

## **Lamar Community College Financial Aid Code of Conduct**

1. No action will be taken by financial aid staff that is for their personal benefit or could be perceived to be a conflict of interest.
  - a. Employees within the financial aid office will not award aid to themselves or their immediate family members. Staff will reserve this task to an institutionally designated person, to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.
  - b. If a preferred lender list is provided, it will be compiled without prejudice and for the sole benefit of the students attending the institution. The information included about lenders and loan terms will be transparent, complete, and accurate. The complete process through which preferred lenders are selected will be fully and publically disclosed. Borrowers will not be auto-assigned to any particular lender.
  - c. A borrower's choice of a lender will not be denied, impeded, or unnecessarily delayed by the institution, even if that lender is not included in the institution's preferred lender list.
  - d. No amount of cash, gift, or benefit in excess of a de minimis amount shall be accepted by a financial aid staff member from any financial aid applicant (or his/her family), or from any entity doing business with or seeking to do business with the institution (including service on advisory committees or boards beyond reimbursement for reasonable expenses directly associated with such service).
2. Information provided by the financial aid office is accurate, unbiased, and does not reflect preference arising from actual or potential personal gain.
3. Institutional award notifications and/or other institutionally provided materials shall include the following:
  - a. A breakdown of individual components of the institution's Cost of Attendance, designating all potential billable charges.
  - b. Clear identification of each award, indicating type of aid, i.e. gift aid (grant, scholarship) work, or loan.
  - c. Standard terminology and definitions, as outlined on Page 2 of the Code of Conduct.
  - d. Renewal requirements for each award.
4. All required consumer information is displayed in a prominent location on the institutional web site(s) and in any printed materials, easily identified and found.
5. Financial aid professionals will disclose to their institution any involvement, interest in, or potential conflict of interest with any entity with which the institution has a business relationship.



The intent of this glossary is:

- To provide colleges community-defined and accepted definitions of common terms used on institutional award notifications
- To provide greater clarity and understanding by students through consistency in the use and meaning of terms on award notifications across all colleges and universities
- To allow prospective students to more easily compare information from multiple schools because terms used have common definitions

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The estimated cost of attending this institution for one academic year. This amount includes the following:

- Expected charges for one year of tuition and fees
  - Tuition – Charges assessed for classes
  - Fees – Charges assessed for other college services
- Room and board for resident students
- Estimated living expense -- allowance for rent, utilities, and food for off-campus living
- Estimated transportation costs
- Estimated books and supplies
- Miscellaneous costs

**Direct Costs:** Expenses the student/family pays to the college.

**Educational Loan:** A form of financial aid that must be repaid with interest. Educational loans have varying interest rates and repayment terms. Students and/or parents are required to sign a promissory note when accepting an educational loan.

- **Student Loan:** Funds awarded to the student that must eventually be paid back to the lender by the student.
  - **Federal Direct Student Loan:** Loan funds provided *to the student* by the U.S. Department of Education, through the school. Repayment of principal begins six months after the borrower ceases to be a student on at least a half-time basis. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the annual application. There are two types of Federal Direct Student Loans: subsidized and unsubsidized. Students with financial need can qualify for a subsidized loan, and the government pays the interest on the loan while the student remains enrolled at least half time. Students who don't demonstrate financial need qualify for an unsubsidized loan and interest accrues while the student is in school.
  - **Federal Perkins Loan:** A low interest loan for educational expenses provided by the federal government for qualified individuals with exceptional financial need as defined by the institution. .The Federal Perkins Loan needs to be repaid with interest once the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time.
  - **Federal Grad PLUS Loan:** Loan funds provided *to graduate students* by the U.S. Department of Education, through the school.This federal loan program allows graduate students with no adverse credit history to apply for up to their Cost of Attendance each year, less any financial aid. To be eligible, the student must be enrolled at least half time in an eligible program of study and first borrow the maximum allowable through the Federal Direct Student Loan program. Repayment of principal and interest begins 30 to 60 days after the loan is fully disbursed with deferment and forbearance options available.
  - **Private (Alternative) Loan:** A loan from a commercial, state-affiliated or institutional lender used to pay for up to the annual cost of education, less any financial aid received. Private loans usually require the applicant to be creditworthy or have a co-signer and have varying interest rates, fees and repayment options. Repayment of interest (and often principal) generally begins immediately, with some lenders offering deferment options for in-school periods.
  - **Federal Parent Loan (PLUS):** A federal loan program that allows parents who have no adverse credit history to apply for up to the Cost of Attendance each year, less any financial aid. PLUS loans must be repaid with interest.



