# FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

A Guide to Financial Aid at DigiPen

# The Office of Financial Aid

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DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid helps students and prospective students locate and utilize resources to fund their education at DigiPen. No matter where you are in the financial aid process, our staff is always happy to answer questions and provide information on how best to fund your education.

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# Introduction

**"Financial aid"** is funding intended to help an eligible student bridge the gap between the cost of attending college and their financial means. Financial aid may come in the form of state grants, scholarships offered by a school or organization, and loans from the government or private lenders. Some financial aid — including loans — must be paid back with interest, while other types of financial aid — including grants and scholarships — do not need to be repaid. Savings, investments, and gifts of money from relatives are not financial aid.

Because the financial aid process consists of so many different parts, it is important for you as a student to understand the basic terms and principles of financial aid as well as which parts of the process are most relevant to your situation.

## How to Use This Guide

The purpose of this document is to guide you through the financial aid process and provide a better understanding of the elements that will most impact your financial aid journey. This guide is not intended to be an exhaustive resource; rather, it should serve as a reference manual for common terms and the basic steps involved in receiving financial aid (for those who qualify).

The best way to use this guide is to read through it once in its entirety, then re-read the parts most relevant to your situation. Whenever you encounter an unfamiliar financial aid term, refer to the Terms and Definitions section at the end of the guide, where you can also find links to important financial aid–related websites and resources.

Every student is different, and no two students' financial aid processes will be the same. To ensure your financial aid journey goes as smoothly as possible, we encourage you to contact our Office of Financial Aid early and often. Frequent communication ensures we can provide you with maximal assistance in a timely manner.

## The Office of Financial Aid

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**CONTACT US**

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**Email Addresses:**

- Financial Aid Questions — *financialaid@digipen.edu*
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**Office Hours**
The Office of Financial Aid is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (Pacific).

# Eligibility for Financial Aid

In order to be eligible for federal financial aid, a student must:

- Be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen.
- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Have a valid Social Security Number.
- Enroll at least as a half-time student in an eligible degree program for Direct Loan Program funds.
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).
- Not owe a repayment on a grant or be in default on a student loan.
- Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Register with Selective Service, if required and if male.
- Work toward a degree or a certification program.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

In order for a student to receive and continue receiving financial aid funds, the student must meet and maintain the standards set forth in DigiPen's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy. In addition to other criteria, a student must meet the following terms to meet SAP standards:

- **Grade Point Average:** GPA of 1.8 or greater for the first 50% of credits received at DigiPen; GPA of 2.0 or greater for the last 50% of credits received at DigiPen.
- **Academic Pace:** Passing grades in at least 67% of credit hours attempted.

Students who fail to meet SAP standards are placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next semester. If the student does not meet SAP standards by the end of the next semester, future financial aid is terminated starting the next semester. Students whose financial aid is terminated may appeal to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee for reinstatement of financial aid.

More information on how SAP affects financial aid can be found on DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid website. The full text of DigiPen's SAP policy can be found in the DigiPen Course Catalog.

## Enrollment Status by Credit Load

The amount of credit hours you pursue per semester determines your enrollment status.

| CREDITS PER SEMESTER | ENROLLMENT STATUS |
|---|---|
| **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS** | |
| **12+ credits** | Full-time Student |
| **9–11 credits** | Three-quarter-time Student |
| **6–8 credits** | Half-time Student |
| **GRADUATE STUDENTS** | |
| **9+ credits** | Full-time Student |
| **6–8 credits** | Half-time Student |

## Financial Aid Eligibility by Enrollment Status

Your enrollment status determines the types of financial aid you are eligible to receive.

| FINANCIAL AID TYPE | MINIMUM ENROLLMENT STATUS REQUIRED |
|---|---|
| **Direct Loans** | Half-time Student |
| **Federal Pell Grant** | Award prorated based on enrollment |
| **Federal Work Study (FWS)** | Half-time Student |
| **DigiPen Scholarships** | Full-time Student |
| **Other Scholarships** | Determined by donor |

## Drug Convictions

Students who are convicted of a federal or state drug crime are disqualified from receiving Federal Student Aid (FSA) funds. A conviction that occurs during a period when a student is not enrolled does not affect FSA eligibility unless the student is denied federal benefits as a part of sentencing.

The chart on the next page illustrates a convicted student's period of ineligibility for FSA funds depending on whether the conviction is for sale or possession and whether the student has committed previous offenses.

