FINANCIAL AID DICTIONARY





















Resource Guide to NJ State Financial Aid Terminology



The following resource is intended as a helpful guide of financial aid terms. This dictionary is one of the many financial and informational resources offered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) to support New Jersey students and families in pursuing education beyond high school.

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Accruing Interest (on a loan)

The cost of the loan, represented by the interest which is added to the loan amount prior to the repayment period or prior to a payment installment.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

All taxable income as reported on a U.S. income tax return.

Adjustable (Variable) Rate Loan

The interest rate on an adjustable rate mortgage can vary, usually with the rate on the 1-year Treasury bill. The lender can let the rate adjust monthly, quarterly, annually, every 3 years or every 5 years, depending on the type of loan you get. The disadvantage is that the rate can go up if the Treasury bill rate increases, thus suddenly increasing your monthly payment. This rate fluctuates based on economic conditions, including interest-only mortgages, credit card debt and private student loans. Lenders typically add a point or two to create a profit. (*Also Known As: ARM, adjustable rate loan, variable rate mortgage, variable rate loan.*)

Army College Fund

A program that provides Army enlistees in certain job specialties with educational benefits to attend college. The money is combined with benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill. Participation requires a monthly contribution during the first year of military service.

Assets

Cash on hand in checking and savings accounts; trusts, stocks, bonds, other securities; real estate (excluding the home), income-producing property, business equipment, and business inventory. Assets are considered in calculating the Student Aid Index (SAI).

Associate Degree

A degree given for successful completion of the Associate Curriculum at a two-year institution.



Award Letter

Official document issued by a college's Financial Aid Office. Lists all of the financial aid awarded to a student. Could be refered to as College Financing Plan or NJ Shopping Sheet

Bachelor's Degree

The degree given for successful completion of the undergraduate curriculum at a four-year college or a university. It is also called a baccalaureate degree.

Bankruptcy

A person is declared bankrupt, when found to be legally insolvent and the person's property is distributed among creditors or otherwise administered to satisfy the interests of creditors. Generally, federal student loans cannot be discharged through bankruptcy.

Borrower

The person who applies for a loan and receives the proceeds (or money) of the loan.

Business Assets

Property that is used in the operation of a trade or business, including real estate, inventories, buildings, machinery and other equipment, patents, franchise rights, and copyrights. Business assets are considered in the calculation of the SAI under the regular formula.

Campus-Based Programs

The term commonly applied to those federal student aid programs administered directly by institutions of postsecondary education. Campus-based programs include: Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), and Federal Work-Study (FWS).

Capitalization

Addition of unpaid interest to the principal balance of a loan which increases the total outstanding balance due. *Also known as Interest Capitalization*.



Central Processing System (CPS)

The computer system to which the student's need analysis data is electronically transmitted by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) processor. The Central Processing System performs database matches, calculates the student's official SAI, and generates the Student Aid Report (SAR).

Certificate

The formal acknowledgment of successful completion of a particular program or course of study, particularly at a vocational school, trade school, or junior college.

Claim

An application made to a guarantor for payment of an insured student loan for loss of payment due to borrower death, total and permanent disability, bankruptcy, default, or school closure.

Collection

The activities and/or actions associated with getting payment on unpaid loan principal and interest from a borrower after that borrower defaults on the loan. The players in the loan process that could be taking these actions include lenders, guarantors, servicers, and collection agencies.

Combined Billing

Lenders (or servicers) generally offer a combined bill for all of a borrower's loans serviced by that lender/servicer so that the borrower only needs to make one payment per month for all of the loans.

Commuter Student

A student who does not live on campus; typically, "commuter" refers to a student living at home with his or her parents, but can also mean any student who lives off campus.

Consolidation

Combining several loans into a single loan to reduce the monthly payment amount and/or increase the repayment period.



Contributor(s)

On the 2024–25 FAFSA form, a contributor refers to anyone (student, the student's spouse, a biological or adoptive parent, or the parent's spouse) who's required to provide information on the FAFSA form.

Cosigner

A person who signs the promissory note in addition to the borrower and is responsible for the obligation if the borrower does not pay. A cosigner must be able to pass a credit review and must live in the United States.

Cost of Attendance

The TOTAL estimated costs associated with enrolling at a school for a specific enrollment period.

