

**2016–2017**

# **Financial Aid Handbook**

**Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA)  
George Mason University**

Federal School Code 003749



# IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows students and parents to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and transfer the data directly into their FAFSA from the IRS Web site. If you are eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, we highly recommend using the tool for several reasons:

1. It's the easiest way to provide your tax data.
2. It's the best way of ensuring that your FAFSA has accurate tax information.
3. You won't need to provide a copy of your or your parents' tax returns to the OSFA.

Students or parents who are married and filed as Married Filing Separately, are married and filed as Head of Household, filed a Form 1040X amended tax return, or filed a Puerto Rican or foreign tax return are not eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. Additionally, students or parents who filed their tax returns electronically within the last three weeks, or through the mail within the last eleven weeks, might need to return at a later date to transfer their tax return information into the FAFSA, as their tax return information might not be available for transfer from the IRS.

To use the Data Retrieval Tool, complete the following steps:

- Go to [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov) and select the "Start Here" button
- Log in using your FSA ID
- Select the "Continue" or "Make a Correction" button
- Select the "Financial Information" tab from the top of the page.

## Instructions for the parent to request the parent IRS information:

1. Go to "Parent Financial Information" page
2. Answer the questions in the first box to see if you are eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool
3. If eligible, select which parent is providing information on the FAFSA
4. Enter the FSA ID for the parent providing the information
5. Click "Link to IRS" (**Note:** *If you previously transferred your tax return information from the IRS, or you indicate that you filed your tax return electronically within the last three weeks or through the mail within the last eleven weeks, then the **Link To IRS** button displays once you click the "View option to link to the IRS" hyperlink).*
6. Review the information displayed and select the "Transfer My Information into the FAFSA" option

## Instructions for the student to request the student IRS information:

1. Go to "Student Financial Information" page
2. Answer the questions in the first box to see if you are eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool
3. If eligible, click "Link to IRS" (**Note:** *If you previously transferred your tax return information from the IRS, or you indicate that you filed your tax return electronically within the last three weeks or through the mail within the last eleven weeks, then the **Link To IRS** button displays once you click the "View option to link to the IRS" hyperlink).*
4. Review the information displayed and select the "Transfer My Information into the FAFSA" option
5. Proceed to the Sign and Submit page

# Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Students must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in order to receive federal and state financial aid. Academic progress of students is reviewed annually, at the end of each spring semester. Students who do not meet the minimum SAP requirements for financial aid after that review will be ineligible for financial aid and placed on financial aid suspension.

## ***Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards:***

Academic progress standards are measured in the following three ways:

### **1. Qualitative Standard:** A minimum cumulative grade point average (**GPA**).

- Undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0
- Graduate and doctoral students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0
- Law students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.15

### **2. Quantitative Standard:** A minimum **completion rate**.

Completion rates are calculated by the number of completed credit hours divided by the number of attempted credit hours. All students must have successfully completed at least **67%** of all hours attempted. Completion rate calculations include credits attempted at Mason as well as credits transferred into Mason.

For example, a student who attempted 50 credits and completed 45 credits has a 90% completion rate.

- Incompletes, withdrawals, failing grades and grades of NC (no credit) all count as attempted but not completed credit hours.
- If a student **repeats** a course, both the original and the repeated courses will count toward attempted credit hours but only one of the courses (if a passing grade is earned) will count toward earned credit hours. Students may receive financial aid one time only for courses they are repeating to improve a course grade.

### **3. Maximum Time Frame for Degree Completion:**

In addition to the above GPA and completion rate requirements, all students must complete their programs of study by attempting no more than 150% of the hours normally required for completion. For example, if a program of study is normally completed with 120 credit hours, financial aid eligibility will be suspended once a student has attempted 180 credit hours or more. Repeated courses are considered in the maximum time frame requirement. Transfer credit hours accepted as part of a student's degree program will be counted as both attempted and completed hours towards their maximum time frame for degree completion. Therefore, a student in a Bachelor's degree program may attempt up to 180 credits before the student is considered to have exceeded the Maximum Time Frame. This 150% rule is also applicable to students who have changed majors or who seek a dual or second degree.