## Drug Convictions (cont'd)

| | POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS | SALE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS |
|---|---|---|
| **1st offense** | 1 year from date of conviction | 2 years from date of conviction |
| **2nd offense** | 2 years from date of conviction | Indefinite period |
| **3+ offenses** | Indefinite period | — |

A student regains eligibility for FSA funds the day after the period of ineligibility ends. A student may also regain eligibility upon completion of a qualified drug rehabilitation program or by passing two unannounced drug tests conducted by such a program.

## Dependent or Independent?

Throughout the financial aid process, you will see many references to "dependent students" and "independent students." These terms are used to determine your eligibility for Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs, including Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct PLUS Loans.

Most students applying to attend DigiPen right after high school are **dependent students** and must submit their parents' financial information with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

If you meet any of the following criteria you are considered an **independent student** and do not need to provide your parents' information on the FAFSA:

- You are 24 years of age or older by December 31 of the award year.
- You are married.
- You are a veteran.
- You are a ward of the court.
- You are a graduate or professional student.
- You have children or legal dependents (other than a spouse) who live with you and receive more than half their support from you.

# The Free Application for Federal Student Aid

To apply for financial aid, you must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You must submit a FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA each year for which you are seeking financial aid. The FAFSA and instructions for filling it out can be found online at *www.fafsa.gov*, where you can also register for a Federal Student Aid ID (required to submit the FAFSA).

> *Beginning with the 2017–18 application year, you can submit your FAFSA as early as October 1 the year before you plan to attend college.*

You should submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after this date, even if you have not applied for admission to DigiPen Institute of Technology. This will allow the Office of Financial Aid to determine your financial aid award eligibility and amounts. You must be enrolled in college to actually receive financial aid funds, but you can apply for financial aid any time, even if you are unsure whether or not you will enroll.

> *Please note that the Federal School Code for DigiPen Institute of Technology is 037243.*

By providing the DigiPen school code on your FAFSA, the U.S. Department of Education will send DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid a copy of your FAFSA, which will enable DigiPen to create your award offer letter.

After submitting your FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) in your mail or email. Once you receive it, ensure all the information on your SAR is correct. Your SAR includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This number is calculated from the information submitted on your FAFSA and is used to determine the amount and type of financial aid for which you may be eligible.

After submitting your FAFSA and being accepted to DigiPen, you will receive an award offer letter from DigiPen detailing your financial aid offer. Review this letter, note any changes you'd like made, and send it back to DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid. You will then need to log on to the Federal Student Aid website to complete entrance counseling and sign your Master Promissory Note acknowledging that you will repay your federal student loans (if any). After completing these steps, as long as you have no outstanding documents to submit, you will receive your financial aid at the beginning of the school year.

Some students may be required to complete verification before receiving an award offer letter. Verification is the process schools use to confirm the accuracy of the information submitted on the FAFSA. The Office of Financial Aid will contact each student who has been selected for verification and request additional documentation. Once this process has been completed, an award letter will be sent to you for review.

# FAFSA Checklist

In order to make sure the application process goes as smoothly as possible, make sure to have the following documents ready when you begin to fill out your FAFSA.

- [ ] Your Social Security Number

- [ ] Your parents' Social Security Numbers if you are a dependent student

- [ ] Your driver's license number if you have one

- [ ] Your Alien Registration Number if you are not a U.S. citizen

- [ ] Federal tax information* or tax returns including IRS W-2 information, for you (and your spouse, if you are married), and for your parents if you are a dependent student

- [ ] Records of your untaxed income, such as child support received, interest income, and veterans noneducation benefits, for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student

- [ ] Information on cash; savings and checking account balances; investments, including stocks and bonds and real estate but not including the home in which you live; and business and farm assets for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student

*You may be able to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA website to automatically import your tax information from the IRS into your FAFSA. This option is encouraged.*

# Types of Financial Aid

There are three main kinds of financial aid available to students entering college: grants, scholarships, and loans. In order to be eligible for most financial aid, a student must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

## Financial Aid Types and Awards

The following table breaks down the most common forms of financial aid available to DigiPen students, as well as the maximum financial aid award available from each program per year, the type of application (other than the FAFSA) required to apply for the aid program (if any), and additional details. More details on each type of financial aid are included on subsequent pages of this document.

