



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IRVING MEDICAL CENTER

# **FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK**

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2025-26 MD Program



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# FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

The Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning administers financial aid for the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Dental Medicine, the Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Programs in Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Genetic Counseling. We serve as a resource and as a link to your funding sources. Keep in mind that financial aid programs are subject to change due to legislative and regulatory changes.

Each class is assigned a Financial Aid Officer who will determine “calculated need”, prepare financial aid offers and work closely with you throughout your time in the program.

Check our [website](#) periodically for up-to-date information and helpful links.

## WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

Financial aid is any grant, scholarship, loan, or work-study award offered to help you meet educationally related expenses. Such aid is usually provided by or through the school, federal and state agencies, foundations or corporations and other entities.

**Scholarships** are generally regarded as "gift" assistance and need not be repaid.

**Loans** are borrowed money, offered at various interest rates, which are repaid over an extended period after you graduate or leave the institution.

The primary responsibility to pay for medical school rests with you and your family, to the extent that you are determined able to do so. While we will do everything possible to assist, the school should be expected to assist only when you and your family are unable to meet the full cost of attendance. Since we have a finite amount of need based school funds, some students may need to borrow.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

### Guidelines to Determine Whose Financial Information Must be Reported

- **Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) IF YOU ARE SEEKING EXTERNAL LOANS** such as the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan, Federal Direct Graduate PLUS (GradPLUS), private/alternative loans, and/or Federal Work Study. If you are **married**, your spouse's financial information is required.

**IF YOU ARE SEEKING VP&S SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE** (School Need Based Scholarships), you must **complete the FAFSA** (providing your and your spouse's financial information), and the **student/spouse and parent sections of the CSS Profile**. **International and DACA students** do not have to complete the FAFSA but should complete the **CSS Profile Application** and the **Certification of Finances Form**.

- Parent information is **required** unless you will be **35 years old by the start of the academic year**.
- **IF YOUR PARENTS ARE DIVORCED OR SEPARATED**, information is required from *both* of your parents and their current spouse(s).
- **IF YOU ARE MARRIED or INTEND TO MARRY DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR, your spouse's (or prospective spouse's) financial information is required.**
- **Returning students whose** need based aid in 2024-25 was based on parent income less than \$125,000 will not need to complete a CSS Profile for the 2024-25 award year. Instead complete the VP&S 2025-26 Supplemental Financial Aid Form. Qualifying students will be notified via email by our office. Please note that if parent total income (wages and other unearned income) has risen over the \$125,000 benchmark, you may be asked to also complete the CSS Profile.

We will assume that if **you do not complete a CSS Profile application, you wish consideration only for external loans** such as Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan, Federal Direct Graduate PLUS, private loans and/or Federal Work-Study.

### **International and DACA Students Who Do Not Hold a Permanent Resident Visa**

**Cannot Receive Financial Aid from Federal or State Sources, but are eligible for consideration for school need based scholarships.** An **international student** in the United States with an F1 or F2 student visa, with a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or with a G-series or H-series visa **is not eligible for student aid from federal or state sources**, but you may qualify for and receive "alternative loans" from outside sources, and scholarships from funds which are not federally or state-sponsored. If you acquire permanent resident status prior to graduation, you may become eligible for "external" state and federal assistance.

Please note that a "Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence" (I-171 or I-464) does not make you eligible for federal student aid.

### **When Should I Apply?**

**New students should submit the FAFSA and the CSS Profile application by March 10th (or within 2 weeks after acceptance, whichever is later).**

The deadline for returning students is March 31st for all forms except the 2024 tax forms, which are due **no later than April 15th. No awards will be made to continuing students whose application materials are not complete.**

You must also notify us about any new income such as scholarships, etc, that becomes available after you submit your applications. This obligation extends throughout the entire academic year. Your Financial Aid Officer will review changes in your financial circumstances throughout the year to determine if there is a change in your eligibility for funds.

## Application Materials

*Please keep copies of completed materials.*

**New students:** Once you receive your CU ID, you will be able to log into NetPartner to check the status of your application materials and to see if any additional documents are needed. If we request additional tax information for 2023 or for 2024, **please submit it [here](#).**

**Returning students** who need to submit 2024 tax forms and all supporting schedules and statements, please do so [here](#).

1. The **Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA)** - This is the federal application required for all applicants that are U.S. citizens or permanent residents who wish to establish eligibility for financial aid offered by the United States Department of Education (Title IV), the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Title VII), and for any school funds.

[StudentAid.gov](#) is the U.S. Department of Education website where you can complete and submit your FAFSA online. The application is free.

An **FSA ID** is the username and password you need to log in to and sign the FAFSA online. If you do not already have a FSA ID, you can [create a FSA ID](#) online. This is your electronic signature for FAFSA and Renewal FAFSA on the Web. It can also be used to access your Title IV federal student aid history [online](#) (select "Manage Loans").

At this same website, you can complete a **Renewal FAFSA** if you applied for federal student aid last year.

Read the instructions carefully when you complete your FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA. Most mistakes are made because students fail to follow instructions.

