FINANCIAL AID

Benedictine University's Office of Financial Aid administers a variety of federal, state, and institutional programs of student financial assistance. Each of these programs carries specific student eligibility requirements. In general, students must be formally admitted as degree-seeking and enrolled at least half-time (6 semester credit hours).

The fundamental purpose of the financial aid program at Benedictine University is to make it possible for every qualified student to obtain a college education regardless of financial means. The process of financing an education is a partnership. Although the student and his/her family have primary responsibility for meeting college costs, Benedictine University, as well as the federal and state governments have a variety of financial aid programs available to students who need financial assistance.

Application Procedure

All students applying for financial aid are asked to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa/).

Students must reapply for financial aid each award year. The FAFSA should be completed as soon as possible after October 1.

After completing the financial aid application process, a student will receive a financial aid offer letter. The offer letter will include the financial program(s) that the student is eligible to receive and the amount(s) offered by each program.

Financial Aid & VA Enrollment Statuses

To receive most forms of financial aid, undergraduate students must be enrolled, at least half-time, as a degree-seeking student in an eligible program. For federal financial aid purposes, a full-time student is one who has enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. To achieve half-time status, a student must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours per semester.

The above standards are applicable to students using federal student aid. Those who are utilizing benefits offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs have different criteria to determine their aid eligibility under the various VA programs offered.

Benedictine offers undergraduate courses in 5-week sessions, 8-week sessions, and 15-week semesters. All VA enrollments are based on a student's enrollment status per payment period. Overlapping course start dates may result in differing enrollment statuses than those below.

Enrollment Definitions for Students Utilizing VA Benefits

Type of Course	Course Load	Enrollment Status
5-week session	4+ credit hours	Full-time
	3 credit hours	Part-time
	2 credit hours	Half-time
	<2 credit hours	Less-than-half-time
8-week session	6+ credit hours	Full-time
	4-5 credit hours	Part-time
	3 credit hours	Half-time
	<3 credit hours	Less-than-half-time
15-week semester	12+ credit hours	Full-time
	9-11 credit hours	Part-time
	6-8 credit hours	Half-time
	<6 credit hours	Less-than-half-time

Types of Financial Aid

Grants

Grants are considered to be gift assistance. Gift assistance does not have to be repaid.

State of Illinois (IL) Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant
Source: Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Eligibility: U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens, residents of Illinois, demonstration of need as determined by the applicant's FAFSA Student Aid Index (SAI)

Federal Pell Grant
Source: Federal Government
Eligibility: U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens, demonstration of need based on tax filing requirements, family size and composition (i.e., single parent or non-single parent), Federal poverty guidelines, and state of residence.

Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
Source: Federal Government
Eligibility: U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens, demonstration of need as determined by the applicant's FAFSA Student Aid Index (SAI)

Information on federal and state programs may be subject to change at any time due to changes in legislation.

Scholarships

Scholarships are considered to be gift assistance. Gift assistance does not have to be repaid.

Scholarship opportunities at Benedictine University (https://ben.edu/scholarships/)

Loans

Loans are considered to be a form of self-help assistance. Loan programs provide funds for educational purposes and are paid back with interest.

Federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans
Source: Federal Direct Loan Program
Eligibility: U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens, registered for at least six semester credit hours, demonstration of need (Cost of Attendance minus SAI) is required for the Direct Subsidized Loan

The interest rate for the Federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans is established each year and the rate is fixed for the life of the loan. The U.S. Department of Education pays the interest on a Direct Subsidized Loan while a student is in school at least half-time, for the first six months after a student leaves school (referred to as a grace period), and during a period of deferment (a postponement of loan payments). A student is responsible for paying the interest on a Direct Unsubsidized Loan during all periods.

Federal Direct Parent Loan Program (PLUS)
Source: Federal Direct Loan Program
Eligibility: Dependent student registered at least half-time, credit-worthy parent borrower/endorser.

M (http://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/)ore information about student loans (http://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/).

