



# Academic year 2016-2017 Financial Aid Checklist Graduate & Professional Programs

## PREPARE FOR THE 2016-2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

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- ☐ File the 2016-2017 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You will receive an email notification when your FAFSA has been processed and the Student Aid Report (SAR) is ready for you to review. A copy of your record will be sent to SMU.
- ☐ Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) for errors or items that may need to be updated. Submit any corrections as necessary. All updates will be sent to SMU for review.
- ☐ Check your Financial Aid Pony Tracks through [my.SMU.edu](http://my.SMU.edu). A link for FA Pony Tracks will be on the Student Center page. A small red pony will be displayed on each step that requires attention.
- ☐ Submit any documentation requested. Information requests are sent to student via SMU e-mail. You can also check the status of documents and confirm receipt through FA Pony Tracks.
- ☐ Wait for your Financial Aid Award Notification to arrive in your SMU email account. See tentative schedule of awarding on Step Three of your FA Pony Tracks.

## WHILE YOU WAIT

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- ☐ SMU Faculty/Staff: Submit application for your Tuition Remission to Human Resources
- ☐ Search and apply for third-party scholarships. Recommended scholarship sites: [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) & [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com).
- ☐ Contact your academic department regarding academic scholarships/stipends/assistantships or other potential departmental funding options.
- ☐ Continue to check your SMU email ([webmail.smu.edu](mailto:webmail@smu.edu)) and your FA Pony Tracks through [my.SMU.edu](http://my.SMU.edu) for additional information or documentation requests.
- ☐ Your award notice will be sent to your SMU email account only.

## AWARD NOTICE HAS ARRIVED. NOW WHAT?

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- ☐ Log into [my.SMU.edu](http://my.SMU.edu) to “accept/decline” your financial aid programs. If you want to reduce a loan amount, you will be able to do so after you accept the loan.
- ☐ Look for additional instructions sent to your SMU email account, typically within 72 hours of acceptance. Do NOT complete the loan documents through [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov) until AFTER you have accepted your loans through [my.SMU.edu](http://my.SMU.edu) and received notice through SMU e-mail that your loans are ready to complete.
- ☐ Continuing students must clear any outstanding Holds or document requests through [my.SMU.edu](http://my.SMU.edu). This includes Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals for financial aid and all financial/enrollment holds through the Office of Student Accounts.

## COMPLETE LOAN DOCUMENTS

(LOANS MUST BE ACCEPTED THROUGH MY.SMU PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE STEPS IN THIS SECTION.)

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- ☐ Log in to [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov). The Federal Direct Unsub, Federal Direct GradPLUS and Federal Loan Entrance Counseling are all completed through the studentloans.gov website,
- ☐ Direct Unsubsidized Loan - Sign the Federal Unsub Master Promissory Note. Students who have previously borrowed an Unsub while attending SMU will not need to complete a new promissory note unless otherwise instructed to do so.
- ☐ Direct GradPLUS Loan - Submit the GradPLUS application for credit approval. Approvals will be directed to sign the promissory note at that time. Denials will be given additional instructions at that time. SMU will be notified within 24-48 hours.
- ☐ Complete the Federal Loan Entrance Counseling while logged into [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov)
- ☐ Alternative Loans - If you chose to borrow an alternative loan through a private lender or bank, you must submit your application directly through the lenders website.

## FINANCIAL AID AND YOUR BILL

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Loans will appear on your billing statement as anticipated aid if you have finalized your loans prior to the date you receive your billing statement. If your anticipated loan disbursements do not appear on your billing statement, please check your Financial Aid Pony Tracks through My.SMU for additional information. Personal payments, institutional or departmental aid, or student loans that are finalized after you receive your bill WILL NOT generate a new billing statement.

If you wish to view the most recent student account information, including all financial aid processed after your official billing statement was received, please see step 6 of your Financial Aid Pony Tracks through [my.SMU.edu](http://my.SMU.edu).

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:** Financial aid is available and intended for the sole purpose of providing assistance with educational expenses. The processing status of your financial aid will not supersede or eliminate your responsibility to ensure full payment by the published payment due date. SMU STONGLY recommends that students allow a minimum of 4-6 weeks prior to the start of classes in order to complete the financial aid process. To avoid all late fees, please file early, check your SMU e-mail and FA Pony Tracks daily, and make sure to complete all of the loan documents well in advance of the start of classes.

For additional information on financial aid, please refer to the "Guide to Financial Assistance for Graduate and Professional Programs" which can be found in the [Financial Aid Forms Library](#).

For additional information on your student account, billing, payment due dates, and refunds please refer to the [University Bursar's website](#).

