usdofa

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