PLANNING LETTER GUIDE
2015 - 2016

The purpose of this Guide is to help you understand the financial aid process at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The Office of Financial Aid supports the commitment Rutgers makes to provide a superior education at an affordable price.

When you receive your Offer Announcement, review your preliminary financial aid awards at studentaid.rutgers.edu/new. Does the total award on your Planning Letter cover the anticipated typical costs and the cost associated with purchasing books, travel and miscellaneous expenses explained to you in the second paragraph of the Offer Announcement? If not, you will need to obtain other sources to supplement any expected financial aid.

We strongly encourage you to consider one or both of the following options for additional financing:

The Rutgers University Tuition Payment Plan (RUTPP) allows you to pay term bill charges in convenient monthly payments. Unlike loans, the RUTPP is interest free and can effectively reduce the amount of debt owed upon graduation. Tuition Protection Insurance is provided at no additional cost. Multiple plan options are available for the academic year. Please visit http://www.studentabc.rutgers.edu/tuition-payment-plans, for more information and instructions on how to enroll.

The Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) is part of the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program where parents borrow directly from the federal government. No bank or other lender is needed to receive Direct PLUS loans. As with Direct Stafford loans where the student is the borrower, Direct PLUS loans are not subject to commercial market conditions. Applications for the Direct PLUS loan become available on July 1, 2015, at www.studentloans.gov, sign-in and click the option you would like to use.

In addition, other sources to fund educational expenses can be found at studentaid.rutgers.edu/PrivateLoans.

NEXT STEPS:

Review the Student Aid Report (SAR) you received from the U.S. Department of Education. The SAR outlines the information you reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Please make sure the information you reported is accurate. Promptly correct inaccurate information. Keep the SAR for your records. Please do not mail the SAR to our office.

Correct your FAFSA data, if necessary, online at www.fafsa.gov using your federal Personal Identification Number (PIN). Parents of dependent students must use their own PIN to correct parental FAFSA data. NOTE: The federal PIN will be changing to the FSA ID in the spring. More information will be available at that time.

Your awards may change. The amount of aid on your Planning Letter is preliminary, determined by the unverified information you reported on the 2015-2016 FAFSA. If the information we currently have on file changes or if you receive scholarships or other aid not listed on your Planning Letter, your awards may change. Carefully review your SAR to verify the information you reported is correct.

After you file your taxes, use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer your income information directly into your FAFSA. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool simplifies your application process, helps reduce errors and may lower your chance of being selected for verification, where you are asked to validate the information on your FAFSA. To use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, sign into www.fafsa.gov to correct your FAFSA. Click the Financial Information tab at the top of the page. Then, from the Financial Information page, click Link to IRS. The tool will be available to you two weeks after your electronic filing with the IRS or 6-8 weeks after you file by mail. Inaccurate FAFSA information will delay the processing of your aid. Use the Data Retrieval Tool to ensure the accuracy of your FAFSA income information.

ONCE YOU ENROLL AT RUTGERS:

Verification: In some instances the Office of Financial Aid is required by the federal government to verify information reported on your FAFSA. You may receive a Request For Documentation (RFD), to which you must respond promptly and return the requested information to our office. Please do not send documentation to our office unless requested to do so. Check online to see outstanding documents at studentaid.rutgers.edu. Check Required Documents. We strongly recommend you use the Document Management Program (DMP) to manage your documents. The link for the DMP is found on the Check Required Documents link on our homepage. Your award package is not final until all requested documentation is submitted. Your aid will not credit to your student account until you provide all necessary documentation.

Financial Aid Award Letter: In late spring, you will receive an email instructing you to view your aid package online. Your awards are based on the most current information reported. Your aid may be adjusted or cancelled if current data on file changed. The receipt of scholarships or other aid not currently listed may also impact your final aid package.