Please note: All courses attempted at Mason, regardless of the length of time that has passed since the last date of the student's enrollment will be factored into a student's SAP calculation.

### ***Loss of eligibility due to lack of satisfactory academic progress:***

A student who has lost eligibility to participate in federal student aid programs for reasons of academic progress will be ineligible for financial aid until they are meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress. Students who have been academically suspended from the university but who are subsequently given permission to re-enroll are not automatically eligible to continue to participate in federal, state, or institutional aid programs. Admissions decisions are separate from funding decisions.

### ***Appeals:***

Students have the right to appeal any decision of financial aid ineligibility. Appeals must be filed within 10 days of notification that aid eligibility has been lost. The appeal may not be based upon your need for the assistance, your lack of knowledge that your assistance was in jeopardy or courses taken at another institution during a “break” from attending Mason. An appeal would normally be based upon some unusual situation, condition or other mitigating circumstances which prevented you from passing courses, or which necessitated that you withdraw from classes. Examples of possible situations include documented serious illness, severe injury, or death of a family member.

### **How to Appeal**

If your financial aid eligibility has been suspended due to low GPA, completion rate and/or maximum timeframe, you must request reinstatement by submitting the following forms and any supporting documentation to the OSFA. Students appealing for the 2016 summer term must submit an appeal to the OSFA by June 30, 2016. Appeals for the 2016 fall semester must be submitted to the OSFA no later than one week prior to the start of the semester. Appeals received after this date will be reviewed for the 2017 spring semester only. Students will be notified via email of the result of their appeal. **Please allow a minimum of two to three weeks for processing.**

1. [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) Appeal Form](#)
2. [SAP Student Educational Plan Form](#)

For SAP Appeals, students may contact an advisor from the [Academic Advising Contact List](#).

### ***Appeal Approval Conditions:***

Appeals can only be approved if the Financial Aid Appeals Committee determines:

- that the student will be able to meet minimum SAP standards after the next payment period;

OR

- that the student has agreed to follow an academic plan, that if followed, will ensure that the student can meet minimum SAP standards by a specific point in time.

### **If an appeal is approved:**

Students whose appeals are approved will receive aid on a conditional basis. The conditions will be outlined in a letter emailed to the student. The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will continue to monitor the student’s record to determine

his/her financial aid status for future semesters. Students who fail to meet the conditions outlined in their individualized academic plans will not be eligible to submit a subsequent appeal.

If you do not have grounds for an appeal, or if your appeal is denied, you may still be able to regain your eligibility for future semesters. This is done by enrolling in courses at Mason at your own expense and meeting SAP standards.

### **Tuition Surcharge: 125 Percent of Degree**

Undergraduate students who have established Virginia domicile and eligibility for in-state tuition will be subject to a surcharge if they exceed 125 percent of the credits required to complete a degree. The surcharge will be determined by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia.

The following courses and credit hours shall be excluded in calculating the 125 percent credit threshold: remedial courses; transfer credits from another college or university that do not meet degree requirements for [Mason Core](#) courses or the student's chosen program of study; advanced placement or international baccalaureate credits that were obtained while in high school or another secondary school program; and dual enrollment, college-level credits obtained by the student prior to receiving a high school diploma.

# Constitution Day and Voter Information

September 17 is Constitution Day and Citizenship Day (Constitution Day). This day commemorates the September 17, 1787, signing of the United States Constitution. Written in 1787, ratified in 1788, and in operation since 1789, the United States Constitution is the world's longest surviving written charter of government. Its first three words — "We the People" — affirm that the government of the United States exists to serve its citizens. For over two centuries the Constitution has remained in force because its framers wisely separated and balanced governmental powers to safeguard the interests of majority rule and minority rights, of liberty and equality, and of the federal and state governments. Since 1789, the Constitution has evolved through amendments to meet the changing needs of a nation now profoundly different from the eighteenth-century world in which its creators lived.

