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Aid Calendar

JANUARY 1, 1999

First day to apply for financial aid for 1999-2000 academic year

MARCH 1, 1999

Deadline to apply for spring 1999 Federal Direct Loans

MARCH 15, 1999

"On-Time" UF Financial Aid Application Deadline for 1999-2000. We must receive the results of your FAFSA analysis and all other documents required to complete your aid file by this date.

APRIL 1, 1999

Deadline to apply for summer 1999 Federal Direct Loans

May 15, 1999

Florida Student Assistance Grant 1999-2000 Application Deadline.

Apply Now

How will you pay for school if you don't get your financial aid next fall? You may come up short and cause yourself a lot of unnecessary stress. By the time you receive this newsletter, time will be running out for you to meet the on-time deadline--**March 15, 1999**.

You need to start filling out forms **NOW** to meet this deadline. To be considered on-time, your need analysis report must reach us from the federal processor. This can take from one to four weeks, depending upon how you apply and if you need to make any corrections to your application. Application files that become complete after March 15th are awarded *after* on-time applicants have been awarded, which means you may not get some desirable aid for which you might have qualified.

Getting Started

1. First, decide whether to apply using a paper application or electronically, over the internet. The electronic application will reach the federal processor more quickly, so if you feel comfortable on the internet, try using FAFSA on the Web this year. In either case, pick up a *1999-2000 Gator Aid Application Guide* from the forms racks in S-107 Criser Hall to get in-depth instructions and find out the latest info on application and programs.

2. Whether you choose to complete a paper or electronic version of the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*, complete it carefully; your financial aid award depends upon your accurate, timely completion of the FAFSA. Mistakes delay processing and can disqualify you for some types of aid.

Using a Paper FAFSA

If you want to apply using a paper application, pick up a FAFSA from the forms rack in S-107 Criser Hall. Or, if you received

a *Renewal FAFSA* from the federal Department of Education, use it. *Renewal FAFSAs* are preprinted with your prior-year responses to certain data items (e.g., name, address, Social Security Number) and prompt you to write in your new or updated responses for 1999-2000.

OR, Using FAFSA on the Web,
(see [FAFSA on the Web](#), below):

- Go to FAFSA on the Web at: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. Follow the instructions provided on the site.
- **Print and mail the signature page.**
- Use the "Application Status Check" feature to keep track of your application.

Whether you use the paper FAFSA or the FAFSA on the Web,

- **List the University of Florida and the UF federal school code (001535) in one of items 83-93**
- **Read the "Common Mistakes" section of the *Gator Aid Application Guide* before filling out the FAFSA.**

Application Tips

1. Apply accurately. Read the instructions.
2. Enter your CORRECT Social Security number on all forms.
3. Photocopy your application and IRS records and save all W-2s.
4. Make a file for your financial aid records. Record dates you mail forms/documents.
5. Respond quickly to requests from our office and from the federal processor.
6. Ask questions. For questions about applying or help completing the FAFSA, call us at (352) 392-1275; or call the federal processor at 1-(800) 433-3243/(319) 337-5665.
7. Follow up continuously on the status of your aid application. See "[Follow Up](#)," below.
8. Remember, you must reapply each year. Financial aid awards are not renewed automatically.

Follow Up on Your Application

After you apply, check on the status of your application regularly. You can do this: (1) by calling SFA TIPS, our automated financial aid line, at (352) 846-1183; (2) through ISIS on the UF's web site (see "[Check Your Financial Aid Status on ISIS](#)," immediately below); or (3) by calling our office at (352) 392-1275.

Here's a look at what to expect after you apply. You will receive the following responses from Student Financial Affairs and other agencies.

1. The *Federal Student Aid Report (SAR)*

The federal processor will send you a SAR about three to four weeks after receiving your *FAFSA* or *Renewal FAFSA*. The SAR indicates your "expected family contribution," which is used by UF and other schools to determine your eligibility for aid. When you receive the SAR, review it for accuracy. If you need to make corrections, follow the instructions on the SAR.

2. Verification

Your application may be selected for "[verification](#)", the federally required process of checking accuracy of information students supply on their aid applications. If selected, you will be required to provide verifying documentation before aid can be disbursed to you. Respond promptly to requests you receive from us for information or documentation. Do not wait until fall to turn in documents. Verification is a lengthy process. Many verification forms are available on our web site as downloadable forms.

3. Notification of Aid Award

When UF receives your FAFSA application information from the federal processor and you have been admitted to UF, if you are eligible for aid, SFA will award you an aid package based on your demonstrated need. You will receive an award letter stating the terms and conditions of aid programs awarded to you. If your aid file is complete by the March 15th "on-time" application deadline, you can expect an award letter in late spring.