You will be using 2023 tax year information. Your (and your spouse's) consent and approval is needed to retrieve and disclose federal tax information (FTI). With your consent and approval, FAFSA can obtain tax return information automatically from the IRS which will help you complete the form. **If you do not provide consent and approval, you will not be eligible for federal student aid, including Federal Direct Loans and Federal Work Study. You must provide consent and approval even if you did not file a U.S. federal tax return or any tax return at all.**

If you have already completed your FAFSA, and **Columbia University Title IV Code 002707** was not one of the schools you originally listed, please go [online](#) and add us.

**Note:** There may be private companies who charge to help you complete this form. **There is no charge for filing a FAFSA**, so be sure to go to the correct website: [StudentAid.gov](https://StudentAid.gov)

2. Complete the [Aid Type Request Form on NetPartner](#) if you have never applied for aid with us before. This form asks you to indicate the type of financial aid for which you would like to be considered. This will determine which documents you need to complete for the financial aid application process. You will receive an email from our office with instructions on how to access NetPartner.
3. The [CSS PROFILE](#) application is a fee-based online financial aid application which collects supplemental information for us (the fee for your first school is \$25). Since some of the information that you provide on the FAFSA is also required on the CSS Profile application, you may want to complete both applications at the same time. The **CSS Profile code for VP&S is 2148**. If your parents have separate households (separated/divorced) then you must provide complete financial information for each parental household. One parent will be called the custodial parent and the other will be called the non-custodial parent. There will be an additional charge for collecting the non-custodial parent's information. If you have questions about completing or submitting the application, contact [CSS PROFILE](#) at 844-202-0524.
4. We use the **College Board Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC)** to securely collect families' tax returns and other financial documents. You will receive an IDOC instruction email with your IDOC ID# after the online submission of the CSS Profile.

Application materials may be submitted via upload to IDOC:

Submit Documents Online:  
<https://idoc.collegeboard.org/idoc/>

Applicants may check the status of documents submitted to IDOC [online](#) by logging into IDOC. Please allow 5-8 business days for documents uploaded to IDOC to be received by Columbia University.

To see if Columbia has received processed documents, please use [Net Partner](#), our online document tracking system. It will be available after March 15, 2024.

5. **International and DACA Students** who want consideration for School Need Based Scholarships should also complete the [CSS Profile](#). If you and/or your family file foreign tax returns, they will also need to be submitted via IDOCs, and you will to complete and submit the **International Certification of Finances Form (international students only)** found [here](#).
6. **IRS Tax Forms** - We require **signed and dated copies** of the 2023 IRS tax forms, **the 1040, W-2 forms**, and **all supporting schedules and statements** for all persons supplying information on the CSS Profile application. If there is a Partnership or S-Corporation listed on Schedule E, we need copies of the 1065, 1120S or K-1. You will submit all of these via IDOCs. **New students** should submit these documents no **later than March 10th**.

**Returning students** who had not applied for Columbia aid in 2024-2025 and who complete the CSS Profile will also have to submit 2023 tax returns via IDOC.

**Third and fourth year returning students** applying for school based aid who already provided 2023 tax returns for the 2024-2025 academic year do not need to do so again via IDOC; you will need to submit signed copies of the 2024 tax returns for you, your spouse, and your parents [here](#). Submit these documents no later than **April 15th**.

**Second year returning students** applying for school based aid will need to submit their and their parents' 2023 tax returns via IDOC. Those students notified by our office that they don't need to complete the CSS Profile can submit the required 2023 tax documents [here](#). You will also need to submit signed copies of the 2024 tax returns for you, your spouse, and your parents [here](#). Submit these documents no later than **April 15th**.

## 7. **Non-tax Filers**

**New Students:** If you did not have to file a tax return for 2023 you will be able to complete a "**Student's Non-Tax Filer's Statement**" on line when you are logged into IDOC.

**Returning students** who received Columbia need based aid in 2024-25 and who did not file a 2023 tax return will be able to complete a "**Student's Non-Tax Filer's Statement**" on line when you are logged into IDOCS. Those students notified by our office that they don't need to complete the CSS Profile and did not file a tax form can submit a "Why I Did Not File A Tax Form" [here](#).

**Returning students** who had not applied for Columbia aid in 2024-2025 and who complete the CSS Profile and did not file a tax return for 2023 will be able to complete a "**Student's Non-Tax Filer's Statement**" on line when you are logged into IDOCS.

**Note:** We may make **tentative financial aid offers to entering students without complete tax information**. However, **they are subject to change** based on a Financial Aid Officer's review when complete 2023 IRS tax forms and any additional requested documentation are received.

8. **Permanent Resident Card** – If you have been selected for federal Verification and do not hold U.S. citizenship but have been accorded "permanent resident" status, you must submit a copy of both sides of your Permanent Resident Card (I-151, I-551, or I-551C) to our office. If you have an Arrival- Departure Record (I-94 or I94A), you may be eligible for federal financial aid. Please check with us.

If you have a Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence (I-171 or I-464), you are not eligible for federal student aid.