To encourage all Americans to learn more about the Constitution, Congress in 1956 established Constitution Week, to begin each year on September 17th, the date in 1787 when delegates to the Convention signed the Constitution. In 2004, Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia included key provisions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2005 designating September 17th of each year as Constitution Day and requiring public schools and governmental offices to provide educational programs to promote a better understanding of the Constitution.

The following links will provide you with additional information and resources on the Constitution and what it means to you:

#### **The Declaration of Independence**

[The Declaration of Independence](#)

School House Rock-[The Declaration](#)

#### **The Constitution**

[The Constitution of the United States](#)

[The Constitution of the United States en Espanol](#)

[The Founding Fathers](#)

[Take the Constitution IQ Quiz](#)

[Constitution Facts, Real or Fake?](#)  
[Constitution Duel](#)  
[Famous Quotes about the Constitution](#)  
[Constitution FAQ's](#)  
[Constitutions Around the World](#)  
School House Rock-[The Preamble](#)

**The Bill of Rights**  
[The Bill of Rights](#)  
[Bill of Rights Game](#)

**Our Government**  
[The 3 Branches](#)  
School House Rock-[3 Branches of Government](#)

**The Executive Branch**  
[The Executive Branch](#)  
[The White House](#)

**The Legislative Branch**  
[The Legislative Branch](#)  
[The House of Representatives](#)  
[The United States Senate](#)  
School House Rock-[I'm Just a Bill](#)

**The Judicial Branch**  
[The Judicial Branch](#)  
[Supreme Court of the United States](#)

## Voter Information

[Learn about Elections & Voting](#)  
[Registering to Vote](#)  
[Rock the Vote](#)  
[Volunteering & Contributing to the Election Process](#)  
School House Rock-[I'm Gonna Send Your Vote to College](#)

# Withdrawing from courses

## Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4)

The OSFA is required by federal law to re-calculate federal financial aid eligibility for students who completely withdraw from all classes, stop attending, are dismissed, never attend, or take a leave of absence prior to completing 60% of a payment period or term. According to the regulations, the amount of Federal Title IV awarded to a student must be recalculated in these situations and any portion of the financial aid received that is considered to be "unearned" must be returned to the Title IV Program(s) from which it was received. Students will be billed by Mason for any amount due to the University as a result of Title IV funds that were returned that would have been used to cover University charges.

Please note that Mason uses the same return policy for state grants as is required for federal funds.

**If you are considering dropping or withdrawing from all your courses, please contact your Financial Aid Counselor immediately regarding possible adjustments to your financial aid.**

For a student who withdraws after the 60% point-in-time, there are no unearned funds. However, a school must still complete a Return calculation in order to determine whether the student is eligible for a post-withdrawal disbursement.

The calculation is based on the percentage of earned aid using the following Federal Return of Title IV funds formula:

Percentage of payment period or term completed = the number of days completed up to the withdrawal date divided by the total days in the payment period or term. (Any break of five days or more is not counted as part of the days in the term.) This percentage is also the percentage of earned aid.

Funds are returned to the appropriate federal program based on the percentage of unearned aid using the following formula:

Aid to be returned = (100% of the aid that could be disbursed minus the percentage of earned aid) multiplied by the total amount of aid that could have been disbursed during the payment period or term.

If a student earned less aid than was disbursed, the institution would be required to return a portion of the funds and the student would be required to return a portion of the funds. Keep in mind that when Title IV funds are returned, the student borrower may owe a debit balance to the institution.

If a student earned more aid than was disbursed to him/her, the institution would owe the student a post-withdrawal disbursement which must be paid within 120 days of the student's withdrawal.

The institution must return the amount of Title IV funds for which it is responsible no later than 45 days after the date of the determination of the date of the student's withdrawal.

