

# Financial Aid Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is Financial Aid?

Financial aid is federal or state financial assistance that comes in the form of (1) grants, which do not have to be paid back (2) work-study, like a part-time job on campus (3) student loans, which are required to be repaid starting six months after you leave school. Students must be enrolled and attending a Financial Aid eligible program.

## 2. When do I apply for financial aid?

You can begin applying for financial aid in the January prior to the fall you plan to attend. The earlier you apply, the better, as some resources are limited and may run out. We encourage all students to apply as soon as they and their family complete their taxes for the previous year.

## 3. How do I know if I will be eligible for financial aid?

Never assume you will not be eligible! You will not know what types of financial aid you are eligible for until you apply. **When you complete the FAFSA application process, you will be considered for all types of Federal and State grants, loans and work-study.** All students who meet general eligibility requirements will at least be eligible for the Federal Stafford Student Loan Program. Every student can get a student loan! **Approximately 70% of MSTC students pursuing a degree or diploma and who are enrolled at least half-time, receive some type of financial aid.**

## 4. How can I apply for financial aid?

You can apply for financial aid online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or at MSTC <http://www.mstc.edu/finaid/apply.htm> or on MyMSTC if you are a current student. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). To be able to electronically sign your application and access it at a later date, you should first apply for a PIN number at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). You will need your name, social security number and date of birth. If a parent is required to sign the FAFSA, one parent must also apply for a PIN number.

## 5. What happens after I apply for financial aid?

The Federal Processor will process the data you completed on the FAFSA and will send you a **Student Aid Report** in the mail within two to four weeks. If you provided an email address on the FAFSA, the processor will email you the Student Aid Report. This report details the information that you provided and informs you of any corrections that need to be made. At the same time that you receive the Student Aid Report, the Financial Aid Office receives your information electronically as long as you listed MSTC as one of your school choices on your financial aid application. Once we receive that file electronically, the Financial Aid Staff will determine if additional information or documentation is required, at which time, the staff will send you a letter indicating what is needed.

## 6. What school code do I list for Mid-State Technical College?

005380 for all MSTC Campuses

**7. Do I need a PIN number?**

No, you do not need a PIN number to apply for financial aid, but the PIN number will allow the processor to expedite your application. It will provide you additional options such as signing your application electronically, checking the status of your application online and making corrections to your application online. If you choose to take a student loan in the future, the PIN number can also be used as your electronic signature on that agreement.

**8. What if I don't have a computer to use to complete the FAFSA?**

Each MSTC campus has a computer area available. If you or your parents don't feel comfortable doing it electronically, there are paper Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Applications available at each MSTC Campus Office. Complete and mail to the federal processor in the envelope provided.

**9. What is a Renewal FAFSA?**

If you have applied for financial aid this past year, you may be able to fill out a renewal FAFSA rather than a new FAFSA. The renewal FAFSA will include all of last year's information. You just need to update your and your family's income information and any data that has changed. If you have a PIN number, you can access your renewal FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or at MSTC <http://www.mstc.edu/finaid/apply.htm> or on MyMSTC if you are a current student. To request your PIN number, go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).

**10. What is the deadline for applying for financial aid?**

The sooner you apply, the more likely your funding will be available when you start school. MSTC requires your financial aid file is complete to defer your tuition on financial aid for the semester. It is important to note that your financial aid file must be completed by the end of your last semester of each school year to be eligible for any funding. Student financial aid applicants are processed based on the date the FAFSA is received at MSTC and the file is completed.

**11. What if my family income has changed since last year? How will they know?**

You are required to use the information from the prior year on the FAFSA. If you and/or your family's income information have changed significantly in the current year due to unemployment, death, divorce, medical expenses or other special circumstances, you may be eligible to be considered for a special circumstance or re-evaluation. After you have completed the FAFSA and have received your Student Aid Report, you can request a "Special Circumstance/Re-evaluation" form from the financial aid office and submit to them with documentation of the changes (pay stubs, more recent tax information, medical bills, or unemployment compensation payout report, etc...). The Financial Aid Office will then consider your current situation to determine if you will be eligible for more financial aid.

**12. I don't live with my parents. Do I have to have my parents complete their section on the FAFSA? Can I be considered independent?**

Living on your own doesn't automatically qualify you as an independent student. The Federal Government requires parents to complete their information and considers you a dependent until you are 24 years old, married, have dependents of your own that you provide more than 50% support for, are pursuing a graduate degree, are an orphan or ward of the court, or are a veteran of the US armed forces. If there are unusual circumstances, please discuss them with the Financial Aid Staff, and they will determine the best way for you to complete the FAFSA.

**13. What is a SAR?**

A SAR is a Student Aid Report. The report is provided by the Federal Processor and is a summary of the information you provided on the FAFSA. The SAR will be mailed to you if you sent your FAFSA through the mail and did not provide an email address on the FAFSA. If you filed your FAFSA electronically or provided an email address on the FAFSA, the SAR will be emailed to you. The report will also let you know if the application was rejected or if there are any problems with your application that require a correction be made.

**14. What do I do with a SAR?**

If everything on your SAR is correct, file it away for your records. There is nothing you need to do with it, but keep it available in case you want to add another college later.

**15. How do I make a correction to my financial aid?**

If you need to make a correction to your financial aid application information before you receive your award notice, you can do so using the Student Aid Report by mailing it to the processor or by doing it on the FAFSA website at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). If you have already received your award letter, contact the financial aid office to determine if the correction is necessary.

**16. I originally filled out my FAFSA with a different school listed. How do I add MSTC?**

You can go online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to add MSTC to your FAFSA, school code 005380.

**17. Will I need to fill out forms in addition to the FAFSA to receive financial aid?**

If you are selected for a process called verification or the Financial Aid Office needs additional documentation to complete your file, you may need to fill out additional forms to receive financial aid. The Financial Aid Office will inform you of any documentation you need to complete. Current students can also go into MyMSTC and check their TO DO lists under the Finances tab. Some of the financial aid forms requested can be completed at [www.mstc.edu/finaid/forms.htm](http://www.mstc.edu/finaid/forms.htm). If a student needs to complete the Dependent Verification Form, they must print it and have a parent sign the form and mail it to the Financial Aid Office to be valid.

**18. Do I have to be a full-time student to receive financial aid? Should I bother to apply for financial aid if I am enrolled less than half time?**

Students with exceptionally high need may be eligible for a Pell Grant as a less-than-half-time student. Complete the FAFSA and your eligibility will be determined based on the results of the FAFSA and based on your enrollment level of full time (12 or more credits), three-quarter time (9-11 credits), half time (6-8 credits) or less than half time (1-5 credits). The Financial Aid Office will automatically consider you for the Pell Grant and any other type of financial aid that you may be eligible for and will notify you in an award letter. Students must be enrolled at least 6 credits or more to be considered for state grants, work-study, and Stafford Student Loans.

**19. I heard I have to be accepted into an “eligible” program of study to receive financial aid. What does that mean?**

The federal and state regulations require a student to apply to the college and be accepted into an “eligible” program. At MSTC, all Associate Degree programs and most one- and two-year Technical Diploma programs are considered eligible. Health Unit Coordinator and Phlebotomy Programs are prorated for financial aid because they are less than one year. If the program is

short-term or offers only a certificate upon completion, it probably is not eligible for financial aid funding. Examples of those programs not eligible for financial aid are: Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.), Emergency Medical Technician-Basic or Intermediate; Medication Assistant, and Farm Business & Production Management. Consult with the Financial Aid Office Staff if there is a particular program that you are concerned about!

**20. How do I receive the money I am awarded?**

First, you must provide all necessary requested documents to complete your file so your eligibility can be determined. Grants, work-study and loans will be awarded in that order based on eligibility and availability. You will receive notice of the awards by mail with A Student Guide to Financial Aid Award Information brochure. At the same time, they will be posted to **MyMSTC under Financial aid/Awards**. You must go to MY MSTC and accept or deny all awards. If you accept the student loan and you are a first-time borrower, you must complete the Master Promissory Note and Entrance Loan Counseling Session. Once the paperwork is completed and you are enrolled for the minimum number of required credits, your financial aid will be applied to your student account as the funds are received. Your tuition and fees are then paid, and a refund, or difference check, is mailed to your address. Checks are processed weekly after the start of each semester, when the funds are received, as long as the student remains enrolled and attending.

**21. Will I have to pay back my financial aid if I withdraw from my program (classes)?**

If a student **completely** withdraws from school (drops all classes) or quits attending before the 60% point in the semester, the student will be required to repay a portion of the aid he/she received for that semester. A Return of Title IV worksheet is completed using the amount of aid received and the withdrawal date to determine if any repayment is due. You will be notified by mail as to the repayment amount if necessary.

**NOTE: It is important to consult with the Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawal to determine how your financial aid eligibility will be affected.**

**22. Do I have to pay back a Pell Grant?**

There are only two reasons a student would ever have to pay back a Pell Grant. First, if a student drops courses which impact enrollment status (for example: full time to three-quarter time, etc.) during the first 14 days of the semester, their Pell Grant eligibility must be recalculated. If a student has not received their funds yet, it will be recalculated and the student will receive a “revised” award letter. If Pell funds have been credited to the account or disbursed, the student will be required to repay a portion of the Pell Grant. If a student withdraws from school (drops all classes) before the 60% point in the semester or quits attending, a Return of Title IV worksheet is completed using the amount of aid received and the last date attended to determine if any repayment is due. You will be notified by mail as to the repayment amount if necessary.

**23. What is the difference between a subsidized loan and an unsubsidized loan?**

The **subsidized** loan is need based (based on the information you provided on the FAFSA) and the government pays the interest while you are in school and during authorized periods of deferment.

The **unsubsidized** loan is not awarded based on need and **you will be** charged interest from the time the loan is disbursed until it is paid in full. You have two options for repayment. You may choose to pay the interest as it accumulates. This is the method we suggest, as you will repay less in the long run or you may allow the interest to accumulate and it will be capitalized. (The interest will be added to your loan and additional interest will be based upon the higher amount. This will increase the amount you have to repay.)

**24. What if I only want a loan?**

You must first file the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine what other type of aid you qualify for; you will be offered need based (grants, work-study & subsidized loans) funds first, then last resort type of funds (unsubsidized or PLUS loans). To be eligible for Financial Aid, you must be accepted into an eligible program and be planning on attending at least half time. The loan is always considered financial aid even though you have to repay it.

**25. How much can I borrow on a student loan?**

The Department of Education has set maximum levels for student borrowing which is driven by the total number of credits that you have completed toward graduation in your program of study to determine if you are a first-year or second-year student. Those limits are listed below. Each student’s eligibility is determined based on the results of the FAFSA if the student is dependent or independent and the unmet need and cost of attendance.

<b>Dependent Undergraduate Student</b>	<b>Independent Undergraduate Student</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year \$2625 2 <sup>nd</sup> year \$3500	1 <sup>st</sup> year \$6625 * 2 <sup>nd</sup> year \$7500 **

\*Only \$2625 of this amount may be in subsidized loans.

\*\*Only \$3500 of this amount may be in subsidized loans.

**26. Can I just go to the bank to get a student loan?**

No, for federal low-interest student loans, you need to complete the FAFSA. The Financial Aid Office will determine your eligibility and help you complete the application process. While you will list a lender on your Master Promissory Note to process the student loan, it is not necessary to visit your lender or use them for all your banking needs. There are several private lenders who offer private alternative loan programs. **Caution:** These loans are usually higher interest and may require a cosigner. MSTC does not encourage students to take private loans before exhausting Federal financial aid options. Consult with the Financial Aid Office before taking any private educational loans.

**27. Can I cancel my loan if I don’t need it?**

MSTC gives you the option to accept or decline any loan offered. You may cancel your loans at any time as long as your tuition has been paid. Contact the Financial Aid Office to cancel your loan or the second half of the loan.

**28. Why isn’t my loan here yet?**

Did you complete the Master Promissory Note and the online Entrance Loan Session (for first-time borrowers)? If yes, you can view your current loan status through the IBIS link at [www.glhec.org](http://www.glhec.org). You can also monitor past balances at this same site to make sure you’re in good standing. If your current loan was disbursed to MSTC greater than two weeks ago, contact the Financial Aid Office for further information.

**29. What is a Master Promissory Note?**

The Master Promissory Note is a legal document, which binds you to the conditions and terms of your student loan. It is necessary to complete the MPN the first time you choose to borrow at MSTC. You can fill out your MPN by following the loan links at <http://www.mstc.edu/finaid/index.htm>. Enter your PIN when requested. Continuing students who processed a student loan at MSTC the prior year will not need to complete a new MPN or repeat entrance loan counseling.

**30. What is the interest rate on student loans?**

For any Stafford Student loans taken after July 1, 2006, the interest rate is fixed at 6.8 %. Any loans prior to that date may be at a variable rate. It is important to take all Student loans with the same lender code so that you have one payment upon repayment. You will be notified of any interest rate changes throughout the life of your loans.

**31. Can I get more loan than what I was awarded?**

Your loan amount is determined by your financial need. Not all students will qualify for the maximum loans. MSTC takes a proactive approach in awarding student loans and wants you to understand the difference in need-based and non-need based loans. Contact the Financial Aid Office if you may want to be considered for Unsubsidized Stafford Loan or Parent PLUS loans. They will determine the maximum amount you are eligible for and advise you appropriately. The amount is then divided between the semesters you plan to attend. An origination fee is assessed to each loan disbursed by the lender.

**32. When do I pay back my loan?**

Generally, you will begin paying back your loan six months after you graduate or drop below six credits.

**33. What is a PLUS loan?**

The Parents Loans for Undergraduate Students or PLUS loan enables parents (who do not have an adverse credit history) to borrow to pay the educational expenses of each dependent undergraduate student.

**34. What is the interest rate on a PLUS loan?**

For any PLUS loans taken after July 1, 2006, the interest rate is fixed at 8.5%. Any PLUS loans taken prior to that date may be at a variable rate. Your parent will be notified of interest rate changes throughout the life of their loan.

**35. How do I apply for a PLUS loan?**

The Student must file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to determine what type of financial aid they are eligible for. Once the student has been awarded, the parents may consider a PLUS Loan in their name to assist the student with the cost of education. Parents can get additional application information on PLUS at <http://www.mstc.edu/finaid/index.htm>.

**36. What is a WHEG?**

A WHEG is the Wisconsin Higher Education Grant provided by the State of Wisconsin to state residents enrolled at least half time in a degree or certificate program at a state college, technical college or tribal college.

**37. How do I apply for state grants?**

Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and indicate "Wisconsin" as your "State of Legal Residence". If this question is left blank, you are not considered for state funds.

**38. Why haven't I received my WHEG (WI Higher Education Grant)?**

Reasons for not receiving your WHEG award would be failure to meet the following eligibility requirements or applying too late to be considered:

- a. Wisconsin Resident
- b. Accepted into a program
- c. Enrolled at least half time
- d. Up-to-date on Child Support payments
- e. Making satisfactory academic progress
- f. State is out of funds

**39. What is a SEOG?**

A SEOG is a Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant. A limited amount of SEOG is appropriated to MSTC from the federal government every year to be awarded to the students with the highest financial need.

**40. What is work-study?**

The Federal College Work-Study Program provides jobs to eligible students. You have the opportunity to earn money like a part-time job as well as gain valuable work experience. Most jobs are on campus and may offer more flexibility than a traditional part-time job in that your class schedule is considered when setting up your work hours.

**41. How do I apply for a work-study job?**

Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and be offered work-study as part of their Financial Aid award. If you are interested in work-study, but were not offered it, contact the financial aid office to review your eligibility for the program.

**42. How much will I get per hour with a work-study job?**

\$6.50 per hour

**43. What kind of work is available for a work-study job?**

Work-study positions are available at each MSTC Campus. A limited number of off-campus opportunities may be available at non-profit sites such as tutoring elementary students in math and science. At Wisconsin Rapids, job postings are outside the Financial Aid Office, at Marshfield

and the Adams Center, consult with the Main Office Staff and at Stevens Point, consult with the counselor in Student Affairs. Work-study students complete and submit a timesheet for all hours worked each week and are paid every other Friday.

**44. Do I need to have good grades to receive financial aid?**

Students must maintain a semester grade point average (G.P.A.) of 2.0 and complete at least 67% of your attempted credits. Withdrawals, drops, in progress, and no show grades will count against your attempted credits. Students will be placed on probation if they do not meet the standards at the end of the semester and will be suspended after two semesters of unsatisfactory progress. If the student's lack of progress was due to extenuating circumstances, the student can appeal consideration for reinstatement of financial aid to the Financial Aid Supervisor.

**45. I'm taking classes at another college in addition to my classes at MSTC. Can I get financial aid there too?**

You may only get financial aid at one college for each semester. You should request financial aid through your home school (the school you intend to graduate from). A Consortium Agreement can be used to include the credits from both schools. If we are considered your home school (the school you intend to graduate from), you should request your Consortium Agreement through the MSTC Financial Aid Office. If you are pursuing a degree at your other college, contact their Financial Aid Office to initiate a Consortium Agreement.

**46. I'm only taking general education courses, am I eligible for financial aid?**

Each student must be accepted into an aid-eligible program to be eligible for financial aid at a technical college. If you have been accepted to a program of study and are taking general education courses only because you are on the waiting list, you can be eligible to receive financial aid.

**47. My parent is also taking classes, should I include them as going to college on my FAFSA?**

No, parents cannot be included in the number in college.

**48. Does the college take into account my living expenses when determining financial aid?**

Yes, when determining the amount of financial aid you are eligible for, the Financial Aid Office assigns each student a budget, which includes tuition, fees, books, room and board, personal expenses, transportation and loan fees. Child care expenses, excessive transportation or disability-related expenses are not budgeted unless the student provides documentation to the Financial Aid Office for consideration.

**49. What if I decide to transfer to another college at the semester?**

If you received financial aid at MSTC first semester and now want to transfer to another college at semester, it is important to notify the Financial Aid Office to cancel your funds for second semester. You will need to add your new college to the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) so they have your information to award you at that college.

**50. How do I apply for scholarships?**

Each scholarship has different criteria. Information about scholarships awarded by the MSTC Foundation is available online at <http://www.mstc.edu/about/foundation.htm>. If you are still in

high school, it is important to work with your high school counselor for information on scholarships for students entering college. Other sources are available to search for scholarship sources such as [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). Caution: Never pay a fee to agencies that offer scholarship search services or financial aid consulting services without first checking the validity of that agency. For more information on scholarship scams, check out: [www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml)

**51. What if I receive a scholarship from my high school or a community group? Do I have to notify the financial aid office?**

All types of financial assistance, scholarships, other community agency grants, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation grants, Dislocated Worker benefits, etc. must be reported to the Financial Aid Office to be coordinated with your federal and state aid.

**52. Is there a new Federal grant program available that I may be eligible for?**

The Federal government has approved the Academic Competitiveness Grant effective July 1, 2006 to be implemented this academic year. A student will be identified by completing the FAFSA according to specific criteria: eligible to receive a Pell Grant, US citizen, college grade level 1 or 2, high school graduate as of May 2005, and the student must have completed a rigorous course of study in high school. Students were asked to self-identify if they met the above criteria on the FAFSA. If you did not apply and want to be reviewed for eligibility, you can self-identify at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

**53. What educational benefits are available to veterans?**

Chapter 30—Federal Montgomery GI Bill (active duty)  
Chapter 31—Federal Educational Assistance Program for Service-Connected (disabled) Veterans/Vocational Rehabilitation  
Chapter 35—Federal Dependents' Educational Assistance Program  
Chapter 1606—Federal Selective Reserve GI Bill  
Chapter 1607—Federal Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)  
Wisconsin GI Bill Tuition Remission  
Veterans Education Grant Program (VetEd)  
National Guard Tuition reimbursement

**54. How do I apply for veteran benefits?**

The MSTC Application process for both Federal and State Veterans benefits is outlined at <http://www.mstc.edu/pdf/VeteransApp.pdf>

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## Important Internet links/Contacts/Resources

» [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)

(To apply for Financial Aid)

800-433-3243 if questions

» [US Department of Education PIN](#)

(To apply for a PIN Number)

800-433-3243 if questions

» [IRS](#)

(To request copies of Federal Tax Returns & W-2's)  
800-829-1040

» [Selective Service Registration](#)

(To confirm registration status)  
847-688-6888

» [Social Security Administration](#)

(Corrections and request of benefit statements)  
800-772-1213

» [Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation](#)

(For information regarding student loans)  
Application status: 800-236-6600 Repayment information: 800236-4300

» [Debt Collection Service](#)

(To clear up Federal Repayments)  
800-621-3115