**Enrollment Level:** Level of the degree-granting program in which a student is enrolled. Basic levels of enrollment include: undergraduate (students seeking an associate's degree, a certificate, or a baccalaureate degree); post-baccalaureate (such as teacher certification); graduate (students working on a master's degree or professional degree); and post-graduate (such as students enrolled in a doctoral program). The amounts and types of financial aid a student is eligible for is determined, in part, by their enrollment level.

**Enrollment Status:** Academic workload (or course load), as defined by the institution, that a student is carrying for a defined academic period. This normally relates to the number of credit hours or clock hours taken by a student during a given academic period. For most traditional undergraduate term-based schools:

- Full-time status = at least 12 credit hours
- Three-quarter time status = at least 9-11 credit hours
- Half-time status = at least 6-8 credit hours.

For most clock hour schools full-time enrollment equates to at least 24 clock hours per week.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** A measure of how much the student and his or her family can be expected to contribute to the cost of the student's education for the year. The EFC is calculated according to a formula specified in the law and is based upon the information provided by the student and his or her family during the FAFSA filing process.

**Family Financial Responsibility:** Many schools award institutional scholarships and grants based upon a more comprehensive calculation of family financial circumstances using information provided on the CSS PROFILE or the College's own financial aid form. This can result in a higher (or lower) financial responsibility for the student (and his/her family) than the FAFSA might indicate with its Expected Family Contribution (EFC) estimate.

**Federal Pell Grant:** A grant provided by the federal government to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need and have an Expected Family Contribution below a threshold designated annually by the U.S. Department of Education, based on the amount of program funds appropriated by Congress.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG):** A grant provided by the federal government to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. Priority is given to Pell Grant recipients and funds must be awarded by the school in lowest EFC order.

**Federal Work-Study (FWS):** A program that provides part-time employment to students attending institutions of higher education who need the earnings to help meet their costs of postsecondary education and encourages students receiving FWS assistance to participate in community service activities.

**Gift Aid:** Funds awarded to the student that do not have to be repaid, unless the student fails to meet certain terms, such as a service requirement, specified as a condition of the grant. Gift aid includes awards with titles such as grants, scholarships, remissions, waivers, etc. Gift aid can be awarded based upon many factors, including (but not limited to) financial need, academic excellence, athletic, musical, and theatrical talent, affiliation with various groups, or career aspirations.

**Grant:** Gift aid awarded to the student that does not need to be repaid. Grants are typically based on financial need.

**Indirect Costs:** Expenses incurred as a result of attendance that the student/family may pay to a third party (merchant, landlord, etc.) other than the college.

**Net Cost:** Amount of direct and indirect costs remaining after all gift aid (scholarship and grant) is subtracted.



**Out-of-pocket Cost:** Difference between the cost of attendance and all gift aid. Out-of-pocket cost can be covered through a variety of sources, including: savings, income and educational loans.

**Scholarship:** Gift aid awarded to the student that does not need to be repaid. Scholarship awards are typically based on merit or a combination of merit and need, such as academic excellence, talent, affiliation with various groups, or career aspirations.

**Self-help:** Financial aid in the form of loans or student employment. Loans are used to help pay the remaining net costs after gift aid is deducted. Student employment earnings (including Work-Study awards) are generally not deducted from billed costs but can be used to help cover indirect costs and are paid in the form of wages to the student.

**Verification:** Process to confirm the accuracy of data provided by the applicant on the FAFSA. In order to complete the verification process, students are required to provide certain documents to the school for review.