



# WELCOME TO ORIENTATION!

## Funding an Education

Presented By:

Office of Student Financial Aid

Student Accounts Office



University Life  
**NEW STUDENT AND  
FAMILY PROGRAMS**  
George Mason University®



# Office of Student Financial Aid



# Office of Student Financial Aid

What does the OSFA do?

- ❑ Assists you and your family by providing information on ways to fund your education.
- ❑ We provide students with:
  - information about aid applications– eligibility, forms, and deadlines
  - financial aid awards – including estimated costs
  - financial aid counseling – understanding financial aid awards
  - additional resources – information on funding outside OSFA

**Email is our primary means of communication.**

# Financial Aid Applications

- ❑ Students must apply **each year** for financial aid by submitting **1** of the applications below they are eligible for:

## **1. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

- Complete at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- Learn about FAFSA updates at <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/fafsa-support>

## **2. Virginia Alternative State Aid Application (VASA)**

- Virginia students who are ineligible to complete the FAFSA application (undocumented and DACA students) can complete the VASA application at <https://www.levelupvirginia.org/finance/financial-aid/vasa-application>

- ❑ **Priority deadline for 2024-2025 aid year: March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024**

- ❑ **Mason school code: 003749**

# Financial Aid Award Information

## **What is the Cost of Attendance (COA)?**

- Estimated annual budget of average costs. This includes billable items such as tuition and fees, living expenses (billable if living on campus) and non-billable items such as books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses. **The COA is not your bill.**

## **What is the Student Aid Index (SAI)?**

- An eligibility index number that is used to determine how much aid a student can receive. This number results from the financial information students and required contributor(s) provide on the FAFSA. **This number is not a dollar amount of aid eligibility or what a student or their family is expected to provide.**
- Learn how the SAI is calculated at <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/how-sai-calculated>

# Financial Aid – Types of Awards

## **Gift Aid – aid that does not need to be paid back**

- Grants – need based aid. FAFSA or VASA must be completed.
- Scholarships – generally merit based aid. FAFSA or VASA may be required. Incoming students should inquire with Admissions directly regarding Mason scholarships. External scholarships should be reported to our office.

## **Self Help Aid – aid that needs to be paid back**

- Federal Student Loans – offered through Federal Student Aid. FAFSA must be completed.
- Federal Parent PLUS Loans – additional credit check application with Federal Student Aid. FAFSA must be completed prior to applying. PLUS Loan applications can be applied for Mason beginning 7/1 at <https://studentaid.gov/plus-app/parent/landing>
- Private Loans – offered by private organizations such banks and educational lenders. Private loan applications can be applied for Mason beginning 7/1.

## **Federal Work Study (FWS)**

- Federal student aid program that provides part-time employment while enrolled in school to help pay educational expenses. FAFSA must be completed.
- Students search for and apply to FWS positions.
- Income earned as biweekly paycheck and is not applied to the student account.

# Additional Considerations

**Verification** – the process used to confirm that the data reported on the FAFSA is accurate. If a FAFSA is selected for verification, our office will request via **email** additional documentation that supports the information reported. Verification must be completed or you will not receive awarded financial aid. Verification documents may be submitted online via Patriot Forms at <https://www.gmu.edu/financial-aid/patriot-forms-verification>, dropped off in person or faxed to 703-993-2350. Be sure to list your name and G# on each page for in person submitted or faxed documents.

**Special circumstances** – If you or your family experienced significant changes to your financial situation (such as loss of employment or pay cuts), or there are other special circumstances, please **email** our office. We will be able to provide information on what options are available depending on the situation.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** – is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records, this includes financial aid information. Without FERPA authorization on file, our office cannot provide information to outside parties, including parents, regarding an enrolled student's financial aid. FERPA forms can be completed online through the Registrar's website at <https://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/>  
By providing FERPA authorization, our office will be able to respond to emails and phone calls from outside parties.

# Next Steps

## 1) SUBMIT DOCUMENTS IF REQUESTED

## 2) ACCEPT AID

- ☐ **GIFT AID:** grants do not need to be accepted. We always post them on your account in the "accepted" status.
- ☐ **LOANS/FWS:** If you intend to utilize federal student loans and/or FWS, offers must be accepted in Patriot Web. Once loans are accepted, you will be required to complete the MPN/EC.

## 3) AID DISBURSEMENT

- ☐ If all requirements have been completed, accepted aid will disburse on the student account no earlier than 10 days before the first day of the semester. Please note, enrollment adjustments may lead to financial aid adjustments.



# Student Accounts Office




# Student Accounts Office

## **What does the Student Accounts Office do?**

- Billing for Tuition, Fees, Housing and Meal Plans.
- Third Party Billing (529 Plans, VA, Employers).
- Process refunds based off of charges and aid received.

