

INTRODUCTION

Federal regulations require that institutions have written policies and procedures. Beyond this federal requirement, there are many benefits to having a written document outlining Student Financial Services policies and procedures: 1) for distribution to appropriate others outside the Office of Student Financial Services for the purpose of informing and fostering an understanding of the complexity and operation of the Office of Student Financial Services; 2) for Student Financial Services staff as a referral guide to assist in maintaining consistency in the problem-solving process; and 3) as an important component of a comprehensive training program.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to record policies and procedures surrounding the delivery of financial aid at the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI).

THIS MANUAL:

- Provides the Student Financial Services staff with current policies and procedures surrounding federal, state, and institutional programs
- Provides each staff member with the general responsibilities of the total staff and the office's relationship to other departments/divisions of the university
- Provides each staff member with general office procedures ensuring that similar situations would be handled consistently
- Provides quick reference to various programs, problems, forms, rules, and regulations.
- Provides a clear understanding of policy, authority, and responsibility in matters relating to operational practices
- Provides orientation and training materials for new personnel

FINANCIAL AID REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Reference materials which assist the Office of Student Financial Services staff in the delivery of financial aid are maintained in the Director's office. These include but are not limited to, current regulations published in the Federal Register; the Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook; Verification Guide; Audit Guide; Dear Colleague Letters as well as policies and procedures furnished by outside agencies regarding their funding and/or administration. Examples of these include the Finance Authority of Maine.

This Policies and Procedures Manual does not entail all details of the administration of financial aid programs and the related references should be used for in-depth clarity.

FINANCIAL AID PHILOSOPHY

The University of Maine at Presque Isle makes every effort to ensure that each student who is accepted and wishes to enroll has the financial ability to meet his or her educational expenses. Financial aid is offered to qualified students in the forms of scholarships, grants, loans, and work assistance. Most financial aid is offered as a "package" of gift aid (scholarships and/or grants for which no repayment is expected) and self-help (loans and part-time employment during the academic year).

In adhering to the philosophy that the primary responsibility for meeting college expenses rests with the student and the family, most aid is offered on the basis of financial need (the

difference between the estimated cost of attendance and the amount the family can be expected to contribute). The estimated cost of attendance includes tuition, fees, room and board, and a modest allowance for books, supplies, travel and miscellaneous expenses. Factors considered in determining a family's ability to help finance a student's education are: taxable income, non-taxable income, cash and bank accounts, family size and the number of family members in college. Normally, only a small percentage of a family's adjusted gross income is considered a resource for a student's college education. In addition, students are expected to contribute a portion of their savings and base year earnings.

GENERAL FINANCIAL AID POLICIES

The University of Maine at Presque Isle uses the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the United States Department of Education's tool to collect the data required to determine the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This figure, in conjunction with other information, is used by the university to determine a student's eligibility for institutional, state and federal student assistance programs.

In the awarding of financial aid, the University of Maine at Presque Isle must comply with the regulations set forth by the U.S. Department of Education. Some of these are outlined below as they pertain to the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

- The primary purpose of financial aid is to provide financial assistance to those students who, without such aid, would be unable to attend the University of Maine at Presque Isle.
- The University of Maine at Presque Isle works with schools, community groups, and other educational institutions in support of the national goal of equality in educational opportunity.
- The University of Maine at Presque Isle publishes student educational expense budgets which include both direct and indirect educational costs.
- Both parents and students are expected to contribute from their assets and income, according to their means.
- Financial Aid is offered only after determination that the resources of the family are insufficient to meet the student's educational expenses. The amount of aid offered should not exceed the amount needed to meet the difference between the student's total educational expenses and the family's resources.
- The University of Maine at Presque Isle reviews its financial aid educational budgets annually and adjustments are made, if necessary, to reflect changes in the expenses of attending the University.
- Because the amount of Financial Aid offered reflects the financial circumstances of the student and his family, the University refrains from any public announcement of the amount of aid offered and encourages the student and others to respect the confidentiality of this information.
- It is of utmost importance to treat all documents, correspondence, and conversations regarding a student and/or his/her family in a confidential manner.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

Job Descriptions are found in the Office of Student Financial Services and the Human Resources Office.

President
Chief Business Officer
Director of Student Financial Services
Assistant Director of Financial Aid
Assistant Director of Financial Aid
Administrative Assistant II
Student Employees

GENERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION OFFICE HOURS

The Office of Student Financial Services is located on the second floor of Preble Hall. It is open and available to serve students from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday.

CORRESPONDENCE

General correspondence that cannot be answered by the Administrative Assistant is routed to the appropriate personnel. Where appropriate, correspondence should be responded to within one week. If a staff member is responding to a specific complaint, it is typical procedure for the staff member to have the Director review the correspondence. This allows the Director to be aware of potential problems.

TELEPHONE

Telephone calls are answered in a friendly and professional manner. Typically, each staff member answers his or her own incoming calls. If the caller requires specific information, the staff member should screen the call thoroughly and transfer the information and caller to the appropriate individual.

