

# Office of Student Financial Aid

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The mission of the Office of Student Financial Aid is to serve prospective students and currently-enrolled students by providing information, assistance, and guidance on ways to plan for and meet the costs of education at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. The office administers a full range of federal, state, university, and private aid programs.

Financial aid is provided to supplement the amount the student and parents can contribute toward the costs of the student's education. The federal government and UNCSEA believe the primary responsibility for paying for education rests with the student and their parents, who are expected to meet as much of the cost as possible.

## Instructions for Applying for Financial Aid

Undergraduate students wishing to be considered for financial aid should complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Priority consideration will be given to students whose FAFSA applications are received at the Central Processing Service (CPS) by the first day of February. Students who submit applications after the priority date will be considered as funds permit.

**Note:** Students wishing to be considered for need-based financial aid must submit a FAFSA for each year of enrollment.

North Carolina residents who wish to be considered for the NC Scholarship should have their FAFSA filed as soon as possible. Out-of-state students who are interested in receiving funds through their state grant program should be aware of their state aid deadlines; these dates are provided at <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/fafsa-deadlines>.

## Types of Financial Aid

The financial aid program at UNCSEA offers federal and state grants, loans, employment (Federal Work Study), and scholarships. Financial aid is awarded on the basis of a student's "Expected Family Contribution" (from the FAFSA calculation) and demonstrated need. Demonstrated need is determined by subtracting the Expected Family Contribution or "EFC" from the "Cost of Attendance" or Financial Aid Budget (a budget determined by the institution, according to federal guidelines). A student who demonstrates financial need and applies in a timely manner can expect to receive a financial aid package from UNCSEA, which may include funds from one or more of the following sources.

### Grants (Gift Aid)

The Federal Pell Grant Program is designed to provide financial assistance to needy undergraduate college students pursuing their first Bachelor's degree, based on their Expected Family Contribution, determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Pell Grants for the 2023-24 academic year range from \$767 to \$7,395 for full-time attendance. Awards for each academic year depend on federal funding. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) awards are reserved for undergraduate students with exceptional financial need who are eligible for the Federal Pell Grant. The amount varies, depending on the student's financial situation and federal appropriations.

North Carolina state grants may include the NC Scholarship. Eligibility is determined by information provided on the FAFSA. The programs are administered through the NC State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA). Final appropriation decisions depend on the North Carolina General Assembly.

Other states award grants, and some allow students to use the grants to attend colleges outside their state. In addition to the FAFSA, a separate state application may be necessary to receive those grants. Students should contact their state education department for complete information.

## **Federal Work-Study Employment (Self Help)**

Federal Work-Study (FWS) is a federal program through which undergraduate college students are provided jobs so that wages can be earned to meet expenses. Students participating in this program at UNCSCA work an average of four to five hours per week. New students awarded FWS must attend a mandatory FWS meeting during Orientation.

Undergraduate students who want to work on campus but do not qualify for the FWS program may be hired directly by specific departments. These positions are not administered by the Office of Student Financial Aid; students should contact specific departments directly regarding availability.

## **Loans (Self Help)**

The Federal Direct Loan Program provides low-interest loans to college students, directly from the U.S. Department of Education. Students may qualify with at least half-time enrollment. Loans are available for the student borrower and the parent borrower. Federal Direct Subsidized Student Loans are based on demonstrated need, but Federal Direct Unsubsidized Student Loans and PLUS loans for parents are available regardless of need. Information about grace periods and interest rates will be provided at the time the student receives their award notification.

Subsidized Federal Direct Loans are federally-insured loans available to the student borrower. Interest is covered by the federal government during the in-school period and for a six-month grace period. The interest rate is fixed on an annual basis. For loans disbursed between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, the interest rate is 5.50%.

Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans require the student to be responsible for paying the interest, which begins accruing from the date of the first disbursement. Quarterly interest statements will be sent from the Federal Direct Loan Program. Any unpaid interest will be capitalized when the student goes into repayment. For loans disbursed between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, the interest rate is 5.50%. This loan can be used to replace EFC for students who do not demonstrate eligibility for need-based aid based on the FAFSA, up to the maximum allowed per grade level.

Under the Federal Direct Loan Program, the maximum Subsidized annual loan limits are \$3,500 for freshmen, \$4,500 for sophomores, and \$5,500 for juniors and seniors; dependent undergraduates may borrow an additional \$2000 in Unsubsidized loans. Students classified as independent according to FAFSA guidelines may be eligible for additional Unsubsidized loan amounts not to exceed \$4,000 for freshmen and sophomores and \$5,000 for juniors and seniors.

The Federal Direct PLUS Loan is another federal loan available to provide funds for educational expenses, borrowed by parents of dependent undergraduate students. For loans disbursed between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, the interest rate is 8.05%. A parent of a dependent undergraduate may borrow up to the Cost of Attendance Budget minus estimated financial aid per academic year. No demonstration of need is necessary to borrow under this program. However, a credit check will be performed, and the borrower must be creditworthy.

First-time student-loan borrowers of Federal Direct Loans at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts are required to complete Entrance Counseling.

Students who borrow under any of the loan programs offered at UNCSCA are also required to complete Exit Counseling before leaving campus at the time of graduation or withdrawal from the institution. Any student who fails to complete Exit Counseling can expect to have a "hold" placed on his or her academic record, pending completion of this federal requirement.

## Scholarships (Gift Aid)

All undergraduate students who apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA each academic year are considered for scholarships based solely on demonstrated financial need. Other scholarships may be awarded by the arts dean, based on talent determined at the time of audition, interview, or evaluations. Students who want to be considered for talent scholarships may wish to complete the FAFSA, since the arts dean may use need criteria in combination with talent qualifications to determine scholarship awards. All scholarships are included as part of a student's financial aid package by the Office of Student Financial Aid.

The following scholarships are provided in conjunction with the University of North Carolina:

*The C.M. and M.D. Suther Scholarship* is awarded annually to a full-time North Carolina resident undergraduate student on the basis of academic standing and financial need. The recipient is chosen by the Office of Student Financial Aid. The award is nonrenewable and varies in amount according to income available from the trust.

*The A.P. and Frances Dickson Scholarship* is awarded annually to a full-time undergraduate student whose permanent residence is in Hoke County, North Carolina. The recipient is chosen by the Office of Student Financial Aid on the basis of academic standing and financial need. The award is nonrenewable and varies in amount according to income available from the trust.

*The James Lee Love Scholarship* is awarded annually to a full-time North Carolina resident undergraduate student. The recipient is chosen by the Office of Student Financial Aid on the basis of academic standing and financial need. The award is nonrenewable and varies in amount according to income available from the trust.

## Outside Scholarships

Information about scholarships from private foundations, professional organizations, religious organizations, community organizations, and civic groups may be available in your community or on the Internet. The Internet offers a wide range of free information and resource listings for students and prospective students in all areas of study.

**NOTE:** Students awarded any scholarships from sources outside of UNCSCA are required to report the amount and source to the Office of Student Financial Aid. If your financial aid package includes need-based aid and/or aid up to your Cost of Attendance Budget, it is possible a reduction in previously-awarded aid may be necessary.

## Other Resources

### Department of Veterans Affairs

A student who is a veteran or a dependent of a veteran may be eligible for benefits. Students should contact the Department of Veterans Affairs for more information.

### Vocational Rehabilitation

Students with a disability may wish to contact the Vocational Rehabilitation Office in their state for more information.

## Financial Aid Determination and Award

Awards are made to students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment, for the purpose of obtaining a degree during the regular academic year. (Special students and Undergraduate Arts Certificate students are not eligible for need-based aid. Degree students taking academic course(s) in the summer session at UNCSCA should contact the Office of Student Financial Aid to determine if they have eligibility for any need-based aid for summer.

