

Financial Aid Newsletter

Winter 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

Topics:

[Study Away Reminder](#)

[Siblings in College](#)

[Last Day to Request Fall Loans](#)

[Help with Senior Expenses](#)

[Plan Ahead for Interterm Medical and Other Expenses](#)

[January Review](#)

[Financial Aid Hold for Pre-Registration or Spring Registration](#)

[Refunds and Cash Advances](#)

[Book & Course Fee Expenses in Excess of \\$1,000](#)

[Funding for Music Performance Courses for Credit](#)

[Computer Purchase](#)

[Student Employment Reminders](#)

Studying Away Reminder

Students who plan to study away from Amherst this spring (either abroad or at another U.S. institution) are reminded that if they have not already done so, they should make an appointment with Dean Kate Gentile to discuss the process for transferring financial aid. 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 determined according to the educational costs of the program away from Amherst just as costs are used to determine your aid 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, you should make an appointment with Dean Gentile to arrange for the transfer of these resources to your study-away program.

Please submit the required documentation in a timely manner so your aid can be forwarded to meet the billing deadline of your program.

If you plan to study away next fall or for the 2016-17 academic year, you should meet with Dean Gentile after the end of the registration period in February.

Students with Siblings in College

If you have not yet submitted the Sibling Enrollment Verification form that was requested in September (and October), please do so immediately. Financial aid for the school year can't be

finalized until we receive confirmation of your sibling's enrollment and **a hold will be placed on your spring registration if we have not received this required form.**

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.

Last Day to Request Fall Semester Loans

For students who want to request a fall semester loan or increase an already existing loan, the last day to do so for this semester is **December 11th**. This is particularly important for 16E graduates.

Support Is Available for "Senior Expenses"

Amherst scholarship recipients in the Class of 2015 who have "senior expenses" can ask for assistance from the financial aid office. Senior expenses include graduate school application and testing costs, resume preparation, and unreimbursed interview costs, such as unreimbursed travel expenses or the purchase of clothing for interviews.

Students whose total parental contribution (before adjusting for number of children in college) is \$5,000 or less may qualify for a Dean's Discretionary Grant of as much as \$400. Any aided student may receive an Amherst College loan of as much as \$2,000 to cover these expenses.

Requests for assistance with senior expenses should be made in writing and must include documentation for the total costs. **The last day to submit senior expenses for 16E students is December 15th (the last day of classes).**

Unreimbursed Medical, Emergency Dental and Optical Expenses - As semester end approaches, please plan ahead!

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 after the last day of exams (December 22) until the first day of spring semester classes (January 25).*** ***Students who will incur medical expenses during Interterm need to plan ahead to cover their own expenses during this period.*** Assistance does not cover routine or preventative care and is not available during the summer (after the last day of spring semester exams).

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

What is a "January Review"?

If your family's financial situation has changed significantly during 2015 as compared to what it was during 2014, your family can request a voluntary January Review. Requests should be made no later than December 15 and documentation for a January Review should be submitted by January 15 but preferably as soon after January 1st as it is available. **Families may not request a January Review or provide documentation for a Review after February 12.**

If your family requests a voluntary January Review or if they were already scheduled for a mandatory January Review, we will write to your family in December to ask for information about their income for 2015, and we will send you a copy of the letter. The information we need may include copies of end of December year-to-date paystubs; December statements about interest, dividends, or other income; and records of income received from unemployment compensation, disability, social security, or pension programs. After we have reviewed your family's updated financial situation, we will determine if there has been a substantial difference in your family's financial circumstances and a change is warranted. If so, additional grant aid will be credited towards your spring semester bill.

A voluntary January Review will not interfere with a student's spring registration. If you have been scheduled for a mandatory review, your spring registration will have a hold until required paperwork has been submitted and reviewed.

Is a Financial Aid Hold Preventing Your Pre-Registration or Spring Registration?

If you have been notified there is a hold on your pre-registration or are notified in January there is a financial aid hold on your spring registration, go to amherst.edu/go/netpartner, log in 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 currently have a credit balance on your student account, you may request a refund of the excess amount by contacting the Controller's Office from your Amherst College e-mail address.

If your financial aid will result in a credit balance for the spring semester due to pending aid, you may request an advance on your spring aid **after the first day of classes (January 25)**. 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.

Book and Course Fee Costs

If you receive scholarship from the College and your costs for required books, course fees 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.

Music Performance Courses

Students who receive need based scholarship aid from the College and who enroll in music credit-bearing 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 to new students 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.

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.

For More Information:

Notes Concerning Your Financial Aid Award

https://www.amherst.edu/offices/financialaid/Notes_Concerning

Office Contact: Phone (413) 542-2296 E-mail finaid@amherst.edu Fax (413) 542-2628

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