DISTRIBUTION OF FORMS

General financial aid forms and information is distributed from the Office of Student Financial Services as well as the University of Maine at Presque Isle website.

STAFF MEETINGS

Student Financial Services staff meetings are held as needed.

APPOINTMENTS WITH OFFICE STAFF

Students and parents who require general information may see a staff member without an appointment. If a student requests an appointment with a staff member, an appointment is arranged.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

The Office of Student Financial Services maintains a record for each student receiving financial assistance. All records and conversations between an aid applicant, his/her family and the staff of Student Financial Services are confidential and entitled to the protection ordinarily

given a counseling relationship. UMPI assures the confidentiality of student educational records in accordance with University of Maine System rules, state, and federal laws including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended. As a rule, all currently enrolled and former students have the right to review their records to determine their content and accuracy. A student who wishes to obtain access to his/her financial aid record must schedule an appointment with the Director of Student Financial Services.

All financial aid information is retained for a minimum of five years after submission of the FISAP report. Any records involved in any claim or expenditure which has been questioned by federal audit are retained until the question has been resolved.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

A student must submit the Student Consent to Release Information Form in order for information to be exchanged with other agencies or individuals.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the right to know the following:

- The type of financial assistance that is available, including information on all federal, state, and institutional aid programs
- Deadlines for submitting applications for each of the financial aid programs available.
- The cost of attendance at the University
- The University's policies on refunds to students who leave school.
- Criteria used to select financial aid recipients
- How the University determines student financial need. The process includes the cost for tuition and fees, room and board, travel, books and supplies, miscellaneous expenses, etc. are considered in the student budget
- The resources, such as parent contribution, assets, other financial aid, etc., are considered in the calculation of need
- How much of financial need, as determined by the University, has been met
- The portion of the financial aid the student receives must be repaid and what portion is grant aid
- How the University determines whether the student is making Satisfactory Academic Progress and what happens if progress is not being made
- The interest rate on loans, the length of time to repay the loan, and when repayment is to begin

Student responsibilities include the following:

- Review and consider all information about his/her program before enrolling

- Pay special attention to the FAFSA, it must be completed accurately and submitted on time. Intentional misreporting of information on federal financial aid application forms is a violation of law and is considered a criminal offense
- Supply all documentation, verification, corrections and/or additional information requested by the Office of Student Financial Services
- Carefully read and understand all forms before signing
- Accept responsibility for all agreements signed
- If the student has a loan, notify the servicer of changes in name, school/of any changes in address
- Perform all work agreed upon as a participant in the Federal Work Study Program in a satisfactory manner
- Be aware of and comply with the deadlines for application or reapplication for aid
- Be aware of and comply with the University's financial aid policies

STUDENT CONSUMER INFORMATION

Several policies have been implemented to ensure that dissemination of accurate and timely information to our students. Information regarding UMPI financial aid programs and policies is distributed through the following published documents:

- The UMPI Catalog (includes eligibility requirements, application process, academic progress requirements and aid programs available)
- The Image (UMPI's monthly newsletter)
- The University Times
- UMPI Website
- MaineStreet

Additional resources are published outside of, but are distributed through the Office of Student Financial Services. These resources include but are not limited to:

- Funding Your Education published by the U.S. Department of Education
- Pamphlets and brochures published by the U.S. Department of Education

Other disclosure and reporting requirements are met as follows:

- Annual campus security reports are distributed by the Chief Business Officer.
- Completion or graduation rates are published in the Registrar's Office
- All students are given information on University of Maine at Presque Isles Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program.
- Constitution Day is held once a year in September. A report is kept in the Student Affairs Office, which highlights activities/events that coincide with this celebration.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT PRESQUE ISLE POLICIES AND PRACTICES GOVERNING STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

By signing the Award Letter, a student agrees to comply with the following policies regarding his/her financial aid award at the University of Maine at Presque Isle. Failure to meet the requirements may result in a student having to repay funds and being denied future financial aid.

- The Office of Student Financial Services reserves the right on behalf of the University to review and cancel an award any time because of changes in financial or academic status, or change of academic program. If an overpayment occurs, the student is responsible for reimbursing the University.
- Recipients of financial assistance from the University **MUST** notify the Office of Student Financial Services of any educational assistance (grants, scholarships, outside assistance, etc.) extended to them from sources outside the University.
- Financial Aid is awarded contingent upon enrollment in an eligible program and maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress. The University catalog and webpage provide information about these policies.
- The initial award is based upon a student attending full time. The student is responsible for notifying the Office of Student Financial Services of his/her intended enrollment status. Credit loads are verified after the end of the Add/Drop period each semester, or each session if applicable, and awards are adjusted accordingly.
- Any commitment of Federal/State/Institutional Funds is tentative and contingent upon subsequent Congressional appropriation and actual receipt of the funds by the University of Maine at Presque Isle.
- New applications for financial aid are required and should be submitted before the priority awarding deadline of April 1st. Students are responsible for completing the FAFSA as well as providing any additional information requested by the Office of Student Financial Services.
- Multi Campus/Away Classes: Courses attempted at another campus are treated the same as other courses as long as they meet specific requirement of the degree program the student is matriculated in. Any student enrolled in Multi Campus/Away Courses, must complete the Study Away Form prior to any financial aid being disbursed. All course work must be approved by the Registrar.
- Concurrent Enrollment: Students attending other institutions of higher education while matriculated at the University of Maine at Presque Isle must have a completed Consortium Agreement on file in the Office of Student Financial Services prior to any financial aid being disbursed. Students can only receive financial aid at only one institution during a given term. All course work must be approved by the Registrar.
- Federal Repayment Policy: If a student receives Title IV financial aid (Pell Grant, SEOG, or Direct Stafford Loan) and stops attending all classes (officially or unofficially) prior to the 60% point of the term, repayment of a portion of those funds will be required.