9. The [Request to be Classified "Disadvantaged"](#) helps us identify eligible candidates for Loans for Disadvantaged Students (LDS). Students may also find that this designation helps them in the future for possible HHS funding. LDS loans have very favorable repayment terms. Please review the eligibility criteria on the Form and submit it if you think you may qualify.

10. [Activity Questionnaire](#) – All applicants for VP&S Scholarship assistance must complete this form. We use the information you provide both to report to our donors on scholarship recipients and to identify eligible students for targeted funds.
11. Students with dependents should complete the [Budget Adjustment & Loan Change Request Form](#) and [Expected Year Income Form](#) and contact their financial aid officer to discuss any budgeting concerns.
12. If you are interested in a Federal Work-Study award, you should contact our office for further information.
13. **Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS (GradPLUS) Loans -**  
Students applying for Federal Direct Loans should complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) for the Direct Unsubsidized Loan. If you will also be applying for the Grad PLUS loan you will need to do a separate MPN. Please note that Entrance Counseling is required and can be completed at [StudentAid.gov](http://StudentAid.gov) along with the MPN. Entrance Counseling is done once and applies to both loans. If you are a continuing student who borrowed from these programs in the previous academic year, you will not have to complete another MPN or redo the Entrance Counseling.

**Please note that there is no place on the MPN to request loan amounts:**

- a) If you don't qualify or apply for school funds your financial aid offer letter will include recommended amounts to borrow from the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan.

You should review your Financial Aid Offer Letter and then complete and submit the [Financial Aid Acceptance Form](#) within two weeks after receipt of the letter. Should you wish to borrow an amount that is different from what we recommend, please indicate the amounts you wish to borrow on the Financial Aid Acceptance form.

You can work with your Financial Aid Officer to make the necessary adjustments if you need help determining the proper amounts. These are the annual maximum amounts for the Direct Unsubsidized loan , based on your year in school:

	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
<b>VP&amp;S</b>	\$42,722	\$42,722	\$47,167	\$44,944

- b) **We cannot originate either Direct Unsubsidized Loans or GradPLUS Loans until you have “accepted” them on the Financial Aid Acceptance Form.** You have the right to cancel these loan amounts or to subsequently change them. However, please be advised that changes may cause a delay with disbursement. For a GradPLUS loan you must also submit a Credit Authorization Form; you will receive instructions in the financial aid offer letter checklist which is part of your financial aid offer letter.

14. The [Sibling/Spouse Enrollment Verification](#) is required if you receive school need based funds and have indicated on the CSS Profile or VP&S Supplemental Form that you will have one or more siblings or a spouse who will be **enrolled full-time** in college or graduate school during the academic year. This form should be completed by each sibling's/spouse's school and



returned to our office no later than September 30th of the academic year. If either your sibling or spouse do not enroll full-time as expected, your financial aid package may be adjusted.

15. **Verification Worksheet** - To confirm the accuracy of data reported by financial aid applicants and their families, the federal government has a regulatory process called Verification. Verification applies to applicants for the Direct Unsubsidized, Graduate PLUS and Federal Work- Study programs.

**If you are selected for Verification**, our office will contact you with the appropriate Verification Worksheet. It must be returned to our office no later than **three weeks** from the date you are notified that you must complete the form (see below for late penalties). The completed Worksheet plus all required documentation must be reviewed by your Financial Aid Officer before Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Graduate PLUS Loans and Federal Work-Study can be awarded.

Please note also that if you or your spouse receives untaxed benefits, the Verification process requires documentation from the appropriate agency.

If you submit subsequent applications for additional federally regulated aid after you have filled out a Verification Worksheet, federal regulations require that you "update" your household size, and number of household members in a postsecondary school.

**Important Note on Penalties:** If the required information has not been submitted by the stated deadline then:

- Our office will consider your application for federal aid **withdrawn**. You may reactivate it by supplying the information.
- Our office will then certify Federal Direct and GradPlus loan applications. This will be done only following a review of all on-time applications.
- In any case, if you miss the deadline and your financial aid is delayed because of this, you will be responsible for all late charges assessed on your school account.

## HOW DOES VP&S DETERMINE FINANCIAL NEED?

Our financial aid program is designed to help meet the calculated need of our students. **"Need" is defined as the difference between anticipated expenses and family financial resources.** Every application is individually reviewed by a Financial Aid Officer. Students with special family circumstances are encouraged to discuss their situation with a Financial Aid Officer.

### Determination of a Family's Financial Resources for School Need Based Scholarships

Family resources are assessed based on the financial information provided by the family on the required FAFSA and CSS Profile applications. A family's total income (taxable and untaxed), as well as all assets (cash, investments, real estate, business value, etc.), are considered in the

calculation. Funds held in formal retirement accounts (such as 401K plans) and the value of the parents' primary residence are NOT included. **The result of this calculation is used as a rationing index to determine eligibility for school need based scholarships.**

VP&S recognizes that our calculation may produce a "parent contribution" that may seem unrealistically high. Medical school is an expensive endeavor, and we expect that families will assist to the degree that they are able. The amount that your parents are able and willing to contribute is a family decision. Any amount of the calculated parent contribution that your parents are unable or unwilling to actually contribute can be covered with federal or alternative loans.

