 Fee Assistance Program

Please visit the Fee Assistance Program website for information about application timing and the application process, eligibility requirements, benefits, and the financial documentation you will need to apply.

How are Fee Assistance Program award decisions made? Are there a limited number of awards each year?

Fee Assistance Program award approval is tied directly to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' poverty level guidelines. In 2015, you will be granted fee assistance if each household reported on your application has a 2014 total family income that is 300 percent or less than the 2014 national poverty level for that family size.

There is not a limit to the number of Fee Assistance awards AAMC provides each year.

Is Fee Assistance Program eligibility based on my income or my parent(s)? Can the parental financial information requirement be waived if I am independent from my parents? (i.e. if I am married and no longer live with my parents.)

The Fee Assistance Program requires financial information and supporting tax documentation from you and all of your living parents. Parental information is viewed independently from applicant data, but must also fall within eligibility guidelines. This requirement cannot be waived on the basis of your marital status, age, or tax filing status.

The Fee Assistance Program, unlike some federally funded programs, does not draw distinctions based on your dependent or independent status for tax purposes, therefore, parental financial information and supporting tax documentation are required.

I am waiting for my parents' W-2 form and IRS 1040 Federal Tax Forms and the MCAT exam registration opens soon. Can I submit my Fee Assistance application and get a decision without these forms?

You can submit your Fee Assistance Program application, however without supporting financial documentation your application will remain on hold and unverified. The AAMC must have all required support documentation in order to make a decision regarding your application.

I’m married, does the Fee Assistance Program require financial information from my spouse’s parents as well as my parents?

Financial information is only required for your household and your parent(s)’ household(s), the AAMC does not need documentation from your spouse’s parents.
How should I provide financial information for my parents if I do not have any contact with them?

If you do not have any contact with your parents, or if your parents are deceased, please contact the AAMC at fap@aamc.org or 202-828-0600 for further information.

Once my benefits expire, when can I reapply for fee assistance?

You can reapply to the Fee Assistance Program as soon as the next application year opens in January. If you apply for and receive fee assistance during two consecutive calendar years, any unused benefits from your first award will expire as soon as your new award is approved.

Is there a date by which Fee Assistance Program applications need to be completed?

You may submit the 2015 Fee Assistance Program application at any time this calendar year. If approved, your benefits will be valid until December 31, 2016.

If you received fee assistance benefits for the last three years, and were to be approved again in 2015, would this be the last year you would be eligible for the award since benefit approval now lasts up to two years?

You can still be approved for the Fee Assistance Program up to five (5) times in your lifetime. If you apply and are approved for assistance in 2015, it will count as one award. In the scenario above, you would still be eligible to receive fee assistance one more time.

Do Fee Assistance Program benefits cover secondary medical school application expenses?

Fee Assistance Program benefits do not cover any secondary medical school application fees. However, many medical schools will waive these fees for those awarded fee assistance from the AAMC. Contact the schools you apply to for more information.

Is it too late to sign up for Fee Assistance if you have already taken or registered for the MCAT exam?

If you have already registered for or have taken the MCAT exam you can still use Fee Assistance Program benefits such as a waiver for AMCAS application fees, access to the Medical School Admissions Requirements database, and a reduced subscription to Pivio.

Will medical schools know if an applicant is participating in the Fee Assistance Program?

Yes, medical schools see that you have been approved for fee assistance from the AAMC.
Financing Medical School

What is the average cost of applying to medical school?

Costs for applying to medical school will vary depending on how you approach the application process. Some of the costs you should be aware of include: MCAT exam registration fees, AMCAS application fees, and secondary application fees, and service fees from the registrars at your undergraduate institution(s). You may incur costs for things like MCAT prep courses, a Medical School Admission Requirements website subscription, a Pivio subscription, and possible moving expenses.

If you are already paying off a loan (e.g. a house mortgage), would that affect your ability to get a loan and/or financial aid for medical school? Do any of the federal student loans require that you have a credit history?

Federal loans do not require a credit history. Direct Unsubsidized Loans are not based on credit, so outstanding credit obligations do not factor into loan awards. If you decide to apply for a Direct PLUS Loan, a credit check is required and can affect whether or not you are granted the award. With other loans, like a private/alternative loan, the lender will have their own credit criteria for determining eligibility and other debt obligations could play a role in eligibility for the loan.

How do you get information about a school's financial aid? Are they comparable to undergraduate financial aid awards?

Visit medical schools’ financial aid websites, or talk with their financial aid administrator. Medical students are generally eligible for the same type of aid as an undergraduate student, except for Pell Grants. Participating medical schools also offer Primary Care Loans and Loans for Disadvantaged Students through HRSA. Check with the schools you are interested in attending for more information.

How much is the average cost of applying to medical school?

Application costs vary by school. You can review this information within the Medical School Admissions Requirements, and you can also check the school’s website for more information.

Do my loans stay in deferment when I'm in my residency? If so, how long can you defer payment?

While in residency you can postpone repayment by requesting a Mandatory Forbearance for Medical Students on an annual basis. Some residents may choose to start paying on their loans through an income-driven plans as well.

Where can we find the best scholarships for medical school?