| GRANTS | | |
|---|---|---|
| Financial Aid | Separate Application Required? | Notes |
| Federal Pell Grant | No | Exact award amount may vary by year. |
| Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) | No | |
| Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant (IASG) | No | Award amount is equal to Federal Pell Grant award. |
| Washington State Need Grant (SNG) | No | |
| Washington State Opportunity Grant | Washington State Opportunity Grant Application | BSCE, BSCSRTIS, and BFADAA students only; Washington residents only. |

| SCHOLARSHIPS | | |
|---|---|---|
| Financial Aid | Separate Application Required? | Notes |
| DigiPen Scholarships | Varies | See page 8. |
| Washington College Bound Scholarship | No | |

| OTHER FINANCIAL AID | | |
|---|---|---|
| Financial Aid | Separate Application Required? | Notes |
| Federal Work Study (FWS) | Job application | Eligibility and award are based on remaining need after accounting for other sources of financial aid. |
| VA Educational Benefits | Form 22-1990; certificate of eligibility must be sent to the school | Contact your local Department of Veterans Affairs office for more information. |

## Grants

Grants are considered gift aid and do not require repayment unless a student fails to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) or leaves school before completing 60% of a semester for which a grant was received. The following grants are available to eligible undergraduate students at DigiPen.

Unless otherwise noted, you are automatically considered for federal grants when you submit your Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA). For links and more information on each of these grants, visit the DigiPen Office of Financial Aid website.

### FEDERAL PELL GRANT
These need-based grants are the largest source of free federal money for college students and are awarded to every undergraduate student who qualifies. The amount a student can receive is determined by a student's FAFSA and enrollment status.

### FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (FSEOG)
The FSEOG helps students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. Priority is given to Federal Pell Grant recipients.

### IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN SERVICE GRANT (IASG)
The IASG is a non-need-based grant available to any undergraduate student who is not eligible for the Federal Pell Grant and whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. The award amount is equal to that of the Federal Pell Grant.

### WASHINGTON STATE NEED GRANT (SNG)
The Washington SNG program helps the state's lowest-income undergraduate students pursue degrees, hone their skills, or retrain for new careers. For the purpose of determining the grant amount, DigiPen is considered a private four-year college.

The Washington SNG maintains a separate Satisfactory Academic Progress policy that must be met to be eligible for the grant. For details, contact DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid or visit the Office of Financial Aid website.

## WASHINGTON STATE OPPORTUNITY GRANT

DigiPen participates in the Washington State Opportunity Grant program. The goal of the Opportunity Grant is to help low-income adults reach the "educational tipping point" and beyond in high-wage, high-demand careers. Students who demonstrate financial need and who are entering one of the following degree programs are eligible for this grant: Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science in Real-Time Interactive Simulation, or Bachelor of Fine Arts in Digital Art and Animation.

## STATE GRANT ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER STATES

Other state grants may be available to out-of-state students who attend DigiPen. Be sure to research state grant opportunities for your state to maximize your financial aid options.

## ARE YOU A WASHINGTON STATE RESIDENT?

Students who have lived in Washington for at least one year prior to attending college may be eligible for certain need-based or merit-based grants and scholarships. The following grants and scholarships require a student to be a resident of Washington state to be eligible:

- Washington State Need Grant
- Washington College Bound Scholarship (see page 9)
- Washington State Opportunity Grant

# Scholarships

Scholarships are gift aid (usually monetary) given to students by an organization or donor to help pay for students' education. In order to be eligible for a scholarship, students must meet the organization or donor's criteria — such as pursuing a certain program of study, demonstrating financial need, writing an essay on a particular topic, or being an exemplary student.

Private organizations will notify you directly of an award, its requirements, and how you will receive the funds. If you are awarded a scholarship, you should notify DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid as soon as possible so we can add the funds to your award offer letter or student account and work with the scholarship agency if necessary.

The Office of Financial Aid will apply scholarship awards toward your unmet need or will reduce your loan aid (rather than grant aid) by an amount equal to the scholarship award.

## DIGIPEN SCHOLARSHIPS

DigiPen offers the following need-based and merit-based scholarships for eligible undergraduate students.

Except where noted, DigiPen scholarships require students to submit a printed or online application to the Office of Financial Aid. Additional requirements are detailed in the scholarship description. Applications can be found online at: **digipen.edu/financial-aid/scholarships**

### ART SCHOLARSHIP

- **Max Award:** $10,000
- **Separate Application Required:** Yes
- **Priority Deadline:** February 1 (The final deadline is April 1)
- **Degree Restrictions:** None

DigiPen offers two merit-based scholarships of up to $10,000 each for incoming students who demonstrate considerable artistic talent. To apply for this scholarship, students must complete the Art Scholarship application and submit samples of their artwork. The first scholarship is awarded after the February 1 priority deadline and the second is awarded after the April 1 deadline.

