Financial Aid

Office of Financial Aid  
Cope Administration Building 218

The purpose of Student Financial Aid is to provide assistance to qualified students who would find it difficult or impossible to attend Middle Tennessee State University without aid. The Office of Student Financial Aid is a department within the Division of Student Affairs.

Students and their families have the primary responsibility for financing a college education. However, through federally funded programs, students may receive assistance when it is determined that the student and family cannot meet the costs of a postsecondary education. Need is defined as the difference between the cost of attending MTSU and the calculated family contribution toward this cost. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the document from which the family contribution is calculated.

In addition to programs based on need, MTSU has a limited number of scholarships that are based on academic performance and/or ability in a particular area.

Deadlines for Applications

Federal/State Deadlines
To apply for federal and state aid, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed. The priority date to apply for federal financial aid is May 15. The priority date does not apply to the Federal Pell Grant or Federal Stafford Loan programs. The priority deadline for the state grant (Tennessee Student Assistance Award) is May 1. State aid is based on availability of funds which are often depleted by April 1. Completing the FAFSA early is strongly encouraged. Due to limited funding for campus-based programs (e.g., Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, Perkins Loan, and Federal Work Study), all eligible students may not receive these funds.

Scholarship Deadlines
To apply for scholarships for the upcoming academic year, the following deadlines must be observed:

Currently enrolled students: Submit a scholarship application by December 1
Entering freshmen: Apply for admission, submit official ACT or SAT test scores, and submit an official sixth-semester high school transcript (through the end of the junior year) by December 1
Transfer students: Apply for admission by February 15
Foundation scholarships: Complete online application at www.mtsu.edu/scholarships by February 15
Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program (TELS): The priority deadline requires the FAFSA results to be on file in the Financial Aid Office by May 1; submit the completed FAFSA by April 1, if possible.

How to Apply

Step 1. Prospective students and their parents should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), following the instructions very carefully. Forms are available beginning in January for the next Fall, Spring, and Summer terms. Forms are available from the MTSU Financial Aid Office and most high school guidance counselors or via the Web at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

The completed FAFSA can be mailed to the processing center in the envelope provided with the application, or the FAFSA can be completed online. The federal processor will not process an application until it is signed. If completing the FAFSA online, parents and students should register for a personal identification number (PIN) before completing the application. The PIN can be used as an electronic signature. The federal processor generally takes four to six weeks to process the application manually and approximately two weeks via the Internet. The Federal Processing Center will send a Student Aid Report (SAR) to the student and MTSU (if the student enters the MTSU School Code of 003510 in the school section of the FAFSA).

Step 2. If the MTSU Financial Aid Office receives a complete and valid SAR before the beginning of the Fall semester of the upcoming academic year, students will be sent a Fall/Spring award letter stating the tentative financial aid they will be awarded. The award letter is based on full-time attendance and will indicate both grants and loans for which the student is eligible. After the award letter is printed, the estimated aid amounts may change due to changes in enrollment, EFC amounts, scholarships, and other aid. Please remember to write accept or reject beside each award, sign the form, and return it to Middle Tennessee State University, Financial Aid Office, Cope Administration Building, Room 218, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. Students may view their tentative financial aid awards under the Personal Financial Aid Information pages on WebMT, via PipelineMT.

Step 3. Students applying for a Federal Stafford Loan must submit a completed Loan Request Sheet (LRS) to the Financial Aid Office. Copies of the LRS are included with the award letter, available in the MTSU Financial Aid Office, or available on the Web at www.mtsu.edu/financialaid/forms.htm. To process a loan, a valid SAR must be on file. The request should be submitted a few months before the loan is needed.

Return of Financial Aid
For the Fall and Spring semesters, a federal financial aid return will be calculated for all students who withdraw after the fourth day of class but prior to completing 60 percent of the term. For the Summer term, a federal financial aid return will be calculated for all students who withdraw after the last
Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Federal regulations require that all federal financial aid recipients be enrolled in a degree-seeking program and maintain satisfactory academic progress toward a degree to maintain eligibility. MTSU complies with this requirement by monitoring each aid recipient’s cumulative grade point average (GPA), completion rate, and maximum time frame for completion of a degree. The following describes MTSU’s method for monitoring each of these measures.

