Step-by-Step Guide to Financial Aid

SUNY EMPIRE
STATE COLLEGE

What types of financial aid are available?

The most common types of federal student aid include grants, government loans and federal work study. Federal student aid programs are regulated by the government and are usually the first resources students turn to when looking for financial aid. State grants also are available to New York residents who qualify.

FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS

1. Federal grants are funded by the federal government and are administered by the college Financial Aid office. The **Federal Pell Grant** and **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant** (SEOG) are available to undergraduate students who qualify. At the graduate level, the federal **TEACH** Grant is available to those who qualify. Students who are interested should review the TEACH Grant process online at www.esc.edu/FinancialAid.

2. New York state grants include **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants** and **Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS) grants for undergraduate students**; other state grants are available. Please visit www.esc.edu/FinancialAid for more information.

FEDERAL LOANS

1. **Federal Direct Stafford Subsidized Loans** are student loans that are guaranteed by the federal government, are applied for at the college, and are based on need. The interest rate is favorable and no interest is charged until the recipient ceases to be enrolled at least half time. The principal is deferred until six months after the recipient ceases to be enrolled at least half time. Effective July 1, 2012, only undergraduate students may qualify for a subsidized loan.

2. **Federal Direct Stafford Unsubsidized Loans** are student loans that are guaranteed by the federal government and applied for at the college. The principal is deferred until the recipient ceases to be enrolled at least half time, but the student is responsible for the interest from the disbursement date of the loan.

3. Dependent students also may have a parent complete the PLUS loan application process. If a parent is denied a PLUS loan, the dependent student may qualify for additional loan funds. Graduate students also may apply for a Graduate PLUS loan. For more information on both of these loan programs and how to apply, please visit www.esc.edu/FinancialAid.

INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Empire State College Foundation Scholarships are available to students thanks to the generosity of alumni, employees, foundations and friends of the college who have chosen to recognize the importance of education by establishing and contributing to scholarship funds. To apply, students must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and students must submit the General Application through the Empire State College Foundation Application for Scholarships Tool ESC*FAST* prior to April 1 for consideration for the upcoming school year.

FEDERAL WORK STUDY

The **Federal Work Study Program** is jointly funded by the college and the federal government and is administered by the college Financial Aid office.

PRIVATE LOANS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

1. **Private alternative loans** may be obtained and used to cover education costs that cannot be met by federal aid. Additional information can be found online at www.esc.edu/FinancialAid.

2. **Private scholarships** can be found in a listing on our website.

AID FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS

Additional information for military and veteran students can be found online at www.esc.edu/OVME. We encourage you to review this information and take advantage of this resource.

Applying for Financial Aid

Before applying for federal student aid, you must apply for an FSA ID, which is a username and password that you must use to log in to certain U.S. Department of Education websites. It gives you access to Federal Student Aid's online systems and serves as your legal signature. You can create your FSA ID at https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm.

STEP 1
Submitting the FAFSA

Filing the FAFSA is the first and most important step in the financial aid process. The data submitted in the application determines your eligibility for all of the federal student aid programs, including government loans, and many state and institutional programs as well.

The FAFSA code for Empire State College is 010286.

The fastest and most accurate way of submitting the FAFSA application is the online process from the U.S. Department of Education, available at **www.fafsa.ed.gov**. For those without computer access, paper applications are still available and can be ordered by calling FAFSA at **800-433-3243**.

FAFSA Dates and Reminders

The Financial Aid office encourages every student to complete the FAFSA three months before the expected start date. The online process becomes available the preceding year on Oct. 1, but an FSA ID can be created at any time.

We recommend applying for financial aid concurrent with your application to the school. Existing students should file the appropriate FAFSA for the upcoming financial aid year (which starts with the May term).

Please refer to our website to determine which year FAFSA is necessary for your academic term.

The priority deadline for receipt of the FAFSA results and all additional necessary paperwork by the Financial Aid office is six weeks prior to the start date of the term. **FAFSA results and additional paperwork received after this date will continue to be reviewed but aid will not be determined and in place in time to secure your courses.** If FAFSA results and all necessary paperwork are not received before the term ends, aid eligibility may be denied for that term.

STEP 2
The Student Aid Report (SAR)

Approximately two weeks after submitting the online FAFSA, you will receive a **Student Aid Report (SAR)** from FAFSA. The SAR contains all the information you provided on your FAFSA, messages from the processor, and a list of schools that will receive the SAR. Schools use the SAR data to determine your eligibility for student aid.

STEP 3
Expected Family Contribution

When you apply for federal student aid, your answers to specific FAFSA questions will determine whether you are considered dependent or independent. If you are considered dependent, your parents' income and assets as well as your own must be reported on the FAFSA. Students are classified as dependent or independent because federal student aid programs are based on the principle that students (and their parents or spouse, if applicable) are considered the primary source of support for postsecondary education.

Your FAFSA responses are entered into a formula (known as the Federal Methodology), which is regulated by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The result is your expected family contribution, or EFC. The EFC is a preliminary estimate that measures your family's financial strength. It is subtracted from the cost of attendance at the school(s) you plan to attend to determine your eligibility for federal student aid.

Every SAR will reflect the EFC that has been generated using the information provided on your FAFSA. It will appear in the upper right-hand corner of the SAR. This is the amount the federal government has determined that you and/or your family will be able to contribute toward the cost of your education, including living expenses, for one year.