In general, students enrolled in courses that do not count toward graduation requirements in the specific program to which they have been admitted, cannot use enrollment in those courses toward their enrollment status for financial aid purposes. (Examples of various enrollment statuses include full time, three-quarter time, half time and less-than-half time.) The financial aid award must be based on a student's enrollment in required courses, and this enrollment status will be the basis of determining the Cost of Attendance Budget for Financial Aid Purposes, as well to determine eligibility for awards including student loans, Pell Grants or any aid based on a specific enrollment status. A student's school bill, however, will be based on their actual course enrollment, rather than their enrollment status for financial aid purposes.

Students wishing to be considered for federal financial aid must be U.S. citizens or "eligible" non-citizens (see FAFSA instructions for an explanation). Financial aid is awarded without discrimination against a student's race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, handicap, or sexual orientation.

Financial aid awards are dependent upon institutional, private, state and/or federal funding. Although UNCSCA fully intends to be able to adequately fund offers made and provide accurate information, there is always a possibility that a program may be discontinued, funds may not be appropriated to UNCSCA, or a computational error may be made. Students will be notified immediately regarding any change in an award.

## **Verification of Student Aid Application Information**

The U.S. Department of Education may select a student's application for a process called "verification." This process requires the student to submit certain documents to verify information reported on the FAFSA. If selected, the student may be asked to submit documentation of Federal Income Tax Returns (transcripts or signed photocopies), W-2 forms, and other documents. (Successful use of the IRS Data Retrieval when completing the FAFSA may replace the need to submit Federal Income Tax Return documentation.) The Office of Student Financial Aid will contact the student regarding these forms. The student may also be requested to supply additional documentation to clarify conflicting information on the FAFSA. Prompt responses are helpful in order to maximize eligibility.

Failure to provide verification information means the student will not receive aid from the U.S. Department of Education and may not receive need-based aid from other sources.

Any person who intentionally makes false statements or misrepresentations on a federal aid application is violating the law and is subject to fine or imprisonment or both.

## **Renewal of Financial Aid**

Applicants must file a new FAFSA for each year of enrollment. Applicants can complete the FAFSA online at the following Internet address: [studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa).

Awards may vary from year to year based on changes in family circumstances and availability of funds. To be eligible for ongoing assistance, a student must continue to have demonstrated need and be maintaining satisfactory academic progress at UNCSCA. A student is not eligible for financial assistance if a refund of federal grant aid is owed or the student is in default on a federal loan.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

To be eligible for federal aid programs, a returning college student must maintain "satisfactory academic progress (SAP)." Satisfactory academic progress is determined using the three areas listed below:

## Qualitative (Grade Point Average)

Students must meet UNCSA's Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements consistent with the academic standard for graduation in the program in which they are enrolled. The achievement of acceptable GPAs will be monitored and administered by the arts schools and the Division of Liberal Arts, in conjunction with the University Registrar. GPAs include all course work at UNCSA.

Note: If students are continued in their program but temporarily placed in a probationary status for reasons that may include GPA, they may retain financial aid eligibility if their cumulative GPA is at least 2.0, and they meet both of the Quantitative Measures outlined below, when SAP is reviewed. The UNCSA Office of Student Financial Aid will monitor for this GPA "floor" of 2.0.

## Quantitative

To be progressing satisfactorily, a student must meet two types of quantitative measures.

### Completion Ratio

Students must achieve and maintain a cumulative Completion Ratio of at least **67%** to remain eligible for financial aid.

The Completion Ratio will be calculated by dividing the cumulative number of total credit hours **completed** by the cumulative number of total credit hours **attempted**. Credit hours successfully **completed** at UNCSA are for all courses in which a student receives a non-failing letter grade (A – D), S (Satisfactory), or P (Passing). Credit hours **attempted** at UNCSA include credit hours for all courses in which a student was enrolled on the tenth day of class each semester (or the second day of class each summer session). Credit hours from other institution(s) accepted toward a student's program at UNCSA are added to both **attempted** and **completed** hours.