**Email is our primary means of communication.**

# Student Accounts Office Website

 Student Accounts Office

HOMEAPPROVED TUITION & FEES ▾PAYMENTS ▾CALENDARFORMSPOLICIESFAQCONTACT

Finance Offices

Third Party Billing Office

Cashiers Office

Account & Loan Management

Bill + Payment PDF Guides

Payment Instructions

Direct Deposit Guide

MSSC Portal Guide

Payment Plan Guide

Authorized User Setup

TransferMate Payment Guide

On Demand Statement Guide

The mission of the Student Accounts Office is to provide excellent service for our students, staff, and faculty, while maintaining internal controls that ensure financial transactions are accurately processed and proper records are maintained.

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**ATTENTION STUDENTS** — The Secure Payment Portal at TouchNet has moved to Single Sign On (SSO) to enhance security. The change will require you to enter your NetID and Password into the standard SSO login screen before accessing TouchNet. If you have any saved bookmarks please be aware they will need to be updated as well.

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We look forward to seeing you at Mason, whether in person or virtually, and are here to assist where we can. If you need assistance related to a Student Accounts Office question (tuition/fee charges, payment information, 1098-T), your first stop is the [Mason Student Services Center](#). The MSSC team is cross trained to provide help to new and continuing students on matters related to billing, as well as registration, enrollment, financial aid, academic records and other student support services.

MSSC services are available on both a walk-up and virtual basis. For more information, please select how you would like to be serviced below:

- [Virtual Services](#)

Pay Online

Online payment is available through a secure portal at [\[Bill+Payment for Students\]](#) or [\[Bill+Payment for Authorized Users\]](#)

The system is unavailable nightly from 10:30 pm – 12:00 am

Having trouble logging in? [Try FAQ for help.](#)

Reminders

Spring 2024 Payment Due Date:

# Methods of Payment

- Financial Aid (Incoming)
- Payment Plans (Installments)
- On Campus - Checks only
  - Write your G# on memo line
  - Place in the drop box at the Cashier's Office in SUB1
  - Mailed checks should be sent to our lockbox address, not to campus
- Online on TouchNet
  - Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express (**vendor fee** applies)
  - Electronic Check (no vendor fee)
- International Payers
  - Flywire or Transfermate

# TouchNet Bill + Payment System

**Student Accounts Office**

HOME APPROVED TUITION & FEES PAYMENTS CALENDAR FORMS POLICIES FAQ CONTACT

**Finance Offices**

- Third Party Billing Office
- Cashiers Office
- Account & Loan Management

**Bill + Payment PDF Guides**

- Payment Instructions
- Direct Deposit Guide
- MSSC Portal Guide
- Payment Plan Guide
- Authorized User Setup
- TransferMate Payment Guide
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**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

NetID

Password

☐ Don't Remember Login

Login

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Need Help?](#)

## TouchNet Login Page

Login for parents or others who have been granted access.

Email:

Password:

[Forgot Password](#) [Login](#)

Parents, guardians, or employers require student permission through the student's authorized user process. Authorized Users should contact their student for password reset in cases of lost or forgotten passwords. If you have any questions about the system, please send an e-mail to [saccount@gmU.edu](mailto:saccount@gmU.edu).

Welcome to George Mason University Student Account Suite. This service lets students and their families view bills, make payments, and manage the student account.

**ATTENTION STUDENTS** — This login portal is only for Authorized User accounts. For student login to the George Mason University Student Account Suite please use: [https://secure.touchnet.com/C20788\\_tsa/web/caslogin.jsp](https://secure.touchnet.com/C20788_tsa/web/caslogin.jsp)

### Student Account Center

- Check your balance.
- Make a payment towards your balance.
- View your payment history.
- Store your payment methods for quick and easy payment.
- As a student, provide permission to others (parents, employers, etc) to view your bill and make payments.

### E-Billing

- View and print your billing statement.

### 1098T

- View and print your 1098-T.

# Payment Plans

- Mason payment plans are available online only. Each semester will have its own offering of plans. All payment plans require a non-refundable enrollment fee.
- When you set up a payment plan, you will link a payment account which you designate to be **automatically** charged on each installment due date. If you link a debit/credit card as the payment account, a **vendor fee** will also be charged for each payment. There is no vendor fee for linking a bank account as the payment account.
- Please visit our website at <http://studentaccounts.gmu.edu> for deadline information and payment plan setup guides.

# International Payments: Flywire or Transferrate

- Both platforms allow students to pay from a country outside the US.
- They offer excellent foreign exchange rates, allowing you to pay in your home currency (in most cases) and save a significant amount of money, compared to traditional banks.
- Standard wire transfers are not accepted. If you must send a wire, please open a US bank account and wire yourself funds. Then make a web check payment via TouchNet.