Student Employment

Part-time jobs on campus are available to students through the University and Federal Work-Study program. Students working on campus receive a bi-weekly paycheck.

Federal Work Study (FWS)
Source: Federal Government through Benedictine University
Amount: Hourly wages up to 20 hours per week
Eligibility: U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens, demonstration of need as determined by complete financial aid offer

University Employment
Source: Benedictine University
Amount: Hourly wages up to 20 hours per week
Eligibility: Registered student, not tied to federal aid

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Recipients

Federal regulations require that Benedictine University establish and enforce standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving federal and/or state funds. SAP is a minimum requirement of academic progress to successfully complete a degree for which federal and/or state financial aid is received. All federal and/or state financial aid programs are subject to this policy.

NOTE: All terms of enrollment are reviewed, as well as all transferred credits, regardless of whether aid was received. Students who have not previously received financial aid are still required to meet the cumulative grade point average requirement prior to receiving financial aid.

For traditional undergraduate students, Satisfactory Academic Progress is reviewed annually, typically at the end of the spring term.

Financial Aid Programs Included Under this Policy

All federal and state financial aid programs are subject to this policy.

Students Subject to this Policy

All students currently receiving federal and/or state financial aid funds are subject to this policy. Benedictine University students who have not previously received financial aid are required to meet the cumulative GPA requirement of this policy prior to receipt of financial aid.

Satisfactory Academic Progress includes three criteria:

- Qualitative: Academic standing based on the student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA).;
- Quantitative: The student's cumulative rate of progression towards a successful degree completion; and,
- Maximum Timeframe: Degree completion within a maximum timeframe of 150 percent of the published length, in credit hours, of a program.

In order to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, students must comply with the following requirements:

1. Remain in satisfactory academic standing or be on academic probation. The minimum cumulative GPA required to achieve satisfactory academic standing for all undergraduate students is 2.00.
2. Maintain a completion rate of coursework equal to at least 2/3 of the total number of credit hours attempted. This quantitative requirement ensures the student is steadily progressing toward their degree by completing at least two-thirds of all attempted credit hours. For example, a student who has attempted a cumulative total of 12 credit hours must complete at least 8 credit hours to meet the completion rate requirement (12 hours x 2/3 = 8 credit hours).
3. Complete their degree requirements before attempting 150 percent of the credit hours required for their chosen program of study. For example, a student enrolled in a traditional undergraduate bachelor's degree program that requires a total of 120 semester credit hours would have a maximum limit of 180 semester credit hours.

Once a student has reached the maximum credit hours, the student is no longer eligible to receive federal or state financial assistance. All terms of enrollment are reviewed as well as all attempted transferred credits regardless of whether aid was received.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Review Process

Satisfactory Academic Progress for all students, except accelerated program students, is reviewed on an annual basis, typically at the end of the spring term. Satisfactory Academic Progress for accelerated program students is reviewed at the end of each payment period. Satisfactory Academic Progress for online undergraduate students is reviewed twice, at the end of the fall and spring sessions. Students failing to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress will be notified in writing of their loss of financial aid eligibility.

In the event that a student is not meeting SAP requirements their financial aid is revoked. The student will have the opportunity to regain eligibility through one of two methods:
1. Students can continue on in their program without federal or state aid and complete enough classes successfully to meet the SAP requirements of their program; Or,
2. Students with extenuating circumstances (illness, family problems, death of a family member, etc.) leading to academic difficulties are able to appeal the cancellation of their aid with the Financial Aid Department.

Appeal Procedure

Students failing to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress are notified in writing of their financial aid loss eligibility. Students wishing to appeal this loss will need to submit the following documents to Benedictine's Office of Financial Aid by the deadline of each term the student is wishing to receive federal and state assistance:

1. The **SAP Academic Plan Appeal Form** which the student states an academic plan that if followed will enable the student to meet SAP by the end of the probationary period.
2. A **SAP Appeal letter** discussing the extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from succeeding in meeting the SAP requirements, but also including what changes the student will make to improve their academic standing and career.
3. Any documentation supporting their extenuating circumstance.

