

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AND AWARDS

Lamar University is committed to helping students attain their educational goals and expand their opportunities. Financial Aid is monetary assistance to help with costs associated with attendance at Lamar University. Financial assistance in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment is available to qualified students. Information regarding programs, policies, rules, regulations and eligibility criteria may be obtained from the Office of Student Aid (SA), Wimberly Bldg. Room 200, (409) 880-8450 or <https://www.lamar.edu/financial-aid/>. Any questions regarding scholarships may be sent to scholarships@lamar.edu.

Students must be admitted into a degree-seeking or eligible certificate program and meet all other requirements set by the U.S. Department of Education to be eligible for federal financial assistance. More information regarding eligibility requirements may be viewed at <https://www.lamar.edu/financial-aid/>.

1. When to Apply

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and related documents should be completed by February 1st to meet the priority deadline for the following academic year. OSFA will begin emailing notifications of awards in late spring. All emails are sent to students' LU email accounts. The university will continue to award student assistance if funds are available. The most desirable types of assistance are normally expended early; therefore, students should make every effort to meet the February 1st deadline.

2. How to Apply

Step 1

Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by applying online at www.fafsa.gov (<http://www.fafsa.gov>). Using prior-year income tax information, students need to complete a new FAFSA the first year and a renewal FAFSA in subsequent years. The student and one of his/her biological parents can speed up the process by obtaining an FSA ID to be able to sign the application. An FSA ID can be obtained at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/>. Make sure to list Lamar University, school code 003581, when completing the FAFSA. The student will receive an acknowledgment from the U.S. Department of Education upon receipt.

Step 2

Once a student's electronic information is received by Lamar University, SA may request additional documentation before the student is awarded. Once the student has been admitted to Lamar University, he/she can log into his/her self-service banner account online and view what documents SA is requesting. Often the request will include the student's and, if applicable, parent's tax return information from the tax year requested on the FAFSA. Students are encouraged to use the IRS data retrieval tool on the FAFSA. Additional documentation may be requested to complete the verification process. For faster processing, students are encouraged to upload required documents through their Self-Service Banner account.

Step 3

Once SA has received, reviewed and verified all the requested paperwork, students will be awarded grants (if available and applicable) and loans for which they are eligible. During this process, SA will also re-evaluate the student's academic progress. If a student is not meeting Lamar University's Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards, then financial assistance will be put on hold and the student will be notified. Students will have an opportunity to appeal, if they are not meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards, by submitting documentation to SA. Students should make sure that all necessary documentation is submitted and fully explains why academic standards were not met.

Step 4

Once financial aid has been awarded, grants (if applicable), will automatically be accepted on behalf of the student. If the student was awarded loans and would like to receive these funds, he/she will need to accept them on Self-Service Banner. Students who accept loans will need to complete Entrance Counseling and a Master Promissory Note at www.studentloans.gov (<https://www.studentloans.gov>). Students must completely follow all instructions to receive all awarded financial assistance.

Parents wishing to request a PLUS loan will complete the PLUS application and PLUS Master Promissory Note at www.studentloans.gov (<http://www.studentloans.gov>) by logging in with parent information. Once the Office of Student Aid receives approval for the PLUS loan the funds will be awarded to the student and he/she must accept the award on Self-Service Banner.

Graduate students requesting a Graduate PLUS loan must complete the PLUS application and PLUS Master Promissory Note (MPN) at www.studentloans.gov (<http://www.studentloans.gov>). If approved and awarded, the loan must be accepted on the self-service banner account.

Step 5

Provided a student has registered during the priority registration time frame and all processing is complete, the money will be disbursed to the student's account no sooner than 10 days before classes begin. Any residual money (refund) will be disbursed to students through the Cardinal One Card by the Cashiers' Office. Note: Students are initially awarded grants, work-study, and loans based on full-time enrollment (undergraduates—12 hours, graduates—9 hours) If enrolled less than full-time, financial aid may be reduced. If grant money has been reduced, a student may not be able to receive additional grant money if he adds classes after financial aid has already been reduced. If a student adds classes after loans have been reduced due to enrollment status an Additional Loan Worksheet may be required if the student wishes to have the loan amount increased based on his/her new enrollment status. Enrollment in at least 6 hours as an undergraduate and 5 hours as a graduate is required for loans and most grants. Prior to Lamar University releasing funds, SA will check the number of class hours in which a student is enrolled, satisfactory academic progress, default status, and if a student has completed the entrance counseling and MPN requirement. Any student who withdraws during the first 60 percent of the semester may have grant/ loan funds returned to the DOE. This return may leave the student with a balance owed to Lamar University. Also, the student may be required to pay grant funds back to the Department of Education.