PARTICIPATION IN FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

The Office of Student Financial Services participates in financial aid programs funded through a variety of sources. Types of assistance include scholarships, grants, loans, and work opportunities.

Scholarships and grants are gift aid which generally do not have to be repaid. Scholarships may be merit or need based. Grants are based on financial need. Work opportunities are considered self-help awards in which performance of duties are required. Work programs provide both on and off campus employment with hourly pay meeting minimum wage requirements or more.

The type of aid awarded depends upon the student's financial need and is generally a combination of gift and self-help assistance. As a public institution, the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) has been authorized by the United States Secretary of Education to participate in the Title IV Federal Financial Aid programs.

The Program Participation Agreement between the University of Maine at Presque Isle and the Department of Education entitles the Office of Student Financial Services to participate in the following federal programs:

- Federal Pell Grant Program
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program
- Federal Work-Study Program
- Direct Stafford Loan Program

Descriptions and eligibility requirements of each program are found in the Guide to Federal Student Aid, published annually by the U.S. Department of Education.

The University of Maine at Presque Isle also participates in the following state funded programs:

- Maine State Grant Program
- Educators for Maine Program
- Several Scholarship Programs

The Foundation of the University at Presque Isle as well as individual donors provide numerous scholarships opportunities. As with awards from other sources, they are used in computing the total aid package for students.

Current federal, state and institutional regulations, policies and guidelines are followed in awarding and disbursing aid from all financial aid programs in which we participate in.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The following award policy is established for those University scholarships for which the Office of Student Financial Services has authority to select recipients and determine award amounts within the limitations specified by the donor and/or the responsibility for funds management. Generally, this authority is designed in the scholarship description but may also have been delegated to the Office of Student Financial Services by the Board of Directors of the Foundation of the University at Presque Isle.

The Office of Student Financial Services awards University scholarship, including scholarships with limiting criteria, to students as part of a financial aid award package. Priority is given to determining scholarship eligibility on the basis of financial need. It is understood that a student with financial need must also satisfy the limiting criteria specified by the donor(s).

Scholarships are awarded so that total financial aid does not exceed the student's educational costs.

This general policy for awarding University scholarships does not apply when it conflicts with guidelines set forth by the donor(s). Every reasonable effort will be made to honor the intent of the donor.

Application Process/Eligibility

- The Office of Student Financial Services designates the forms required and deadline dates on an annual basis
- All applicants must complete the University of Maine at Presque Isle Scholarship application
- The student must meet the criteria specified by the donor(s)
- The student must be enrolled in a degree program
- The student must be enrolled as a full-time student unless otherwise specified in the scholarship criteria
- The student must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCEDURE

When to Apply:

A complete file in the Office of Student Financial Services on or before April 1st will ensure priority consideration for all financial aid programs. Although students may apply for financial aid at any time, applications received after the above date will be considered on a funds available basis, in the order that the student's files are completed in the Office of Student Financial Services.

How to Apply:

Financial aid is an annual award and must be applied for each year.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be submitted to the Federal Student Aid Programs. The information that the Office of Student Financial Services receives on the Institution Student Information Record (ISIR) will be used in determining a student's eligibility for the following Federal and University aid; Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study, Direct Stafford Loans, and University Grants. The duration of eligibility for Pell is defined as the period required for the student to complete the first undergraduate baccalaureate course of study. There is no one-year limit on the amount of non-credit or remedial coursework for which a student may receive federal funds.

Aid will not be awarded until the Office of Student Financial Services has all the required documentation on file.

PROCESSING STUDENT AID REPORTS

The Office of Student Financial Services participates in the Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) process with the U.S. Department of Education. Student information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the processed results, are imported on a weekly basis. Corrections of data elements requested by the student, or required because of verification, are transmitted directly to the Central Processing System (CPS).

STUDENT BUDGETS

Standard student expense budgets at the University of Maine at Presque Isle are constructed to reflect the costs of the different categories of students. The budgets include a student's total cost: both direct and indirect cost. Indirect costs (non-university charges) are based upon surveys sent to randomly selected students, national median expenses, analysis of cost of living in the area. Standard student budgets reflecting the average student population cost of attendance at a modest, but adequate standard of living are used to award financial aid. The Director of Student Financial Services collects information to prepare standard costs on an annual basis. All costs are based on limitations to the amounts and other criteria set forth in the federal regulations.