### BRIDGE SCHOLARSHIP

- **Max Award:** $10,000
- **Separate Application Required:** Yes
- **Priority Deadline:** February 1
- **Degree Restrictions:** None

DigiPen offers Bridge Scholarships to incoming students who demonstrate considerable financial need. To be considered, students must complete the Bridge Scholarship application in addition to the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA). Bridge Scholarships are awarded in late spring to early summer.

### COMPUTER ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP

- **Max Award:** 75% of tuition
- **Separate Application Required:** No
- **Priority Deadline:** N/A
- **Degree Restrictions:** BS in Computer Engineering

DigiPen awards up to 20 scholarships per year to incoming and continuing students pursuing the Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering (BSCE) degree program who demonstrate financial need. These scholarships cover up to 75% of tuition and are renewable for up to five years. Recipients of Computer Engineering Scholarships are also eligible to earn an additional $1,500 stipend for summer research projects at DigiPen following their sophomore and junior years.

COMPUTER ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP (CONT'D)
All applicants to the BSCE program are automatically considered for this scholarship; there is no separate application.

To retain the Computer Engineering Scholarship, a recipient must continue to pursue the BSCE degree program and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher. For recipients who receive additional grants or scholarships, the sum of the Computer Engineering Scholarship and these other awards may not exceed the total cost of tuition.

FIRST SCHOLARSHIP
- **Max Award:** $5,000
- **Separate Application Required:** Yes
- **Priority Deadline:** N/A
- **Degree Restrictions:** High school seniors in FIRST

DigiPen offers two merit-based scholarships of $5,000 each for high school seniors who have participated on a For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) team during their junior or senior year of high school. A scholarship committee evaluates applications based on an essay about the applicant's involvement in FIRST and the student's academic record.

JIM JOHNSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
- **Max Award:** $25,000 per year
- **Separate Application Required:** Yes
- **Priority Deadline:** N/A
- **Degree Restrictions:** BFA or MFA

The purpose of the Jim Johnson Memorial Scholarship is to provide financial assistance to a candidate who demonstrates talent, creativity, and a sense of adventure and courage in the pursuit of a degree in fine arts at DigiPen. Students must submit an essay, a portfolio of their artwork, and additional documents in order to apply for this scholarship, which awards $25,000 each year for four years.

PRESIDENTIAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP
- **Max Award:** See below
- **Separate Application Required:** No
- **Priority Deadline:** N/A
- **Degree Restrictions:** None

In support of DigiPen's goal of attracting the best and brightest students, DigiPen awards a number of merit scholarships each year to students who exhibit exceptionally strong academic performance and/or artistic talent. All applicants to the school are automatically considered for a DigiPen Presidential Merit Scholarship — no application is necessary. The award amount is determined by a student's merit.

DIGIPEN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS
- **Max Award:** $5,000
- **Separate Application Required:** Yes
- **Priority Deadline:** February 1
- **Degree Restrictions:** Sophomore, junior, or senior DigiPen student

Continuing students who demonstrate financial need and academic success can apply for DigiPen's Scholarships for Continuing Students by submitting an application. These scholarships are awarded to DigiPen sophomores, juniors, and seniors who:

1. have demonstrated leadership skills through active participation in campus activities,
2. have proven to be valuable members of the DigiPen community, and
3. demonstrate satisfactory academic progress.

DigiPen offers three different Scholarships for Continuing Students, including the Continued Student Academic Success Scholarship, the DigiPen Financial Stimulus Scholarship, and the Campus Leadership Scholarship. All three of these scholarships utilize the same application; applicants must indicate on their application the scholarships for which they would like to apply.

**OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS & SCHOLARSHIP TIPS**
In addition to scholarships awarded by DigiPen, students may seek financial aid in the form of scholarship funds from other organizations or donors.

To be considered for a private scholarship, you must usually submit an application. Submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) does not by itself qualify students for scholarships, but many scholarships (including DigiPen's institutional scholarships) require that you submit your FAFSA beforehand to prove financial need.

FEATURED SCHOLARSHIPS
DigiPen does not endorse any particular scholarships. Previous DigiPen students have found success with the following scholarships. Links to more details and the applications for these scholarships can be found on the DigiPen Office of Financial Aid website.

- **College Success Foundation:** Need-based scholarships offered by the College Success Foundation are available to students attending college in Washington state. Scholarships available include the Leadership 1000 Scholarship, the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship, and the Governor's Scholarship for Foster Youth.
- **Washington College Bound Scholarship:** Students in 7th and 8th grade who reside in Washington state can apply for this need-based scholarship.

- **Robert B. McMillen Foundation Art Scholarship:** This $25,000 scholarship is available to students pursuing an education in fine art at select schools, including DigiPen.

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

- It is never too early to start looking for scholarships! Many scholarships exist for juniors and seniors in high school who are planning to attend college.

- Ask friends, family, and employers about scholarships in your local community. These scholarships have less competition than national scholarships. Civic and religious groups often offer scholarships for new college students. Your high school counselor can point you toward additional local resources.

- Use scholarship search engines and online directories to find scholarships that match your interests or skills. If the subject of a scholarship essay doesn't interest you, that will probably show through; your time is better spent on scholarships that are actually relevant to you.

- Know the signs to look for to avoid scholarship scams. If a scholarship donor or advisory service "guarantees" you'll get scholarship aid or asks for a significant amount of financial information, it may be a scam. Generally, if a claim seems too good to be true, it probably is.

- Continue applying for scholarships throughout your college years. For upperclassmen, summer is a great time to look for more scholarship opportunities.

## SCHOLARSHIP TRACKER

Use the worksheet on the next page to note the deadlines of scholarships that interest you and track any scholarships to which you have already applied.

# Scholarship Tracker

| Scholarship | Deadline | Award Amount | Requirements | Completed? | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |
| | | | ☐ # Recommendations:<br>☐ Essay<br>☐ Transcripts<br>☐ Other: | | |

# Loans

Loans are financial aid funds that must be paid back, typically with interest. Loans come in two main types: federal loans from the Direct Loan Program and private loans from third-party lenders. In addition to scholarships and grants, loans are one of the most common ways students with financial need bridge the gap between their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and their total Cost of Attendance.

### DIRECT LOANS

DigiPen participates in the Direct Loan Program, the largest federal student loan program offered by the U.S. Department of Education. Direct Loans are low-interest loans for students and parents to help pay for the cost of a student's education beyond high school. Students can choose from a variety of flexible repayment plans designed to meet the needs of different borrowers. Direct Loans are the most common form of loans for undergraduate students seeking financial aid to fund their higher education.

To receive Direct Loans, you must be enrolled as at least a half-time student and you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine your eligibility. If you are deemed eligible, you will have the option of enrolling in a Direct Loan Program when you receive your award offer letter. To receive your loans once school begins, you must sign a Master Promissory Note and complete entrance counseling on the Federal Student Aid (FSA) website.

### TYPES OF DIRECT LOANS

There are two types of Direct Loans: Direct Subsidized Loans, for which the government pays the interest while you are in college; and Direct Unsubsidized Loans, for which you are responsible for paying all the interest on the loans, during college and after. You may receive both types of loans at the same time.

- **Direct Subsidized Loans** are awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need as determined by the FAFSA. The federal government pays the interest on these loans while they are in deferment. The deferment period includes when you are in college and during the six-month grace period after you graduate, leave school, or enroll as a less-than-half-time student.
- **Direct Unsubsidized Loans** are available to all eligible students and do not require students to demonstrate financial need. You are responsible for paying all the interest on an unsubsidized loan, but you can allow it to accumulate while you are in college and during the grace period. If you do, the interest will be "capitalized" — that is, added to the amount you borrowed when repayment begins, and future interest will be based on the new, higher loan amount.

- The **Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (Direct PLUS Loan)** enables parents or stepparents to borrow up to the total cost of their dependent child's education, minus any other aid the student receives. Only undergraduates who are dependent students are eligible for Direct PLUS Loans.

### DISBURSEMENT OF DIRECT LOANS

Once you have determined your eligibility for Direct Loans and enrolled in a Direct Loan program, the U.S. Department of Education will disburse the agreed-upon loan amounts and apply them to your tuition balance throughout the academic school year. Half of your annual Direct Loan is disbursed after the beginning of the fall semester, and the other half is disbursed after the beginning of the spring semester.

Keep disbursement dates in mind while calculating student living expenses for your first month at school, as loan funds may not be immediately available at the start of the semester. DigiPen's Accounting Department requests Direct Loans the first week of fall and spring semester. Once the money is disbursed, the Accounting Department deducts all tuition and fees due to the school, then issues the student (in the case of Direct Loans) or parents (in the case of Direct PLUS Loans) any excess funds for living expenses within 14 days. Parents can elect to have the refund amount applied directly to the student's account by signing the Direct PLUS Loan authorization form attached to the award offer letter.

*In general, you should be prepared to cover living expenses for the month of September (fall semester) and January (spring semester) of every school year while you wait for Direct Loan funds to be disbursed to your account.*

Students may choose to have excess Direct Loan funds issued back to the government instead of their bank account. If you decide that you do not want your excess funds to obtain books and supplies, you must indicate this to the Office of Financial Aid by email or in writing prior to the start of each semester.

### DIRECT LOAN AMOUNTS

The following table shows the maximum amounts students can borrow through the Direct Loan Program based on their dependency status, including the total amount available for borrowing and how much of that total can come from Direct Subsidized Loans (the remainder can be borrowed as Direct Unsubsidized Loans). The final row lists the total aggregate loan limits for each situation, which is the total amount a student can borrow over the course of their college career.

DIRECT LOAN AMOUNTS (CONT'D)

| YEAR IN COLLEGE | DEPENDENT STUDENTS | INDEPENDENT STUDENTS<br>or Dependent Students whose parents have been denied a Direct PLUS Loan | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Freshman | **$5,500 total**<br>($3,500 Subsidized) | **$9,500 total**<br>($3,500 Subsidized) | |
| Sophomore | **$6,500 total**<br>($4,500 Subsidized) | **$10,500 total**<br>($4,500 Subsidized) | |
| Junior/Senior | **$7,500 total**<br>($5,500 Subsidized) | **$12,500 total**<br>($5,500 Subsidized) | |
| Graduate | N/A | **$20,500 total**<br>($0 Subsidized) | |
| Aggregate Loan Limits | **$31,000 total**<br>($23,000 Subsidized) | **$57,500 total**<br>($23,000 Subsidized) | *Graduate/Professional Students*<br>**$138,500 total**<br>($0 Subsidized) |

## PRIVATE LOANS

Private loans are often referred to as "private educational loans" or "alternative loans." Private loans are based on your credit history and can help bridge the gap between your other financial aid funds and your Cost of Attendance. These loans are offered by private lenders, not the U.S. Department of Education, and should be considered only after exhausting all other sources of funding, including federal loans and grants. Title IV program loans (including Direct Loans) may have more favorable terms and conditions than private loans, which do not fall under Title IV.

Before a student can obtain a private loan from a private educational lender, the student must provide the lender with a completed and signed Self-Certification Form. The Self-Certification Form can be downloaded on the DigiPen Office of Financial Aid website.

# Other Types of Financial Aid

In addition to grants, scholarships, and loans, students may be eligible for one of the following other types of financial aid.

## FEDERAL WORK STUDY

The Federal Work Study (FWS) program enables students with financial need to apply for part-time jobs at their college to earn financial aid in the form of wages. FWS is available to students whose enrollment status is half-time or greater, and eligibility is determined after accounting for other sources of financial aid. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for more information.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs may award financial aid in the form of grants or scholarships to qualifying members of the military and/or their dependents. Contact DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid, your local Department of Veterans Affairs office, or 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) for more information.

DigiPen participates in the following veterans benefits programs:

- **Yellow Ribbon Program:** This program supplements the base benefits of the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program. Veterans who qualify for the maximum level of benefits provided by the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program are eligible for Yellow Ribbon Program funds.
- **Chapter 30 of Title 38, U.S. Code: All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program:** Also known as the Montgomery GI Bill for Active Duty program, veterans who are eligible for this program are provided up to 36 months of educational benefits.
- **Chapter 32 of Title 38, U.S. Code: Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance:** This aid program is available to veterans who entered active duty between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985.
- **Chapter 33 of Title 38, U.S. Code: Post-9/11 Educational Assistance:** This aid program is available to veterans who served on active duty for at least 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001, and to certain qualifying dependents.
- **Chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S. Code: Survivors' And Dependents' Educational Assistance:** This program provides up to 45 months of educational assistance to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently or totally disabled due to a service-related condition or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition.
- **Chapter 1606 of Title 10, U.S. Code: Educational Assistance For Members Of The Selected Reserve:** This program provides financial aid for education to members of the Selected Reserve.

# Financial Aid Timeline

While going through the financial aid process, keep in mind the following important dates and deadlines.

## October 1
*(prior to the fall semester for which you are requesting funds)*

Beginning with the 2017–18 academic year, October 1 of the prior calendar year is the first day you can sign and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Renewal FAFSA. DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid will have DigiPen's financial aid forms — including verification forms and scholarship applications — available after this date.