Credit (or Credit Hour)

The unit of measurement some institutions give for fulfilling course requirements.

Default

Failure to repay a loan according to the terms agreed to when the borrower signed a promissory note for the loan. Default on federal student loans occurs at 270 days delinquent. Private loans may have different periods for default.

Deferment

A period during which a borrower, who meets certain criteria, may suspend loan payments. For some loans the federal government pays the interest during a deferment. On others, the interest accrues and is capitalized, and the borrower is responsible for paying it.

Delinquency

Failure to make monthly loan payments when due. Delinquency begins with the first missed payment.

Dependent Student

A student who does not meet the eligibility requirements for an "Independent Student". Dependency status affects the maximum amount that a student may borrow in Stafford Loans and whether a parent may take out a PLUS Loan on behalf of the student.



Direct PLUS Loan

Graduate PLUS loans allow students enrolled in graduate school to borrow up to the cost of attendance. After exhausting the maximum Federal Direct Loan amount, this loan can be a useful alternative to private education loans.

Disbursement

The release of loan funds to the school for delivery to the borrower. Disbursements are usually made in equal multiple installments co-payable to the borrower and the school. Disbursement of funds may be sent electronically to the school.

Discharge

The release of a borrower from a loan obligation.

Educational Benefits

Funds, primarily federal, awarded to certain categories of students (veterans, children of deceased veterans or other deceased wage earners, and students with physical disabilities) to help finance their postsecondary education regardless of their ability to demonstrate need in the traditional sense

Educational ExpensesSee Cost of Attendance.

Entrance Loan Counseling

Students with federal educational loans are required to receive counseling before they receive their first loan disbursement and before they graduate or withdraw, during which the borrower's rights and responsibilities and loan terms and conditions are reviewed with the student. These sessions may be conducted online, by video, in person with the FAA or FAO, or in a group meeting.



Exit Loan Counseling

Students with federal educational loans are required to receive counseling before they graduate or withdraw (i.e., leave school), during which the borrower's rights and responsibilities and loan terms and conditions are reviewed with the student. This session may be conducted online, by video, in person with the FAA or FAO, or in a group meeting.

FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the application prospective and current college students must complete to access federal and/or State financial aid for which they might be eligible.

FAFSA on the Web (FOTW)

Allows students to complete and file a FAFSA online at **www.studentaid.gov**.

FAFSA Submission Summary

The FAFSA Submission Summary, formerly known as the Student Aid Report (SAR), is made available to FAFSA filers in their StudentAid.gov accounts (typically) within a few days of completing their application. This summary provides the student with their estimated financial aid eligibility and other relevant information about next steps, including any changes that may need to be made to their FAFSA.

Federal Default Fee

The fee paid to the guaranty agency to insure the loan. This amount is deducted from the dollar amount of the loan.

Federal Direct Loans

Loans, both Subsidized (need-based) and Unsubsidized (non-need based), provided by the federal government and available to students to fund education.

Federal Loan Consolidation

Combining several federal loans from multiple lenders into a single loan to reduce the monthly payment amount and/or increase the repayment period.



Federal Methodology (FM)

A standardized method for determining a student's (and family's) ability to pay for postsecondary education expenses. The single formula for determining an SAI for Federal Pell Grants, campus-based programs, and Direct Loan programs; the formula is defined by law.

Federal PLUS Loan

Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students. Federally-insured loans for parents of dependent students and students who have been unable to acquire private student loan funds. The amount of a PLUS Loan can not exceed the cost of attendance minus all other financial aid.

Federal Student Aid Estimator

Allows students and families to input financial information and receive an estimate of their federal aid eligibility before filing the FAFSA.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

One of the campus-based programs; grants to undergraduate students of exceptional financial need who have not completed their first baccalaureate degree and who are financially in need of this grant to enable them to pursue their education. Priority for FSEOG awards must be given to Federal Pell Grant recipients with the lowest SAIs.

Federal Tax Information (FTI)

Data received directly from the IRS to calculate to use in calculating student's SAI and Pell Grant award.

Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program

This program provides part-time employment to postsecondary students to help pay their educational expenses.

Financial Aid

Money to help pay for college or career school.