There is no exception to this rule, and students cannot appeal this decision to Lamar University.

Deferred Payments

Lamar University's Cashier's Office provides a Deferment Payment program for students in need. Those interested in deferred payments should contact (409) 880-8390.

Employment

Employment opportunities under the Federal College Work-Study Program and other employment programs of the university are available to LU students. The university, local businesses, and industry partners provide a number of part-time jobs that enable students to earn part or all of their expenses while attending the university. Students may visit lamar.edu/jobs (<http://lamar.edu/jobs/>) for information on job opportunities.

To check the progress of your student loans/grants online

- Go to *Self Service Banner* and Log In.
- Look under the "Financial Aid" tab. Under this title, you will see various links that provide information concerning your financial aid account.

To download student financial aid forms

- Go to the Financial Aid Website at <https://www.lamar.edu/financial-aid> (<https://www.lamar.edu/financial-aid/>)
- Click on "Forms"

Things to remember

- Students must first be accepted to Lamar University before Financial Aid can be reviewed and awarded
- The priority date for submitting all documents required for financial aid awards is February 1st.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress must be maintained in order to continue to receive financial aid.
- Lamar University will not automatically award or process any loans for individuals who have defaulted on their student loans. Students submitting documentation that the defaulted loan has been repaid or satisfactory repayment arrangements have been made may be considered for grants and work-study. The letter (from the respective guaranty agency) must also state that the student is now eligible for further financial aid.

3. Scholarships

Lamar University scholarship programs dedicate substantial financial resources to assisting students in achieving their educational goals. Scholarships are awarded competitively, based upon such criteria as; academic achievement, standardized test scores, class rank and grade point averages. Other factors such as academic major, demonstrated leadership ability and specialized skills (athletics, marching band, art, music, dance) also may be considered in awarding scholarships. The review process begins in October for the following academic year. Entering freshmen and transferring college students are encouraged to apply early. For priority consideration for most Lamar University scholarships, apply no later than February 1 each year although some scholarship opportunities require earlier deadlines. Deadlines for application as well as information on individual scholarships is available online at www.lamar.edu/myscholarships (<http://www.lamar.edu/myscholarships/>).

Applying for Scholarships

To apply for Lamar University scholarships, both new and continuing students should submit applications online at [lamar.edu/myscholarships](http://www.lamar.edu/myscholarships) (<http://www.lamar.edu/myscholarships/>), the Lamar University online scholarship application management system. New students must first apply for admission to the University and at that time will receive a username and password for entry into Lamar electronic services. Current students use their existing LU electronic credentials to log into the scholarship application site. Academic transcripts (high school and/or college) must be submitted to the University Admissions Office. Beginning freshman applicants must submit SAT or ACT test scores with the Lamar University Admissions Office. Transcript and test score information is automatically matched to each individual scholarship application.

1. Minimum Qualifications

Scholarship awards to entering freshmen are determined by applicants' high school academic records, scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Testing Program (ACT), leadership, and high school class rank. Scholarships awarded to transferring college students consider, grade point average, the number of semester credit hours earned and major field of study. Scholarship awards to continuing students are determined by their cumulative grade point average as well as displayed leadership abilities.

Some scholarships require that financial eligibility be established through the submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). To be eligible for federal educational aid, the student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident of the United States;
- Possess a high school diploma from an accredited high school (Note: Students who graduate from home schools or unaccredited high schools must submit passing ACT or GED scores);
- Be admitted to Lamar University; and
- In the case of continuing students, meet reasonable academic progress standards.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)—Students receiving aid must maintain a 2.00 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA). Students must also complete 67 percent of the hours they attempt and earn their first degree within 150 percent of the published hours required to earn the degree.