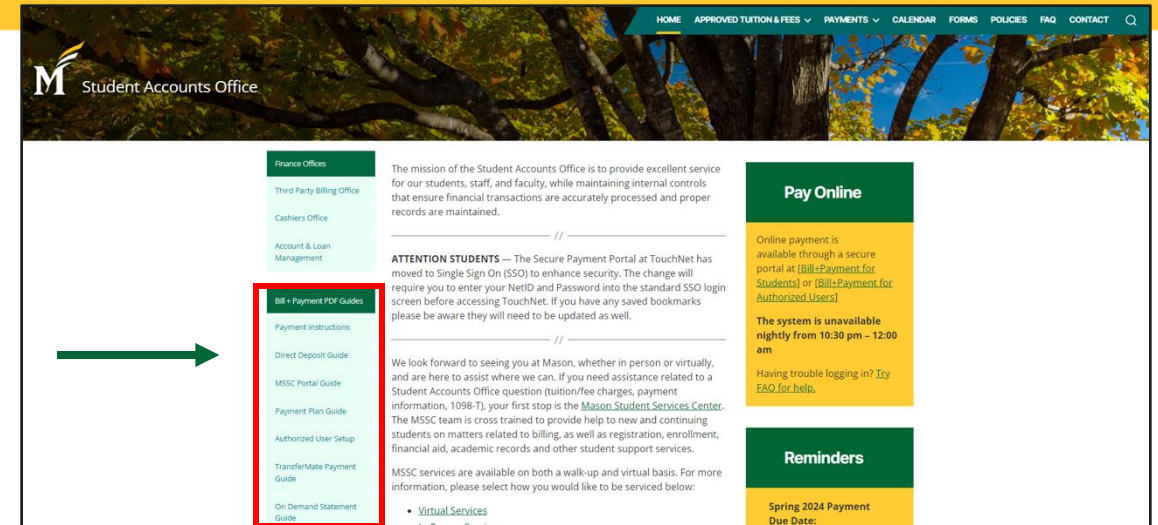
For more information, visit: <https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/payment-information/>

# Authorized Users & FERPA Consent

- If someone helps you pay your bill, consider adding them as an authorized user in the TouchNet Bill + Payment System **AND** granting them FERPA consent.
- Authorized users receive e-bill notices and can access the student account in TouchNet, but they are not able to view academic information.
- Set up instructions can be found on our website:  
<https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/AuthorizedUserSetup.pdf>
- Completing a FERPA consent form to allow the Student Accounts Office to discuss billing with your parents, guardians, or other individuals.
- Students can complete and submit the form online:  
<https://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/>

# Methods of Refund

- Direct Deposit (preferred and fastest)
  - For check payments
  - Students self-enroll through Patriot Web
  - Guided instructions available on the Student Accounts Office website
- Paper Check
  - This is the default method used if you do not sign up for direct deposit
- Refund to Credit/Debit Card
  - This method is used when the payment method was a credit/debit card
  - The vendor fee will **not** be refunded as this is a fee not charged by Mason



# Tuition Insurance: GradGuard

- Provides coverage of financial losses if a student withdraws from the semester due to a covered illness, injury, mental health condition, or as a result of the job loss of the tuition payer during the covered semester.
- The current cost is 1.20% of the insurance coverage amount requested, so \$10,000 in coverage will cost \$120. \*Please check with our office for rate updates.\*
- The policy is purchased on a semester basis.
- The university does not refund/waive tuition & fees after the drop deadlines published in the university calendar.

# Tuition Insurance: GradGuard

Learn more: <https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/tuition-insurance/>



# Understand How Your Account Balance Impacts Your Education

- After the drop deadline, any balance not covered by pending financial aid or a payment plan will be subject to:
  - **Late Payment Fee** assessed at 10% of the balance up to \$125
  - **Account Hold** that prevents the following services: registering for future terms and applying to graduate.
- If your account remains unpaid at the end of the semester, it will be placed with a collection agency and the following will happen:
  - **Collection Fees** up to 25% of the account balance will be assessed
  - **Payment in Full** required (including collection fees) in order to continue your education
  - **Reported** to the National Credit Bureaus
- If you decide not to attend Mason, you **must self-drop** courses by the drop deadline posted in the university calendar. You will incur tuition liability for all charges remaining on the account after the drop deadline without exception.

# Contact Information

## **Office of Student Financial Aid**

Hours: 9:00AM-5:00PM (M-F)

Website: <https://financialaid.gmu.edu>

Email: <https://www.gmu.edu/financial-aid/contact-financial-aid>

Phone Number: 703-993-2000

Fax Number: 703-993-2353

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Website: <https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/>

Email: <https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/contact/>

Phone Number: 703-993-2000

Location: SUB 1, Fairfax Campus. Check in at MSSC Desk

Please complete this quick feedback survey for this presentation!

