Financial Aid Newsletter
Fall 2016

www.amherst.edu/go/financialaid

Topics:
- Tools to Stay Informed
- Questions About My Award
- Refunds and Cash Advances
- Financial Aid for Credit Bearing Music Performance Classes
- Computer Purchase
- Help with Uninsured Medical, Emergency Dental or Optical Expenses
- Book Expenses in Excess of $1,000
- Other Personal Expenses
- Student Employment Reminders (Forms and Process)
- Siblings In College
- Study Away Planning and Financial Aid
- Financial Aid Renewal Questions

Tools to Stay Informed

Check Your Financial Aid Application Status and Review Aid Awards On-line

Financial aid awards, messages, and required documents may be reviewed on-line. These records may be accessed by our secure financial aid portal at https://www.amherst.edu/go/netpartner by entering your Amherst user name and password. A link to this site is on our home page at https://www.amherst.edu/offices/financialaid.

What if I have some questions about my award?

If you have a question about your financial aid award, please visit, call, or write the office. Our staff is experienced in answering a broad array of questions regarding the application process, individual aid programs, the crediting of aid to student accounts, and general policy and procedures. In some cases, questions may be referred to a dean if the review and discussion of family’s financial circumstances is involved.

If you have general questions about the aid program, you can also go to https://www.amherst.edu/offices/financialaid/topics for a list of topics and frequently asked questions.
Funds to Cover Other Expenses

Refunds and Advances

If you have a credit (negative balance) showing on your student account in ACData, you may request a refund of that credit amount, or if your financial aid will result in a credit balance due to pending aid, you may request an advance on your aid. Please plan ahead in making your requests. Checks for financial aid refunds and advances are prepared by the Controller’s Office once a week - on Thursday - and are mailed to students’ post office boxes on Friday.

Music Performance Courses

Students who receive need based scholarship aid from the College and enroll in music performance courses for credit will receive additional scholarship aid to cover the extra expense charged for music performance classes.

Computer Purchase

If you receive need-based scholarship from the College, you may borrow a long-term student loan for purchase of a reasonably priced, education-related computer. Appropriate software and equipment (e.g., network card, printer, etc.) may also be included. Direct purchase must be made while you are a student or in the summer immediately before your first year of enrollment.

Unreimbursed Medical, Emergency Dental and Optical Expenses

Students whose total parental contribution is $5,000 or less (not adjusted for number of children in college) may be eligible for help with medical, emergency dental and optical expenses incurred, but not covered by health insurance. This assistance can include prescription co-payments. Please ask the Office of Financial Aid about your eligibility. Also, please note this eligibility is for expenses incurred after the first day of classes and before the last day of exams each semester. Assistance is not available during the summer or Interterm and does not cover routine or preventative care.

Note that any eligible student must confer with the Office of Financial Aid before making arrangements for eye exams or emergency dental care.

Book Costs

If you receive scholarship from the College, and your costs for required books and supplies exceed $1,000 in an academic year, your grant aid can be adjusted to account the difference. To request an adjustment, you should send the Office of Financial Aid a listing of your courses and documentation for the total costs incurred for books and supplies for each class. Costs can
include course packets and lab fees charged to your student account. If you have questions, contact the Office of Financial Aid.

Please note this typically cannot be done until the spring semester when the expenses for both fall and spring courses can be documented.

Other Expenses (Personal)

If you didn’t achieve the student income contribution/summer savings expectation that we used in calculating your financial aid, or if you want to shift some student employment to a student loan in your aid package, consult us to see if this change is possible.

Student Employment During the Academic Year

Forms and Taxes

To be employed by the College, you must complete three forms –

- **I-9 Form, Employment Eligibility Verification**, required by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Original copies of proper identification documents must be provided when completing the form.
- **W-4 Form, Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate**, which directs or exempts the College to withhold federal income taxes from your pay. If you claim “exempt” status, you must file a W-4 Form annually.
- **M-4 Form, Massachusetts Employee’s Withholding Exemption Certificate**, which directs or exempts the College to withhold state income taxes from your pay. Most students are eligible to claim “exempt” status for Massachusetts income taxes.

For more detailed information about these forms, see the 'Student Employment' page under the 'Life At Amherst College' heading on the College website [https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/student_employment](https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/student_employment)

Social security taxes (F.I.C.A.) are not withheld from student earnings for employment on campus during the academic year. However, F.I.C.A. taxes must be withheld from any off-campus earnings and summer employment on campus.

**Working on campus:** If you work on campus, the department you’re working for must complete an employment authorization and send it to the Office of Financial Aid. Each student worker must be assigned to a specific position in a specific department at a specific hourly rate. Once we have your department, position, and pay rate in the computer, no further paperwork is needed unless there’s a change in any of the three items. If the paperwork is not submitted on time, your paycheck will be delayed. Submitting this information is the responsibility of the employing department, but when you begin work in any new position, with a new department, or if your hourly wage rate changes, it would be helpful if you ask the department you work for whether they’ve sent in the paperwork for you.
Working off campus under Work-Study: If you are eligible for the Federal Work-Study program, you may be employed off campus by an eligible non-profit organization or government agency in work that is "for the public good." If you're interested in off-campus FWS employment, visit the student employment website for information about available positions at https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/student_employment/off_campus. Note that off-campus Work-Study positions are available in the summer as well as during the academic year.

Students with Siblings in College

If you indicated in your aid application that a brother or sister will be enrolled in college in 2016-17, you have recently been sent a notice requesting their enrollment be confirmed by their institution. Financial aid for the school year can’t be finalized until we receive confirmation of your sibling’s enrollment.

Note that if an adjustment in your financial aid is required by a change in the number of family members enrolled in postsecondary education or attendance at a lower cost institution than was initially reported on your aid application, it may affect financial aid for both the fall and spring semesters.

Studying Away Considerations

You can use your financial aid for study elsewhere if the program is approved by the College for full credit. In general, your financial aid is adjusted according to the educational costs of the program - just as the costs used if you were at Amherst. Your family contribution is the same whether you are at Amherst or studying away.

Students who are planning on studying away from Amherst - study abroad or at another U.S. institution - should set an appointment in the spring semester with Dean Kate Gentile to discuss their plans and how financial aid can transfer. Information about financial aid and study away from the College is available on our web site — https://www.amherst.edu/offices/financialaid/studyabroad_aid.

Please note that even if you receive only external sources of aid such as student or parent loan assistance, you should make an appointment with Dean Gentile to arrange for the transfer of these resources to your study-away program.
Financial Aid Renewal Questions

Underclass students who applied for financial aid for 2016-17 were recently emailed a notification regarding important changes in the financial aid renewal application process for 2017-18. Renewal applications will be due March 1, 2017. If you have any questions about changes in the renewal application process, please contact our office by email at www.amherst.edu/go/financialaid, call 413-542-2296, or come to our office in B-5, Converse Hall.