Financial Aid Package

The total amount of financial aid a student is offered by the school. This information, which includes federal/state grants, scholarships, workstudy, and loans, as well as institutional aid, is listed in the college's financial aid "Award Letter."

Financial Need

The difference between the institution's cost of attendance and the family's ability to pay (i.e., SAI). Ability to pay is represented by the SAI for federal need-based aid and for many state and institutional programs.

Fixed Interest

On a fixed interest loan, the interest rate remains the same for the life of the loan.

Forbearance

Temporary cessation of regularly scheduled payments or temporary permission to make smaller payments than were originally scheduled. Interest still accrues and you are responsible for the added interest.

Garnish Wages

If you default on your student loan, money may be withheld from your paycheck and paid to your lender on your behalf.

Giving Consent

All contributors, even if they have not previously filed a tax return, must give consent and approval on the FAFSA for the Office of Federal Student Aid to automatically obtain their federal tax information from the IRS, except in the case of contributors who do not have a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Anyone who declines to give consent and approval must enter their income information manually and will not be eligible for federal student aid, (the latter of which does not apply to contributors without SSNs or ITINs).

Grace Period

The six-month period that begins the day after a Federal Direct Loan borrower ceases to be enrolled at least half-time at an eligible school. During the grace period, payments of principal are not required.



Graduated Repayment

A repayment schedule where the monthly payments are smaller at the start of the repayment period and increase later in payment.

Grants

A form of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. Usually awarded to students based on financial need.

Guaranty/Guaranty Agency/Guarantor

State agency or private non-profit institution that insures student loans for lenders and helps administer the FFELP.

Holder

The institution that owns a loan.

Independent Student

On the FAFSA, a student is considered independent for financial aid purposes if they are at least one of the following:

- at least 24 years old by December 31 of the financial aid awar year;
- married (and not separated);
- · a graduate or professional student;
- a veteran:
- a member of the U.S. armed forces;
- an orphan;
- a ward of the court;
- · a current or former foster youth;
- in a legal guardianship (now or in the past);
- someone with legal dependents other than a spouse;
- an emancipated minor; or
- unaccompanied and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Interest

An amount, calculated as a percent of the principal loan amount, that is charged for borrowed money. See Fixed Interest and Variable Interest.



Interest-Based Repayment

With an interest-only repayment option, the borrower only pays interest each month for a certain amount of time. Generally, an interest-only repayment term is in effect only while a student is in school at least half time. Typical education loans revert to principal and interest repayment once a student borrower is no longer enrolled in school or the enrollment status falls below half time. The interest-only repayment option accrues more interest over the life of the loan than the traditional principal and interest repayment options.

Interest-Only Payment

A payment that covers only accrued interest owed on a loan and none of the principal balance. Interest-only payments do not prohibit borrowers from making additional or larger payments at any time if the borrower desires.

Lender

The organization that funds private education loans for students and parents.

Loan Proceeds

The money the borrower receives from a loan (or the amount borrowed minus fees).

Master Promissory Note (MPN)

A Master Promissory Note (MPN) is a legal document borrowers sign, promising to repay their federal student or Parent PLUS loan(s) and any accrued interest and fees to the U.S. Department of Education. It also explains the terms and conditions of the loan(s). More than one federal loan can be received under an MPN over a period of up to 10 years.

Need-Based Aid

Financial aid awarded based on a student's financial need.

NJ Financial Aid Management System (NJFAMS)

NJFAMS is New Jersey's online financial aid system which serves as a tool for students to view and manage their State grant and scholarship eligibility.



Non-Need-Based Aid

Aid based on criteria other than need, such as academic, musical, or athletic ability. Also, refers to federal student aid programs where the SAI is not part of the need equation.

Origination Fee

An amount, payable by the borrower and deducted from the principal of a loan prior to disbursement to the borrower. For federally backed loans, the origination fee is paid to the federal government to offset the cost of the interest subsidy to borrowers. For private loan programs, the origination fee is generally paid to the originator to cover the cost of administering and insuring the program.

Packaging

The process of combining various types of student aid (grants, loans, scholarships, and employment) to attempt to meet the full amount of a student's need.

Parent PLUS Loan

Unsubsidized federal loans available to parents of dependent undergraduate students to help them pay for the cost of college.