Direct Cost

Tuition, fees and on campus room and board charges are determined by the University of Maine System, Board of Trustees. Generally, this does not occur until late spring and as a result, estimated values may be used. Typically, this estimated information is established by using previous year costs plus an estimated percentage increase.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs consist of the following types of expenses incurred by students: books and supplies, off campus room and board, transportation and miscellaneous items. Off campus room and board expenses are divided into two categories: living with parents and living off-campus. Miscellaneous items include personal expenses for clothing, toiletries, medical/dental, recreational, and other miscellaneous expenses. Indirect costs (non-university charges) are based upon surveys sent to randomly selected students, national median expenses, analysis of cost of living in the area.

Upon request, aid officers may review, and if appropriate, adjust a student's budget. Students should submit appropriate documentation.

Examples of changes to standard budgets include, but are not limited to:

- Child care - the cost of child care for students with dependent children may be added to a standard budget.
- Special needs - disabled students or students with special needs may be allocated funds to cover reasonable costs associated with disabilities or problems that are not already covered by other resources.
- Special program costs – some programs of study require additional expenses such as supplies and extra material.

Any variation from the standard budget is noted in the student's file.

In the event of an unforeseen emergency situation that results in changes to how courses are delivered, the Office of Student Financial Services will not adjust cost of attendance components to reflect downward adjustments of fees, room and board or other direct cost during the payment period of the event.

VERIFICATION

Regulations governing the Title IV student financial aid programs require institutions to verify applicant reported data in certain instances (34 CFR Part 668 Subpart E).

The University of Maine at Presque Isle adheres to the following verification principles developed by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administration (NASFAA).

- To ensure that limited financial aid funds are awarded to eligible students in an equitable and consistent manner, all institutions must develop policies for verification of family-reported information.
- Requirements for verification for family-reported information for purposes of qualifying for financial aid must be cost effective, flexible and based upon acceptance of a reasonable tolerance range for error applied to award amounts.
- While institutions vary widely by type, students served, and mission, minimum standards for verification must exist for all institutions.
- Established institutional policies which outline required forms and procedures to fulfill verification standards shall be written and made available to applicants for financial aid.
- Verification procedures must be uniformly applied to all financial aid programs which require demonstrated financial need as an eligibility criterion.
- Verification procedures used by institutions should, as a minimum, be based on an accurate representation of the applicant pool and may include the use of single or multiple edit checks used to establish error-prone criteria. (These principles are published in NASFAA Monograph #4, Standards For The Verification of Information to Determine Financial Aid Eligibility, Washington, D.C., 1984)

Who must be verified?

- The institution will verify applicants selected by the Department of Education via the federally approved edits.
- The institution may, in addition, select applicants for verification when conflicting information exists.
- The institution's selection policy will be applied consistently to all applicants not selected or required to be selected by the Department of Education.
- The institution will require transfer students previously selected for verification to re-verify their information (unless they are excluded by Title IV Federal Regulations)

Verification items

- For applicants selected, the institution will verify the items specified in the Application and Verification Guide, published by the USDE.
- The institution will resolve discrepant application information for all applicants in compliance with Title IV Federal Regulations.

Applicant responsibility

- Applicants selected for verification by the Department of Education or the institution are required to provide requested information or documentation in order to be eligible to receive Title IV student aid funds.

Documentation

- The institution will require applicants to submit acceptable documentation as specified under 34 CFR Part 668.57.
- With respect to the household size, in order to determine the need for additional documentation, the institution will collect a statement signed by the applicant and spouse, if independent, or by the applicant and parents, if dependent, which lists the names of household members, their relationship to the applicant, and their ages.
- With respect to the number in postsecondary education, in order to determine the need for additional documentation, the institution will require a completed Verification Statement; documentation from the school(s) attended by other family members will be required.
- With respect to the verification of child support, in order to determine the need for additional documentation, the institution will require a statement signed by the applicant and by the dependent applicant's parents confirming the amount of child support received for all children in the household. If conflicting information exists, additional information will be required (i.e., copy of child support checks, divorce decree, etc.)
- The institution will follow the guidelines under 34 CFR Part 668.57(d)(3)(ii) with respect to the "ability" of the parent(s) to provide documentation.

Time Period

- Applicants selected for verification either by the Department of Education or the institution must provide the requested information or documentation no later than the last day of classes of the academic period.
- For purposes of the Pell Grant Program, an applicant selected for verification must provide requested documentation no later than the last day of classes to allow sufficient time for re-submission to the processor by the deadline established by the Department of Education and published in the Federal Register.
- If a Direct Stafford Loan applicant is selected for verification after the institution certifies the loan, the time period for completion of the verification process will be dependent upon the date on which the loan is disbursed. In no case will the time period extend beyond 45 days after the institution receives the loan disbursement.

Interim Disbursements

- The institution will not disburse any Federal Pell Grant, or SEOG funds, employ a student under the Federal Work Study Program, or certify a Direct Stafford Loan, for a student for whom the institution has documentation which indicates the application information is inaccurate.