Check Your Financial Aid Status on ISIS

Financial aid information--the status of your financial aid file, documents still needed, your aid award, deferment status, and disbursement status--is available on the internet through ISIS--UF's Integrated Student Information System. Use ISIS regularly to keep track of your financial aid application status. Go to the UF Web site, select ISIS, choose "More ISIS Services," then choose "Financial Aid." OR go to: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/>

FAFSA on the Web

Check out **FAFSA on the Web** and **Renewal FAFSA on the Web**--the newest way to apply for student financial aid! These online Macintosh-, PC-, and UNIX-compatible applications are available from the Federal Department of Education (FDOE). Use them to send your financial aid application information to the FDOE over the web. They not only save time, but also offer instant editing of your application.

Please note that students using *Renewal FAFSA on the Web* who have used *FAFSA on the Web* previously will receive an Electronic Access Code (EAC) by mail this year. The EAC is required to apply electronically. First-time electronic applicants can request an (EAC) by simply entering some personal information such as Social Security number, first two letters of last name, and date of birth, and will receive their (EAC) within 7 to 10 days through the mail. Further instructions about this are provided on the FDOE site.

The 1999-2000 versions of *FAFSA /Renewal FAFSA on the Web* are supported by the domestic version of Netscape Navigator 3.0-4.05, and Internet Explorer 4.0 and 4.01 with Service Pack 1. You can download these free of charge from the site. To access *FAFSA/Renewal FAFSA on the Web*, go to: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

Potential Aid Delays

From incorrectly reported untaxed income

Students and parents continue to have difficulty identifying and reporting untaxed income items on their aid applications. The result is inaccurate information, potential changes in eligibility, and, at worst, students needing to repay funds already disbursed.

If your application is selected for verification, the process of correcting your file if you reported untaxed income incorrectly can seriously delay disbursement of your aid. Generally this happens because applicants have not carefully read the *FAFSA /Renewal FAFSA* instructions. Not knowing what to look for usually contributes to the problem. Try the following tips.

1. When completing the untaxed income section, carefully check your W-2 forms, where items such as 401(k)s and 403(b) plan payments are listed.
2. First and foremost, carefully complete "Worksheet 2" in the *FAFSA /Renewal FAFSA* instruction booklet. You and/or your parents may be asked to provide us with a complete copy of this worksheet, as well as special documentation.

Financial Aid and the IRS

Students who receive financial aid must report portions of their financial aid as "taxable income" on their income tax returns. What must you include? Federal Work-Study funds must be included as *earned income*. Funds you receive from grants, scholarships, benefits, and fellowships from UF or any other source that, *combined*, are more than the cost of your tuition, fees, books, and required supplies are considered taxable income; loans are not.

Accordingly, throughout the year you should keep a detailed record of your expenditures for tuition, fees, books, and required equipment, supplies, and costs. Housing and food are nonexempt, so money spent on these IS subject to income tax.

If you report financial aid on your tax returns, be sure to list the same amount on your *1999-2000 FAFSA* as the answer to question #48, "Title IV Income Exclusions."

For more information, consult the IRS, your tax form instructions, your *FAFSA* instructions, and/or your personal tax adviser.

Some families may be eligible this year for Hope Scholarship or Lifetime Learning tax credits. For more information, do not contact our office. Contact the IRS or the Federal Department of Education (web page: <http://www.ed.gov/inits/hope/>).

Changes in Your Family Circumstances

After you submit your *FAFSA*, if there are changes in your financial circumstances or any factors relevant to your aid application, you should notify Student Financial Affairs in writing. Conditions that could affect your eligibility for aid include: loss of employment by a parent or spouse; separation or divorce of your parents or you from your spouse; loss of other income or benefits (such as Social Security or child support) by you, your parents, or your spouse; and death of a parent or spouse. You should also report changes in the enrollment period for which you have requested aid, in your residency status for tuition purposes, and in your expected graduation date. You must also notify us if you receive scholarships or financial aid from other sources.

Plan Now for Summer!

Academic year award cycle may affect your summer loan eligibility

The amount UF students can borrow annually through the Federal Direct Loan Program is affected by *award year* loan limits. UF defines an award year as fall, spring, and summer. SFA awards most financial aid, including Direct Loans, on a fall/spring cycle--this may affect the amount you can borrow for summer term. Students who attend during the summer can receive only the amount of their remaining eligibility for any given program. Students who have been awarded the maximum amount of their Direct Loan eligibility during fall and spring will be ineligible for summer loans.

If you plan to attend summer term and have questions about how much you will be able to borrow, consult your financial aid adviser in S-107 Criser Hall. Program limits are also listed in your *Gator Aid Application Guide*.