PELL Grant

A Pell Grant is money the government provides for students who need it to pay for college. Grants, unlike loans, do not have to be repaid. Eligible students receive a specified amount each year under this program.

Prepayment

Payment received for a borrower account for more than the amount due.

Prime Rate

The prime interest rate is the rate charged by commercial financial institutions for short-term loans to corporations or individuals whose credit standing is so high that little risk to the lender is involved in making the loan. This rate fluctuates based on economic conditions and may be different among financial institutions. The prime rate serves as a basis for the interest rates charged for other, higher-risk loans.



Principal

Amount borrowed, which may increase as a result of interest capitalization, and the amount on which interest is calculated. Also known as principal balance.

Private Loans

Private loans can provide supplemental funding when other financial aid does not cover costs. These loans are offered by banks, other financial institutions, and schools to parents and students.

Professional Judgment (PJ)

The financial aid administrator's discretion, based on the special circumstances of the student, to change the data elements used in determining eligibility for federal student aid or adjust a student's costs.

Promissory Note

Contract between a borrower and a lender that includes all the terms and conditions under which the borrower promises to repay the loan.

Provides Most Financial Support

If a dependent student's parents are divorced, separated, or never married, and don't live together, the parent who provided more financial support during the last 12 months is considered the contributor on the FAFSA.

Provisional Independent Status

Otherwise dependent students who indicate that they have unusual circumstances that prevent them from providing parent data. Aid administrators will need to make a final determination whether these students should receive a dependency override.

Refinancing

When a private lender pays off a borrower's existing student loan(s) and issues the borrower a new loan for that amount with new terms. Borrowers may seek to refinance if they have multiple loans with different servicers and would rather pay one amount to one lender each month or if the new lender can provide better terms for their loan (ie: a lower interest rate).



Repayment

The time during which a borrower actively pays back an education loan.

Scholarship

Financial support awarded to a student to help them pay for the cost of college. They may be one-time awards or renewable, depending on the terms of the award.

Secondary Market

An organization that purchases education loans from lenders in order to replenish the supply of funds for new education loans. The secondary market obtains funds from investors and uses those funds to purchase existing education loans from lenders. The lenders then use the proceeds of those sales to make new education loans.

Serialization

When a borrower has multiple federal student loans with different servicers, the U.S. Department of Education may choose to change the servicer on the loans to try to ensure that all of a borrower's federal student loans are handled by the same servicer.

Servicer

Organization that administers and collects loan payments. May be either the loan holder or an agent acting on behalf of the holder. The Federal Government contracts with multiple entities to administer and collect.

Standard Repayment

A repayment schedule reflecting equal monthly payments over the term of the loan.

State Financial Aid

New Jersey offers a variety of grants and scholarships to New Jersey residents who attend a college or university in our state. State aid can be need-based, merit-based, or based on a student's specific circumstances. Programs include the Tuition Aid Grant (TAG), Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG), New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS), Garden State Guarantee (GSG), and Governor's Urban Scholarship (GUS), among others.



StudentAid.gov Account

The username and password you use to access the U.S. Department of Education's online systems, which can serve as your legal signature when completing electronic documents. Also known as the FSA ID.

Student Aid Index (SAI)

The calculation for federal student aid eligibility. The FAFSA previously used Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to calculate a student's eligibility, but now relies on the SAI.

Student's Child or Other Dependent

A child or someone else who lives with the FAFSA applicant who receives more than half of their support from the applicant and will continue to do so during the award year. Spouses are not considered dependents of the applicant.

Student Loan

Money students and/or their parents can borrow to help pay for the cost of college. The loan must be repaid according to the agreed upon terms regarding interest rates, repayment timelines, and more.

Subsidized Loans

Subsidized Loans are awarded to students who demonstrate financial need (i.e., need-based loans). Because the U.S. Department of Education subsidizes the interest, borrowers are not charged interest while they are enrolled in school at least half-time and during grace and deferment periods.

Taxable Income

Income earned from wages, salaries, and tips, as well as interest income, dividend income, business or farm profits, and rental or property income.



Term

A length of time in which to repay a loan. The term is usually agreed to by lender and borrower within the borrower's contract or promissory note. Also refers to language used in legal documents, such as the promissory note, that defines how a loan will be borrowed and repaid. (Also refers to some postsecondary educational institutions' academic period.)