STEP 4
Submitting the TAP Grant Application
(Students who are not residents of New York, please skip to step 7.)

The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grant is available for undergraduate students meeting residence, income, academic or other requirements, as established by New York state law. As a result of completing the FAFSA, your information will be forwarded to the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC).

Electronic FAFSA applicants who meet New York state residency requirements and who have listed a New York state college may link to the HESC website to complete their **NYS Express TAP Application (ETA)** after completing the FAFSA. Paper FAFSA applicants will be sent their ETA by mail if you are a first-time state award recipient or if HESC requires additional information to process their application.

The Empire State College TAP code for bachelor's degree is 0913.

The Empire State College TAP code for an associate degree is 0916. TAP awards require enrollment of 12 or more credits per semester for the fall and spring terms. Students enrolled in the summer term have to meet additional criteria to be eligible for TAP. **Part-Time TAP also is available to undergraduate students who qualify.** Please refer to TAP guidelines for additional information online at **www.esc.edu/TAP**.

STEP 5
Submitting the New York State Excelsior Scholarship Application

The Excelsior Scholarship is available to undergraduate New York state residents who meet income and academic requirements as established by New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC). Students must

apply on the HESC website by the application deadline as determined and set by HESC. Students must be full-time to qualify. Eligible students will receive free tuition, capped at $5,500 per year. There are post-award obligations tied to this award. Students should refer to the financial aid website at www.esc.edu/FinancialAid for more information.

STEP 6
Submitting the Aid for Part-Time Study Grant Application

Undergraduate students meeting New York residence, income, academic or other requirements, as established by state law, may qualify for the **Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS) grant** if they are attending 3-11 credits per semester. Students must complete the APTS application and submit a signed copy of their – and spouse's if married, parent(s) if dependent – current year New York state income tax return. The application may be completed online at **www.esc.edu/FinancialAid** or you may request a paper application by contacting the Financial Aid office. Funding is limited; completed applications and tax information received by April 1 for the upcoming school year will be given priority consideration.

STEP 7
Additional Information Request

The Financial Aid office will notify you if additional information is required before determining your financial aid eligibility. We recommend that you always respond immediately to any requests for additional information, as financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and some funds are limited. To facilitate this process, please make sure that the college has your correct email address. Students should not supply these additional documents unless the Financial Aid office requests them.

Students who wish to obtain a loan will be required to complete the FAFSA and have an Entrance Loan Counseling form on file and a valid Loan

Agreement for a SubsidizedUnsubsidized Loan (MPN). These applications can be obtained at **www.esc.edu/FinancialAid**.

If you are selected for verification by the federal processor, you will be required to submit additional information. We will notify you via email of what is required of you. [Any discrepancies determined by the Financial Aid office must be resolved before aid can be awarded.]

STEP 8
Receiving Award Notification

Your file is considered complete once the Financial Aid office has received all of the requested information. It is then reviewed by a financial aid advisor and aid eligibility is determined. Once this is determined, you will receive a financial aid award notification from the Empire State College Financial Aid office. The award notification indicates how much funding, and what types of aid, you are eligible to receive. The Financial Aid office will send the award notification to your email address – it is very important that we have your correct email address.

Upon receipt of the award notification, you will be directed to review the online Conditions of Awards. Please note that the Financial Aid office operates under an active confirmation process for all students. This means that you will be required to accept or decline your student loans. Aid is only activated if and when you enroll. You must accept your loans in order for your loans to apply to your balance within two to three business days.

When you enroll, the college defers your tuition and fee charges on the basis of financial aid awarded by the Financial Aid office. You are responsible for paying from your own personal funds any amount due that is not covered by pending student aid. Once you enroll, it is your responsibility to view your account summary online at **www.esc.edu/MyESC** to make sure that your aid is showing on your account summary. Please allow two to three business days for your aid to show on your account summary. If you view the account summary and the anticipated aid is not showing, please contact the Financial Aid office as it may be due to lack of completion of a necessary form or an academic progress issue. For more information on billing procedures, payment options and payment due dates, please visit **www.esc.edu/ StudentAccounts**.

STEP 9
Stay on Top of Your Information

The Financial Aid office sends email reminders and updates throughout the year to our students via Self-Service. Please make sure to notify Empire State College if your email, address or phone number changes.

If you believe that your current household or financial circumstances are not accurately reflected on the FAFSA, you may file a Special Condition/Professional Judgment request. For more information, please review Special Condition/Professional Judgment in the "Appeals" section at **www.esc.edu/FinancialAid**.

STEP 10
Ordering Books With Financial Aid Funds

If you are eligible to receive a financial aid refund, you may use this credit to order and pay for books available at the Empire State College Bookstore by indicating you have available financial aid on your order form and listing your Student ID number. In some cases, enrolled students may be eligible to receive a small advance against pending, excess financial aid. Contact the Student Information Center for details at **800-847-3000.**

STEP 11
Additional Information for Students With a Disability

All students with a disabling condition who meet the academic and technical standards for participation in the program are eligible to request reasonable accommodations to achieve equal access in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.

More information can be found at **www.esc.edu/DisabilityServices**.

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yourself with higher education

SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

SUNY Empire State College offers financial aid for undergraduate and graduate degree programs that are affordable and flexible to accommodate the needs of working adults.

Learn more at www.esc.edu, email FinancialAid@esc.edu or call 800-847-3000

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