Funds to be returned are processed in the following order:

- Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loans (other than PLUS loans)
- Subsidized Direct Stafford Loans
- Federal Perkins Loans
- Federal Parent (PLUS) Loans
- Direct PLUS Loans
- Federal Pell Grants for which a Return of funds is required
- Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grants for which a Return of funds is required

Please note that Mason uses the same return policy for state grants as is required for federal funds.

### **Withdrawing from courses offered in modules**

A program is offered in modules if, for a payment period or period of enrollment, a course or courses in the program do not span the entire length of the payment period or period of enrollment. For all programs offered in modules, a student is a withdrawal for Title IV purposes if the student ceases attendance at any

point prior to completing the payment period or period of enrollment, unless the school obtains written confirmation from the student at the time of the withdrawal that he or she will attend a module that begins later in the same payment period or period of enrollment.

The summer term at Mason is considered modular-based, as are fall and spring courses that are offered in multiple sessions throughout the fall and spring term. Therefore, students enrolled in summer courses or fall and spring modules may be considered withdrawn if they do not complete all of the days in the payment period that they were scheduled to complete. In these situations a recalculation of aid known as R2T4 (Return to Title IV) may be required and any unearned funds will be returned to the appropriate Title IV source. If the recalculation results in an over-award, the student will become ineligible for aid they may have already received. An over-award will require the immediate return of a loan, grant and other aid for which the student is determined to be ineligible and will prevent all future federal and state aid from being disbursed until the over-award is paid in full.

Students who drop or withdraw from any modular course and plan to enroll in future course in the same payment period or period of enrollment must immediately confirm their intent to re-enroll, in writing, to the OSFA. Students who fail to confirm their intent will be assumed to be withdrawn from the university and any aid disbursed will be adjusted or canceled. Please contact the OSFA immediately if you are dropping course(s) prior to the start date of the course(s), or if some of your classes are canceled after your aid has disbursed, or if you withdraw from a course(s), as this may result in a recalculation of your financial aid eligibility.

## Citizenship Requirements

In order to qualify for Federal and State Financial Aid, a student must be a citizen or eligible non-citizen. Students that have been asked to provide the OSFA with proof of their US citizenship or DHS eligible citizenship status must present their original document in-person at the OSFA. Students that are unable to appear in-person must complete and follow the steps listed on the [Citizenship Affidavit](#) form. The OSFA is unable to accept citizenship documents from family members on behalf of the student. With the exception of U.S. Passports, expired documents are not acceptable. Copies are not permitted unless indicated otherwise below. For additional information regarding citizenship, please visit: [Student Aid Guide - Citizenship](#) .

### Eligible Citizenship Status for Financial Aid:

- A U.S. citizen or national;
- A U.S. permanent resident or other eligible noncitizen;
- A citizen of the Freely Associated States: the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republics of Palau and the Marshall Islands. These students can only receive aid from some of the financial aid programs.

### Documentation of U.S. Citizenship



- A copy of the student's birth certificate showing that the student was born in the United States, which includes Puerto Rico (on or after January 13, 1941), Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands (on or after January 17, 1917), American Samoa, Swains Island, or the Northern Mariana Islands, unless the person was born to foreign diplomats residing in the U.S.
- A U.S. passport, current or expired, except limited passports.
- A copy of Form FS-240 (Consular Report of Birth Abroad), FS-545 (Certificate of birth issued by a foreign service post), or DS-1350 (Certification of Report of Birth). These are State Department documents.
- A Certificate of Citizenship (N-560 or N-561), issued by USCIS to individuals who derive U.S. citizenship through a parent.
- A Certificate of Naturalization (N-550 or N-570), issued by USCIS through a federal or state court, or through administrative naturalization after December 1990 to those who are individually naturalized.

