

# University of Science & Arts of Oklahoma

## Financial Aid Offer Information

Beginning with the fall 2024 term, students can access aid offer information, upload missing documents, review aid history and SAP status, and accept or decline student loan offers in USAO Self-Service.

All aid is subject to change. Reasons include, but are not limited to, changes in federal, state, and institutional funding, enrollment intensity, residency status, the receipt of outside scholarships, change in financial standing, academic or program status, and failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as defined by USAO policy.

Also beginning with the fall 2024 term, aid may adjust according to enrollment intensity, which can be full-time (12 or more credit hours), or less than full time with eligibility based on the credit hour total. Enrollment intensity is finalized at the end of the designated add/drop period of each standard term. Federal and state aid recipients must be degree-seeking students at USAO. Classes must count towards the student's declared degree to be eligible for federal aid funding.

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) to remain eligible for federal aid assistance, as well as some state aid. In addition, students must meet specific program requirements. The SAP policy for continuance of federal and state financial aid is available in the online USAO Catalog and at [usao.edu/financial-aid](https://usao.edu/financial-aid), in USAO Self-Service, and from the Financial Aid Office.

Students must notify the Financial Aid Office of any aid resources received or expected that are not yet included in the aid offer (e.g., scholarships (including those paid directly to the student), tribal assistance, etc.).

The USAO Foundation may contact students receiving named foundation scholarships regarding correspondence with donors and future recognition events. Donor correspondence helps ensure future funding.

Resources included in aid offers may be estimates and are not always guaranteed. Final aid eligibility is verified and adjusted according to each program. Oklahoma's Promise, athletic scholarships, tribal assistance, and any aid resource based on credit hours enrolled are examples of aid that may be estimates. Final guidelines for federal Pell grant are made available by February for the next academic year. Final USAO enrollment costs are finalized each summer and must be approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Aid offers are adjusted for these revisions accordingly.

The Financial Aid Office must receive valid results of the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before federal aid is determined. Beginning with the 2024-2025 year, the FAFSA will require all applicants and their required FAFSA contributor(s) to provide consent for the transfer of their federal tax information (FTI) from the Department of the Treasury. USAO Financial Aid cannot process this consent for students. For assistance in filling out the FAFSA form, including providing consent, go to [studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/help](https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/help), or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). If the FAFSA is selected for verification, those requirements must be complete before any type of federal aid and some state aid, such as OTAG and Oklahoma's Promise, is available. Students with reductions in household income or other special circumstances regarding income should contact the Financial Aid Office regarding possible income adjustments, made possible through approvals of "professional judgement". Students who do not meet the Department of Education's independent student criteria, but who no longer have parental contact, should also contact the Financial Aid Office regarding a possible "dependency override". Specific criteria and supporting documentation are required for professional judgement and dependency override approval. This approval is solely the decision of the Director of the Financial Aid Office.

### FUND DISBURSEMENT:

The process of disbursing financial aid varies for each program. USAO Financial Aid begins this process as soon as possible after the designated last day to drop classes for each standard term.

After an enrollment audit is complete and verification of eligibility is confirmed, the first type of aid applied is scholarship waivers. This includes tuition, student fee, housing, and food waivers. Waivers are not the same as cash scholarships funded by Foundation or Alumni Scholarship resources. Completion of waiver disbursements is usually within 3-4 weeks, or earlier, after the start of each standard term.

Federal direct loans (subsidized, unsubsidized, and PLUS) for most students are disbursed after scholarship waivers. Completion of master promissory notes and appropriate loan counseling are required for Direct Loan disbursements. First time freshmen borrowers will not receive a Federal Direct Loan disbursement until 30 days of the standard term are completed.

Federal grants require confirmation of attendance from faculty. Disbursement of federal Pell and SEOG is made after faculty attendance reports are reviewed, usually 2-4 weeks, or earlier, after the start of each standard term. Students reported as not attending class at least once during the first two weeks may be subject to Pell adjustment or removal.

Oklahoma's Promise and OTAG both require USAO Financial Aid to submit eligibility claims to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. These claims are submitted by the end of the third week of classes. Disbursement is made after USAO receives the approved funding from the state for the submitted eligibility claims. Processing time for the state varies, but is usually available 5-7 weeks, or earlier, after the start of each term.

Institutional Foundation and Alumni Scholarships require purchase order requests to the appropriate offices. These scholarships are disbursed after the appropriate offices provide the requested funding to the Business Office. These scholarships are normally available 6-7 weeks, or earlier, after the start of each term.

Federal work-study pay is processed on a bi-weekly basis according to the USAO payroll schedule and is issued directly to the student.

Outside aid (private sector scholarships, tribal funds, etc.) disbursements are made as soon as possible after the receipt of the funds from the source, after the designated last day to drop classes for each standard term.

Late applications or students requiring additional documentation for the aid program will not receive disbursement of that program's funds until all required documentation is received and processed, and eligibility is confirmed. Late aid disbursements are processed as soon as possible. Applications still incomplete at the end of each standard term may not be eligible for late disbursements after the last day of the standard term.