### **Assessing Parent Contribution for School Need Based Scholarships**

Financial information from parents is **required** of all applicants for **school need based scholarships regardless** of marital status or length of time a student has been self-supporting. We assume that parents and the students (and spouse) will contribute to the cost of education to the extent they are able, and that financial aid will be used to supplement the effort the family is making. VP&S does not recognize "independence" when determining eligibility for school need based scholarships unless you are age 35 or older by the start of the academic year. This means that **parents who are divorced** must **each** provide the information requested on the CSS Profile. They can use passwords to complete these sections to ensure their information is private. Please be aware that stepparents must also provide their financial information.

All parents (of both new and continuing students) whose total annual income falls below \$125,000 a year will be assessed a zero contribution from income; there may still be a parental contribution assessed on the family's assets.

### **Why a Parent Contribution is Required in Assessing School Need Based Scholarships**

VP&S makes a substantial contribution to the financial support of its student, based on "calculated" need. If parental resources were not taken into consideration for the awarding of need based aid, then the calculated need of students from more economically advantaged families would be similar to the calculated need of students from more economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Since the VP&S sources available for need based financial aid are finite, eliminating parental resources from the financial calculation of need could result in greatly diminished scholarship support for those students with the least amount of potential resources.

### **Waiver of Parental Information**

Parental information may be waived only in very rare cases should extreme circumstances warrant it. The family situation must be well documented. Such documentation should include third-party verification, i.e. attorney, social worker, member of clergy or family physician who has personal knowledge of the family situation. Complete the required [Waiver of Parental Information](#) and submit it along with the required supplemental materials. Please contact your Financial Aid Officer if you wish to pursue this.

### **Parent Contribution(s) Are Not Assessed for Certain Funds**

Financial information from parents is not required if you are **applying only for Federal Work-Study, and external loans** such as the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan (), GradPLUS, or other "alternative" loans.

### **Assessing Your (and your Spouse's) Contribution for School Need Based Scholarships**

We expect that you will pay for a portion or all of your educational expenses. We will evaluate your (and your spouse's) ability to contribute from income and assets. VP&S expects all first and second year students who are applying for School Need Based Scholarships to contribute a minimum of \$1,200 from earnings. Most students will find summer to be the best time to work. On an individual basis, a Financial Aid Officer may reconsider this required "contribution" where a student's academic schedule or circumstances preclude working.

If you are employed in a research or medically related program with limited remuneration, an adjustment may be made. You must provide a letter describing the nature of employment, income from the position, other resources for this period, and a list of expenses for the period covered by employment. If this pertains to a summer period, you should submit the request and itemization at the end of the summer, but **no later than September 30th**. A revised award may be made where appropriate.

Please note students with spouses may have a contribution assessed from spousal income and joint assets even if the income falls below \$125,000; the less-than-\$125,000 threshold in incomes applies only to parent income. Likewise, all of a student's (and spouse's) assets (including primary residences and retirement accounts) are considered in the student contribution calculation.

We expect spouses to work outside the home unless they are full-time students or caring for young children. Only student and "dependent/child care" costs can be included in the student's budget.

## Determination of Academic Year Expenses

Student budgets are divided into three areas: **Tuition and Fees** (charges paid directly to the university), **Educational Expenses** (books & supplies, transportation to clinical courses, board exam fees and other costs not charged by the university), and **Living Expenses** (food, housing, clothing and personal expenses). The budgets are used to calculate eligibility for all types of financial aid. You can see the full **Cost of Attendance** budget [here](#).

**A student's budget is computed only for enrolled periods - the summer between first and second year is not an enrolled period, so plan your finances carefully. The length of the academic year varies from class to class. Once you begin your second year, your academic periods run consecutively.**

**Adjustments to student budgets** may be made for special circumstances including the following items, where applicable:

- ✓ If you opt in to the university "Medical Insurance Plan" your budget will be increased by the amount of the premium for a single student and your financial aid package adjusted accordingly.
- ✓ Transportation home - Varies with final destination, to a maximum of \$1,326 per year. No more than two round trips will be included.
- ✓ Medical/dental care expenses in excess of the benefits provided by the CUIMC Student Health Service Program or dental costs that exceed \$200 per year will be considered if

documentation is provided.

