




Financial Aid & the Cost of College



Financial Aid Offer Letters




What is an “Offer Letter”?

- Documentation from a college or university to the student that details the amount of financial support the student is eligible to receive
 - Initial offer letters typically become available after a student is admitted and has some type of aid available
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Financial Aid Offer Letters



What is listed in my offer letter?

- Financial aid offer - the amount and types of financial assistance available to a student for a given academic year, including scholarship offers, federal and state grant support, and federal loan eligibility. This is a living document that may change as a student's aid eligibility
 - Cost of Attendance (COA) - estimated costs the average student during the academic year. Not the bill.
 - Net cost - estimated COA minus grants and scholarships. Also not the bill.
 - May include "estimated" financial aid eligibility, such as Parent PLUS Loan offers, which represent a loan that can be applied for
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Example Offer Letter

Cost of Attendance

Estimated direct costs for 2024–25 ?	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Total
Resident tuition and fees ?	\$5,996	\$5,996	\$11,992
Estimated indirect costs for 2024–25	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Total
Housing and meals	\$5,072	\$5,072	\$10,144
Books and supplies	\$612	\$612	\$1,224
Transportation ?	\$1,040	\$1,040	\$2,080
Personal expenses ?	\$1,045	\$1,045	\$2,090
Estimated total cost of attendance	\$13,765	\$13,765	\$27,530

Example Offer Letter

Grants^o and scholarships^o

	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Total
Federal Pell Grant	\$3,698	\$3,697	\$7,395
Federal SEOG	\$350	\$350	\$700
Kansas Comprehensive Grant	\$500	\$500	\$1,000
Pepsi Scholarship	\$500	\$500	\$1,000
Employee Dpndnt Tuit Asst Schl	\$2,059	\$2,059	\$4,117
Chancellor's Scholarship	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
Total grants and scholarships	\$9,607	\$9,606	\$19,212

Estimated Net Cost:

Your estimated net cost is **\$9,068**

Student loan options^o

	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Total
Fed Subsidized Direct Loan ^o	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
Fed Unsubsidized Direct Loan ^o	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Total student loans	\$2,750	\$2,750	\$5,500

Your estimated cost

after grants and student loan options **\$3,568**

Additional options

	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Total
Additional Borrowing Eligibility	\$1,784	\$1,784	\$3,568
Total additional options	\$1,784	\$1,784	\$3,568

Options to Pay Your Balance

You may be eligible to borrow up to \$3,568 to cover your remaining costs after grants and student loan options. Borrowing options include:

1. [Federal Parent PLUS Loan](#)
2. [KU Endowment Loan](#)
3. [Private/alternative loans](#)

You can also use college savings accounts, personal savings, private scholarships, etc., to pay any portion of your cost. If you need additional aid, you can search for additional private scholarships at scholarships.ku.edu

ACCEPT OR DECLINE YOUR FINANCIAL AID

These awards are based on the information you provided on your FAFSA and your academic information; awards can vary if new information becomes available. This aid offer is based on current data from the U.S. Department of Education and State of Kansas funding levels. If any changes occur, students will be notified and aid will be changed to comply with federal and state regulations.

How to Get an Offer Letter

Offer letters require students to be admitted and have some type of financial aid

- Merit-based aid and/or
- Federal aid: the FAFSA and any additional information/action (such as verification) must be completed before federal financial aid can be offered

Accessing Your Offer Letter

- Some schools will mail physical copies of offer letters directly to incoming students
- Other schools handle offer letters completely electronically and send them via email
- The information is also typically available to review in an online portal

Cost of Attendance

What is a “Cost of Attendance”?

- Cost of Attendance (COA) refers to the estimated costs of attending a specific school
- Also known as a financial aid budget
- It is not "the bill"

Components of COA



If you're attending school at least half time, the COA is an estimate of...

- Tuition and fees
- Books, course materials, supplies, and equipment;
- Housing and food (or living expenses);
- Transportation expenses;
- Loan fees (excluding any loan fees for non-federal student loans);
- Miscellaneous expenses (including a reasonable amount for the documented cost of a personal computer);

Components of COA



Can also include

- Allowance for childcare or other dependent care;
- Costs related to a disability;
- Costs of obtaining a license, certification, or a first professional credential;
- Reasonable costs for eligible study abroad programs.

Direct Costs

Direct costs are **estimates** of expenses that will be billed through the school.



Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are **estimates** of expenses associated with being a student but not inherently billed through the school.