Tuition Payment Plans

A strategy by which payment for present costs of postsecondary education is extended into a future period of time.

Unmet Need

The difference between a student's total cost of attendance at a specific institution and the student's total available resources.

Unsubsidized Loans

Unsubsidized Loans are available to students regardless of financial need (i.e., non-need based). Borrowers are responsible for the interest that accrues during any period.

Untaxed Income

All income received that is not reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or is reported but excluded from taxation. Examples include, but are not limited to, Supplemental Security Income, child support, alimony, and federal or public assistance.

Variable Interest Rate

With a variable interest loan, the interest rate changes periodically. For example, the interest rate might be affected by the cost of U.S. Treasury Bills (e.g., T-Bill rate plus 1.7%) and be updated monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.

Wage Garnishment

If you default on your student loan, money may be withheld from your paycheck and paid to your (lender on your behalf.)



Financial Aid Acronyms

A	2
ACH Automated Clearing House	2
ACT American College Testing Program	2
AGI Adjusted Gross Income	2
	3
В	3
BA Baccalaureate Degree	3
BIA Bureau of Indian Affairs	3
	3
C	3
CCOG Community College Opportunity Grant	3
CLEP College - Level Examination Program	4
COA Cost of Attendance	4
CPS Central Processing System	4
	4
D	4
DISB Disbursement	4
	4
E	5
E-APPS Electronic Applications	5
ED U.S. Department of Education	5
EDCAPS Education Department's Central Automated Processing	5
System	5
EDE Electronic Data Exchange	5
EDP Electronic Data Processing	5
EOF Educational Opportunity Fund	5
,	6
F	6
FAA Financial Aid Administrator	6
FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid	6
FOTW FAFSA on the Web	6
FSEOG Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	6
FWS Federal Work Study	6
	7
	7

7



G	7
GIVS Governor's Industry Vocations Scholarship	7
GPA Grade Point Average	7
GSG Garden State Guarantee	7
GUI Graphical User Interface	8
GUS Governor's Urban Scholarship	8
	8
Н	8
HEA Higher Education Act	8
HESAA Higher Education Student Assistance Authority	8
HHS Department of Health and Human Services	8
	9
I .	9
IPA Income Protection Allowance	9
IRS Internal Revenue Service	9
ISIR Institutional Student Information Record	9
T. Committee of the Com	10
L LEAD Loverseiner Edwardianal Assistance Doutseaskin	10
LEAP Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership	10
LEOMS Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Scholarship	10
LOA Leave of Absence	10
M	10
MIS Management Information Systems	10
wanagement information bystems	11
N	11
NJASFAA New Jersey Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators	11
NJCLASS New Jersey College Loans to Assist State Students	11
NJEI New Jersey Eligibility Index	11
NJFAMS New Jersey Financial Aid Management System	11
NJ STARS New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship	12
NSLDS National Student Loan Data System	12
·	12
0	12
OIG Office of Inspector General	12
OPE Office of Postsecondary Education	12
	12
	13

13



P

PDF Portable Document Format
PLUS Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
PM Payment Methodology
PO Potential Over-Award

Q

QA Quality Assurance **QC** Quality Control

R

ROTC Reserve Officer Training Corps

S

SAI Student Aid Index
SAIG Student Aid Internet Gateway
SAT Scholastic Assessment Test
SSN Social Security Number
STB Survivor Tuition Benefits

Т

TAG Tuition Aid Grant **TEACH** Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education



Helpful Websites

HESAA - Higher Education Student Assistance Authority 609-584-4480

Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m.- 8 p.m., Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Bilingual experts are available to answer your questions www.hesaa.org

TDD System for the Hearing Impaired 609-588-2526 Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

U.S. Department of Education

Federal Student Aid Programs 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) TTY 1-800-730-8913 | www.ed.gov

Complete the FAFSA Online www.studentaid.gov

NJ Colleges and Universities www.njedge.net

NJ College Credit Transfer Information www.njtransfer.org

Consumer Protection/Financial Aid and Scholarship Fraud www.ftc.gov



HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY

New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority

4 Quakerbridge Plaza PO Box 071 Trenton, NJ 08625

www.hesaa.org

Phone: 609-584-4480 Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.