#### **Documentation of U.S. Permanent Resident or other eligible noncitizen:**

##### **Lawful permanent residents:**

- The standard document is the Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551 since 1997) or Resident Alien Card (Form I-551 before 1997). Both forms are referred to colloquially as "green cards," though they have changed color over the years. Possessors of the older Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-151, issued prior to June 1978) should have replaced it with a newer card, but for receiving FSA funds it is acceptable as evidence of permanent residence.
- Permanent residents may also present an Arrival/Departure Record (CBP Form I-94) or the Departure Record (Form I-94A, which is used at land border ports of entry) with the endorsement "Processed for I-551. Temporary Evidence of Lawful Admission for Permanent Residence. Valid until \_\_\_\_\_. Employment Authorized." The form will have an A-Number annotated on it and is acceptable if the expiration date has not passed.

##### **Conditional Resident alien of the United States:**

- Conditional Resident Aliens are eligible for aid if their documentation has not expired. I-551, I-94, I-94A, or a passport with an MRIV bearing the statement "Upon endorsement serves as temporary I-551 evidencing permanent residence for 1 year.

##### **Alien granted asylum or refugee status in the United States:**

###### **Refugees:**

- Form I-94 or I-94A annotated with a stamp showing admission under Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).
- Old Refugee Travel Document (Form I-571)
- Newer U.S. Travel Document annotated with "Refugee Travel Document Form I-571"

###### **Persons granted asylum in the United States:**

- I-94 or I-94A with a stamp showing admission under Section 208 of the INA.
- May also have the same travel documents described for refugees.

##### **Alien paroled into the United States pursuant to Section 212(d)(5) of the INA:**

**Persons paroled into the U.S. for at least one year** must provide evidence (such as having filed a valid permanent resident application) from the DHS that they are in the U.S. for other than a temporary purpose and intend to become a

citizen or permanent resident. Their documentation must have a stamp indicating that the student has been paroled into the United States for at least one year, with a date that has not expired.

**Alien who is a Cuban/Haitian entrant as defined by Section 501(e) of the REAA of 1980:**

Students will have a stamp across the face of the I-94 indicating that they have been classified as a “Cuban-Haitian Entrant (Status Pending). Reviewable January 15, 1981. Employment authorized until January 15, 1981.” A document showing that the holder is a Cuban-Haitian entrant is valid even if the expiration date has passed.

**Alien who is a conditional entrant:**

I-94 with a stamp displaying “Section 203(a)(7)” indicating that the person was admitted to the United States as a conditional entrant prior to March 31, 1980.

**Victims of human trafficking**

- Student’s certification or eligibility letter from the Department of Health and Human Services(HHS).
- The spouse, child, or parent of a trafficking victim might be eligible for aid with a T-visa (e.g., T-2or T-3).

**American Indian born in Canada, to whom the provisions of section 289 of the INA applies**

Students who may be eligible for financial aid funds under the INA and who have a valid A-number should enter that on the FAFSA and indicate they are eligible noncitizens. Jay Treaty students who don’t have a valid A-number should enter “A999999999” in that field on the FAFSA and report that they are eligible noncitizens. The student must submit proof that such a student has 50% Native American blood and was born in Canada. To do so, the student should provide one or more of the following documents:

- A “band card” issued by the Band Council of a Canadian Reserve, or by the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa;
- Birth or baptism records;
- An affidavit from a tribal official or other person knowledgeable about the applicant’s or recipient’s family history;
- Identification from a recognized Native American provincial or territorial organization.

**Battered immigrants-qualified aliens**

Students may, with their designated children, be eligible under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) for federal public benefits, including Federal Student Aid. The student must obtain and provide documentation based on their case type: self-petition, suspension of deportation, or cancellation of removal. Please contact your assigned Financial Aid Counselor for information regarding the required documentation.