Cumulative Grade Point Average

1. **Undergraduate students.** To be eligible for financial aid, a student’s GPA must meet at least the minimum requirements found in this catalog. The cumulative GPA includes all transfer credits and hours earned at MTSU.

2. **Graduate students.** To be eligible for financial aid, a student’s GPA must meet at least the minimum requirements found in the graduate catalog or be approved by the College of Graduate Studies for enrollment.

Completion Rate

Students must earn 66 percent of their cumulative credits attempted to remain eligible for financial aid. Grades of A, B, C, D, P, or S, including any “+” or “−” options, count as credits earned. All courses for credit will be counted as hours attempted including withdrawals, incompletes, courses repeated, and courses resulting in grades of N, U, WF, WP, and F.

1. **Probation.** Students whose completion rate is greater than 50 percent but less than the required 66 percent will be placed on probation. Students on probation must pass 75 percent of their attempted hours.

2. **Suspension.** Students whose completion rate is less than 50 percent of the credit hours attempted or those previously placed on probation who did not pass 75 percent of attempted credit hours will be suspended from eligibility for federal grants, loans, and federal work-study employment. Students may still be eligible for emergency short-term loans and other University funds.

Time Limitations

1. **Undergraduates.** The maximum time limit for completion of a first degree is 150 percent of the program’s published length. Most undergraduate programs require 120 hours; therefore, the maximum attempted hours allowed is 180. Students working on programs listed in catalogs before Fall 2004 may require 132 hours. Therefore, the maximum attempted hours is 198. This time limitation does not include remedial/developmental courses for which the maximum federal limit is 30 hours. The maximum hours include all transfer hours and all attempted hours. Students who change majors during the junior or senior year will be allowed 24 additional attempted hours to obtain a degree. The Records Office must have the change of major recorded prior to the student’s achieving the maximum hours.

2. **Graduates.** The maximum time limit for graduate students will be 150 percent of the standards established by the College of Graduate Studies and published in the graduate catalog.

Review of Progress Standards

1. **GPA.** The Records Office reviews the GPA at the end of each semester. Students may appeal academic suspension to the undergraduate or graduate academic appeals committee. The decision of the committee is final.

2. **Completion rate.** The completion rate is reviewed annually at the end of the Spring semester by the Financial Aid Office.

3. **Time limitation.** The maximum time limit is reviewed at the end of each semester by the Financial Aid Office.

Notification/Appeals

1. **Time Limits.** The Financial Aid Office will send a letter of notification regarding the maximum limitation on hours for federal financial aid. For programs requiring 132 credit hours, students will be notified after attempting 150 credit hours. Students will be notified after attempting 135 credit hours in a program requiring 120 credit hours.

2. **Probation.** The Financial Aid Office will send a letter to students placed on financial aid probation notifying them of their financial aid status and the expected requirements. Each student will be allowed at least one probationary period during the course of enrollment.

3. **Suspension.** Students suspended from financial aid will receive a letter from the Financial Aid Office along with a Satisfactory Progress Appeal form. Students are allowed to appeal their suspensions if they can document extenuating circumstances beyond their control which have since been resolved. Examples include death of an immediate family member and extended medical illness and/or disability. Provisions may also be made for students who have been approved to participate in the Academic Fresh Start program or who have military credits that cannot be counted toward a degree. Any other circumstances not listed above must be well documented and have the approval of a financial aid administrator and/or the director of Financial Aid.

   a. **Financial Aid Suspension Appeals.** Student appeals are reviewed by an internal committee composed of financial aid staff. Each student will be notified of the appeal decision and—if denied—what action must be taken to regain financial aid eligibility.

   b. **Loan and Scholarship Committee.** Students who are suspended a second time or who have been denied by the internal financial aid committee may appeal to the Loan and Scholarship Committee or its designee. The Loan and Scholarship Committee comprises faculty members, students, and administrators. Since faculty and students do not report unreported financial aid committee may appeal to the Loan and Scholarship Committee or its designee. The Loan and Scholarship Committee comprises faculty members, students, and administrators. Since faculty and students do not report unreported financial aid eligibility.

