

# Financial Aid Checklist

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

- 1. File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to be considered for federal and state financial aid (good idea to do this every year, even if you don't expect aid).
  - File as soon after January 1<sup>st</sup> for maximum eligibility. Enter WIU school code 001780.
  - Financial Aid Office receives the information in 3-4 days from the federal processor.
  - 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 the Release of Authorization Form on STARS/Financial Aid Information.
  
- 2. Submit Verification Worksheet and federal tax returns** *if selected* for verification review.
  - Financial Aid Office will send an email request and post it on STARS/Financial Aid Information. Our goal is to review your information within 2 weeks after all of your required information has been submitted. The volume of files and time of year will affect time needed for this review.
  
- 3. Financial Aid Office will review** all FAFSA information and send an email request if more information is needed. You will be sent an email when your award letter is posted to STARS.
  - Complete a Direct Loan Master Promissory Note and Entrance Counseling at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov) if this is your first Federal Direct Loan.
  - You may reduce or cancel loans on STARS.
  
- 4. Additional loan** eligibility may be available if needed. See PLUS and alternative loan information in Loans section of [www.wiu.edu/fa](http://www.wiu.edu/fa).
  
- 5. The first bills** of the semester are usually sent August 6<sup>th</sup> and January 6<sup>th</sup>. You can calculate your expected charges at [http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/business\\_services/billing/costestimate.php](http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/business_services/billing/costestimate.php).
  - Student loans cannot be disbursed until 10 days prior to the start of classes and will not appear on the August or January bills.
  - Complete Direct Deposit Authorization on STARS to receive any refund due you.
  
- 6. Be prepared** to pay for your books by cash or credit card.
  - Financial aid may not always be sufficient to cover the cost of university charges and books.
  - Financial aid refunds may not be available in time to cover the cost of books.
  
- 7. Check your WIU email** frequently for reminders, requests, and notices from the Financial Aid Office.
  - Activate your ECOM account by going to [www.wiu.edu/guava](http://www.wiu.edu/guava). Select Account Activation and use your ECOM username (all lowercase), which was provided in your letter from the Registrar's Office.
  
- 8. Access your records through STARS** using your WIU ID Number and 8-digit PIN. The first time you access STARS, your PIN will be your MONTH/DAY/YEAR of birth (mmdyyy).
  - You may grant online access to your records to a maximum of 5 guests by selecting Parent and Guest Account Management from STARS.

Review our **Frequently Asked Questions** online at [www.wiu.edu/fa](http://www.wiu.edu/fa) and check out **WIU Financial Aid** on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WIUFinancialAid](http://www.facebook.com/WIUFinancialAid).



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