2. Policy Regarding Competitive Scholarships

Competitive scholarships are awarded under the authority of the Lamar University Scholarship Committee, or other University committees specifically authorized by the Lamar University administration to commit scholarship funds. Students applying for academic scholarships administered through the university should complete the Lamar University Scholarship Application. Students seeking scholarships related to specific skills or areas of study should contact the university department in that specific area of interest.

3. Selection Factors

Scholarships offered through the Lamar University Scholarship Committee are awarded on a competitive basis. The application process is open to all potential and current students. Scholarships may be awarded to graduating high school seniors, transfer students, or currently enrolled Lamar University students. Factors indicating academic achievement used in determining recipients of competitive scholarships include:

- a. class ranking and/or grade point averages
- b. standardized test scores such as SAT, ACT, or GRE
- c. previous high school and/or college academic transcripts
- d. academic awards, honors, or achievements; and
- e. academic major

Displayed leadership abilities and participation in extracurricular activities are used as secondary factors.

Competitive scholarships are also awarded by university programs for students showing demonstrated abilities and prior successful participation in such areas as music, writing, art, dance, or athletics. Factors in the awarding of competitive skill-based scholarships include an evaluation by faculty and/or staff in each specific area. Evaluations may be based on, but are not limited to, video, film, audiotape, auditions, student-created works, or personal observations of student performance by university faculty or staff.

4. Waiver of Non-Resident Fees

Students receiving competitive academic scholarships of \$1,000 or more may be exempt from the payment of nonresident tuition rates. To be eligible for this waiver the scholarship must meet all institutional requirements of competitive awards and comply with all rules governing tuition rates and waivers as established by the State of Texas.

5. Valedictorians

Valedictorians from accredited high schools of Texas are entitled to an exemption from payment of tuition and laboratory fees for the two regular semesters immediately following graduation. Other fees are not exempt. Upon registration, valedictorians should submit the "Highest Ranking Graduate Certificate" to the Student Financial Aid Office so that the appropriate fee adjustment can be made.

6. Students with Physical Disabilities (Vocational Rehabilitation)

The Texas Rehabilitation Commission offers assistance for tuition and non-refundable fees to students who have certain types of disabilities, provided their vocational objectives have been approved by a TRC counselor. Examples of such conditions are orthopedic disabilities, emotional disorders, diabetes, epilepsy, heart conditions, etc. Other services also are available to assist students with disabilities to become employable. Application for such service should be made at:

Texas Rehabilitation Commission
Beaumont District Office
5550 Eastex Freeway
Beaumont, Texas, 77701
(409) 898-3988.

7. Hazlewood Exemption

The purpose of the Hazlewood Exemption is to provide an education benefit to Texas veterans who received an *honorable* or *general under honorable conditions* discharge and to eligible dependent children and spouses of Texas veterans.

Eligibility is for Veterans who

- a. were, at the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, Texas residents
- b. designated Texas as Home of Record or entered the service in Texas

- c. served at least 181 days of active military duty; and
- d. have no federal benefits dedicated to the semester enrolled that do not exceed the value of Hazlewood benefits (such as Ch 33 Post 9/11 or Ch 31 Voc Rehab).

These veterans must be

- a. current Texas residents
- b. not in default on a student loan made or guaranteed by the State of Texas, and
- c. enrolled in classes for which the college receives tax support.

Qualifying Veterans may transfer their unused Hazlewood benefits to their biological child, stepchild, adopted child, or dependent in the current or previous tax year. The child must be a Texas resident and 25 years or younger on the first day of the semester.

The children and/or spouse of qualifying Texas Veterans (who were members of the U.S. Armed Forces, Texas National Guard or Texas Air National Guard) are entitled to Hazlewood if the parent or spouse died as a result of service-related injuries or illness, is missing in action, or became totally disabled for purposes of employability as a result of service-related injury or illness. The children and/or spouses must be current Texas residents.

Further information and applications may be found at <http://www.tvc.texas.gov> or through the Lamar University Veterans Affairs Office at (409) 880-8998 or <https://www.lamar.edu/financial-aid/veterans-affairs/index.html> (<https://www.lamar.edu/financial-aid/veterans-affairs/>).