- ✓ Child care for a single parent or when spouse is working outside the home.
- ✓ Expenses for students with dependents are reviewed on an individual basis. Be sure to discuss your situation with your financial aid officer when applying for aid. Students with dependents should complete the [Budget Adjustment & Loan Change Request Form](#) and the [Expected Year Income Form](#).
- ✓ International Student Fee - \$170 (subject to change) assessed each semester by the International Students & Scholars Office – CUIMC (ISSO-CUIMC).
- ✓ Rents that exceed our average budgets may be approved BUT only to a maximum of \$1,650 a month (covered by student loans only). The [Budget Adjustment & Loan Change Request Form](#) and a copy of your lease will be required before any adjustments to your budget are made. Check with your Financial Aid Officer before committing to additional housing or other expenses that you cannot cover with personal funds.
- ✓ Monthly MetroCard expense if living outside of Washington Heights.
- ✓ Elective Travel – Differentiation & Integration (D&I) students should note that expenses incurred for away electives are not included in the standard budget. These expenses may be covered by external loans. You will need to submit a separate itemized budget with documentation in order to add these expenses to your budget and qualify for additional loans. We expect you to use the least expensive transportation options, i.e., use ground transportation to Boston and Washington, DC and public transportation, not car service, to local airports. Consult beforehand with your Financial Aid Officer if you have any questions about allowable expenses.
- ✓ Limited scholarship funds are available for travel expenses for MCY clerkships and D&I electives taken at Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, New York. Requests for these costs for all students should be submitted or itemized separately from other travel requests.
- ✓ All requests for additional funds for senior elective travel, including Cooperstown, should be made in writing to the Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning by February 1st of the academic year.
- ✓ Residency Application and Interview Expenses – Some expenses for residency applications and interviews may be added to your financial aid budget. This is done on an individual basis. You will need to submit a separate itemized budget with documentation in order to add these expenses to your budget and qualify for additional loans.

Please contact your Financial Aid Officer if you have another special circumstance that you would like considered for a budget adjustment.

**PLEASE NOTE!**

Other expenses will be considered if they are necessary and related to attendance at medical school, **BUT** you should not incur expenses that exceed the standard budget unless: a) you can cover them with assistance from family or friends, or b) if you will need financial aid to cover them, you have **first** cleared the expenditure(s) with your Financial Aid Officer. Be prepared with itemized documentation of any additional expenses. If you do not get an apartment in Columbia owned housing, we may be able to approve higher rent, BUT only to a predetermined maximum. Potentially refundable deposits cannot be covered.

In most cases you will have to pay for additional expenses by accessing higher cost loans, so it is to your advantage to **“think frugally”**.

## **THE FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE AND AWARDING POLICIES**

Once your demonstrated financial need is determined, a Financial Aid Officer will construct a "package," or list of funds you can use to supplement the calculated family contribution in order to pay for medical school.

### **VP&S School Need Based Scholarships**

VP&S need based scholarship funds are awarded to meet the gap between the standard **Cost of Attendance** and the “calculated Estimated Family Contribution” for the academic year. The maximum scholarship allowed is derived from a single student budget with a zero Estimated Family Contribution.

The basic formula is: **Cost of Attendance Budget - Resources = Need.**

**Cost of Attendance Budget** = total costs for one year including tuition, fees, approved study materials, housing, food, and other expenses.

**Resources** = funds available from the student, spouse, and a calculated parent contribution.

**Need** = difference between the total budget and total available resources. Once a student's “calculated need” is determined, scholarship funds will be offered to meet this need. Under the Vagelos Scholarship Program, the package of support made available to meet “calculated need” will not include any loans.

## Columbia-Bassett Track

If you are in this track, you will receive a \$30,000 Columbia-Bassett tuition Scholarship for each of the four years of medical school, as long as you make satisfactory academic progress. If you leave the 'regular' curriculum, the scholarship will be suspended. It will be restored when you return to the 'regular' curriculum.

Since this scholarship can be used only toward tuition, should you receive another award that also pays your tuition, this scholarship will be reduced so that your tuition is not overpaid. The following programs would be examples of awards that could reduce or cancel the scholarship: an Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship (Army, Navy, or Air Force), a National Health Service Corps Scholarship, an Indian Health Service Scholarship, or tuition exemption (because a relative is an employee of Columbia University). The only exception would be an award from the VA's Yellow Ribbon Program - it will not affect this scholarship.

Students demonstrating high need may also be eligible for some need based VP&S Scholarships. The total of this Scholarship and other financial aid cannot exceed the total cost of attendance.

## Tax Information for Students

*This information is of a general nature, and does not constitute tax advice. Students should consult the Internal Revenue Service, the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, or a certified tax professional for tax advice.*

## Scholarships and Fellowships

Grant aid (scholarships and fellowships) covering the cost of tuition and required fees, books and course related expenses, is non-taxable.

Grant aid used for room, board, travel, and incidental living expenses is subject to US federal and state income taxation. In all cases, students are responsible for accurately reporting grant aid amounts, filing returns, and making estimated tax payments, if appropriate.

- There is no withholding on scholarships disbursed to US students and permanent residents. Columbia University is not required to, and does not report this income to the IRS.
- International students can refer to [this page](#) for withholding information.

## Additional Information

For additional tax information, please consult:

- The [Tax Information page](#) provided by Student Financial Services
- The [Tax Benefits for Education page](#) provided by the IRS
- [Foreign Students and Scholars page](#) provided by the IRS

## Loans

There are several scenarios where students may still wish to borrow:

- 1) To borrow the calculated "Estimated Family Contribution";
- 2) To cover eligible expenses that are not in our standard budget; and
- 3) Students who do not receive school need based scholarships, but need assistance to pay for school.