Attendance Confirmation/Payment: In July, you will receive term bill notification from Student Accounting Services. Payment is due in early August. You must respond to the Attendance Confirmation/Payment Notice even if term bill charges are fully covered by financial aid or you are waiting for a loan to be approved. Respond to the term bill. Students enrolled in the Rutgers University Tuition Payment Plan have their attendance confirmed automatically and do not need to respond. If you were offered Federal Work Study (FWS), you cannot credit the FWS amount to your term bill charges. Information on FWS job opportunities will be included with the Award Letters you receive in late spring.

Financial Literacy: Do you need help managing your educational expenses? A variety of cash management tools available to assist you can be found at studentaid.rutgers.edu, under Financial Management, Cash Course. Financial literacy develops the skills and knowledge you need to make informed decisions regarding your financial resources. Take a look. You may find it useful.

Pertinent information regarding your awards can be viewed online studentaid.rutgers.edu
The New Jersey Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) for NJ Residents

Your TAG award is distributed by the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). Rutgers University does not determine your eligibility for TAG. NJ residents must provide supplement applicant data to HESAA in order to be considered for a TAG Award. If you did not apply for New Jersey state-based financial aid when you completed your FAFSA (the link was available on your 2015-2016 confirmation page), HESAA will request information from you to determine your eligibility for TAG. You will be contacted directly by HESAA. Follow their instructions carefully. Submit TAG information to HESAA, not Rutgers University. Failure to do so will render you ineligible for TAG. Once your TAG eligibility is determined, Rutgers will receive your TAG information from HESAA.

A Glossary of Terms

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The total amount it costs to attend school. The COA includes tuition and fees; on-campus room and board (or a housing and food allowance); allowances for books, supplies, transportation, loan fees; and miscellaneous expenses.

**EFC:** Expected Family Contribution. The amount you and your parents (or you and your spouse, if married) are expected to contribute toward your educational expenses. The EFC is determined by a federally mandated formula which uses the information you provide on your FAFSA.

**Federal Work Study (FWS) Program:** A federal need-based program that offers part-time jobs to students to earn money for college expenses.

**Grants:** Financial aid that does not require repayment. Grants are usually awarded to students based on financial need, not academic record.

**Loan:** Borrowed money that must be repaid with interest.

**Need:** The difference between COA and EFC: COA - EFC = Need.

**Need Based Aid:** Financial aid programs for which you must demonstrate need in order to qualify.

**Package:** The total amount of financial aid a student receives from a college or university. Packages may consist of one or more aid programs such as grants, loans and work-study.

**Scholarship:** An award based on grades or other academic achievement rather than solely on financial need. Often referred to as merit aid. Does not require repayment.

The Federal Personal Identification Number (PIN) Changing to FSA ID in Spring

The PIN allows you to access personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems. Using your PIN, you can access your account, review your SAR, and make corrections to your FAFSA online. You will need a PIN to sign the Master Promissory Note if awarded a Federal Direct Stafford Loan for the first time. Lost or forgotten your PIN? Visit www.pin.ed.gov. NOTE: The PIN will be changing to the FSA ID in the spring. At that time, you will be prompted to establish your FSA ID when you try to access one of the federal systems. The FSA ID replaces the federal PIN. Once the FSA ID is established, your federal PIN is no longer valid.

**USE YOUR PIN TO:**
- Retrieve your SAR
- Make corrections to your FAFSA data
- Sign Federal Direct Loan Promissory Note
- Access Direct Loan account
- Consolidate loans
- View your federal aid history
- Renew financial aid application for 2016-2017

Parents of Dependent Students

- Must have own PIN to sign FAFSA online
- Apply for PIN at www.pin.ed.gov
- Need own PIN to correct parental FAFSA data online
- Sign Federal Direct Parent Loan Promissory Note

MAINTAIN YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS. Until you enroll and register for classes, please keep the email address you reported on the FAFSA current. Update your FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov to include an email address if a valid one is not already reported. Once you register for classes you are required to maintain your official Rutgers University email at http://search.rutgers.edu/changes.html. Notifications from the Office of Financial Aid will only be sent to your Rutgers email account. You are responsible to maintain and check your official Rutgers University email on regular basis.

Pertinent information regarding your awards can be viewed online studentaid.rutgers.edu