Reinstatement of Financial Aid if Appeal Denied

Students can attend MTSU and make up deficiencies in credit hours at their personal expense. If a student chooses to do this, a written appeal to the Financial Aid Office must be made when the deficiencies have been completed. This option is not available to students who have reached the maximum time limit.

No Credit Hours Earned

A student who earns no credit hours for one semester will be placed on probation. A student who earns no credit hours for the previous two semesters enrolled will be suspended from federal financial aid. However, the student may appeal the suspension. Please see the suspension guidelines above.
Teacher Licensure

Students who have completed an undergraduate degree and are enrolled for the sole purpose of attaining teacher licensure may be eligible for loans at the undergraduate level. To receive aid, students must be accepted into the teacher education program. Students may be eligible for aid one semester prior to being accepted provided they have taken or will be taking FOED 1110 and FOED 2110, have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and provide the Financial Aid Office with a copy of their program of study. Exceptions may be made by the Financial Aid director or his/her designee.

Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program (TELSP)

The Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) awards the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarships. For additional information visit www.state.tn.us/tsac.

Eligibility Requirements:

For all students
- Tennessee residency

For entering freshmen
- December 2004 and later graduates must have at least an unweighted 3.0 GPA or 21 ACT (980 SAT).
- August to November 2004 graduates must have at least an unweighted 3.0 GPA or 19 ACT (890 SAT).
- GED recipients who attain a GED on or after December 1, 2004, must have at least 21 ACT (980 SAT) and 525 GED.
- Graduates of home school or an ineligible high school must have at least 21 ACT (980 SAT).
- GED recipients must enroll within six (6) months after GED test date.
- Graduates of home school or a high school must enroll by the Fall semester after graduation.

In April of each year, TSAC will determine the availability of funds for Summer Lottery Scholarships. If funds are available, part-time Fall students and/or part-time Spring students may receive scholarship funds if eligible.

For more information on General Assembly Merit Scholarships, Need-Based Supplemental Awards, and Hope Access Grants, visit the Web site at www.state.tn.us/tsac.

Application Procedures:

Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for each academic year. The FAFSA is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov beginning January 1. The application priority date is May 1; submit the completed FAFSA by April 1, if possible.

Renewal Criteria:
- Must enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit hours for each Fall and each Spring term.

Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program (TELSP) Policy

Refer to the current schedule book for the most recent policy. Rules and regulations are accurate as of February 2005; however, TSAC reserves the right to modify rules and regulations without prior notification. Before dropping or withdrawing from classes, contact the Financial Aid Office.

According to Title 49, Chapter 1640-1-19 of the Tennessee Code Annotated, the Financial Aid Office must implement policies and procedures for the monitoring of TELSP. In addition, the statute requires students to maintain federal Satisfactory Academic Progress as established by MTSU as noted below. Following are the policies and procedures for the monitoring of TELSP

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

Eligibility will be reviewed at the end of the term in which the student has attempted a total of 24, 48, 72, 96, or 120 credit hours. At the end of the term in which the student has attempted a total of 24 credit hours, the student’s cumulative GPA must be at least 2.75. At the end of the term in which the student has attempted a total of 48, 72, 96, and 120 credit hours, the student’s cumulative GPA must be at least 3.0. The cumulative GPA includes all transfer credits and hours earned at MTSU including grades from repeated classes. Dual enrollment, credit-by-examination, and/or AP credits are not included in the cumulative GPA.

Completion Rate

Students must earn grades for hours attempted based upon their enrollment status as of the census date (fourteenth day). For example, students who are paid based on full-time enrollment cannot drop below 12 credit hours during the term.

Time Limitations

Students can receive a TELSP award until the first of the following events occurs:
1. The student has earned a baccalaureate degree.
2. The student has attempted a total of 120 credit hours. If an undergraduate degree program requires more than 120 credit hours, students are eligible for up to a total of 136 credit hours attempted OR the number of hours required for graduation, whichever is less.
3. Five years from the date of the student’s initial enrollment have passed, unless a leave of absence has been approved.

