



UW-River Falls Financial Aid Office

Understanding Your Award Letter

Your enclosed Financial Aid Award Letter reflects your eligibility for financial aid at UW-River Falls based on the information you provided on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This informational guide is intended to help you with the financial aid process and identify specific steps you need to complete to receive your aid. It is our role to answer your questions and provide the information you may need. You must read all of the following information and **FOLLOW ALL BOLDED INSTRUCTIONS** to ensure your aid is ready for you at the beginning of each semester.

ACCEPT OR DECLINE YOUR AWARDS

Go to www.uwrf.edu/financial-assistance and click on ***Types of Aid*** to get detailed information on each award listed on your Award Letter. In general, grants are gift-aid that do not need to be repaid and are accepted on your behalf, while Work Study and loans are self-help aid which you need to accept if you decide you want these awards. Your aid package is likely to include a loan. If it does, carefully consider the amount of loan you wish to accept. You can accept less than the amount listed, or you can decline the loan entirely if you can finance your education without it.

Accept or decline your awards:

1. From your eSIS home page (your Student Center), click on *View Financial Aid*.
2. Choose the correct aid year.
3. View your award information for the year and read through the information provided.
4. Click on *Accept/Decline Awards*. You need to accept, decrease, or decline the amount of any Work Study and/or loan awards on this page. Click on the "Accept" box next to an award if you want the full amount. To decrease an amount, click on the "Accept" box and enter your desired lesser amount. Click on the "Decline" box to fully decline the award.
5. Click *Submit* when finished. Once an award has been decreased or declined online, it cannot be changed without contacting the UW-River Falls Financial Aid Office.

YOUR ENROLLMENT STATUS

If you are awarded aid for a semester which you are registered for classes, your aid is based on your actual enrollment. If you are awarded aid for a semester which you are NOT YET registered for classes, your aid is based on the assumption of full-time enrollment. **Review your enrollment in the "Eligibility" section of your Award Letter. Your aid will not disburse if your actual enrollment conflicts with what is listed.** UW-River Falls evaluates your enrollment on the 5th day of class, and your financial aid will be revised if your enrollment on that day does not match the enrollment at which your financial aid was awarded. **It is your responsibility to verify that your anticipated enrollment is correct by the 5th day of class each semester because your aid eligibility will not be re-evaluated after the 5th day if you add or drop a class.**

PROCESSING YOUR LOANS

If you are borrowing a Federal Stafford and/or Perkins Loan for the first time at UW-River Falls, **you must complete additional steps online before your loan(s) will be processed and disbursed** to the UW-River Falls Accounts Receivable Office. You must complete Loan Entrance Counseling and sign the Master Promissory Note at www.uwrf.edu/financial-assistance (select *Processing Your Loans*).

REPORT ALL ANTICIPATED RESOURCES

Federal regulations require that we consider all outside resources you may receive to finance your education. Your federal and state financial aid eligibility may change if you receive any outside scholarships, grants, DVR assistance, etc. **Promptly notify us of any such outside resources** so any necessary adjustments can be made to your award as soon as possible. **Complete the "Scholarship & Outside Resource Notification Form" and send it to our office.** The form is at www.uwrf.edu/financial-assistance under *Forms and Applications*.

FINANCIAL AID DISBURSEMENT

When you have completed ALL required steps listed thus far and your financial aid file is complete, you can expect your aid to disburse on the 6th day of each semester. Financial aid awards are usually divided into two equal payments for fall and spring semesters. You need to become familiar with your eSIS account online to ensure that all funds disburse and are applied to your bill correctly. **It is your responsibility to monitor your account to ensure that your bill has been paid or arrangements for payment have been made with the Accounts Receivable Office. Monitor the *Pending Financial Aid* and *View & Pay Bill* areas of your eSIS account regularly, and contact the Financial Aid Office if your aid does not disburse when anticipated.**

Sign up for Direct Deposit for Refunds:

Financial aid will be disbursed directly to UW-River Falls to pay your tuition, fees, housing, dining, and other charges on your account. If your aid exceeds all eligible charges on your account, a refund will be produced. To receive your refund, you must sign up for Direct Deposit through eSIS QuikPAY after you accept your awards:

1. From your eSIS home page (your Student Center), click on *View & Pay Bill* from the Finances section.
2. Select *Direct Deposit* from the QuikPAY menu and enter your bank account information.
Parent PLUS Loan recipients will receive letters explaining PLUS Loan refunds.
3. Contact Accounts Receivable at 715.425.3145 for refund information if you do not have a bank account.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

If Federal Work Study is a part of your financial aid award, you will be eligible to earn up to the amount listed on your Award Letter. Your Work Study award amount will not be disbursed to you or applied to your bill as a lump-sum; you earn these funds by working and funds are directly deposited into your bank account. Work Study earnings are considered taxable income when completing tax returns. However, Work Study earnings are not considered as income when you re-apply for financial aid the following year and are not subject to FICA (Social Security) withholdings. If you are not awarded Work Study, there are non-Work Study jobs available on-campus called Student Assistance jobs. Any student can work either on-campus or off-campus.

Search for both on-campus and off-campus jobs:

- Log in as a “Guest” or create an account on the Hire A Falcon system at www.uwrf.edu/career/financial_aid.htm to search for jobs and get application information.
- If you have a Work Study award, you can search for jobs under any Position Type.
- If you do not have a Work Study award, you can search for jobs under any Position Type *except* UWRF Work Study.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to www.uwrf.edu/financial-assistance for more detailed information about receiving financial aid at UW-River Falls.

In particular, these webpages will give you the following information:

- **Policies & Procedures** and **Rights & Responsibilities:** You are responsible to be familiar with all financial aid policies as an aid recipient. Read this information under the appropriate links on our homepage.
- **Release of Information Form:** You must submit this form in order to authorize our staff to talk about your financial aid information with anyone other than yourself. The form is found under *Forms and Applications*.
- **Estimate Your Semester Bill:** Guidance on how your aid package compares to your estimated charges.
- **Types of Aid > Loans:** Information and application instructions if you need an additional loan to cover a balance due.
- **J-Term / Summer / Study Abroad:** Financial aid application process for J-Term, Summer, or Study Abroad charges.
- **Search for Scholarships:** Information and application instructions for UWRF Foundation scholarships and outside scholarships.