Students in these circumstances are eligible to borrow external loans such as the Direct Unsubsidized, GradPLUS or private alternative loans. Please see Item #13 on page 7 for more information. For a full description of Federal Direct Loans and private alternative loans [click here](#).

## Reduction of Loans by External Scholarships

You are encouraged to seek scholarships and loans from funds that are not administered by VP&S (such as scholarships offered by county medical societies, private foundations, union, or fraternal organizations, etc.). Please visit our [website](#) for a link that provide information about some "external" sources of financial aid.

If you receive externally awarded scholarships, you **must** notify your Financial Aid Officer. You will be granted a dollar for dollar substitution of the financial aid in the standard package in an amount equal to the "external" award in the following order: Grad PLUS or Federal Direct Unsubsidized will be reduced first, and then the VP&S Scholarship, if applicable.

Recipients of the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship, the Indian Health Service Scholarship, and full-time tuition exemption are not eligible for school need based grants.

## Tuition Exemption

If you are a child of University personnel, you may be eligible to receive tuition exemption benefits. If you are eligible for full-time tuition exemption benefits you would not be eligible for Need Based Scholarship from the school. Partial tuition exemption benefits for children of University personnel are evaluated on an individual basis and may be used to reduce outside loans if you also qualify for need based school funding. Eligibility guidelines and filing procedures may be obtained through the [Office of Human Resources](#).

### **International and DACA Students who do not hold a Permanent Resident Visa**

International and DACA students may face special challenges in financing their medical education. There are no federally guaranteed assistance programs, and private educational loans may not be able to be obtained without a US cosigner. Therefore, early financial planning is essential.

In addition, we request that by **July 1<sup>st</sup> prior to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, and by June 1<sup>st</sup> prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> year** international financial aid applicants or financial aid recipients provide our office with proof of their approved loan(s) in the amount (s) they will need.

If you will be applying for **consideration for school need based scholarships**, you must complete the CSS Profile and the [International Student Certification of Finances Form](#). You will also need to submit additional documents, including tax forms (with English translation, if necessary). These forms must provide parental income and asset information translated into US dollars at official rates of exchange as of the day of filing the form. If a tax return is not filed in your country, please provide a letter from each working parent's employer(s) reporting the yearly earnings. Please have all documents translated into English.

We do not provide any School Need Based Scholarships to replace the "calculated Estimated Family Contribution" or to cover additional eligible expenses greater than the standard student budget. Therefore, in such cases you must find other means to pay for your education.

Some lenders offer private educational loans to international students who can provide a credit-worthy cosigner who is a US citizen or, for some programs, a US permanent resident. At a minimum, the cosigner should have at least a two-year employment history, good credit, and the ability to repay the loan in case of default on the part of the student. For more detailed information regarding private educational loan programs, please visit the [University's Student Financial Services Web site](#). Please be aware that you have the right and ability to select the education loan provider of your choice, are not required to use any suggested lenders and will suffer no penalty for choosing a lender that is not a suggested lender.

For private loan programs, it is your responsibility to secure an eligible cosigner, and it is very important that you do so as soon as possible. It is also vital that you submit applications for private loans well in advance of the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, preferably by May or early June so that you can find out whether your cosigner meets the credit criteria of the lender you choose. Once you and your cosigner have applied for a loan, the lender will inform you if the loan is approved or denied.



Check with the private loan lender if you are required to have a US Social Security Number (SSN) or [Individual Taxpayer ID Number](#) (ITIN), or if it is required only for the cosigner at the time of application. You may need to begin the ITIN or SSN application process as soon as you are considering a private loan. International students should note that you cannot obtain a US Social Security Number unless you are currently living in the United States.

For the purposes of **visa documentation**, you should note that **loans are accepted as documentation of financial resources only if they have been approved for credit by the lender and certified by us**. Therefore, in order to avoid delays with your visa, apply early so that you have your loans finalized by the end of June if you are a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, and by the end of May if you are a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year student.

Students holding a nonresident visa will be charged an International Services Charge each term (\$170 for 2025-26, but subject to change). This fee supports the University's services to international students.

**Completion of the I-20 Form** - You will work with International Students and Scholars Office-CUIMC ([ISSO-CUIMC](#)) to obtain the Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status needed to apply for your F-1 student visa. Whether or not you are applying for any financial aid, you must complete their online Application for Visa Certificate of Eligibility (AVC). If you are financing part of the cost with alternative loans, we will require approval from those lenders before your I-20 can be issued. Application materials for the I-20 form should be submitted according to the instructions on the [AVC web site](#). Processing time is usually two to four weeks after all materials have been submitted; allow at least 3 to 4 months before you plan to enter the United States.

**All questions related to the issuance of visa documentation should be addressed to the [ISSO-CUIMC](#) at 212-305-8165.**

**Withholding Tax** - United States tax law requires the University to withhold tax at the rate of 14% on scholarship and fellowship grants paid to nonresident aliens in excess of the cost of tuition, books, fees and related classroom expenses. **Therefore, to avoid having living stipends incorrectly taxed, a VP&S scholarship or grant will be applied towards your bill. This means that you need to be prepared with adequate personal funds to meet out-of-pocket expenses at the start of the year.** See [here](#) for more information.