8. Release of Records

All records (applications and need analysis documents) submitted by a third party become the property of Lamar University and cannot be released to another institution or the student. Prior to processing, items submitted by the student may be returned upon the student's written request. Parental income tax information may be returned upon the written request of the parent. A minimum of five days may be required to complete the return of the requested items. Once the application has been processed, all items must be maintained for audit purposes and cannot be released.

9. Tuition Rebates for Certain Undergraduates

Certain students entering higher education for the first time in fall 1997 or later may be eligible for a \$1,000 tuition rebate granted at the time of graduation. Specific details of this program are available from the Registrar, at Registrar@lamar.edu (Registrar@lamar.edu). To be eligible to apply for this rebate, students must meet all the following conditions:

- a. Enroll in higher education for the first time in the fall of 1997 or later.
- b. Work toward a first baccalaureate degree.
- c. Attempt all courses at a Texas state institution and have been entitled to pay resident tuition rates at all times of enrollment.
- d. Graduate within four calendar years for a four-year degree or five calendar years for a five-year degree, if enrolled for the first time in fall 2005 or later.
- e. Attempt no more than three hours more than the minimum number of semester credit hours to complete the degree under the Lamar University General Catalog from which they graduated. Hours attempted include transfer credits, course credit earned by

examination (the first nine hours do not apply), courses dropped after the official census date, for-credit college readiness courses, optional internship and cooperative education courses, and passed, failed or repeated courses. Co-enrolled courses taken as a high school student do not count toward these total hours.

- f. Apply to the Office of the Registrar during the semester in which the student applies for graduation.

Dispute Resolution

A student must write a request that they are appealing a Tuition Rebate decision to the Registrar's Office, within 30 days after commencement or 30 days following the date of notification that they were ineligible (whichever comes first). A Tuition Rebate Committee (composed of representation from the Offices of the Registrar, the Bursar, Financial Aid and Scholarships and the Dean of the relevant college) will review all appeals within five working days of the request. The committee will notify the student in writing of their decision. Students may appeal all decisions made by the tuition Rebate committee to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.

10. Refunds

For those students withdrawing from the university and who are receiving or have received financial aid (grants, loans, scholarships), all or a portion of the refund will be returned to the appropriate financial assistance source. Recipients in attendance at Lamar University for the first time and who withdraw prior to the 60% point in the semester will have refunds calculated according to the Pro-Rata Refund Schedule listed below. All other applicable refunds will be calculated according to the Refund Policy as outlined in the Fees and Expenses section of this catalog.

Pro-Rata Refund Schedule

Fall, Spring or Summer Full Term Semesters

- a. Prior to the first class day, 100%
- b. During the first week, 80%
- c. During the second week, 70%
- d. During the third week, 50%
- e. During the fourth week, 25%
- f. During the fifth week, 0%

Summer Session and Half Term Semesters

- a. Prior to the first class day, 100%
- b. During class days 1-3, 80%
- c. During class days 4-6, 50%
- d. After the 6th class day, 0%

For dates relevant to refunds during accelerated online courses, see the [LU Online Calendar \(https://www.lamar.edu/onlinecalendar/\)](https://www.lamar.edu/onlinecalendar/).

In allocating the refund to specific programs, Lamar University will practice a "Fixed Priority Allocation." The listing below indicates the priority in which programs will be refunded. The full amount received under each program is returned in priority order until the refund amount is exhausted. The amount returned to a specific program cannot exceed the amount the student received from that program. Refunds due to the Department of Education (DOE) for Stafford Loans and PLUS Loans will be refunded directly to the DOE. The Director of Student Financial Aid may exercise professional judgment in exceptions to the distribution hierarchy policy.

Refund Priority

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal SEOG
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
- Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
- Federal PLUS Loan

Policy Regarding Referrals of Suspected Fraud or Criminal Misconduct

If an applicant is suspected of participating in fraud or other criminal misconduct in connection with the application for Title IV, HEA program assistance, the information will be referred to the appropriate university, state, and/or federal authorities. These authorities may include but are not limited to, the following: University Discipline Officer, University Police, Beaumont Police and the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education.