Free Scholarship Searches

fastWEB, which includes more than 400,000 listings of scholarships, fellowships, grants, and loans, creates a private mail box for you with a list of awards that is updated daily. Takes 5-15 minutes. Link up to fastWEB through SFA's home page or connect directly at: <http://www.fastweb.com/>

SRN Express contains info about 7,000 plus private-sector, non-need-based awards. Less than 20% list financial need as a criterion. Link to SRN Express through the SFA home page or connect directly at: <http://www.rams.com/srn/execsrch.htm>

ExPAN, from the College Board, lists scholarships and other types of financial aid from 3,300 national, state, public, and private sources. <http://www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/ssrchtop.html>

BEWARE Scholarship Scams

If you must pay money to get money, beware, it might be a scam. Every year there are a few scams based on imitations of legitimate foundations, scholarship sponsors, lenders, and scholarship search companies out to scam you out of your money. While looking for a way to pay for school, students and their families often fall prey to such scams.

The Federal Trade Commission initiated Project Scholarship Scam in which they have (1) filed charges in federal district court against companies alleged to have engaged in fraudulent or deceptive scholarship schemes and (2) initiated an extensive consumer education campaign to inform students and their families on how to identify scams. Consult the Financial Aid Information web page (FINAID) at: (<http://www.finaid.org>) for excellent advice on identifying scams and a list of suspicious scholarship opportunities.

SFA TIPS is a computerized phone system that provides you automated data about your financial aid file. Dial (352) 846-1183, enter your Social Security number and UF PIN and follow the instructions.

Applying for Scholarships

- Take advantage of the free scholarship search services listed above.
- READ ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS for the scholarships you are interested in first. If you meet basic requirements, APPLY! Don't apply for scholarships with qualifications you don't match.
- Apply to as many sources as possible. Always apply for need-based aid first.
- Be complete and concise, but also creative, in your application materials.
- Apply as far in advance as possible.
- Avoid spelling and grammatical errors; **have someone else read and proofread your application before you send it off.**
- Never talk yourself out of applying. You have as much of a chance to receive an award as others.
- Get a large calendar and plot the deadlines of applications; look at it every day. Set up a scholarship file with copies of your letters, transcripts, and personal statements to save time.
- NEVER become discouraged or take rejection personally. Universities would love to award EVERY deserving student, but limited scholarship dollars make this impossible.
- Look at scholarship application as a PART-TIME JOB. If you spend ten hours applying and receive a \$1,000 scholarship . . .you made \$100 PER HOUR!

Important URLs

University of Florida <http://www.ufl.edu/>

Student Financial Affairs <http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/SFA/SFA.html>

Introducing VA Work-Study Coordinator, Ray Dixon

Tired of not having enough money at the end of the semester? Student loans and your GI Bill just not cutting it? VA Work-Study is available to work at UF and the Gainesville VA Hospital for veterans who are enrolled students. You can work up to 25 hours a week making \$5.15 an hour, tax-free. Do you need a tutor but can't afford it? Veterans are entitled to Tutorial Assistance, to be reimbursed for these expenses. If interested in either program, see Ray Dixon at the VA Work-Study Office, Room S107G, Student Financial Affairs, Criser Hall, (352) 392-1275, ext. 3314. **Questions about VA benefits or any other educational benefits must be directed to the UF Registrar's Office.**

Log onto SFA

The SFA's web site provides financial aid information and gives students access to up-to-date application instructions and financial aid program information. Students can find late-breaking news on "**News & Updates**," and reach the **Gator Aid Application Guide request link**. The site also offers free scholarship search services, an online student job list, and answers to frequently asked questions. The SFA web site can be accessed through the UF homepage, or at: <http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/SFA/>

E-Mail Hotline answers only general financial aid questions, not specific questions about individual aid files. The goal of this hotline is to respond to questions within 48 hours. Send questions to the hotline at: SFA_Student_Info@SFA.UFL.EDU

Financial Aid Phone Numbers

Federal Student Aid Info

Questions on federal student aid; help filling out FAFSAs or correcting applications:

1 (800) 433-3243

1 (800) 730-8913 (TDD)

Questions on your application status; requests for duplicate SARs:

(319) 337-5665, or

1 (800) 433-3243

Federal Direct Loan Applicant Services

1 (800) 557-7394

Florida Dept. of Education

Office of Student Financial Assistance

325 W. Gaines Street

Room 255 Collins

Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

1 (850) 487-0049 toll free

Financial Aid Offices

Main Office:

Student Financial Affairs

S-107 Criser Hall

P. O. Box 114025

Gainesville, FL 32611-4025

(352) 392-1275

Satellite Offices:

College of Dentistry

Tom Kolb

Dental Tower, D3-#17A

Health Sciences Ctr.

(352) 846-1384

College of Law

Trish Varnes

164 Holland Hall

(352) 392-0421

College of Medicine

Eileen Parris

M-128 Health Sciences Ctr.

(352) 392-7800

Health Professions, Nursing, Pharmacy, & Veterinary Medicine

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CG-96, Health Sciences Ctr.

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