Check with the financial aid administrator at the school(s) you are interested in attending for information about scholarships that they offer. You can also check the same type of resources that you utilized as an undergraduate student. The FIRST website also has some information that may be helpful.

How many years does it take on average to pay back medical school debt?
The length of time it takes to repay medical school debt depends on the borrower and their borrowing/repayment behavior. Data collected by the AAMC indicate that medical students generally pay their loans back successfully, and many times pay them off sooner than the term allowed.

**Will applying for FAFSA independently or dependently make a difference?**

Medical students are independent students, however medical schools may still require parental information.

**When does repayment usually begin on medical school loans?**

- Direct Unsubsidized Loans have a 6 month grace period after graduation.
- Direct PLUS Loans officially enter repayment immediately after they are disbursed; however, while you are in school a deferment is applied so that no payments are required. After you leave school, there is no grace period, but there is a 6-month post-enrollment deferment before payments are required.
- Perkins Loans allow a 9-month grace period.
- For all other loans, you will need to check with the lender regarding repayment terms.

**Are there any types of jobs such as with the AmeriCorps, military, or any teaching opportunities that provide loan repayment options for medical school students?**

Yes, check out the [Commissioned Corps, U.S. Civil Service, and Military Scholarship and Loan Repayment Options](#) fact sheet as well as the other repayment fact sheets on the FIRST website. You may also want to review FIRST’s [searchable database](#) for some state and federal loan repayment and forgiveness programs.

**Do public medical schools typically have an in-state/out-of-state standard tuition difference similar to undergraduate universities?**

This depends on the school. You can check the Medical School Admission Requirements website for this information.

**How do most medical students finance their costs during their 4-year program?**

Many students borrow to finance their medical education, 84% of all medical students graduated with federal student loans. For more information, see the [Debt, Costs, and Loan Repayment Fact Card](#).

**About how much should we budget and save prior to applying and matriculating to medical school?**

This varies by individual but careful pre-planning and budgeting is a good idea in any situation. Generally, the less debt you have when you enter medical school, the less stressful finances will be while in medical school, so it’s important to pay down any consumer debt (like credit card debt) if you are able. Also, it’s a good idea to create a fund for application fees and expenses.
If I am not a U.S. citizen how would I apply for student loans for medical school?

Check with the medical schools you are interested in attending for more information about financing options that may be available to you.

Are there any significant cost differences between D.O. programs and M.D. programs?

Costs vary within both M.D. and D.O. granting institutions, so it’s best to check with the individual schools of interest for their Cost of Attendance (COA) information.

Is there any funding to attend medical school for older, non-traditional students?

Financial aid is available non-traditional students. This fact sheet may be helpful to you. You may also want to search for scholarships for non-traditional students.

When is a good time to fill out FAFSA?

You can complete the FAFSA as soon as Jan. 1st of each year. For instance, if you are planning on attending medical school in the fall of 2015, you could fill out your FAFSA at this time.

Can you apply for federal aid to cover tuition at medical schools that are provisionally accredited?

It depends, you should check with the financial aid office at the school to determine what federal programs they may be eligible to apply for and receive.

When you are paying back your student loans, should you direct your payments to the amount that you took out or to the interest accrued amount?

When the servicer receives payment for a loan, the payment is always applied to accrued interest before principal.

What options are there for students who do not qualify for financial aid? Where do you recommend looking for scholarships (non-need based)?

If a student is not eligible for federal aid, they should check with the financial aid administrator at the school(s) to see what other options may be available. In these cases, a private/alternative loan may be an option. The FIRST website provides some information about scholarships, however you can also check the avenues that you may have pursued for scholarships as an undergraduate as well.

When is a good time to apply for loans for medical school--before or after acceptance?

When you complete your FAFSA, you will list the schools you want to receive your financial information regardless of whether or not you have been accepted at that particular school. Check the
school’s website or speak to the financial aid administrator at the school to make sure you follow their specific procedures and timelines for applying for aid.

**Can I consolidate my undergraduate loans with my medical school loans?**

After you graduate from medical school, you may choose to consolidate your federal loans into a Direct Consolidation Loan. Keep in mind, this is not always necessary, or the most advantageous for the borrower. You would need to evaluate your situation at that time to determine if consolidation is right for you. Some things to consider are included on this FIRST fact sheet.

**Economically speaking, is the HPSP (health profession scholarship) worth it? In the end, is it worth it to have the military pay for college in return for service?**

This question can only be answered by the person choosing to pursue this type of service commitment. For more information about various opportunities, you may want to review FIRST’s Commissioned Corps, U.S. Civil Service, and Military Scholarship and Loan Repayment Options fact sheet.

**Can we defer our undergraduate loans while we are in medical school?**

If you are enrolled at least half-time, undergraduate loans can be deferred. Keep in mind if the undergraduate loans are unsubsidized interest will continue to accrue on those loans. **For the fall 2016 school year, how soon can you complete the FAFSA application?**

If you are planning on starting school in the fall of 2016, then you could complete the FAFSA as soon as Jan.1, 2016. Check with the financial aid office to be certain of their application timelines and procedures for applying for financial aid.