Procedures for Monitoring Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program

A. Grade Point Average (GPA). The Financial Aid Office reviews the GPA at the end of 24, 48, 72, 96, and 120 attempted hours.
B. Completion Rate. The Financial Aid Office reviews the completion rate at the end of each term. Students who change their enrollment status after the census date (14 days) are no longer eligible for the TELSP award.
C. Time Limitations. The Financial Aid Office reviews the maximum time limitation at the end of each term.
Notification of Ineligibility
A. **Grade Point Average (GPA).** Students who fail to maintain the minimum GPA requirement based on attempted hours will be notified of their ineligibility for future TELSP awards. MTSU is not authorized to make exceptions concerning GPA requirements, regardless of extenuating circumstances.

B. **Completion Rate.** Students who change enrollment status after the census date will be notified they are no longer eligible for the TELSP award. Students may appeal changes in enrollment status after the census date provided they can adequately document medical or personal reasons.

C. **Time Limitations.**
   1. **Maximum Credit Hours**
      Students who have attempted 96 credit hours will be reminded of the maximum hour limitation for TELSP. Students who have attempted 120 credit hours will be sent notification letters informing them that they are no longer eligible for the TELSP award. Students whose program lengths are greater than 120 credit hours may appeal their ineligibility.
   2. **Maximum Years Allowed**
      Notification letters will be sent to applicable students informing them they are no longer eligible for the TELSP award.

Appeal Process
Students who have lost their eligibility for the TELSP award can appeal if they had extenuating circumstances or if their program length is greater than 120 credit hours. The Financial Aid Office notifies the student of ineligibility at the end of the semester. A Tennessee Lottery Appeal form is available in the Financial Aid Office or online at www.mtsu.edu/financialaid/forms.htm. Students will be allowed to appeal their ineligibility if they can provide documentation verifying extenuating medical or personal circumstances. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, illness of the student, illness or death of an immediate family member, extreme financial hardship of the student or student’s immediate family, or other extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control.

Students should submit their appeals to the Financial Aid Office to be reviewed by the Institutional Review Panel (IRP). The IRP is composed of administrators and will meet within fourteen (14) days of the student’s completed appeal. If the IRP denies the appeal, students may appeal to the TELSP Award Appeals Panel at TSAC. The decision from the TELSP Award Appeals Panel at TSAC is final.

Grade Changes
Students should submit written notification to the Financial Aid Office within fourteen (14) days of any grade change. The Financial Aid Office will verify the change and make an award adjustment, if applicable.

Incomplete
Incompletes are included in attempted hours but are not calculated in the GPA. If a student’s GPA including a grade of I meets the GPA requirement based on attempted hours, the student may be eligible for a TELSP award for the current semester. However, if the grade of I is changed and the student’s GPA falls below the minimum requirement, the student may be required to repay all TELSP awards within the current academic year. Conversely, if a student is not eligible based on a GPA that includes a grade of I, the student will not be eligible for a TELSP award for the current semester. If the grade of I is later changed and the student becomes eligible based on the recalculated GPA, MTSU will resume the TELSP award.

Leave of Absence
A student may request a leave of absence by completing the Tennessee Lottery Appeal form. In most cases, a student may be granted a leave of absence for up to one year and be eligible to receive the TELSP award upon return. A leave of absence may be approved for medical or personal reasons. Allowable medical or personal reasons may include, but are not limited to, illness of the student, illness or death of an immediate family member, extreme financial hardship of the student or student’s immediate family, to fulfill a religious commitment expected of all students of that faith, or other circumstances.

Allowable medical or personal reasons may include, but are not limited to, illness of the student, illness or death of an immediate family member, extreme financial hardship of the student or student’s immediate family, or other extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control where continued attendance by the student creates a substantial hardship. The student will be notified of the decision of the IRP. If a student’s request is denied, he/she may appeal the decision to the TELSP Award Appeals Panel at TSAC.

