

## FINANCIAL AID OFFICE Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. Who should file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?  
A. Every student who plans on attending college should file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year they attend college.
- Q. When should a student file the FAFSA?  
A. While some federal funds, such as Pell Grants, are generally available year round, there are other funds awarded on a first come first serve basis. We recommend that you file your FAFSA as soon as you (and your spouse or parents) have completed the federal income tax forms. To apply for financial aid for the academic year 2009-2010, you will need your 2008 Federal income tax forms to complete the FAFSA. The 2009-2010 FAFSA is used for Fall 2009 through Summer 2010.
- Q. How do I file the FAFSA?  
A. You can either file your FAFSA by filling out the application and mailing it to the federal processor or you can file your FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) via the U.S. Department of Education web site. By filing your FAFSA on line the process time is approximately 2 to 3 weeks compared to 4 to 6 weeks with filing the paper application.
- Q. Can I file my FAFSA if my parent(s) or I have not yet filed taxes for the year 2008?  
A. Yes, if you or your parent(s) have not yet filed taxes, you can estimate the tax information by using your W2 forms.
- Q. What is Grand Rapids Community College's federal school code?  
A. GRCC's federal school code is **002267**. By listing our code on your FAFSA, GRCC will receive your information electronically from the federal processor.
- Q. If I am not eligible for the Federal Pell Grant, what other types of financial aid are available?  
A. The FAFSA is used to determine your eligibility for other grants, work study and loans. Grand Rapids Community College participates in the Federal Direct Loan program. If you are not eligible for the Federal Pell Grant, you have the option to borrow a student loan from the Federal Direct Loan or through an alternative loan program.

### TO APPLY:

- Go to [www.grcc.edu/studentloan](http://www.grcc.edu/studentloan)
- Follow the application instructions
- Fall Semester loan application deadline is **August 6, 2009**
- Following these instructions will assure that we receive your loan application in a timely manner.

Most students who meet the eligibility requirements for federal student aid and are enrolled in at least six credit hours are eligible for a student loan, regardless of income.

- Q. What is the difference between a subsidized loan and an unsubsidized loan?  
A. Subsidized loans are need-based loans and the interest is paid by the federal government while the student is attending school at least half-time (6 credits). Unsubsidized loans are not need-based and the student is responsible for the interest while attending school. Although you have the option to defer the interest payments, we recommend that you pay the interest as it accrues. The amounts you are eligible to borrow are determined by the FAFSA and your dependency status.

Q. What is entrance counseling?

A. Entrance counseling is for all first time borrowers at Grand Rapids Community College. The entrance counseling is used to inform students on the types of funds they are borrowing, the amount of money they can borrow, interest rates, repayment options and debt consolidation. You can complete your entrance counseling on line as part of the Direct Loan application process at:

- [www.grcc.edu/studentloan](http://www.grcc.edu/studentloan)

Q. What happens to my student loan if I drop below six credit hours during the semester?

A. If you have a loan and your disbursement of your loan has not arrived at the school, you will no longer be eligible for those funds. If you have a loan for the school year, fall and winter, your disbursement for the winter semester may be cancelled. Regardless of when you drop below six credits, GRCC will report you are no longer enrolled in at least six credits and your grace period will start from the date you dropped below six credits.

Q. Can I receive financial aid if I choose to audit a class?

A. No, because when you audit a class you do not have the opportunity to earn credit for the class.

Q. Can I receive financial aid while attending two different schools during the same semester?

A. No, if you are attending two different schools during the same semester, you must choose one or the other to award your financial aid.

Q. What requirements must I meet to be considered independent?

A. There are Federal criteria requirements that can make a student independent. The student only needs to meet one of the following criteria:

1. You were born before January 1, 1986 (for the 2009-2010 FAFSA application).
2. You are enrolled in a graduate program (master's or doctorate).
3. You are married.
4. You have children that live with and you provide more than 50% of their support..
5. You have dependents, other than your children or spouse, who live with you and you provide more than 50% of their support throughout the year.
6. At anytime since you were 13, were both of your parents deceased or you were in foster care?
7. You are a veteran of the Armed Forces.
8. Are you or were you, as determined by a state court, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship.

Q. What if I get married, can I update my dependency status for the current academic year?

A. No, once you file your financial aid for the current academic year, you can't update your dependency status because of marriage.

Q. I am looking for scholarships, are there any on-line scholarship searches?

A. There are many on-line searches available that allow you to set up a profile and then the search will match you up with different scholarships based upon your profile. Listed below are some of the national web based searches:

[www.Cashe.com](http://www.Cashe.com)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.collegenet.com/mach25/](http://www.collegenet.com/mach25/)

[www.scholaraid.studentadvantage.com](http://www.scholaraid.studentadvantage.com)

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)