

# Scaling the Heights: Navigating the Cost of Attendance in Higher Education



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Guilford Technical Community College

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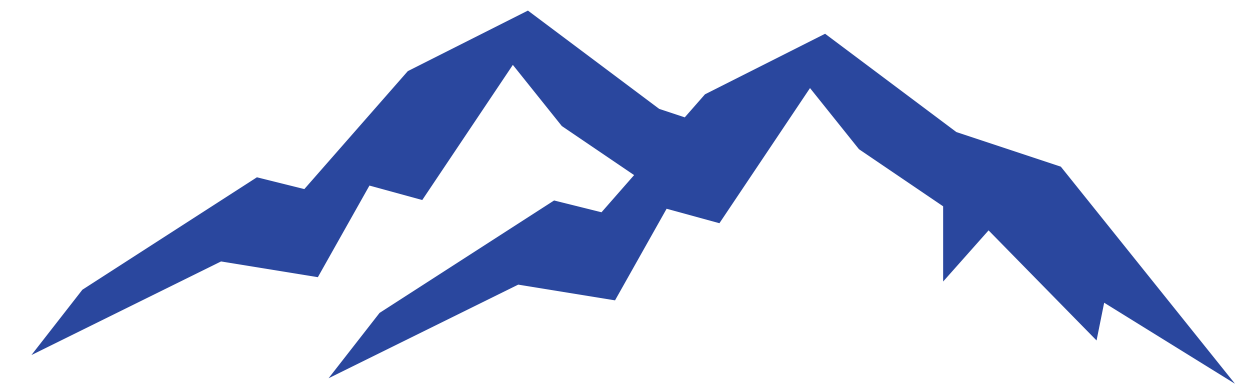


Fall 2024: Climbing Higher Together

# Changes for 24/25

FAFSA Simplification Act, which removes from OFA 1) emergency financial assistance for unexpected expenses within the student's cost of attendance (COA); and 2) foster care payments under Title IV, Part E of the Social Security Act

Calculated 9-month SAI must be used, no matter the period length used to calculate the cost of attendance.





# Allowable Costs

“The COA for a student is an estimate of that student’s educational expenses for the period of enrollment. As you’ll see, in most cases you can use average expenses (for students with the same enrollment status) at your school, rather than actual expenses.....Students must be awarded based on a COA comprised of allowable costs assessed all students carrying the same academic workload.”

- FSA Handbook, Volume 3, Chapter 2



# Cost of Attendance Components

1. Tuition and Fees
2. Books, Course Materials, Supplies, and Equipment
3. Transportation
4. Miscellaneous Personal Expenses
5. Living Expenses (Food and Housing)



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Tuition and Fees

Allowance for what is normally assessed to students carrying the same academic workload.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Books, Course Materials, Supplies, and Equipment

Costs required of all students in the same program, including a reasonable allowance for the rental or upfront purchase of a personal computer or other equipment needed for “instruction by telecommunications”.

Books and supplies can be considered part of tuition and fees if the institution has an arrangement with a book publisher that makes them available below competitive market prices, can be purchased by the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the payment period, and students are given the ability to opt-out if they so choose.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Transportation

May include costs for transportation between school, residence, and work, including the costs associated with maintaining the vehicle.

Can't include the PURCHASE of a vehicle!



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Miscellaneous Personal Expenses

Only permitted for students enrolled half-time or greater







# Cost of Attendance Components

## Living Expenses (Food)

- For **students who choose institutionally owned or operated food services** (e.g., board or meal plans), a standard allowance that provides the equivalent of three meals per day.
- For **students who do not choose institutionally owned or operated food services**, a standard allowance for purchasing food off campus that provides the equivalent of three meals per day.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Living Expenses (Housing)

- For **students who reside in institutionally owned or operated housing**, standard allowances (one for students with dependents, and one for students without dependents) based on the greater of the average amount or the median amount assessed to such students for housing charges.
- For **students living off campus (not in institutionally owned or operated housing)**, a standard allowance for rent or other housing costs.
- For **dependent students residing at home with their parents**, a standard allowance for living expenses determined by the school. The living expenses allowance for these students cannot be zero.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Living Expenses (Food & Housing) – Special Cases

- Students in military housing (on-base or housing allowance) – food only, no housing
- Less-than-half-time students – you MAY include an allowance but only for a limited period. Up to 3 semesters with only 2 of semesters being consecutive at any one school.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Special Categories of Costs

- Dependent Care Costs – should not exceed the reasonable cost in the community and can cover any school-related periods of time.
- Licensure, Certification, or First Professional Credential Costs – MUST include an allowance in COA. Must be incurred while still enrolled, not after. Use actual or average costs (using a reasonable basis). You MAY give an allowance for multiple attempts, but you can set a limit.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Special Categories of Costs

- Study Abroad Programs
- Disability-Related Expenses
- Co-op Education Program Employment Costs
- Loan fees for FEDERAL student loans (not private)
- COA for Correspondence – limited to T/F/B/S
- COA for Incarcerated Students – limited to T/F/B/S/license, certification, first prof credential.



# Cost of Attendance Components

## Not Permitted:

- Periods of non-attendance
- Tuition discounting
- Overtime charges
- Finance charges
- Test prep class costs
- Transcription/diploma evaluation service fees
- Fee for handling or processing required forms to determine TIV eligibility
- Impose fees/penalties due to student's inability to pay due to delayed disbursement (like first-time students' 30-day delay) or delays attributable to the college



# Costs Waived/Paid by Other Sources

Two scenarios:

- COA component is waived  
If a component like tuition and fees are waived, then you do not include that component in the COA or the OFA (other financial assistance).
- COA component is charged to the student but is paid by another source  
The value of the component is included in COA and OFA.





# Other Considerations

COA for Distance Education Students – can't make a distinction based on mode of instruction. However, you could use PJ to adjust COA on a case-by-case basis to allow for special circumstances.

Costs for Full Program Charged at Start

- Include 100% of tuition and fees in 1<sup>st</sup> year COA for Direct Loans and Campus-Based Aid.
- Prorate these charges for Pell Grant purposes

And don't forget -

COA for Pell – always based on a full-time, 9-month academic year

COA for campus-based and loans – based on student's actual period of enrollment





# Recalculation

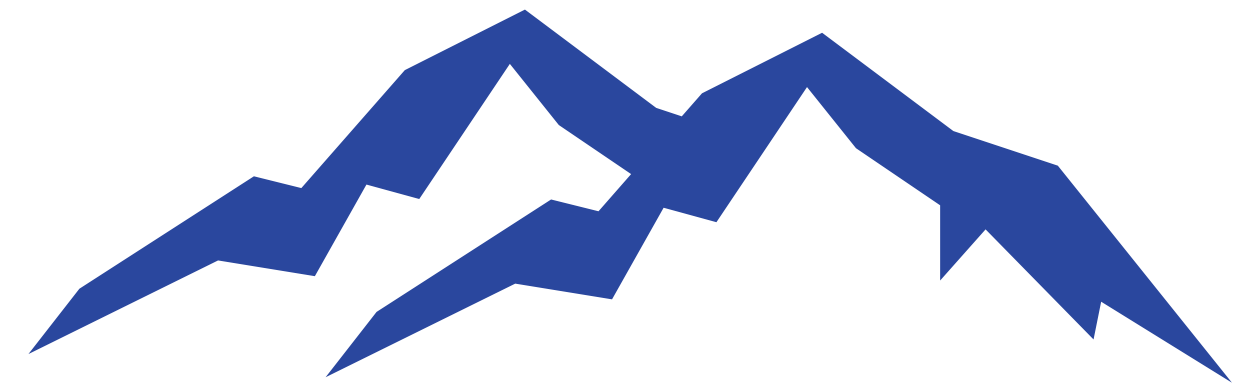
New for 24/25: “Revised the guidance under “Recalculation” to more clearly state longstanding policy that if a change in a student’s enrollment status results in a change in the cost of attendance, a school must recalculate a student’s Campus-Based aid eligibility based on the revised cost of attendance.”

“Any time a student begins attendance in at least one course but does not begin attendance in all the courses they were scheduled to attend and on which eligibility for *Title IV* Aid was based, the school must recalculate the student’s eligibility for Pell Grants and TEACH Grants, based on the revised enrollment intensity or status and COA. For the Campus-Based programs, if a change in a student’s enrollment status results in a change in the student’s COA, the school must recalculate the student’s eligibility based on the revised COA.”

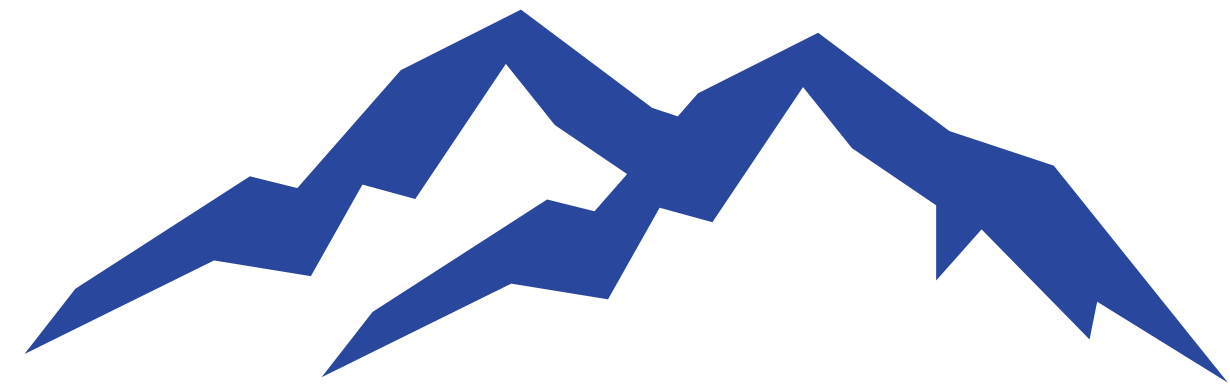
24/25 FSA Handbook, Volume 3

# Questions to Consider

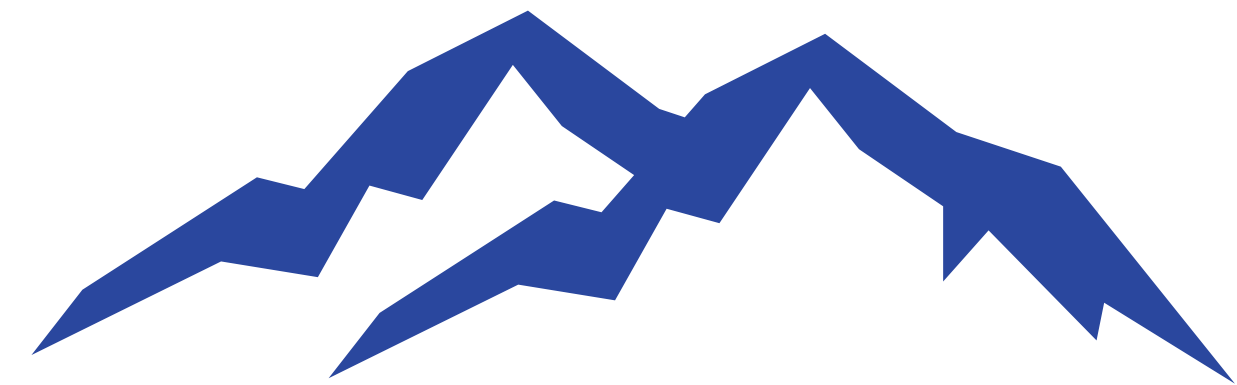
- When do you start your calculations?
- What categories are used (At home, away from home, dependent, independent, with dependents, on campus)?
- What data sources do you use?
- Who is involved? (FA, Business office, Bookstore, Inst. Research, others?)
- Do other departments/administrators have to approve your COA?
- Where is this information published? Do you include this information in your offer letters?
- Other considerations?



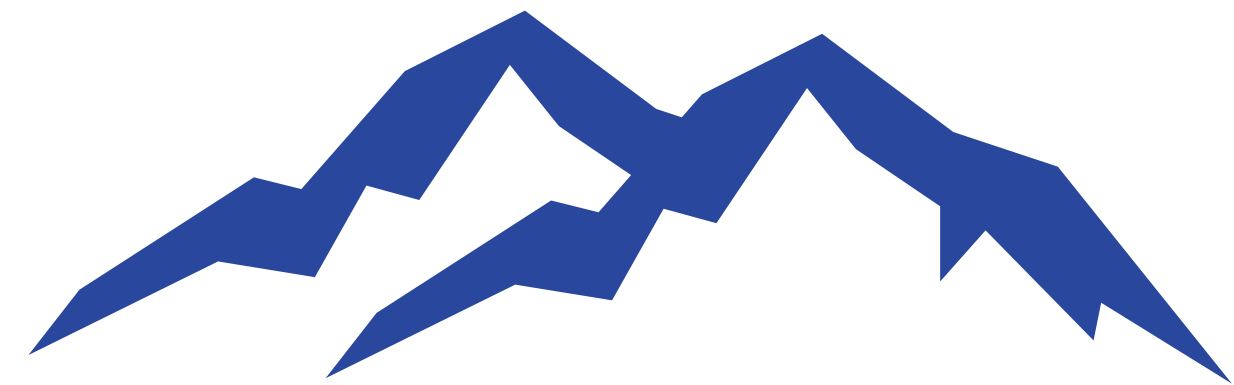
# Questions?



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