All SAP appeal required documentation must be received before the deadline date of the anticipated term the student wishes to receive federal and state aid.
• Summer term -- July 1st
• Fall semester -- October 1st

• Spring semester -- February 1st

Failure to submit all required appeal documentation promptly could result in an automatic denial. The Office of Financial Aid cannot guarantee that appeals received after the submission deadline will be reviewed due to time constraints, so all students are encouraged to submit their appeal by the published deadlines.

Appeal Decision

The Financial Aid's SAP committee will review a student's appeal within 2 weeks of receipt of all the required documentation. Students will be notified via the student's BU e-mail address regarding the appeal decision.

1. **If denied**, the student's financial aid will be suspended until they are again meeting SAP standards.
2. **If approved**, the student will be placed on probation for the appeal semester and awarded with their federal and/or state aid eligibility for the term. The student will be placed on probation and will continue to be monitored at the end of each of the semesters included in their academic plan.

NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to request a review of his/her Satisfactory Academic Progress for reinstatement of financial aid, and to notify the Office of Financial Aid when an incomplete grade has been satisfactorily completed.

Completion of Courses

All students, hours completed are based on grades of "A," "B," "C," "D" and "P." Hours with an "F" (failure), "W" (withdrawal), "I" (incomplete), "IP" (in progress) and "X" (deferred) are counted in the number of hours attempted, but not in the number of hours completed.

Repeated classes, all transfer credits, and developmental course hours are counted in the total number of hours attempted/completed.

Financial Aid Leave of Absence Policy

An **Academic** leave of absence (LOA) is a process that allows students to interrupt their academic program for a limited period of time without requiring them to reapply for admission to the University (see Student Leave of Absence (https://catalog.ben.edu/lisle-undergraduate/general-policies/leaving/) policy). During the period of the leave, the student is considered to be on active status with the University awaiting their return to study. A **Financial Aid** leave of absence (LOA), for Return of Title IV funds purposes is a "temporary interruption in a student's program of study." The University's academic leave of absence and financial aid leave of absence are independent processes from each other.

Length of Approved Leave

The Office of Financial Aid may grant a qualifying student a Financial Aid Leave of Absence of up to 180 days in any 12-month period during which the student is considered on active status and no Title IV Return of Funds calculation is required. Time in excess of 180 days will not be approved.

If approved, the financial aid leave of absence period will be calculated from the student's last date of attendance. The count will be based on the number of days between the last date of attendance (LDA) and the re-entry date. The initial LDA is used when determining the start date for the 12-month period referred to above.

Request for Multiple Leaves of Absence

The Office of Financial Aid may grant multiple leaves at different times as long as all of the leaves added together do not exceed 180 days in a 12-month period. If students request a leave of absence that exceeds 180 days in a 12-month period, the Office of Financial Aid will contact and advise the student that the request is denied, and the student will need to officially withdraw from the program.

Completion of Coursework Upon Return

Title IV regulations indicate that upon the student's return from a leave of absence, the student can begin a new course of study. Therefore, Benedictine University extends to all students the ability to begin a new course of study within their academic plan.

LOA Returns Prior to the Scheduled End Date

Students, upon notification to their academic advisor, may return early from an approved leave of absence prior to the LOA end date as long as they are able to begin a new course within their program. The LOA will be shortened according to the student's return date and the 180-day limitation will be credited accordingly.

Failure to Return

If a student does not return from an approved leave of absence on the expected return date, the student will be considered as withdrawn from the University and a Return of Title IV Funds calculation will be processed. For more information, please see the section titled Return of Title IV Funds on our Financial Aid FAQ web page: https://ben.edu/financial-aid/faq/ (https://ben.edu/financial-aid/faq/). (https://ben.edu/financial-aid/faq/)

Traditional Student Requirements

Traditional students should work with their advisor in order to lessen any academic ramifications. The University Withdrawal/Leave of Absence form will be completed through the advisor and must indicate the date the student plans to return to the University. Even though the academic department may approve a leave for longer than 180 days; federal regulations dictate that financial aid recipients must return within 180 days, or they will be considered withdrawn.