**Ineligible Citizenship Status:**

- Students granted **DACA** (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals).
- Persons with nonimmigrant visas** include those with work visas, students, visitors, and foreign government officials. Someone with a nonimmigrant visa isn’t eligible for FSA funds unless she has a Form I-94 with one of the endorsements given in the eligible document section. Nonimmigrant visas include the F-1, F-2, or M-1 Student Visa, B-1 or B-2 Visitor Visa, J-1 or J-2 Exchange Visitors Visa, H-series or L series Visa (which allow temporary employment in the U.S.), or a G series Visa (pertaining to international organizations). Someone who has only a “Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence (I-171 or I-464)” cannot receive financial aid funds.
- Family unity status** individuals have been granted relief from deportation under the Family Unity Program. They may present an approved Form I-817, Application for Family Unity Benefits. Previously they were eligible for financial aid funds, but they are no longer eligible.

- **Temporary residents** are allowed to live and work in the U.S. under the Legalization or Special Agricultural Worker program. Previously they were eligible for financial aid funds, but they are no longer eligible.
- **Illegal aliens under the legalization (also called the amnesty) program** established by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). These individuals were given documentation that allowed them to work while their application for permanent resident status was being processed, but they aren't eligible for aid unless their application was approved. Documents they might have in the interim are the Employment Authorization Card (Form I-688A), Employment Authorization Documents (Form I-688B or the I-766), or the Temporary Resident Card (Form I-688). None of these documents qualifies a student for financial aid.
- **Students with "Temporary Protected Status"** stamped on their I-94 forms. This is used for persons who are from countries that are in upheaval, but the status differs significantly from refugee or asylee because it provides no conversion to permanent resident status. These students are not eligible for financial aid funds.
- **Alien who is employment authorized in the United States.** This indicates the expiration date or that there is no expiration. Employment authorization doesn't make the student eligible for FSA funds. Unless some eligible status is also checked or the student can provide other documentation that can be confirmed by the USCIS, the student isn't eligible for aid.
- **Aliens not employment authorized in the United States.** This block is checked when an alien's status prohibits employment in the United States. Students with this status aren't eligible for aid. Citizenship and Immigration Services will initial and stamp the front of the G-845 in the signature block.
- **Alien who has an application pending.** This is an alien waiting for a new immigration status or a change of status. A pending application for an immigration status doesn't by itself make the student eligible for financial aid funds; he must have an eligible status checked on the form or provide other documentation of an eligible status.
- **Alien who is a non-immigrant.** A student with this status is not eligible for financial aid funds.

# Appeals

## Dependency Appeal

Students may submit a dependency appeal if they feel they should be considered independent from their parent(s) for financial aid purposes even though they do not meet any of the automatic independent criteria as outlined in Step 2 of the FAFSA. Please note that your parent(s) choosing not to pay for your education is not considered an estrangement and is not grounds for an appeal. Dependency appeals may be submitted under the following circumstances:

1. A severe estrangement exists between you and your parent(s) which would make it unreasonable to expect you to be able to obtain the necessary parental data to complete the FAFSA. Examples of what would be considered a severe estrangement are if the student is in danger of abuse, either physical or mental.
2. If the student has been abandoned by their parents.

If a student wishes to pursue an appeal of their dependency status, he or she must schedule an appointment with their Financial Aid Counselor. Approval of a dependency appeal does NOT guarantee that status in future years. Dependency appeals must be re-certified every year. Your appeal will be reviewed by a committee of financial aid administrators and additional documentation may be required to substantiate your appeal.

## **Change of Circumstances Appeal**

If you believe that the information on your FAFSA does not reflect your current circumstances, please email the Financial Aid Office ([finaid@gmu.edu](mailto:finaid@gmu.edu)) to make arrangements to discuss your situation with a financial aid counselor.

## **Athletic Grant-In-Aid Appeal**

If a student-athlete's athletic grant-in-aid is reduced or cancelled during the period of the award or is reduced or not renewed for the following academic year, the student-athlete has the opportunity for a hearing to appeal the decision. Student-athletes will have 20 business days from the date of the letter notifying them of the reduction or non-renewal decision to request an appeal of that decision. Requests for appeal must be made in writing to the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) Director.