If the total amount of financial aid exceeds direct charges for the term, the student will receive a refund for the remaining balance. Refunds will disburse from the Business Office after incoming financial aid sources or payments have fully paid the bill. Students eligible for a refund from all aid programs, except federal work-study, will receive payments according to how they request refunds within their USAO Self-Service preferences. Questions regarding billing and refund eligibility should be directed to the Business Office. Students eligible for a refund may also check with the Business Office for approval to purchase books and supplies against the value of the refund. The Business Office will set a deadline to charge books and supplies. USAO may not apply more than \$200 of a term's refund to a previous term's account balance, as limited by federal law.

### **FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS:**

A federal student loan (federal direct subsidized and/or unsubsidized or federal direct PLUS) is a form of financial assistance that requires repayment, even if the borrower is not satisfied with his or her education, cannot find employment, or does not receive the educational services purchased.

All federal direct loans initially require a signed master promissory note (MPN). Subsequent loans fall under this MPN, valid for a period of ten years. The student applies for future loans through the financial aid offer process. First time entering freshmen are required to wait until 30 days into the term before their first loan disbursement. All federal direct loan borrowers must complete online entrance counseling in addition to their MPN prior to their first disbursement of funds.

Students are not required to accept a student loan or borrow the full amount offered. There is the option to borrow less than or decline the amount offered. Students are encouraged to borrow only what is necessary. Students have the right to cancel or reduce a loan at any time prior to the disbursement dates or up to 14 days after. Students who initially decline or reduce a student loan may contact the Financial Aid Office to discuss options to re-establish loan eligibility if desired. The Financial Aid Office will not originate a loan until acceptance of the student loan is on record. Enrollment in a minimum of 6-degree eligible credit hours is also required.

Additional loan information is available online at [usao.edu/financial-aid](http://usao.edu/financial-aid), through the online entrance counseling session, and by contacting the Financial Aid Office.

## **FEDERAL WORK-STUDY:**

Students who have eligibility for and are interested in the federal work-study (FWS) program can review available work-study employment opportunities, as well as area part time non-work-study employment openings, by signing up with the "Handshake" platform at <https://joinhandshake.com/>. All students may check with the Financial Aid Office regarding eligibility or other questions regarding this program. Placement in a federal work-study position depends on job availability. Earnings pay directly to the student every two weeks, according to the USAO payroll schedule, for the actual hours worked and submitted. Students may not begin FWS without approval of the Financial Aid Office and completion of the proper paperwork.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS:**

Students withdrawing from USAO must complete the withdrawal process. Students who do not complete 60% of the term are subject to repaying a portion of their aid back to the federal or state programs. The return of title IV funds policy is available online at [usao.edu/financial-aid](https://usao.edu/financial-aid). Loan recipients must complete online exit counseling upon withdrawal. Students who stop attending classes or who never attend are also subject to aid recalculation and/or cancellation. Instructors will provide dates of last attendance.

Continuation of financial aid is not automatic. Students who wish to apply for any of the federal aid programs must complete the FAFSA each academic year at [studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) to establish eligibility. Continuing students may apply yearly for institutional scholarships funded by the USAO Foundation. Alumni Association Scholarships are also available from the USAO Alumni Association and require yearly application. Submit applications as early as possible to maximize opportunity. Be aware of deadlines!

Enrolled students are required to monitor their USAO student e-mail account. USAO Financial Aid uses student e-mails for all enrolled students for important notifications, financial aid offers, and scholarship opportunities. The option for paper correspondence by mail must be requested. Paper correspondence can delay important information being delivered to the student.

Students are responsible for knowing and understanding the criteria for financial aid eligibility. This includes, but is not limited to, enrollment intensity, continuation of institutional scholarships, satisfactory academic progress status, the return of Title IV funds refund and complete withdrawal policy, student loan history and repayment, etc. We strongly encourage students to carefully read all correspondence. Important documents such as tax returns, scholarship agreements, financial aid offers, loan information, etc. should be stored in a safe and easily accessible location. Students are encouraged to ask questions of and visit with the Financial Aid Office directly regarding matters of financial aid. Keep all sensitive information such as user IDs, passwords, and security questions private. Do not disclose personal information to other individuals, including the FSA ID for federal student aid.

The USAO Counseling Office offers services for health, wellness, career, and other counseling needs to students in the Student Center and can be contacted at [counseling@usao.edu](mailto:counseling@usao.edu). Mental health concerns may also be reported through the [Drover Reach](#) portal. The Campus Co-Op food pantry, located in the Lawson Court Clubhouse, is available to students who may experience food insecurity. The Student Success Center offers tutoring, study groups, and more and is available in Nash Library and at [ssc@usao.edu](mailto:ssc@usao.edu).

Financial aid is monetary assistance designed to help cover the cost of a college education. The intent of this assistance is to supplement the family and student contributions.

More information on all of these topics and more, including helpful links to other informative sites and resources, are online at [usao.edu/financial-aid](https://usao.edu/financial-aid).

**USAO Financial Aid Office  
Troutt Hall Room 112  
1727 W Alabama Ave  
Chickasha OK 73018**

**Office Hours Mon-Fri 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

**405-574-1251 405-574-1240 405-574-1353**

**[FINANCIALAID@USAO.EDU](mailto:FINANCIALAID@USAO.EDU)**

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**[usao.edu/financial-aid](https://usao.edu/financial-aid)**