Non-traditional Student Requirements

Nontraditional students requesting a financial aid leave of absence must complete and sign an official Financial Aid Leave of Absence request form and submit it to the Office of Financial Aid to be processed no later than the student's last day of attendance in the course immediately preceding the leave.

If unforeseen emergency circumstances prevent a student from providing a request for a leave of absence on or before the last date of class attendance as outlined above, the academic advisor can request and submit the student's request to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee for approval. Unforeseen circumstances may include medical and family emergencies, unexpected business travel, and natural disasters. If approved, the student will be granted a leave of absence retroactively to the student's last date of attendance, the student will be notified by the Office of Financial Aid and the student's academic record will be adjusted accordingly.

Return of Title IV Funds Policy

Federal Title IV funds are offered to a student under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which assistance has been offered. If a student who received Title IV funds withdraws,

either officially or unofficially, on or before completing the payment period, the Office of Financial Aid is required to review and recalculate the student's eligibility for financial aid.

Students Subject to this Policy

All students currently receiving federal funds are subject to this policy.

Financial Aid Programs Included Under this Policy

All Title IV Federal financial aid programs outside of Federal Work Study are subject to this policy. This includes Federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans, Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Iraq Afghanistan Service Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), and Federal TEACH Grant.

Consequences of Withdrawing From Courses

Withdrawing from courses may affect a student's financial aid eligibility and academic standing. Prior to withdrawing from courses, students are advised to speak with their financial aid counselor and academic advisor, student success coordinator, or program coordinator to discuss all possible implications of withdrawing from a course(s).

Financial Consequences of Withdrawing

Financial aid is offered to assist with educational expenses for the length of an entire payment period. If a Title IV recipient withdraws prior to completing 60 percent of the payment period, the Office of Financial Aid must determine how much of the federal funding was "earned" up to the time of withdrawal. This review and recalculation is called a "Return of Title IV Aid" (R2T4) Calculation.

Return of Title IV Aid Calculation

If a recipient of Title IV funds withdraws from the University or will be out of attendance for over 45 calendar days, the amount of Title IV assistance earned by the student must be re-calculated by the financial aid counselor. If the amount disbursed to the student is greater than the amount the student earned, unearned funds must be returned.

Conversely, if the amount earned is greater, the student may be eligible for a post-withdrawal disbursement. The Office of Financial Aid will notify the student in writing, of their eligibility for a post-withdrawal disbursement if a student is deemed eligible.

The percentage of financial aid the student is eligible for in a payment period is determined by the following:

- The number of days attended divided by the number of days in the payment period. Institutional breaks of five or more consecutive days, excluding a leave of absence (LOA), are excluded from the length of payment period.
- Institutional charges including tuition, fees, and school contracted room and board charges.

Any unearned funds that need to be returned to the Federal Government are completed in the following order:

1. Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan
2. Federal Direct Subsidized Loan
3. Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan
4. Federal Pell Grant
5. Federal Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant
6. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
7. Federal TEACH Grant

If the recalculation determines the student did not earn all of the funds that were disbursed during the payment period, the excess aid received must be returned to the federal government within 45 days of the date of the student's withdrawal.

Title IV funds that must be returned to the government as a result of the R2T4 calculation may create a balance due to the University.

Reinstatement

A student may have their financial aid reinstated after a Title IV calculation has been processed once the student returns to the University.

Number of Weeks a Student Must Complete to Earn 100% of the Financial Aid for Offered Each Payment Period

The following chart represents the approximate number of weeks for each program type students need to complete to retain all aid that was disbursed for the payment period (minimum of 60 percent of the payment period).