Military Mobilization
A student may request a leave of absence due to military mobilization by submitting the Tennessee Lottery Appeal form. A member of the United States Armed Services, National Guard, or Armed Forces Reserves who is mobilized for active duty during a semester that is already in progress may be granted a personal leave of absence and his/her TELSP award eligibility will not be negatively affected. If as a result of being mobilized a student completely withdraws, the hours that were attempted during the semester will not be counted for purposes of determining future TELSP award eligibility. If the student receives grades of I due to mobilization, see the Incompletes section above. Requests for leaves of absence from students whose spouses, children, fathers, or mothers have been mobilized for active duty also will be considered. Students must reenroll no later than one year following the mobilization to be eligible. They must provide the Financial Aid Office with copies of orders for active duty for themselves or the applicable family member.

General Financial Aid Information
1. For the Fall and Spring semesters, students who withdraw during the first four days of classes will have all of their financial aid cancelled. Students who drop course(s) before the census date may have their aid adjusted according to the number of hours enrolled as of that date. Refer to the current schedule book for exact dates.
2. For each session of the Summer term, students who withdraw before the last day to drop without receiving a grade...
may have all of their financial aid cancelled. Students who drop course(s) and receive a grade of W may have their financial aid adjusted. Refer to the current schedule book for exact dates.

3. Students who withdraw from the University before 60 percent of the term has been completed will have their aid adjusted according to the Financial Aid Return Policy. For information about the Return Policy, refer to the Return of Financial Aid section.

4. Class attendance will be verified for financial aid disbursements that occur during the Fall and Spring semesters and each session of the Summer term. For Stafford and Perkins Loans, if a student is reported as not attending classes on at least a half-time basis (6 credit hours), funds may be cancelled or adjusted. For Pell Grants, if a student is reported as not attending classes for which Pell has been awarded, aid may be cancelled or adjusted. If the University cancels a course, the student may be required to register for additional hours to be eligible for federal financial aid. Students are advised to contact the Financial Aid Office if they have questions regarding their eligibility.

5. Class participation must be verified for students who are enrolled in correspondence courses, online courses, telecourses, the Regents degree program, or courses via the Internet. Because attendance is not required for these courses, instructors document class participation according to completed homework assignments. Students should complete their homework assignments in a timely manner so their participation can be documented. If students wish to withdraw or drop from these courses, they are encouraged to contact their instructor(s). Students’ financial aid may be adjusted or cancelled if instructors are unable to verify participation.

6. The federal government randomly chooses students for verification, which is the process of documenting the data submitted on the FAFSA. If a student is selected, the Financial Aid Office will request copies of applicable federal income tax returns, W-2 forms, and other documents. Failure to submit completed documents to the Financial Aid Office in a timely manner may delay a student’s financial aid and may possibly result in the loss of certain funds.

7. Financial aid can pay for up to 30 attempted credit hours of remedial and developmental classes.

8. Students receiving financial aid must declare a major by the time they have earned 60 hours.

9. Any scholarships and grants received in excess of tuition, fees, and books are considered taxable income. Consult your tax preparer for tax filing information.

10. Students enrolled in only Regents Online Degree courses may have their budgets adjusted.

11. All financial aid is subject to the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

12. Students enrolled for an additional bachelor’s degree may qualify for a Stafford Loan provided they have not reached their aggregate limit. The student must provide the Financial Aid Office with a signed copy of the upper-division form detailing the courses required for the additional degree before a loan can be processed.

Aid Available

Following is a summary of financial aid administered through MTSU. Unless otherwise indicated, application is made to the Student Financial Aid Office by completing and mailing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Sources of Aid and Eligibility

Federal Programs

Federal Pell Grant
Undergraduate students (based on need and attempted hours); amount of grant varies.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
Undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time (based on need); amount of assistance varies.
Federal Work-Study Program
Undergraduate or graduate students enrolled at least half-time (based on need); maximum of 20 hours per week.

Federal Perkins Loan
Graduate and undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time (based on need); lifetime maximum of $20,000 for undergraduate study and $40,000 for graduate study.

Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan Program
Undergraduate or graduate students enrolled at least half-time and in good standing or accepted for enrollment at MTSU (based on need); maximum for two semesters is $2,625 for freshmen; $3,500 for sophomores; $5,500 for juniors and seniors; and $8,500 for graduate students, not to exceed a lifetime limit of $23,000 for undergraduate students and $65,500 for graduate students (including the undergraduate loans). Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office.

Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan Program
Independent undergraduate or graduate students attending at least half-time and in good standing or accepted for enrollment at MTSU (based on need and cost of attendance); maximum for two semesters is $4,000 for freshmen or sophomores; $5,000 for juniors or seniors; and $10,000 for graduate students, not to exceed a lifetime limit of $23,000 for undergraduate students and $73,000 for graduate students (including the undergraduate loans). Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office.

Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)
Parents of dependent students; student must be attending at least half-time. The annual loan limit is the student’s defined cost of attendance minus any financial aid received. No lifetime limits. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office.

ROTC Scholarship - Army Officer Scholarship
Based on performance on written and physical examinations; $250 per month plus tuition and books; contact MTSU Military Science Department.

State Programs
Review the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) Web site at www.state.tn.us/tsac for information on application procedures, deadline dates, and eligibility criteria for the following programs:

- Tennessee Student Assistance Award Program
- Dependent Children Scholarship Program
- Ned McWherter Scholars Program
- Minority Teaching Fellows Program
- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program
- Tennessee Teaching Scholars Program
- Christa McAuliffe Scholarship Program
- Tennessee State Lottery Scholarship Program

Institutional Programs
The programs listed below are currently available; however, they are subject to change without prior notification. Review the MTSU Web site at www.mtsu.edu/scholarships for the most recent programs and eligibility criteria.

Incoming Freshman Academic Scholarships
- The National Merit Finalist
- The Chancellor Scholarship
- The Presidential Scholarship
- The James M. Buchanan Scholarship
- The Academic Service Scholarship
- Valedictorians and Salutatorians
- The Provost Scholarship
- The Raider Scholarship

Currently Enrolled Students
- MTSU Enrichment Scholarship
- MTSU/TSU and MLK Scholarship (African American)

Transfer Academic Scholarships
- Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships
- TBR Community College Academic Service Scholarship
- Non-TBR Academic Service Scholarship
- Scholastic Rewards

Minority Academic Scholarships
- National Achievement Finalist
- The Otis L. Floyd Academic Excellence Scholarship
- The Scholastic Achievement Scholarship
- Scholastic Rewards

MTSU Foundation Scholarships
For information on these scholarships, consult the appropriate academic department, school, or college.

Other Scholarships
Athletic Scholarships
Based on skill; amount varies; contact the Athletic Department, MTSU.

Music Scholarships
Based on skill; audition required; amount of assistance varies; contact the director, McLean School of Music, MTSU.

Graduate Assistantships
Based on major field of study; monthly stipend plus fees; contact chair of major department.

Doctoral Fellowships
Based on major field of study; amount of assistance varies; contact chair of major department.

Other Institutional Aid
Clifford N. and Pauline W. Stark Educational Loan
Based on need and GPA; amount of assistance varies; cosigner required; contact the Financial Aid Office.

SAFOS Loan Fund
Education majors; based on need and GPA; amount varies; contact the Financial Aid Office.

SGA Emergency Loan Program
Based on emergency need; $100, which must be repaid in 30–60 days; amounts vary; contact Financial Aid Office.

Foundation Short-Term Loan Program
Based on emergency need; must be repaid in 30–60 days; amounts vary; contact Financial Aid Office.

Other Sources of Aid
Vocational Rehabilitation
Based on physical or emotional disabilities; amount of assistance varies; contact State Vocational Rehabilitation Office in your area.

Veterans Benefits
Veterans, widows of veterans, and children of disabled or deceased veterans; amount of assistance varies; contact Veterans Administration Office in your area.

Private Scholarships
Based on an organization’s or individual’s requirements; amount of assistance varies; contact parents’ employers, local civic organizations, community groups, churches, businesses, etc.