

## Financial Aid Awards

The Office of Financial Aid staff awards students on a priority basis with April 15th being the priority deadline. The need-based aid is awarded to those students with the greatest need until the funds are depleted.

The following information explains important philosophies and procedures which guide the process of awarding financial aid to students at Southern University Law Center:

### Institutional Packaging Philosophy

The packaging philosophy in the Office of Financial Aid is to ensure consistent, equitable, and fair distribution of financial aid funds.

### Institutional Packaging Procedures

When packaging financial aid, the Office of Financial Aid considers scholarships/tuition reimbursement funds, Federal Direct Stafford Unsubsidized, and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS, in that order. The various types of financial assistance is considered in a manner that the student's cost of attendance (COA) is met (tuition & fees, room & board, books & supplies, transportation, and personal).

The Office of Financial Aid staff awards students automatically from criteria set up using the Financial Aid Packaging Module in Banner. If a student has aid other than Title IV Aid and aid from the State of Louisiana (TOP's, etc.), the aid will be applied to the financial aid package manually.

### Outside Resources

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from outside resources. It is required that all outside assistance be reported to the Office of Financial aid. Any outside resources may not exceed the student's cost of attendance and/or need. Therefore, if a student has been awarded by the Office of Financial Aid and receives outside funds, an adjustment to the original award notification may be necessary. If an adjustment is necessary, the Office of Financial Aid will first reduce or cancel all loans until the overaward no longer exists.

### Award Notification and Acceptance of Awards

Students receive notice of financial aid awards via their email accounts. Students must log in to their Banner Self Service accounts to review their award offer.

### Consortium Agreements/Exchange Student

A student may receive Title IV aid if he/she is taking coursework at two or more schools, if the participating institutions enter into a consortium agreement. A consortium agreement specifies which institution will process and disburse student aid. The agreement also should stipulate which institution will consider the student enrolled. Whichever institution disburses aid funds is responsible for keeping records and returning Title IV funds in the case of an overaward.

Enrollment in a program of study abroad approved for credit by the Southern University Law Center is considered enrollment in the home school for purposes of applying for and receiving federal student financial aid.

For enrollment at another law school as a visiting student, please see information regarding additional information regarding consortium agreements or visit the Office of Financial Aid.

## **International Students**

International students are not eligible for federal or state financial aid because they do not meet the citizenship requirement. International students may receive non-federal aid and are encouraged to apply for such aid. International students seeking assistance are referred to the Center for International Affairs.

## **Awards & Disbursements**

A confirmation of the financial aid awarded to each student is provided in an Award Notification emailed by the Office of Financial Aid. Award notifications are emailed during the spring and summer preceding the fall enrollment term.

The award notification will inform students of their awards and direct them to their Banner Student Self Service account, which may contain data on student budgets, expected family contribution, award categories and Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students are requested to accept or decline the terms and conditions of the award(s).

The financial aid awards are usually made on an annual basis. The awards are posted to the student's account by the Office of Financial Aid after the student has completed the requirements and resolved any conflicting information. The annual award is divided into two equal installments, which are posted to the student's account by the Business Office during the Fall and Spring terms.

The student's account, provided by the Finance Office, consists of postings from at least three (3) sources:

### **1. Institutional Charges**

- a. Tuition
- b. Room and Board
- c. Fees, etc...

### **2. Financial Aid Awards**

- a. Loans
- b. Scholarships from College and/or other sources
- c. Tuition reimbursement sources

### **3. Payments by cash or check from students and parents**

When the financial aid award and/or cash payments exceed college charges, the student is eligible to receive a refund. Refunds of the excess credit balances are processed by the Finance Office and will be available to students within 14 days of the credit balance. Entrance counseling must be completed by the student before the loan proceeds are disbursed to the student.

## **Award Revisions**

Once an award notification is sent to the student, there may be instances which warrant a change to the original notification. A Financial Aid Administrator (FAA) may review a student's circumstances, make an adjustment to an award, and release a revised award notification. This revised award invalidates the original award notice.

### **1. Revision Initiated by the Office of Financial Aid**

The Office of Financial Aid will automatically consider a revision in a student's aid package when the following occurs:

- a. There is presence of conflicting information within the file.
- b. There are changes resulting from verification of documents submitted.
- c. There is a change in availability of funds.

- d. There is a staff member error.
- e. There is a change in eligibility.
- e. There is a change in the required order of awards.

The award notification and the terms and conditions of the award acknowledge the rights of the Office of Financial Aid to make a change to any award. Students are sent a revised award notification letter as soon as possible. In the case of an office error, it is customary to contact the student personally, or send a personalized letter.

## **2. Revisions Initiated by Request from Student**

Students may decline any portion of their award. If a student wants to add an award, the request will be referred to a counselor. Student wishing to adjust their aid package are asked to submit the Change Request form.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the Office of Financial Aid of changes in a student's resources. If the student makes an appointment with an aid administrator and reveals a change in circumstances which may affect the student's family contribution, the student should write a letter reiterating the conversation and including supportive documentation. If a change to the award is allowable, the aid administrator will release a revised award notification.

## **3. Overawards**

An overaward occurs any time a student has been disbursed financial aid (federal, institutional, and outside aid) and other resources exceeds the cost of attendance and/or need for the award period by more than an allowable tolerance.

### **a. Eliminating an Overaward**

Before reducing a student's aid package because of an overaward, the FAA should always attempt to alleviate the situation by reducing or eliminating the overaward. The method used is to adjust undisbursed funds (part or all undisbursed financial aid funds must be cancelled/reduced in the case of an overaward).

### **b. Causes of an Overaward and/ or Overpayment**

There are several causes of an overaward:

1. Change in the enrollment status - the student withdraws or drops below the projected enrollment status.
2. Reduction in cost of attendance - the student changes budget categories.
3. Additional resources - the student has resources greater than those used to calculate the award.
4. Administrative error - the aid administrator inadvertently makes an error.
5. Fraud - the student intentionally deceives or misrepresents information to obtain funds.

### **c. Treatment of an Overaward**

If eliminating the overaward is not possible the aid administrator must reduce the overaward using the following sequence:

1. An overaward from an administrative error can be resolved by reducing any aid or by canceling next semester's aid. The FAA will notify the student via an award notification email or personalized letter.
2. If an overaward occurs due to fraud, follow the procedure outlined in the Fraud section of the Federal Student Aid handbook.