Upon receipt of the written request for appeal, the OSFA Director will promptly convene the Athletic Grant-In-Aid Appeals Committee to hear the appeal. The OSFA Director will notify the student-athlete of the date of the hearing.

The Athletic Grant-In-Aid Appeals Committee is comprised of staff members from various offices in the university and is chaired by the OSFA Director.

The student-athlete will be given the opportunity to present the basis for his/her appeal after which the Head Coach (or his/her designee) will present the basis for the reduction/non-renewal decision. It is preferable that all parties are present in person for the appeals hearing; however, if that is not possible, a party may participate in the hearing via teleconference. During both presentations, only committee members shall be allowed to address or question the presenters. In addition to hearing from the student-athlete and the Head Coach (or his/her designee), the committee may interview any other witness or review any other documents or materials it deems relevant.

Each party will be able to bring one individual to the hearing to serve as a support person. That individual will be permitted only to observe the hearing; he/she shall not participate in the hearing in any way.

The Associate Athletic Director for Compliance will be present for the hearing but will not be present during deliberations. The role of the Associate Athletic Director for Compliance is to provide the committee information about applicable NCAA rules and regulations.

Once both sides have presented their position and the committee has collected and considered any other evidence it deems necessary, the committee will meet in private to make a decision on the appeal. The committee shall use good faith efforts to make a final decision within 48 hours of the hearing. The committee shall evaluate whether the reduction/non-renewal decision was reasonable and consistent with the NCAA rules. If it finds that the decision was either unreasonable and/or inconsistent with NCAA rules, the committee shall grant the student-athlete's appeal.

The committee's decision will be determined by majority vote. Once a decision is made, the OSFA Director will notify both parties in writing of the final decision. Pursuant to NCAA rules, all decisions of the committee are final.

## **Loss of Scholarship Appeal**

Students who have been sent a notification of loss of scholarship from the Scholarship Manager at George Mason University, may appeal the loss by contacting the Office of Financial Aid at ([gmsuch@gmu.edu](mailto:gmsuch@gmu.edu)). Your letter or email should explain in detail the circumstances that affected your ability to meet the minimum standards for scholarship renewal. Documentation of those circumstances should be included to the extent possible. You will be notified by the Scholarship Manager if your appeal was granted. If you are granted reinstatement of your scholarship by the Appeals Committee (or, in the case of University Scholars, the director of the University Scholars program), please note that no additional requests for scholarship reinstatement will be granted should you fail to meet scholarship standards a second time. All appeals for scholarship reinstatement must be received no later than one week prior to the start of your next semester (e.g. one week prior to fall for reinstatement for fall semester). Any appeals for scholarship reinstatement received later than one week prior to the semester will be reviewed only for the following semester.

### **Loss of Financial Aid Appeal**

Please refer to the handbook section on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) if appealing the loss of financial aid due to failure to meet SAP standards.

## **Disclosures**

In accordance with the [2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act \(HEOA\)](#), George Mason University makes certain disclosures available to prospective and current students.

#### **Postsecondary education and employment**

Students and prospective students may find the information resources of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) of use in planning for college and careers. SCHEV has created an institutional profile for each Virginia public college and university, and for each independent college or university participating in the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program. Mason's profile can be found here:

#### **George Mason University**

#### **George Mason University Strategic Plan**

- Ten-year Plan
- Six-year Plan

#### **Annual Fiscal Report**

#### **Cost of Attendance**

- Cost of Attendance
- Net Price Calculator - Mason's
- Net Price - College Navigator, National Center for Educational Statistics

#### **Assistance in Obtaining Institutional or Financial Aid Information**

- From George Mason University
- From National Center for Education Statistics

#### **Student Loan Information**

- National Student Loan Data System

- Student Loan Information Published by the Dept. of Education
- George Mason Student Loan Information
- State Grant Assistance Information for Student Borrowers
- Financial Aid Entrance and exit counseling
- Federal Student Loan Default Rate
- Federal Direct Loan - College Navigator, National Center for Educational Statistics