A student who does not maintain the minimum Completion Ratio of 67% will be placed on Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension for the next academic year. The student will not be reinstated for aid until satisfactory academic progress is established. A student has the right to appeal Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension using the appeal process discussed later in this policy.

### Maximum Timeframe

Students must complete their program within the maximum timeframes outlined below. A student who does not complete their program within the maximum timeframes stated below will be placed on Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension for the next academic year. The student has the right to appeal using the appeal process discussed later in this policy.

### Normal Length of Undergraduate Program:

120 credit hours or more

### Maximum Timeframe to Complete Undergraduate Program:

180 credit hours (or 150% of the credit hours required to complete the program, if the published length of the program is more than 120 credit hours)

For undergraduate students, Maximum Timeframe will include credit hours accepted as transfer credit and credit hours earned at UNCSA.

A complete copy of the "UNCSA Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy — College Title IV Financial Aid Recipients Only" is available at the following link: <https://www.uncsa.edu/financialaid/pdf/satisfactory-academic-progress-policy.pdf> or from the Office of Student Financial Aid upon request.

Students dismissed, suspended, expelled or otherwise not continued in their program will not be eligible to receive financial aid.

## Student Responsibilities

Students have the responsibility to:

- Apply for admission;
- Complete all financial aid forms accurately and submit them in a timely manner;
- Reapply for financial aid each academic year;
- Provide any additional information as requested by the Office of Student Financial Aid or any other UNCSA office;
- Inform the Office of Student Financial Aid of any personal changes (increase or decrease in your financial resources, change in name, address and/or Social Security number, withdrawal or transfer from UNCSA);
- Enroll in the necessary number of credit hours;
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress;
- Honor the policies and procedures set forth in the *UNCSA Undergraduate Student Bulletin* and the *College Student Handbook*;
- Request any information you feel is necessary;
- Perform the work that is agreed upon in accepting Federal Work Study; and
- Attend required loan counseling, and repay your loans in accordance with your repayment schedule.

## Student Rights

Students have the right to:

- Obtain information about the student aid programs available at UNCSA;
- Apply and be considered for assistance;
- Request an explanation of any phase of the financial aid process;
- Request special consideration if your family's financial circumstances change significantly (Students/families must take the initiative to notify the Office of Student Financial Aid of these changes);
- Request an appointment with the Director of Student Financial Aid concerning financing your education;
- Request information concerning academic programs, costs and refunds, physical facilities, student retention, etc.; and
- Appeal financial aid awards or denials based upon academic progress.

## **Refunds of Charges and Return of Financial Aid Due to Withdrawal from UNCSA**

If a student withdraws from UNCSA during a term, a refund is calculated according to UNCSA policies. These policies vary according to whether or not the student is a recipient of Title IV Federal Aid such as the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), and Federal Direct Loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, and PLUS). A determination is then made as to whether any aid must be returned to the Title IV Federal Aid Program, any state program, or any institutional fund. Required return of funds to all financial aid programs must be made prior to the refund to the student.

Therefore, if a student withdraws or stops attending UNCSA after receiving funds from a Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), and Federal Direct Loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, and PLUS), or any state grant such as the NC Scholarship, the student may be required to repay all or a portion of the financial aid provided to the student from a credit balance on the student's account. The repayment amount will be calculated on the basis of the calendar days remaining in the semester at the time of the student's withdrawal from or failure to attend UNCSA. The student will be notified of any repayments for which the student is responsible, if the student withdraws or leaves during a semester at UNCSA.

A copy of the "Withdrawal from UNCSA – Refund of Charges and Return of Financial Aid" is available at the following link: <https://www.uncsa.edu/financialaid/policies-disclosures/withdraw-policy-on-financial-aid.aspx> or from the Office of Student Financial Aid upon request.