

Financial Aid Glossary

Cost of Attendance (COA): The total amount it will cost you to go to school—usually stated as a yearly figure. COA includes both direct and indirect costs such as tuition and fees; room and board (or a housing and food allowance); and allowances for books, supplies, transportation, and loan fees. It also includes miscellaneous and personal expenses. For students attending less than half-time, the COA includes tuition and fees and an allowance for books, supplies, and transportation, and can also include room and board for up to three semesters or the equivalent at the institution. But no more than two of those semesters, or the equivalent, may be consecutive.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): This is the number that's used to determine your eligibility for federal student financial aid. This number results from the financial information you provide in your FAFSA®, the application for federal student aid. Your EFC is reported to you on your *Student Aid Report (SAR)*.

Federal Work-Study (FWS): Program providing students with part-time employment during the school year. Eligibility for FWS is based on need. Money earned from a FWS job is not counted as income for the subsequent year's need analysis process.

Financial Aid Package: The total amount of financial aid (federal and non-federal) a student is offered by a college. The school's financial aid staff combines various forms of aid into a "package" to help meet a student's education costs.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The FREE application used to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, loans, and work-study.

Grant: Financial aid, often based on financial need, that does not need to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund).

Merit-based: Financial aid that is merit-based depends on academic, artistic or athletic merit or some other criteria, and does not depend on the existence of financial need. Merit-based awards use grades, test scores, hobbies and special talents to determine eligibility for scholarships.

Need: The difference between the COA and the EFC is the student's financial need — the gap between the cost of attending the school and the student's resources. The financial aid package is based on the amount of financial need. The process of determining a student's need is known as need analysis.

Need-Based: Financial aid that is need-based depends on the student's financial situation. Most government sources of financial aid are need-based.

Net Price Calculation: A tool that allows current and prospective students, families, and other consumers to estimate the net price of attending a particular college or career school.

Pell Grant: A need-based Federal grant awarded to students who are pursuing their first undergraduate degree. Pell Grants may also be available for part-time study.

Verification: Verification is a review process in which the FAO determines the accuracy of the information provided on the student's financial aid application. During the verification process the student and parent will be required to submit documentation for the amounts listed (or not listed) on the financial aid application