## **Gainful Employment**

### **Employment and Graduate Education of Graduates**

- Alumni Survey
- Graduating Senior Exit Survey
- National Survey of Student Engagement
- Annual Post-Secondary Education and Employment Data

### **Accreditation, Approval, and Licensure of Institution and Programs**

- From George Mason University - SACS
- National Center for Education Statistics

### **Retention and Graduation Rates**

- From George Mason University
- From George Mason University - Pell
- From National Center for Education Statistics

### **Campus Security Policies and Crime Statistics**

- Code of Student Conduct
- Crime Log
- Annual Security Report

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Mason's Core Curriculum
- Mason Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes
- Portfolio Assessment of Mason Core
- Assessment Results
- **Mason's Academic Program Review**
- Academic Program Review Process
- Mason's Program Review Outcomes
- Assessment of Students as Scholars
- Student Surveys - Reports

### **General Institutional Information**

- Student Activities
- Disability Support Services
- Transfer Credit Information
- Textbooks
- Graduate & Professional School Enrollment of Bachelor's Recipients

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - Privacy of Student Records
- Refund Policies
- Requirements for Withdrawal and for the Return of Title IV, HEA Financial Aid
- Intercollegiate Athletic Program Participation Rates And Financial Support Data (Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act)
- Student Body Diversity - Official Enrollment
- Student Body Diversity - Degrees Awarded
- Academic Programs
- Copyright Infringement - Policies and Sanctions
- Notice of Federal Drug Law Violations - Title IV
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program
- Voter Registration Guidelines

## Document Submission

Students that are required to submit additional documentation will be notified via email. New students who have not established Mason email accounts will be emailed at the email account listed on their Mason student record.

With the exception of any document requiring citizenship information, you may submit your documents/forms via mail, fax or in-person to the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA), which is located on the 1st floor of SUB I on the Fairfax Campus. The Office's fax number is 703-993-2350.

Citizenship documents must be submitted by the student in-person at the OSFA. If you are unable to appear in-person, please complete and follow the steps listed on the [Citizenship Affidavit](#) form.

After submitting your documents, please allow a minimum of 7-10 business days for processing. If any additional documentation is still required from you, you will receive another email from the OSFA. When all documents are verified, PatriotWeb will show a complete status.

## Subsidized Loan Limitation – 150%

As of July 1, 2013, a first-time Federal Direct Subsidized Loan borrower is no longer eligible for the Subsidized Direct Loan Program and the interest subsidy if he or she exceeds 150% of the published length of the student's undergraduate degree program. This regulation defines a "first-time borrower" as someone who either has never borrowed a Subsidized Loan or is a student that has paid off all outstanding balances on either a Direct or Federal Family Educational Loan Program.

The U. S. Department of Education wants to encourage students to obtain undergraduate degrees within a reasonable time frame and no longer wants to provide interest rate subsidies for students taking an exceptional amount of time to obtain an undergraduate degree. Students, who change majors, drop classes or retake classes excessively, are most likely to be affected by this federal regulation. Presently, the interpretation of the 150% rule is actual credit hours completed versus credit hours attempted. Please view the following link for additional information: Direct Subsidized Loan Time Limitation

## Returning Loans

The OSFA will return federal loan funds on the student's behalf up to 14 days after the loan disburses to the student's account. After 14 days, the student will be responsible for paying their loan servicer directly. Loan servicer contact information can be found at [www.nsls.ed.gov](http://www.nsls.ed.gov) . Students must submit requests to return loan funds in writing to the OSFA.

Students who wish to return private/alternative loan funds will need to make a payment directly to their lender.

## Perkins Loan Servicing

The loan servicer for Perkins loans borrowed at George Mason University is ECSI. To make payments or manage your Perkins loan, please contact ECSI at <https://borrower.ecsi.net/> or 1-888-549-3274.