Certain countries have entered into tax treaties with the United States that may serve to reduce this rate of withholding. However, even when such a treaty applies, both you and the University must report the full amount of such excess to the Internal Revenue Service. If you claim tax treaty benefits, you must also report this amount to your country of residence. See [IRS Publication 901](#) for more information.

Because of legal restrictions, our staff and the staff of ISSO-CUIMC are not permitted to answer individual questions from international students regarding tax liabilities. To assist you in complying with your tax obligations, the ISSO-CUIMC offers annual tax workshops for international students in February, March, and early April. You may also wish to consult the consulate of your country of residence or a qualified professional.

## WHEN WILL I HEAR?

**Entering students** in the Class of 2029 with complete files should receive offer letters by the week of April 7th.

Prior to matriculation, **all notices and letters for entering** students will be sent to the email address you provided to the VP&S Admissions Office, until you have been instructed to activate your UNI (Columbia email address). Once activated, all mail will go to your UNI.

**Current students** should receive their Financial Aid Offer Letter no later than the beginning of June, provided all required documents and requested information have been submitted in a timely manner.

You should periodically check [NetPartner](#) to see if any items are still needed to complete your application.

You can also expect to receive notification from us when the following events occur:

- ✓ If you are selected for Verification;
- ✓ When checks arrive, for example from a private "alternative" loan or "outside" foundation;
- ✓ If adjustments are made to your initial award.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### Interschool Scholarships

A number of scholarships are awarded directly by the University and are available only to students who meet specific criteria. **If you meet any of the following criteria, please write to our office explaining how you qualify, no later than June 1, 2025. If you are accepted after this date and feel you are eligible for these scholarships, please contact our office to see if we can still submit nominations.**

<b>Ellis</b>	Graduate students who are residents of Vermont or who have graduated from an accredited Vermont college or university.
<b>Nichoplas</b>	Students from any area of the University who have attended college or university in Greece. Available to graduate or undergraduate students for a maximum of two years.
<b>Poder</b>	Candidates must speak Estonian.
<b>Upton</b>	Children of employees of the Houghton Mifflin Company, Lexington, Massachusetts.

## External Scholarships

In addition to federal and institutional aid, there are many external scholarships available to qualified candidates. Additional resources can be found at <https://finaid.org/> and at [Foundation Grants to Individuals by Candid](#). Please note that Foundation Grants to Individuals by Candid charges approximately \$20 for 1 month access. It is not a scholarship search engine, but a publication from the Foundation Center, New York Public Library.

We expect that **all** eligible students will apply for grants offered by their states of legal residence. You should investigate the availability of scholarship programs in your home state.

## Service Scholarships

A limited number of **Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarships** are available. These scholarships provide full payment of direct (tuition, fees, books, etc.) educational costs and a stipend for living expenses. Each carries a service commitment.

Students interested in applying for these programs are encouraged to discuss these options with us and with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Support & Services before making a commitment. You may obtain descriptive brochures and applications for these programs by contacting the following:

Kamaal David, HM1 (FMF)  
[Navy Medical Officer Recruiter](#)  
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 13-100A New York, NY 10280  
Cell: 917-696-4092  
E-mail: [kamaal.r.david@navy.mil](mailto:kamaal.r.david@navy.mil)

Tammy Y. Colatat, MPH, MAJ, USAR  
[U.S. Army Professional Health Care Recruiter](#)  
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 1415 New York, NY 10280  
Cell: 732-397-5951  
E-mail: [tammy.y.colatat.mil@army.mil](mailto:tammy.y.colatat.mil@army.mil)

Michael Runyan, TSgt, USAF  
[Air Force Health Professional Recruiter](#)  
26 Federal Plaza, 13<sup>th</sup> Fl, Suite 30-31 New York, NY 10280  
Cell: 347-334-2274  
Email: [michael.runyan@us.af.mil](mailto:michael.runyan@us.af.mil)

Scholarships are also available from the [National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program](#) for students who will become a primary care physician. For more information about scholarship opportunities through NHSC, you can also call 800-221-9393.

The [Indian Health Service Health Professions Scholarship](#) covers tuition, required fees and other educational and living expenses for qualified American Indian and Alaska Native students (members of federally recognized tribes only) applying to, accepted by or enrolled in health professions programs. Students incur service obligations.

## RULES FOR REFUND AND RETURN OF FINANCIAL AID FUNDS

### Refund Policy

If you withdraw, take a leave of absence, leave the University without formal notification, or if you are requested to leave, you may be eligible for a refund of all or a portion of your tuition, fees, and housing charges based on the earlier of the date of formal withdrawal or the documented date of last attendance. The [tuition adjustment schedule](#) is published on the VP&S website under Policies – University Policies. All students are charged a withdrawal fee of \$75.

