

# 2012-13 Financial Aid Checklist

Western Illinois University

[www.wiu.edu/fa](http://www.wiu.edu/fa)

## Fall 2011

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- Create an expandable college folder** where you can store all of your printed information, applications, and forms for future reference. Aren't sure if you'll need it? Save it!
- Begin reviewing *University* scholarship opportunities** available through the [WIU Scholarship Office](#) and WIU academic departments.
  - Pay attention to application deadlines and requirements!
  - [Review tips on applying for WIU scholarships](#)
- Begin researching *private* scholarship opportunities.** Use reputable online scholarship searches like [FastWeb](#), [Collegellinois!](#), and [Scholarship Experts](#).
  - [Learn how to spot a scholarship scam](#)
  - Pay attention to deadlines and requirements!
- Apply for your federal PIN number at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)** to use when you complete your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online.
  - For [students required to provide parent information](#) on the FAFSA, your parent will also need to apply for a PIN number.
- Prepare to file your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** by reviewing our [FAFSA Completion HELP](#) guide.

## January 2012

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- File the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to be considered for federal and state financial aid (it's a good idea to do this every year, even if you don't expect aid).
  - **File as soon as possible after January 1st** for maximum eligibility – you may use estimated income information and then make corrections once your 2011 federal taxes are filed.
  - Include WIU as a school you would like to have receive your FAFSA (school code 001780).
  - If you want Financial Aid Office staff to be able to discuss your financial aid information with your parent(s), spouse, or other person(s), complete an [Information Release](#) form on STARS/Financial Aid Information.
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)** at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) for any mistakes or errors that need correcting.
- Regularly check your WIU email and STARS/Financial Aid Information** for any notifications or requests from our office.
  - If you haven't already, [activate your WIU email and STARS](#) once you are accepted to the University.
  - You may grant online access to your STARS records to a maximum of 5 guests by selecting Parent and Guest Account Management from STARS.

## Spring 2012

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- IF SELECTED** for Verification, submit the requested [worksheet](#) and additional requirements as instructed.
  - **You will receive an email notification if you have been selected for Verification – a STARS/Financial Aid Information message will also be posted.**



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- Please **do not** send a Verification Worksheet, tax returns, etc. unless the information is requested.
- Our goal is to review your information within 2-4 weeks after all requirements have been submitted. The volume of files and time of year will affect time needed for this review.

- Continue to regularly check your WIU email and STARS/Financial Aid Information** frequently for reminders, requests, and notices from the Financial Aid Office.
- Review your Financial Aid Award Letter on STARS/Financial Aid Information.**
  - You will be notified by email that your award letter has been completed and is available online.
  - You may reduce or cancel your loans using STARS.
- Notify our office of any additional aid** you will receive that was not listed on your award letter.
- Complete Entrance Counseling** at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov) if this is your first time borrowing Federal Direct Student Loans.
- Complete a Master Promissory Note** at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov) if this is your first Federal Direct Student Loan, or if this is your first time borrowing student loan funds while attending WIU.
- Calculate your expected charges** using the [WIU Cost Estimator](#). The first bills of the semester are usually sent during the first week of August and January.
  - Student loans cannot be disbursed until immediately prior to the start of classes and will not appear on the August or January bills.
  - Complete the [Direct Deposit Authorization](#) on STARS to receive any refund due you.
  - Remember that funds are to be used only for educationally-related expenses such as books and supplies, room/board or rent, transportation to class, etc.
- Additional loan eligibility may be available** if needed. See [Parent PLUS loan](#) and [private alternative loan](#) information in the [Loans section](#) of our website.
  - Parents may apply for a Parent PLUS loan no sooner than June 01, 2012.

## Now That You're Enrolled...

- Prepare to pay for your books** by cash, check, or credit card.
  - Books **cannot** be charged to your University account.
- Read the [Financial Aid Reminders](#)** available on our website.
- Read the [Financial Aid Handbook](#) and [Financial Aid Policies](#)** information available on our website.
- Review your federal student loan history** at [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov).
  - Use every year to track your federal student loan debt – remember, borrow only what you need!
  - Remember that private student loan information is not available through this federal database, so you will have to keep track of your private loan information yourself.
- Get ready to do it all again!** Financial aid is annual process, so there will be new scholarship applications every fall and a new FAFSA to complete every January.
- Students who are graduating and/or not returning next year should:**
  - Complete Exit Counseling so they are aware of loan repayment procedures and obligations. A WIU email notification will be sent with Exit Counseling instructions.
  - Review federal student loan history at [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov).
  - Learn about [federal student loan consolidation](#) and your [federal loan repayment options](#).

Also review our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) online and check out [WIU Financial Aid on Facebook!](#)



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