- The institution will not make a disbursement of Federal Pell Grant, or SEOG funds or employ a student under the Federal Work Study Program until the verification is complete.

Consequences for Failure to Provide Documentation or Information within the Specified Time Period

- The institution will not disburse any SEOG funds, allow Federal Work Study employment, or certify a Federal Direct Stafford/Ford Loan for applicants until requested documentation is provided.
- Federal Pell Grant applicants who fail to provide requested documentation to verify reported information within the specified time period will forfeit their Pell Grant award.
- The institution will not accept requested documentation after the specified time period and will not award aid to such applicants.

Tolerances

If changes are made as a result of the verification process the University will submit those corrections to the processor for recalculation.

Notification

The institution will notify the applicant of the verification procedures, using the checklist/communication process as delivered within the enterprise wide financial aid application system.

AWARDING FINANCIAL AID

The Office of Student Financial Services has developed an institutional packaging philosophy to ensure consistent, equitable, and fair distribution of financial aid funds. UMPI's policy is to provide the financial aid needed to each applicant to ensure that a degree or program will be completed; to minimize the adverse effects of financial concerns on academic performance; to provide the most advantageous combination of aid funds for which the student qualifies (subject to the availability of funds); and to make maximum use of all financial aid funds available to the institution.

General packaging guidelines are as follows:

Financial aid will be awarded to eligible students who meet the filing deadlines in the following priority:

- Full-time students, $\frac{3}{4}$ -time students, $\frac{1}{2}$ -time students, less than half-time; the same priority will be followed throughout the award year, based upon availability of funds.
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants will be awarded first to students with exceptional need. Priority will be given to students who receive a Pell Grant; however, filing deadlines will also be a consideration in the awarding process.
- Federal Work Study in accordance with the Title IV Federal Regulations.

- Outside scholarships will first be applied to unmet need. Once need is met, the scholarship will replace a portion or all of awarded loan and/or Work Study before replacing University Grant or scholarship funds.
- The maximum award for Campus Based funding is determined annually. The University reserves the right to increase the maximum award amount for the campus based programs for out of state students who will not receive Merit Awards.

Awarding Process

- Determine Need, Cost of Attendance (COA) less Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
- Determine existing eligibility for fix gift aid including Merit Awards, waivers, veteran benefits, renewable scholarships, etc. Calculate Pell Grant and State Grant awards where applicable.
- Determine students remaining need. Cost of Attendance, less Expected Family Contribution, less Fixed Gift Aid, less aid already awarded equals remaining need.
- Set Maximum Gift Aid cost of tuition, fees and books.
- Determine and award maximum SEOG eligibility based on EFC.
- Determine if the student has remaining need. If so, then award University Grant based on institutional policy.
- Determine if the student has remaining need and if the student is living on campus then award Campus Housing Grant based on institutional policy.
- Determine if the student has remaining need. If so, then award Federal Work Study based on institutional policy.
- Finally, Subsidized Direct Loans are awarded to students to meet their remaining financial need. These awards are based on Department of Education loan limits. After the student is awarded his/her need based eligibility, and if the student has remaining loan eligibility, we award Unsubsidized Loan up to the remaining eligibility but not to exceed an amount that puts total aid offered over the cost of attendance.

Outside Resources

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from outside resources. It is required that all outside assistance be reported to the Office of Student Financial Services. Student aid including outside resources, may not exceed the student's Cost of Attendance. Therefore, if a student has been awarded funds by the aid office and receives an outside award, an adjustment to the original award letter may be necessary. If an adjustment is necessary, the outside aid will replace self-help aid, if possible.

Award Letter

Students receive initial notice of their financial aid award via a paper award letter. Students are required to accept or decline each award by returning the signed award letter either to the Office of Student Financial Services or by accessing their MaineStreet account and accepting their aid electronically.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

A financial aid offer is made to a student through the Financial Aid Award Letter/Acceptance Form. No commitment of funds is made until the award letter is completed by the student and returned to the Office of Student Financial Services or the student accepts the award package on MaineStreet. If the completed award letter, or acceptance on MaineStreet is not received within two weeks of the date of the notice, the offer may be withdrawn.

With the exception of the Work Study allotment, financial aid awards are credited to the student's account in the following manner:

- The award for the school year is divided by semesters—one-half for the fall semester and one-half for the spring semester.
- Each semester the financial aid award is credited to the student's account.
- The amount of the financial aid award will be deducted from the total bill for the semester.
- If the amount of the financial award exceeds the charges for the period, the student will receive a refund.

If the financial aid awarded to the student is less than the charges billed, the remaining balance is due and payable to the University of Maine at Presque Isle. Arrangements for payment of the bill may be made in the Office of Student Financial Services.

REVISION OF FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

Once an award letter is sent to the student, there may be instances which warrant a change to the original notification. An Aid Administrator may review a student's circumstances, make an adjustment to an award, and release a revised award letter. This revised award invalidates the original award notice.

Pell Grant Recalculation Date

The Pell Recalculation Date (PRD) is a date in the semester when the Office of Student Financial Services is required to evaluate Federal Pell Grant eligibility based on current enrollment status. If the Pell Grant, originally awarded, does not match the current enrollment status, the award must be adjusted. It is the policy of the University of Maine at Presque Isle to review and recalculate Pell Grant eligibility at the end of the add/drop week of the last class in which a student is enrolled. For example, if a student is registered for courses in both the first and second 8 week session of a semester, Pell Grant eligibility will be reviewed at the end of the second 8 week session add/drop period. If the student's enrollment has changed, the amount of Pell Grant will be adjusted accordingly. If a student is only enrolled in full semester (15 week) courses, eligibility will be reviewed at the end of the full semester add/drop period. If that student later adds a course in a second short session, the enrollment status will be reviewed at the end of the specific short session add/drop period.

Revision Initiated By the Office of Student Financial Services

The Office of Student Financial Services will automatically consider a revision in a student's aid package when the following occurs:

- There is presence of conflicting information within the file

- There is a change in availability of funds
- There is a Student Financial Services error
- Enrollment changes during the Add/Drop period.

Students are sent a revised award notification as soon as possible with a message explaining the change. In the case of an office error, it is customary to contact the student personally, or send a personalized letter.

Revisions Initiated By Request from Student

It is the student's responsibility to notify the Office of Student Financial Services of changes in a student's resources and/or circumstances. The student may notify the Office of Student Financial Services of such an instance that affects the student's family contribution by completion of a Special Circumstance Form along with any documentation to validate the change in circumstance. If a change to the award is allowed, the aid administrator will release a revised award letter.

FINANCIAL AID APPEAL PROCESS

Financial aid applicants who have reason to believe the action taken on their application for financial assistance was not appropriate should first make an appointment to see the Director of Student Financial Services. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of Student Financial Services, he/she has the right to submit a formal written appeal to the Chief Business Officer. The Chief Business Officer will act within 30 days on all written appeals.

SUMMER FINANCIAL AID

Summer financial aid consists of remaining Stafford Loan and Pell Grant eligibility. Limited Federal Work Study funding may be available.

CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

A student may receive Title IV aid if he/she is taking coursework at two or more schools, if the participating institutions enter into a consortium agreement. A consortium agreement specifies that courses from the host institution will transfer to the home institution and that the home institution will process and disburse student aid. Whichever institution disbursed aid funds is responsible for keeping records and returning Title IV funds in the case of an over award.

Process: When the Agreement is approved by UMPI, the credit hours will be included as hours attempted for the term. The hours will be used, along with the hours from UMPI for that term, to determine if the student is awarded to level, as well as determining Satisfactory Academic Progress. If the completed course work is not transferred back to UMPI the course will be counted as not completed.

OVER AWARDS

An over award occurs any time a student's financial aid (federal, institutional, state and outside aid) and other resources exceed the demonstrated financial need for the award period by more than an allowable tolerance. If a potential or actual over award is discovered, U.S. Department of Education guidelines regarding over awards will be followed.

Causes of an Over award and/or Over Payment

There are several causes of an over award:

- Student wages - the student earns more than their Federal Work Study allotment
- Change in the enrollment status
- Additional resources - the student has resources greater than those originally used to calculate the award
- Administrative error - the aid administrator inadvertently makes an error
- Fraud - the student intentionally deceives or misrepresents information to obtain funds

Eliminating an Over Award

Before reducing a student's aid package because of an over award, an attempt should always be made to reduce or eliminate the over award.

Two methods are:

- Increase Cost of Attendance budget using allowable expenses
- Adjust undisbursed funds

Treatment of an Over Award

If eliminating the over award is not possible, the aid administrator must reduce the over award by adjusting other financial aid.

PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT POLICY UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT PRESQUE ISLE

The Higher Education Act of 1992 allows financial aid administrators to make professional judgment decisions when there are special or unusual family or student circumstances that may call for adjustments in determining a student's eligibility for financial aid. Circumstances requiring professional judgment must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. These circumstances must be well documented. Professional judgment adjustments may increase or decrease a student's EFC or Cost of Attendance. Specified adjustments may be made to data elements, but not to the formula. Adjustments made will apply to all institutional, state and Title IV aid awarded. Circumstances which may warrant a professional judgment decision include, but are not limited to the following:

- A change in income of the student's family that would affect the family's ability to pay for college expenses. Examples would be loss of employment, loss of untaxed benefits, a separation or death.
- Student requests consideration as an independent student.
- Excessive medical expenses.

Professional judgment situations are unique. Circumstances other than those listed may be considered and will require documentation specific to that situation.

The Director of Student Financial Services has the final authority to make professional judgment decisions. The decision of the Director of Student Financial Services is final. No further means for appeal are available.

REFUND POLICY

Students registered for classes who withdraw from the University receive no refund until the student officially withdraws in writing to the Advising Center. For students continuing with the University and changing either room and/or board accommodations, no refund is made until the changes is approved by the Director of Residential Life. No refund or adjustment for course load reduction is made to the continuing student's account after the add/drop period. The refund equals the amount originally paid by financial aid and/or cash payment for the payment period minus the amount retained by the University to cover the portion of the payment period while the student was actually in school.

Tuition and room charges are refunded to students according to the Refund Policy outlined by the University of Maine System Board of Trustees.

If a student has an outstanding balance on account - Students are not allowed to register for further classes if they have an outstanding account. If an exception is made, and the student is eligible to receive assistance from any type of funds, the financial aid funds would be applied through credit to the student's account (in compliance with federal guidelines regarding this issue, if federal funds are involved). If this does not satisfy the debt, the student would be required to repay the balance immediately or further collection measures would be taken.

PROCEDURES USED TO IMPLEMENT THE RETURN OF TITLE IV FUNDS POLICY

CALCULATION OF REFUNDS OF FINANCIAL AID FOR WITHDRAWALS and LEAVE OF ABSENCES

In accordance with Title IV Federal Financial Aid regulations, a student "earns" Title IV aid (Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, and Stafford Loan) in direct proportion to the time he or she remains enrolled, through the 60% point in the semester. For the purpose of this policy a Leave of Absence is considered a withdrawal from the semester. A student who withdraws or takes a Leave of Absence after the 60% point in the semester is considered to have earned 100% of his or her aid.

Federal law requires the University to determine the percentage of the payment period (in calendar days) the student attended before withdrawing. The percentage of the period attended generally becomes the percentage of aid earned. If the percentage attended is greater than 60%, the percentage of earned aid becomes 100%. If more aid is disbursed directly to the student, or to his or her account, than the student earned prior to withdrawal, the University determines the unearned aid amount, allocates responsibility for returning unearned aid between the institution and the student, and distributes the unearned aid back to the Title IV programs. An adjustment in aid may result in a student owing a repayment to the Title IV Federal Financial Aid Programs and/or a balance on his or her account at the University of Maine at Presque Isle. Unearned funds that a student owes to a grant program are treated as an overpayment or makes satisfactory repayment arrangements within 45 days from the earlier of (1) the date the institution sends the student notification of the overpayment; or (2) the date by which the institution was required to

notify the student of the overpayment (30 days after the date of the institution's determination that the student withdrew).

For those students who officially withdraw from the University, the withdrawal date is the earlier of the date the student began the withdrawal process or officially notified the institution of intent to withdraw. If a student stops attending classes greater than 10 business days prior to notifying the institution (or beginning the process of notification), the last date of attendance will be used as the withdrawal date for the purpose of the calculation. If a student ceases attendance without providing the official notification of withdrawal, the date is either the midpoint of the semester or a date determined by documented academically related activity. The Director of Student Financial Services has the discretion to exercise professional judgment when determining the date of withdrawal if circumstances warrant.

Unearned funds are distributed back to the Title IV programs in the following order:

- Unsubsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans
- Subsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans
- Federal Direct PLUS Loans received on behalf of the student
- Federal Pell Grants
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)
- Other Title IV grants or loan assistance

For the purpose of State programs (Maine State, Racino and Plate Grants) the Federal percentage of payment period completed, up to the 50% point, will be used to determine the amount of state aid earned. The difference will be removed from the student's award and returned to the appropriate aid program. Effective 9/1/2015 this proration policy for state funds will no longer apply.

REPAYMENTS

When Title IV recipients withdraw, drop out, or otherwise leave school, part of the cash disbursements they received may represent an overpayment. Students must repay any overpayments from Title IV aid.

Students will be notified by the Office of Student Financial Services as to the amount of the overpayment that needs to be refunded to the Title IV programs.

The Title IV portion of the repayment of funds will be allocated to specific programs in the same priority as the institutional refund.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS

In compliance with Federal Student Aid Regulations, the University of Maine at Presque Isle Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for financial aid eligibility incorporates the

University’s scholastic standards with the federal requirements for a specific time frame for degree completion. Students must meet these minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements in order to be eligible for student aid funds. Each of the three following standards must be met:

Quantitative Measurement:

Matriculating students are required to successfully complete a specific percentage of credits that are attempted. The University uses the following scales:

Credits Attempted	Percentage Passed
0-30	50%
31-45	55%
46-60	60%
61-75	65%
76-90	70%
91+	75%

Qualitative Measurement:

Matriculating students are required to maintain a grade point average based on the number of credits that are earned. The University uses the following scales:

Four Year Program		Two Year Program	
Credits Earned	GPA	Credits Earned	GPA
0-15	1.5	0-15	1.5
16-30	1.6	16-30	1.6
31-45	1.7	31-45	1.8
46-60	1.8	46+	2.0
61-75	1.9		
76+	2.0		

Maximum Time Frame:

Federal regulations require that the University set a maximum time frame for successful completion of degree programs. For a four year degree the University has set the maximum number of attempted credits as 180. For our two year programs, the maximum number of credits attempted is 90. If a student attempts more credits than the maximum number identified for his/her degree, he/she is not eligible to receive financial aid.

Attempted Hours

For the purpose of this policy attempted hours include: Audited classes; Classes withdrawn from; deferred grades; incomplete grades; missing grades; developmental courses; repeated courses.

Passed Hours

For the purpose of this policy passed hours include: Passed credits hours that can be used for the purpose of completing degree requirements.

Transfer Students

If a student earned credits at a previous institution(s) that will be accepted toward his/her degree, those accepted hours will be included as attempted hours for the purposes of satisfactory progress evaluation. For example, if a student attempted 15 hours at the University of Maine at Presque Isle and transferred in 30 credits to his/her academic record, all test to evaluate Satisfactory Academic Progress (Quantitative, Qualitative and Maximum Time Frame) would be based on 45 attempted hours.

Financial Aid Probation and Suspension

Satisfactory Academic Progress is measured at the end of each academic year, after the spring grades have been posted. If a student takes a leave of absence for the fall term, re-evaluation will be required before the spring term disbursement will be authorized. Upon review, if it is determined that the student is not making Satisfactory Academic Progress, he/she will be notified in writing that his/her eligibility for financial aid has been suspended.

Appeal of Financial Aid Suspension

A student placed on Financial Aid Suspension who has experienced undue hardship, (e.g. Death of a relative of the student; personal injury or prolonged illness of the student; or special circumstances as determined by the institution.), may submit a written appeal, normally within 30 days of notification, to the Director of Student Financial Services. The appeal must explain the circumstance that prevented the standards from being met. Providing third party documentation, if available, supporting the circumstance is suggested. In the case of undue hardship, the student may be placed on Financial Aid Probation for one period, and will be able to receive financial aid during that time. If at the end of the probationary period the minimum standards are not met, or the student has failed to meet the requirements of the academic plan developed as part of the probation period, the student's financial aid eligibility will be suspended.

The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will review all appeals. The student will receive written notification of the committee's decision within 30 days of receipt of the appeal.

Condition of Financial Aid Reinstatement

Students must complete the required number of credits and achieve the corresponding cumulative GPA as outlined during the probationary period in order to have their financial aid eligibility be reinstated.

AUDITS AND PROGRAM REVIEWS

Federal regulations require the Office of Student Financial Services to have its records and student files audited at least once every two years. Each audit must cover the time period since the last audit. The University of Maine at Presque Isle is audited annually as part of the University of Maine System audit program.

A complete listing of financial aid audit guidelines is listed in the Audit Guide published by the U.S. Department of Education.

FRAUD

Students and parents who willfully submit fraudulent information will be investigated to the furthest extent possible. All cases of fraud and abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

Referral of Fraud

Cases of suspected fraud on the part of a Title IV aid applicant involving information relevant to a student's eligibility or amount of assistance will be referred to the Regional Office of the Inspector General or if more appropriate, state or local law enforcement agencies.

The following circumstances are indicative of possible fraud when the aid administrator can find no other legitimate reason for the discrepancy:

- False claims of independent student status
- False claims of citizenship
- Use of false identities
- Forgery of signatures or certifications
- False statements of income
- Unreported previous loans or grants and receipt of concurrent full grants during one year.

INCARCERATED STUDENTS

While eligible to enroll for classes, students who are incarcerated will not receive federal or institutional need-based financial aid. Incarcerated students must self-identify. Generally this would be done at the time the student applies for admission. Answering "yes" to the following questions on the admissions application triggers a manual review by Student Affairs staff at both the campus & System levels.

- Have you ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at an educational institution you have attended from 9th grade (or the international equivalent) forward, whether related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct that resulted in your suspension, removal, dismissal or expulsion from the institution? _ Yes _ No
- Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor, felony or other crime, or adjudicated of committing a juvenile crime? _ Yes _ No

- If you answered yes to either or both questions, please attach a separate sheet of paper that gives the approximate date of each incident and explains the circumstances.

A negative service indicator will be placed on the student prior to admission which will stop the processing of any financial aid. This negative service indicator will be placed on any UMPI student who is incarcerated after matriculation. This indicator will stop the processing of any Financial Aid.

INTERNAL CONTROL PROCESS

Verification

Return of Title IV Calculation

The financial aid official who is primarily responsible for each of these functions will identify the individual records that need to be acted on and add them to a spreadsheet on a shared drive. At the end of a specific time frame a professional staff member who was not involved in the original action will review a specific percentage of files.

The percent of Verifications reviewed monthly will be five percent.

The percent of Return of Title IV Calculation reviewed at the end of each term will be five percent

Once these records are reviewed the FA Official will indicate on the spreadsheet that it was completed and who the official was.

Professional judgment

The Assistant Director is the lead individual on professional judgment requests. Information is obtained to support the request. The Assistant Director performs a preliminary review and notes her recommendation. The Director will review all information as well as the Assistant Directors recommendations. The overall request is discussed by the Assistant Director and the Director with a final decision being made by consensus. Because two individuals were involved in the review/decision process further internal control review is not necessary.

Revised November 1, 2020