

Graduating Without Getting Buried in Debt



A guide to making smart financial choices

Money Management Skills

Loans Alternatives to Student Loans

- Scholarships - Check with the [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#).
- Grants - Check with your financial aid adviser in the [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#).
- Student Employment
 - Federal Work Study - Check with your financial aid adviser in the [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) for your eligibility.
 - Student Assistants - [Career Services](#) is another source of part-time jobs.
 - You might consider working summers and holidays to help pay tuition and expenses.
- Awards – May be offered by the University, religious groups, fraternities, sororities or civic groups. Check with employers and organizations connected with your field of interest. Visit the [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#).
- ROTC - If you are interested in the military, investigate the educational benefits of ROTC programs.

Factors to Consider Before Accepting a Loan

You may decide a loan is still necessary. First, consider the following:

- *Amount of Loan:* You may not need to borrow the full amount for which you are eligible.
- *Loan Limits:* Most loan programs specify minimum and maximum amounts you can borrow.
- *Number of Loans:* Your future education plans for further study will affect your total indebtedness.
- *Interest Rates:* Rates are subject to change and vary with each program. Check with your lender or agency.
- *Repayment:* You can avoid multiple monthly payments when possible, by staying with one loan program.
- *Length of Repayment Period:* A shorter repayment period will save you interest, although monthly payments will be higher. The William D. Ford and Federal Stafford Loans offer a variety of repayment options.
- *Minimum Monthly Payments:* Monthly payments depend on the amount you borrow and the repayment plan you select. Perkins Loans require a minimum payment of \$40 per month.
- *Borrowers Rights and Responsibilities:* Be sure you understand your rights and responsibilities under each loan program. The school gives you these. Keep all paperwork for future reference.

Career and Salary Planning

- For estimated Salaries, please visit the website The Bureau of Labor Statistics at <http://www.bls.gov/>
- For Career and Salary Planning, please visit the following websites:
 - [Job Star Central](#)

- [Salary.com](#)
- [United States Office of Personnel Management, Salary & Wages](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
- [College Grad](#)
- [Monster.com](#)

Keeping a good credit history

- A student loan can be a first experience with credit. They can be an excellent way to establish a good credit rating. Pay your student loan promptly each month. Frequent late payments constitute delinquency and may harm your credit history.
- Establishing a checking account with your bank or credit union may be your first step toward establishing credit.
- Tips on establishing good credit:
 - Stay in Touch with creditors - That includes on-campus and off-campus creditors, credit card companies, banks, the utility companies, and any other entities to which you owe money.
 - Update your change of address immediately.
 - Good communication, can help you avoid having:
 - Services withdrawn
 - Credit bureau reporting
 - Collection agency action
 - Legal action taken against you.
 - Mail sent to your permanent address may not be received by you, in a timely manner and may create financial problems for you.
 - Make your payment due each month, even if you haven't received a bill. When you can, send extra payments (interest free) to reduce the total interest you pay.
 - Never ignore correspondence or a payment request.

Protecting your identity

- Please visit the website of the FTC ID Theft home page, at <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>. You will find assistance, forms and brochures, which will assist you if you've had your identity stolen.
- If you think your identity has been stolen, here's what to do now:
 - Contact the fraud departments of any one of the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your credit file. The fraud alert requests creditors to contact you before opening any new accounts or making any changes to your existing accounts. As soon as the credit bureau confirms your fraud alert, the other two credit bureaus will be automatically notified to place fraud alerts, and all three credit reports will be sent to you free of charge.
 - Close the accounts that you know or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. Use the ID Theft Affidavit when disputing new unauthorized accounts.
 - File a police report. Get a copy of the report to submit to your creditors and others that may require proof of the crime.
 - File your complaint with the FTC. The FTC maintains a database of identity theft cases used by law enforcement agencies for investigations. Filing a complaint also helps us learn more about identity theft and the problems victims are having so that we can better assist you.
- For more in-depth information on recovering from identity theft and help with specific problems, please go to FTC website: [Fighting Back Against Identity Theft](#)
- FTC's Identity Theft Helpline, 1-877-ID-THEFT
- California DMV Fraud hotline, 1-866-658-5758, or email to DLFraud@DMV.CA.gov

- Social Security Administration, 1-800-772-1213

Debt Counseling

- Financial Goals - Establish financial goals for you. Short-term goals are goals that you can realistically achieve in a short amount of time. You will also want to establish long-term financial goals.
- Needs versus Wants - Consider whether the purchase is something you really need.
- Credit Cards
 - It is suggested that you have only one credit card.
 - Read the fine print.
 - Pay it off at the end of each month.
- Please check out these websites:
 - StudentDebtHelp.org
 - [Consumer Credit Counseling Services](http://ConsumerCreditCounselingServices)
 - [Jumpstart Coalition](http://JumpstartCoalition)
 - Kiplinger.com
 - NEFE.org
 - Stretcher.com
 - [Student Credit.com](http://StudentCredit.com)

Resources

If you would like more information - please visit: Students Account Services, SSW 2536, or call (619) 594-5253.