

2017-18 Financial Aid Checklist

Western Illinois University

www.wiu.edu/fa



WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY

Fall 2016

- Create an expandable college folder** where you can store all of your printed information, applications, and forms for future reference. Aren't sure if you'll need it? Save it!
- Begin reviewing *University* scholarship opportunities** available through the [WIU Scholarship Office](#) and WIU academic departments.
 - Pay attention to application deadlines and requirements!
 - [Review tips on applying for WIU scholarships.](#)
- Begin researching *private* scholarship opportunities.** Use reputable online scholarship searches like [FastWeb](#) and [CollegeIllinois!](#).
 - [Learn how to spot a scholarship scam](#)
 - Pay attention to deadlines and requirements!
- Apply for your FSA ID and Password at www.fsaaid.ed.gov** to use when you complete your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online.
 - For [students required to provide parent information](#) on the FAFSA, your parent will also need to apply for an FSA ID and Password.
- Prepare to file your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** by reviewing our [FAFSA Completion HELP](#) guide.

October 2016

- File the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** at www.fafsa.gov to be considered for federal and state financial aid (it's a good idea to do this every year, even if you don't expect aid).
 - **File as soon as possible after October 1st** – you will use 2015 tax information to complete the application.
 - **Priority consideration is given to students who complete their FAFSA by November 1** – this helps to maximize a student's eligibility for certain campus and state funds, which are typically limited.
 - Include WIU as a school you would like to have receive your FAFSA (school code 001780).
 - If you would like your parent, spouse, etc. to have access to your financial aid information, set up a Parent/Guest Account on STARS.
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)** at www.fafsa.gov for any mistakes or errors that need correcting.
- Regularly check your WIU email and STARS/Financial Aid Information** for any notifications or requests from our office.
 - If you haven't already, [activate your WIU email and STARS](#) once you are accepted to the University.
 - You may grant online access to your STARS records to a maximum of 5 guests by selecting Parent and Guest Account Management from [STARS](#).
- IF SELECTED** for Verification, submit the requested [worksheet](#) and additional requirements as instructed.
 - **You will receive an email notification if you have been selected for Verification – a STARS/Financial Aid Information message will also be posted.**
 - Please **do not** send a Verification Worksheet, tax returns, etc. unless the information is requested.
 - Our goal is to review your information within 2-4 weeks after all requirements have been submitted. The volume of files and time of year will affect time needed for this review.

Spring 2017

- Continue to regularly check your WIU email and STARS/Financial Aid Information** frequently for reminders, requests, and notices from the Financial Aid Office.
- Review your Financial Aid Award Letter on STARS/Financial Aid Information.**
 - You will be notified by email that your award letter has been completed and is available online.
 - Estimate your expenses using the [WIU Cost Estimator](#)
 - You may reduce or cancel your loans using STARS.
- Start saving for upfront costs and personal expenses.**
 - Make the most of a summer job – save your earnings to purchase your textbooks!
- Notify our office of any additional aid** you will receive that was not listed on your award letter.
- Complete Entrance Counseling** at www.studentloans.gov if this is your first time borrowing Federal Direct Student Loans.
- Complete a Master Promissory Note** at www.studentloans.gov if this is your first Federal Direct Student Loan, or if this is your first time borrowing student loan funds while attending WIU.

Now That You're Enrolled...

- After registering for classes, calculate your expected charges** using the [WIU Cost Estimator](#).
 - The first bills of the semester are usually sent during the first week of August and January.
 - Student loans cannot be disbursed until immediately prior to the start of classes and will not appear on the August or January bills. Monitor your university account on STARS by selecting B/R Account Detail.
 - Complete the [Direct Deposit Authorization](#) on STARS to receive any refund due you.
 - Remember that funds are to be used only for educationally-related expenses such as books and supplies, room/board or rent, transportation to class, etc.
- Additional loan eligibility may be available** if needed. See [Parent PLUS loan](#) and [private alternative loan](#) information in the [Loans section](#) of our website.
- Prepare to pay for your books** by cash, check, or credit card.
 - Books **cannot** be charged to your University account.
- Read the [Financial Aid Reminders](#)** available on our website.
- Read the [Financial Aid Handbook & Policy Information](#)** available on our website.
- Review your federal student loan history** at www.nslds.ed.gov.
 - Use every year to track your federal student loan debt – remember, borrow only what you need!
 - Remember that private student loan information is not available through this federal database, so you will have to keep track of your private loan information yourself.
- Get ready to do it all again!** Financial aid is annual process, so there will be new scholarship applications every fall and a new FAFSA to complete every January.
- Students who are graduating and/or not returning next year should:**
 - Complete Exit Counseling so they are aware of loan repayment procedures and obligations. A WIU email notification will be sent with Exit Counseling instructions.
 - Review federal student loan history at www.nslds.ed.gov.
 - Learn about [federal student loan consolidation](#) and your [federal loan repayment options](#).

Review our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) online and check out [WIU Financial Aid](#) on Facebook!



WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY