

ALL ABOUT FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS*

AID PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	ANNUAL AMOUNT	REPAYMENT
Federal Pell Grant	Monetary grant to qualified undergraduate students. Eligibility based on financial need.	Up to \$4,050. Subject to federal budget appropriations.	None
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	A monetary grant awarded to undergraduate students. Eligibility based on financial need, with priority given to applicants qualifying for Federal Pell Grants.	Up to \$4,000. May exceed \$4,000 for study abroad programs. Due to limited funding, most awards are less than the maximum allowed.	None
Federal Work-Study (FWS)	Allows students to work part-time to earn money for college expenses. The school coordinates the job. Eligibility based on financial need.	Earnings are at least minimum wage but may be more. Limited to amount awarded.	None
Federal Perkins Loan	5% fixed-interest loan with the college serving as the lender. Principal and interest charges deferred while enrolled at least half-time. Eligibility based on financial need.	Up to \$4,000 annually for undergraduates, and \$6,000 for graduates.	Repayment begins nine months after the student graduates, falls below half-time enrollment or leaves college. Repayment may run up to 10 years.
Federal Stafford Loan (Subsidized & Unsubsidized)	Annually adjusted variable rate interest with a 8.25% maximum. Eligibility for the subsidized Stafford is based on financial need and features deferment of principal and interest charges while enrolled at least half-time. As an additional alternative, the unsubsidized Stafford is for independent students, and dependent students who do not qualify for the maximum subsidized version. Eligibility for the unsubsidized Stafford is not based on financial need.	Full-time Dependent Undergraduates: 1st year up to \$2,625; 2nd year up to \$3,500; thereafter up to \$5,500. Full-time Independent Undergraduates: May borrow same amounts as dependents from the subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford, plus an additional unsubsidized Stafford up to \$4,000 for years 1 and 2, and up to \$5,000 thereafter. Graduate Students: Up to \$8,500 subsidized Stafford plus up to \$10,000 unsubsidized Stafford.	A standard repayment may run up to 10 years. Repayment of principal begins six months after graduating, leaving school, or whenever enrollment drops below half-time. The government pays interest for the <i>subsidized</i> version until repayment begins. The borrower pays all interest charges for the <i>unsubsidized</i> version, which may be deferred and capitalized (at extra cost to the borrower).
Federal PLUS Loan (Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students)	Annually adjusted variable rate interest with 9% maximum, available to parents. Eligibility determined by college, but not based on need. Borrower must have good credit history.	May borrow up to the difference between college costs minus estimated financial assistance.	Repayment begins within 60 days after loan is fully disbursed.

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*Interest rates and other information are subject to change. Check with financial aid offices.

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APPLYING TO CAREER COLLEGES

How to apply for and succeed in college



BY LYNDI KNOLL

What you might imagine to be the best part about college – freedom – is what causes thousands of college students to fail each year.

More than likely, you consider yourself the very picture of a responsible adult. But the college application process can be overwhelming and confusing.

You will face endless amounts of paperwork, deadlines and requirements all in the name of achieving higher education. Before you get overwhelmed,



know that finding the answers depends on asking the right questions:

What are the requirements for enrolling in a career college?

The main requirement for attending a career college is a high school diploma from an accredited high school, a GED or passing an Ability to Benefit test. Many career colleges will also have other requirements for admission.

What is the typical enrollment process?

Although each school and its enrollment processes are somewhat

different*, most schools adhere to the following process:

- Contact the admissions department
- Interview with an admissions officer
- Tour the school
- Complete an enrollment agreement

- Pay all application fees
- Submit all additional information required, such as financial aid applications

*Some schools have separate admissions testing.

When is the best time to apply?

Most career colleges have start dates throughout the year. Each school's classes begin at different times, so be sure to check when your program is scheduled to begin.

Do you need help developing a study schedule?

Make sure to make studying a habit. The study schedule should fit appropriately around activities such as a job and take precedence over leisure activities.

Knowing what to expect can make the admissions process and surviving college much easier. Although getting into and staying in school requires and investment of time and energy, the payoff is definitely worth it.



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WHAT EVERY COLLEGE GRADUATE SHOULD KNOW

Credit card offers

Don't get sucked into promises of low or no interest rates and high credit limits. Whatever you put on plastic has to be paid off eventually. Having to pay only a low minimum payment each month might seem attractive, but do you really want to be paying for that Xbox you charged for the next three years? Instead of using plastic, take out the amount of cash you can afford to spend. Once it's gone, don't charge anything; be patient and wait until your next paycheck.

Health insurance

If you were lucky enough to have insurance through your parents' while you were in school, chances are it will expire once you graduate. There are many companies that offer short-term insurance to keep you covered until you find your first job. It's a risk to go uninsured. If you're in an accident and not insured, you could rack up tens of thousands of dollars in medical bills.

Student loan payments

You didn't have to think about your student loan payments all that often when you were in college, but now you'll need to think about them every month. Making your student loan payments on time is an absolute must. If you pay your loans on time every month for a specified number of months, many lenders will give you a decrease in your interest rate. That can save you hundreds or thousands of dollars over the life of your loan. If you think you'll have a hard time remembering to make those monthly payments, look into having them debited out of your checking account electronically. Some lenders will reduce your interest rate for doing this, too. If you have loans from multiple lenders – like your school, the government or private lenders – you should consider loan consolidation. Through this process, a lender buys your loans from whoever currently holds them. Instead of having to pay different interest rates on each loan, consolidation allows you to pay one rate and write one check each month.

By SARAH BOND

Getting the most out of your study time

By ERIN SMITH

To succeed in college, you're going to have to study. While you may have already known that, you may be surprised to learn the way you study makes a difference. In fact, study methods can have a big impact on your classroom success. Read on for some suggestions on how to make your study time work for you.

Set a study schedule

Pick specific times each week to devote to studying and STICK TO THEM! Yes, schedules can and should be revised until you find what works best for you. But if you set aside time to review notes or catch up on reading, it's important to follow through.

Pick a place away from distractions

As much as you may love your bedroom or comfy couch, they're not the best places to study. Try to find a spot that's conducive to studying, like space at the school or local library, or even a quiet coffee shop in your neighborhood.

Be unreachable

As hard as it may be, turn off the cell phone, turn on the answering machine and don't check your email. Anything that pulls your attention away from your studies will make it harder to concentrate and absorb information.

Study the hardest subjects first

Prioritize the work you need to do and tackle the hardest assignments first. While it may be tempting to put off studying for that Accounting test for something easier, hitting the hardest subjects while your brain is fresh makes them easier to handle.

Schedule breaks

Take 10 minutes off after every hour

of studying. Get up, walk around, get a drink or just look out of a window. Giving yourself a few minutes away from the books makes study time more productive.

Make notes while you read

Writing things down will help you retain the information, and make it easier to study before tests.

Form a study group

Having others to brainstorm and study with can make all the difference in the world during a difficult class. Find classmates you get along well with, and who are serious about doing well.



Putting your knowledge to work:

Externships let students experience the 'real world' while still in school

By SARAH BOND

Have you ever wondered how sitting through college lectures or just watching someone else do a job will prepare you for life after graduation? After all, how are you actually supposed to succeed in your future career if you've never actually experienced it yourself and only heard about it from others?

Although college lectures and lab work play a huge part in teaching you what to expect in your chosen career, hands-on experience in that field really makes the difference in how successful you'll be after graduation. Many career colleges require their students to seek out this type of training through programs called externships.

What's an externship?

Externships are very similar to internships, which give students an opportunity to work and learn at a job in their career field prior to their college graduation. The main difference be-

tween an externship and an internship is the amount of time required for each. There is no required length for either, but externships are usually shorter than internships.

Not all college programs require students to complete an externship before graduation. Some programs that often require externships include:

- Medical
- Dental
- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
- Veterinary

The great thing about externships is that they give you an opportunity to test-drive your career. Externships also allow you to see how what you're learning in your classes really pays off in the working world. So instead of just wondering if what you're learning is going to help you in your career, you'll actually get to put what you've learned to work.

PS to help you navigate life.

Writing

Avoiding common writing errors

By CARA HOWARD

Impeccable writing skills are the desire of most college-bound students. Even though practice makes perfect, the process of trial and error is a frustrating way to learn the rules of the English language. Awareness of the following common errors will help you pinpoint and correct your bad habits, as well as improve the quality of your writing.

1. Tenses

It is easy to slip from one tense to another when writing. Think about this during reviewing/revising, and make sure your tenses are consistent. Use past tense for essays regarding history and future tense for proposals. Use present tense in most essays; it evokes your active voice, which engages the reader.

2. Prepositions

Become familiar with common prepositions, and do not use them at the ends of sentences. It is fine to close with a preposition in conversation, but do not do so in writing. Rather than "This is what I'm most proud of," you should write "I am most proud of this."

3. Thesaurus use

It is tempting to spruce up a writing assignment with highfalutin words. If the thesaurus says it is interchangeable with your original word choice, it must be so, right? Wrong! Often a thesaurus will list related words that have similar, but not identical, meanings. If you don't recognize a word, look it up in the dictionary to make sure it works before committing to its use.

4. Complete sentences

All sentences must include a subject and a predicate. The subject identifies your topic, and the predicate includes a verb expressing the action. Sentence fragments exclude either the subject or verb, thereby affecting the flow and understandability of your essay.

5. Commas

Learn the proper uses of commas. According to Lynne Truss's best-seller *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, the following are a few of the proper uses for commas.

- Use commas for listing,
- Use commas to set off interjections,
- Use commas before conjunctions to join compound sentences, and
- Use commas before direct quotes.

Learning when and where to place commas will help you avoid excessive comma usage.

By SARAH BOND

Job interviews can be a nerve-racking process if you don't know what to expect. Preparing ahead of time and knowing your interview etiquette can ease your anxiety and make you feel more relaxed during the interview. The following tips will help you keep your calm so you can focus on impressing your potential employer.

1. Dress for success

When in doubt about what to wear for an interview, dress a step above the dress code at your potential employer's workplace. If the workplace attire is business casual – nice pants and shirts for the men, skirts and blouses for the ladies – you'll want to come to the interview in a business suit.

2. Arrive early

Keep this old saying in mind: If you're early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. If you're late, you're lost. If you can't make it to the interview on time, your future employer is going to assume you won't be able to make it to work on time, either.

3. Do your homework

And you thought you wouldn't have to do homework once you graduated. Before you interview with a company, research their mission, who their competitors are and any mentions of them in the news. Employers appreciate job candidates who are truly interested in the company. Plus, you'll be able to answer questions better if you're prepared with background information about the company.

4. Practice your responses

Many of the job search Web sites offer lists of the most common interview questions. Practice responses to some of these questions so you won't be caught off-guard during the interview. Also, be prepared to tell your employer why you're interested in the job and why you're the best candidate.

5. Send thank you notes

After your interview, write a thank you note to everyone you spoke with at the company. These should go out a day or two after the interview and should be handwritten with your signature at the bottom. Thank you notes are a great way to show a potential employer that you are good at following up and that you'll be a courteous and thoughtful employee.

You've got the degree, now land the job

Five tips for job interview success

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