

Financial Aid Newsletter

Fall 2015

Office of Financial Aid
B-5 Converse Hall
(413) 542-2296
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

www.amherst.edu/go/financialaid

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Tools to Stay Informed

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

Financial aid awards for students may be reviewed on-line. These records may be accessed in a secure website at amherst.edu/go/netpartner by entering your Amherst user name and password. A link to this site is on our website home page at amherst.edu/go/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 to clarify things. 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 a question may be referred to a dean for response if it involves interpretation of financial aid policy.

Financial Aid Hold Preventing Registration

If you have been notified there is a financial aid hold on your registration, go to amherst.edu/go/netpartner, login using your Amherst College user name and password and review the Documents tab to view what material is missing. Provide the missing document(s) so your award can be finalized and the hold released.

If you have any questions about what material remains outstanding, please contact the Office of Financial Aid.

Funds to Cover Other Expenses

Refunds and Advances

If you have a credit balance on your student account, you may request a refund of the excess amount, or, if your financial aid will result in a credit balance due to pending aid, you may request an advance on your aid. But 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 Thursdays - and are mailed to students' post office boxes on Fridays.

Music Performance Courses

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

Computer Purchase

If you receive 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. The College sends information about recommended computer packages in the summer. You may, however, propose other alternatives to us. Direct purchase must be made while you are a student or in the summer immediately before your first year of college.

Unreimbursed Medical, Emergency Dental and Optical Expenses

Students whose total parental contribution is \$5,000 or less (unadjusted for number of children in college) may be eligible for help with medical, emergency dental and optical expenses incurred, not covered by health insurance. The assistance can include prescription co-payments. Please ask the Office of Financial Aid about your possible 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 this academic year, your grant aid can be adjusted for 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 summer savings amount that we used in calculating your financial aid or if you want to shift some work to loan in your aid package, consult us to see if a 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 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 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 our website

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 form 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 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 financial aid office 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 2015-16, in the next few weeks we will ask that this be confirmed by your sibling's institution. We do this because the number of family members in college is a major factor in calculating the parent contribution. 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

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 help. Information about financial aid and study away from the College is available on our Web site — https://www.amherst.edu/offices/financialaid/studyabroad_aid.

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.

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.