Until the 2017–18 academic year, FAFSA applicants must submit tax information for the "prior tax year." (For example, 2016–17 applicants must use tax information from 2015.) Beginning with the 2017–18 academic year, applicants must provide tax information from the "prior-prior" tax year. (For example, 2017–18 applicants must use tax information from 2015.)

| IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE IN: | YOU WILL SUBMIT YOUR FAFSA FOR THIS ACADEMIC YEAR: | YOU WILL SUBMIT YOUR FAFSA DURING THIS TIMEFRAME: | YOU WILL USE TAX INFO FROM THIS YEAR: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fall 2016 Spring 2017 Summer 2017** | 2016–2017 | January 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017 | 2015 |
| **Fall 2017 Spring 2018 Summer 2018** | 2017–2018 | October 1, 2016, to June 30, 2018 | 2015 |
| **Fall 2018 Spring 2019 Summer 2019** | 2018–2019 | October 1, 2017, to June 30, 2019 | 2016 |

## November

In November, DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid starts to mail acknowledgments for those FAFSAs we have received. We also start to mail requests for information to students with incomplete applications or missing materials.

## Spring and Summer Months

During the spring and summer months, our office reviews information we requested from you or new information you provided. Information is reviewed in the order it is received. DigiPen accepts admissions applications and financial aid materials throughout the year and, depending on the time of year, announces awards via award offer letters two to four weeks after the Office of Financial Aid receives your FAFSA.

## August
*(before the fall semester for which you are requesting funds)*

In August, tuition balance becomes due for fall semester. Federal Student Aid (FSA) funds are automatically applied to your tuition balance — the remaining balance will need to be paid via check, cash, or credit card.

## September
*(of the fall semester for which you are requesting funds)*

In September, Direct Loan funds are issued to students two to three weeks after the start of fall semester.

## December

In December, tuition balance becomes due for spring semester. Federal Student Aid (FSA) funds are automatically applied to your tuition balance — the remaining balance will need to be paid via check, cash, or credit card.

## January

Direct Loan funds are issued to students two to three weeks after the start of spring semester in January.

# Appendix I: Terms and Definitions

**Award Offer Letter:** The letter sent to you by DigiPen Institute of Technology detailing the financial aid for which you qualify. You must sign and send this letter back to DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid before receiving your financial aid funds.

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The combined cost of all expenses related to a student's college education. Among other factors, COA determines the amount of federal financial aid for which you qualify.

**Deferment:** The act of postponing or reducing federal student loan payments to avoid defaulting. You must meet certain conditions to defer your loans.

**Dependent Student:** Most students applying to attend DigiPen right after high school are dependent students. Dependent students do NOT meet any of the criteria listed under the definition of Independent Student. (Please see that definition in the next column.) Dependent student is a designation used to determine certain types of aid for which an applicant may qualify. If you are a dependent student, you must provide information about your parents on the FAFSA. See page 5 for more details.

**Direct Loans:** Subsidized and unsubsidized loans distributed by the Direct Loan Program, which is operated by the U.S. Department of Education as a way to provide financial aid to college students. See page 12 for more information.

**Direct PLUS Loan:** Stands for Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) Loan. This is a federally guaranteed loan that parents can borrow from the U.S. Department of Education to help fund their child's higher education costs. See page 12 for more information.

**Enrollment Status:** Designations including "half-time," "three-quarters-time," and "full-time." Students are eligible for different types of financial aid depending on their enrollment status.

**Entrance Counseling:** Process intended to inform students about their responsibilities when borrowing funds from the U.S. Department of Education. Entrance counseling must be completed on StudentLoans.gov prior to receiving Direct Loans and grants.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** Number calculated from the information submitted on your FAFSA, and used to determine the amount and type of financial aid for which you may be eligible. The EFC is neither the amount of money you owe nor the amount of financial aid you are receiving.

**Federal School Code:** Number used on the FAFSA to indicate the college(s) to which you want a copy of your FAFSA sent. DigiPen's Federal School Code is 037243.

**Federal Student Aid (FSA):** An office of the U.S. Department of Education that manages Title IV programs to provide grants, loans, and work-study funds to students attending college.

**Federal Work Study (FWS):** Financial aid program offered by the U.S. Department of Education that allows students with financial need to apply for part-time student work and earn funds while attending school. See page 13 for more information.

**Financial Aid Warning:** Status indicating that a student failed to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) during the previous semester. Failure to meet SAP while on Financial Aid Warning will result in termination of financial aid starting the next semester.

**Financial Need:** Dollar value used to determine eligibility for need-based financial aid. Financial need is calculated by subtracting your Expected Family Contribution from the Cost of Attendance for the school you plan to attend.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** A form used by the federal government to determine your eligibility for financial aid. See page 5 for more information.