Direct vs. Indirect

Direct/Billable Costs

- Tuition
- Fees
- Housing and meals (if living on-campus)

Indirect/Non-Billable Costs

- Housing and meals (if living off-campus)
- Books and supplies
- Personal expenses
- Transportation



Direct vs. Indirect

Costs Payable to School

- Tuition
- Fees
- Housing and meals (if living on-campus)

Costs Paid to Others

- Housing and meals (if living off-campus)
- Books and supplies
- Personal expenses
- Transportation



Example COA

Cost of Attendance

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Types of Aid

Scholarships and Grants

- What does it pay for? (specific vs general)
- What does it take to maintain eligibility for the grant/scholarship?
 - Enrollment
 - Need-based
- Is it renewable?

Est. Net Cost

**Est. Net Cost =
COA – grants and scholarships**



Types of Aid Cont.

Federal Work-Study

- How do students get a federal work-study job?

Federal Loans

- How much is really needed?
- What is the interest rate/terms/grace period?

Est. Remaining Cost

Est. Remaining Cost =
COA – grants and scholarships – loans



Comparing offer letters

- When applying to multiple schools, compare the financial aid offers and out-of-pocket costs to find the best situation for you
- Adjust estimated costs based on number of credit hours
- Subtract your financial aid eligibility from your overall COA to get a basic understanding of your out-of-pocket costs

Examples



School A

- Tuition and fees = \$9,915
- Housing and meals = \$11,501
- Books and supplies = \$807
- Transportation = \$1,624
- Personal expenses = \$1,620
- COA = \$25,467

Based on 28 credits per
academic year

On campus housing required for
first year students

School B

- Tuition and fees = \$11,992
- Housing and meals = \$10,144
- Books and supplies = \$1,224
- Transportation = \$2,080
- Personal expenses = \$2,090
- COA = \$27,530

Based on 30 credit hours per
academic year

On campus housing available but not
required



Additional Considerations

Student Aid Index

- Calculated by the FAFSA
- Used to determine Pell eligibility
- Included in the calculation of financial need

Financial Need

- $COA - SAI = \text{Need}$
- $COA - SAI - OFA^* = \text{Remaining Need}$
- Need and remaining need can vary between schools because COA is school specific

*OFA = Other Financial Assistance

Financial Need Comparision



School A

- COA = \$25,467
- SAI = 0
- Need = \$25,467

- Pell Grant= \$7,395
- Merit scholarship = \$1,500
- Remaining Need = \$16,572

School B

- COA = \$27,530
- SAI = 0
- Need = \$27,530

- Pell Grant = \$7,395
- Merit scholarship = \$5,000
- Remaining Need = \$15,135

Adjustments to COA

- There are some scenarios where the COA can be adjusted to reflect actual costs (rather than the estimate) so additional financial aid can be awarded
- Students can contact their school's financial aid offices to determine their eligibility for an adjustment

Adjustments to COA

The following costs may warrant an adjustment to a student's COA

- Medical/dental/disability expenses for the student
- Childcare expenses
- Computer purchase
- Additional required educational expenses
- Additional transportation expenses
- Excess housing costs and/or food and shelter for dependents
- Other

Adjustments to COA

- If a student's expenses for any of the previously listed items exceed what is allotted for in their COA, their school may be able to increase their COA to match
- In most cases, documentation of student expenses can be uploaded to an online portal through their school, where a financial aid administrator will use it to increase COA and offer any additional financial aid that they become eligible for as a result

SAVE THE DATE

**Professional Judgment/Special
Circumstances Deep Dive**

March 4, 2025 from 9:30 – 11:00am



Check out kasfaa.org for registration information.

Enrollment

- Offers are typically based on full-time enrollment, but COA and aid eligibility may change with reduced enrollment
 - Kansas Comprehensive Grant requires full-time enrollment
 - Pell amount adjusts based on enrollment (known as enrollment intensity)
 - Tuition adjusts but some components of COA remain constant: housing and meals, books and supplies

What is my bill?

Direct costs of college

- Tuition – based on a student's actual enrollment. Schools may charge tuition based on a rate (cost) per credit hour or a flat tuition rate for full-time students
- Fees – can include campus fees, technology fees, student health services, and course fees

What is my bill?

Direct costs of college cont.

- On campus housing and meals – based on a student's actual housing and meal plan
- Does your school have a live-on requirement or do you have the option to live off-campus and provide your own food?

Disbursement

- Timeline varies by school
- Cannot occur more than 10 days prior to the start of the term per federal regulations
- May occur throughout the term

Wrap Up

- It's okay to apply to multiple schools, compare options
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions about each school
- Accept aid offer from school of choice
- Contact other schools to decline/cancel aid

Questions



THANK

YOU