Program	Payment Period	60% Completion
Traditional Undergraduate Semester	15 weeks	9 weeks
Online Undergraduate Semester Session	8 weeks	5 weeks
Cohort Undergraduate Semester	15 weeks	9 weeks

Determination of Withdrawal Date

- **Official Withdrawal:**
  - A withdrawal is considered to be an "official" withdrawal when the student completes an official withdrawal through MyBenU, their academic advisor, student success coordinator, or program coordinator or verbally notifies the Office of Financial Aid. Acceptable notification includes oral notification to the designated contacts listed above.
- **Unofficial Withdrawal:**
  - A withdrawal is considered to be an "unofficial" withdrawal when the student stops attending classes and does not withdraw from those classes or notify the University. In these circumstances, the withdrawal date is based on the student's last academic activity (i.e. took an exam, submitted a term paper, etc.). If the date is unknown, the withdrawal date will be the midpoint or 50 percent of the payment period.
  - If the student could not notify the University of their intent to withdraw because of extenuating circumstances (illness, accident, grievous personal loss, or other circumstances beyond student's control), the withdrawal date used will be based on documentation related to the event once the Office of Financial Aid is notified.
  - If a student does not return from an approved leave of absence (LOA) or does not indicate a date of return less than 180 days on the LOA form, the withdrawal date will be the student's last day of attendance prior to the beginning of the LOA and a Return of Title IV Funds will be calculated.

Students with All Failing Grades

Most academic programs at Benedictine do not require monitoring of student attendance. For Title IV recipients, federal regulations state if a student fails to earn a passing grade in at least one course within the payment period, the institution must assume that the student has unofficially withdrawn unless there is documentation that the student completed the period.

Withdrawal Guidelines

Withdrawing from courses while attending Benedictine may have implications beyond the academic realm. It is important to take these other areas into consideration prior to withdrawing. Please refer to the checklist below to assist you in determining these other areas.

1. Financial Aid – Call the Office of Financial Aid (630) 829-6100 or meet with a tuition counselor to discuss the following:
    - Enrollment change from full-time to part-time status: Changes in enrollment can affect the amount of your financial aid eligibility and may affect your eligibility for any enrollment-dependent benefits – such as prior loan deferment or certain types of insurance coverage.
    - Enrollment change to withdrawn status: If you are considering withdrawing from all courses, be sure to discuss the federal Title IV refund policy and its implications for your current financial aid payment period with a tuition counselor. Withdrawing can also impact your payment plan and it is highly advised that students speak with a tuition counselor to discuss all financial implications prior to withdrawing. Please note: outstanding balances must be repaid prior to any future registration and/or release of diploma.
    - Your current and future eligibility for financial aid: Undergraduate students should be aware that Federal Pell Grant, Federal Direct Loans, and the Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) have lifetime limits.
    - Outstanding balance finance options: Discuss available financing options that can be utilized to assist with covering your educational costs.
    - Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) regulations: Federal regulations require that students make steady progress toward a degree to remain eligible for financial aid. You may review the financial aid SAP Policy in the Forms section of our financial aid webpage.
    - Student loan deferment: If you have borrowed federal student loans your withdrawal will have implications which may include your grace period beginning to start or even the repayment on prior loans. Please contact your federal loan servicer for information to determine how withdrawal will affect your loan repayment. You may view your loan information on the National Student Loan Data System.
    - Increased educational expense: Remember that your educational costs will increase when you withdraw and may result in increased time to complete your degree. The expense of unearned coursework, increased educational debt and the potential loss of long-term student aid eligibility are a few examples of how your financial aid and expenses may be impacted by a withdrawal. Work with your financial aid counselor and academic advisor to minimize this cost.
2. Housing – If you are living in a university residence hall, your housing could be affected by withdrawal. Contact Residence Life at (630) 829-6660 to discuss:
    - The implications for your housing obligation if you withdraw or drop below full-time.
    - Any cancellation requirements or financial responsibility you may have for your housing contract if you withdraw.
3. Academic Advising – Contact the Advising Center at (630) 829-1125 to discuss any of the following:
    - You should discuss your anticipated withdrawal and your return plans with your academic advisor, student success coordinator, or program director.
    - If you will be out of school for one year or more, discuss re-admission procedures.