**Withdrawal** is defined as dropping the entire academic program in a given term, not a portion of the program. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs determines the formal withdrawal or date of last attendance to be one of the following:

- The date the student began the school's withdrawal process or officially notified the institution of intent to withdraw.
- The date of last documented academic activity.
- The midpoint of the semester for those students who do not formally withdraw.

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Support & Services determines the formal start and end date for a **leave of absence**. If you are approved for a leave of absence you will be subject to the *Refund and Return of Aid Calculations* listed below.

### Return of Financial Aid Funds

If you have received financial aid and subsequently withdraw during a semester, the Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning must recalculate eligibility for financial aid, and determine if any financial aid funds must be returned or cancelled.

You will be able to view the revised award based on the new period of attendance on NetPartner and must attend an exit interview with the Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning if you have taken any educational loans while you were enrolled. We must process all award changes to Title IV, and Columbia-administered funds, and determine if a return of financial aid funds is due, within 30 days from the date the school has determined you withdrew.

**Title IV and Title VII Funds Calculation** - Students who received Title IV aid are subject to a recalculation of their eligibility according to the federal "Return of Title IV Funds" formula.

- Title IV funds are the federal financial aid programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended) and include the following programs: Federal Direct Unsubsidized and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loans.
- Title VII funds are the federal financial aid programs authorized under the Health Professions Training Act and include: LDS- Loans for Disadvantaged Students, HPSL- Health Professions Student Loan (DDS candidates only), PCL- Primary Care Loan (MD candidates only).
- Allowable charges include tuition and all "billable" fees (excluding the withdrawal fee) paid directly to Registration & Student Financial Services, as well as rent paid if in Columbia owned housing.
- The percentage of Title IV aid returned is determined by dividing the number of days of attendance in a semester by the total number of days in that semester. Scheduled breaks of five (5) consecutive days or more are excluded.
- The federal formula is applicable up to the 60% point of the semester. After the 60% point, the student is eligible for 100% of Title IV and Title VII aid disbursed or scheduled to be disbursed for that semester.
- Students will be requested to approve any post withdrawal disbursements after the Return of Title IV Funds Calculation is completed. The Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning will contact the student one time via email. If there is no response within 14 days a late disbursement of funds will not be authorized.

**School Funds and Private Loans Calculation** - Eligibility for school funds (including Title VII) and private loan funds will be prorated based on actual costs incurred for the enrolled period.

#### **Columbia University's Responsibility**

- Perform Return of Title IV and Title VII Funds calculation. Federal funds will be returned in the following order:
  - Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan
  - Federal Direct Grad PLUS Loan
  - PCL
  - LDS
- State aid funds will be returned according to state guidelines.
- External scholarships will be returned according to external granting institution guidelines.
- Perform Return of School Funds and Private Loan Calculation. Order of the return of funds will be:
  - School Scholarships
  - Private Loans

#### **Student's Responsibility**

- Repay loans according to the terms of the loan program(s).
- Repay any scholarship/grant funds required by the calculation.
- Repay any funds released to the student because of a credit balance that now have to be returned as part of the Return of Title IV aid formula.
- Collection of any grant overpayments will be handled through Student Financial Services, utilizing the regular student billing system.
- You must notify our office in writing if you wish to have more loan money returned to the lender than is prescribed by the formula.
- Complete required on-line loan Exit Counseling.

## **Policy on Fraud and Abuse in Financial Aid**

The Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning for the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Dental Medicine, the Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Programs in Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Genetic Counseling is responsible for overseeing the disbursement of educational funds provided by a number of state and federal programs as well as loans and scholarships from Columbia University. These total over \$97 million dollars during the 2024-25 academic year.

This stewardship includes validating submitted information, awarding aid, monitoring students' and their families' changing financial circumstances, and dealing effectively and fairly with instances of suspected fraud and abuse.

Information submitted by students and families must be accurate. Changes in personal and family financial circumstances which may change a student's eligibility must be reported, documented, and financial aid packages reexamined, to give the student all potential benefits and to fairly distribute funds.

Discrepancies in reported information and IRS 1040 forms or other income and asset verification materials must be clarified. The Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning must, under the law, award funds only to students who prove their eligibility.

We may declare students ineligible for financial aid if there are significant unexplained discrepancies, if students' applications are delayed beyond the filing deadlines published in the Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning Handbook, or if there is intentional misrepresentation on the part of the student and their family.

Acts of fraud and abuse will result in loss of financial aid eligibility, and may result in termination of matriculation and/or referral to the responsible agency of the federal or state governments for investigation and potential prosecution.

The information in this HANDBOOK is compiled to help students understand the financial aid process at Columbia University's Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, College of Dental Medicine, the Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Programs in Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Genetic Counseling. It is as accurate and complete as we can make it at the time of printing. We cannot be responsible for subsequent changes to information or programs over which our office has no control; or for inadvertent omission, misinformation, or typographical errors.

**The Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning is located in 154 Haven Avenue, Suite 405.**

**We are open from 9 am to 5 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.**

**Wednesdays we are open from 12pm to 5pm**



VAGELOS COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Office of Student Financial Aid & Planning  
Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons  
College of Dental Medicine  
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