**Full-Time Student:** A student taking the regular course credit load during the semester. See page 4 for more details.

**Gift Aid:** Financial aid funds (including grants and scholarships) that do not need to be repaid under regular circumstances.

**Grant:** Money awarded by the state or federal government to students with financial need. Common grants include the Federal Pell Grant and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG).

**Half-Time Student:** A student taking half the regular course credit load, which may affect what types of financial aid the student is eligible to receive. See page 4 for more details.

**Independent Student:** A student who meets any of the following criteria:

- You are 24 years of age or older by December 31 of the award year.
- You are married.
- You are a veteran.
- You are a ward of the court.
- You are a graduate or professional student.
- You have children or legal dependents (other than a spouse) who live with you and receive more than half their support from you.

Independent student is a designation used to determine certain types of aid for which an applicant may qualify. If you are an independent student, you provide your own tax and financial information (and not your parents') on the FAFSA. See page 5 for more details.

**Master Promissory Note (MPN):** A legal document students must sign to acknowledge the repayment terms of their federal student loans. Students must sign their MPN on StudentLoans.gov before they receive federal student loans.

**Merit-based:** Used to describe grants and scholarships awarded based on a student's academic performance or another relevant skill or talent.

**Need-based:** Used to describe grants and scholarships awarded based on a student's financial need.

**Private Loan:** An educational loan offered by a private financial institution or lender other than the U.S. Department of Education. Private loans usually entail higher interest rates and steeper penalties than Direct Loans.

**Renewal FAFSA:** FAFSA available to students who filed a FAFSA during the previous award year, pre-filled with information from the student's previous FAFSA. Students must submit a FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA each award year to continue receiving financial aid.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** In order to receive financial aid funds, a student must meet the standards set forth in DigiPen's SAP policy. See page 4 for more information or the DigiPen Course Catalog for DigiPen's full SAP policy.

**Scholarship:** Merit- or need-based gift aid awarded to students who fulfill certain criteria. See page 8 for more information.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** Document detailing what financial aid a student is eligible to receive based on the student's submitted FAFSA. The U.S. Department of Education sends a SAR to every student who files a FAFSA via mail or e-mail.

**Subsidized Loan:** A Direct Loan for which government pays the interest while the borrower is in college or while the loan is in deferment. Compare to unsubsidized loans. See page 12 for more information.

**Title IV:** Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 enables students to borrow funds from the federal government through several programs (called "Title IV programs" or "Federal Student Aid programs"), including Direct Loans, the Federal Pell Grant, and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG).

**Unsubsidized Loan:** A Direct Loan for which the government does not pay any of the interest; interest accrues on the loan throughout its duration — including while the student is in college — and the borrower is responsible for paying the loan and all interest accrued. Compare to subsidized loans. See page 12 for more information.

**U.S. Department of Education:** The department of the U.S. government that oversees primary, secondary, and higher education, including federal financial aid for college students with financial need, as well as Federal Student Aid.

**Verification:** Process by which the U.S. Department of Education selects students at random to ensure accurate reporting and record-keeping. Students selected for verification must submit a verification worksheet and copies of their tax transcripts.

# Appendix II: Important Websites

| WEBSITE | URL |
|---|---|
| **DigiPen Office of Financial Aid**<br>More links and details on the information in this document can be found on DigiPen's Office of Financial Aid website. | *digipen.edu/financial-aid* |
| **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**<br>Information on the FAFSA, including online submission form. | *fafsa.gov* |
| **FAFSA4caster**<br>Free federal tool that can be used to estimate financial aid options and eligibility before filing the FAFSA. | *studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/estimate* |
| **Federal Student Aid (FSA)**<br>User-friendly information and resources related to federal financial aid programs, operated by the Federal Student Aid branch of the U.S. Department of Education. | *studentaid.ed.gov* |
| **StudentLoans.gov**<br>Federal student loan resource where students can register for a FSA ID, complete entrance counseling, exit counseling, sign their Master Promissory Note, and manage repayment of their student loans. | *studentloans.gov* |
| **National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)**<br>Resource accessible to students and parents enrolled in a Title IV program to track the status of their federal financial aid, including Direct Loans. | *nslds.ed.gov* |
| **Veterans Affairs eBenefits**<br>Web resource for veterans to access their education benefits and other veterans benefits. | *ebenefits.va.gov* |

# Appendix III: Notes

**Office of Financial Aid** | **DigiPen Institute of Technology**
9931 Willows Road NE, Redmond, WA 98052 | Phone: (425) 629-5002 | Fax: (425) 558-0378 | financialaid@digipen.edu

*digipen.edu*