

## FINANCIAL AID

### ❖ Student Financial Aid

Okaloosa-Walton Community College's mission is to serve everyone who can benefit from a college education. No one should hesitate to apply for admission because of financial need. OWCC offers a variety of financial assistance for students. The chart within this section gives a brief description of all of the programs that are available for students at OWCC and the Financial Aid Office has hand-outs available that offer more detail on the three basic types of financial aid – Grants, Loans and Work Programs. These handouts, along with the Application for State and Federal Financial Aid, are available either by mail, at the guidance office of any Okaloosa or Walton county high school, or at any of the OWCC locations throughout the two-county area.

### ❖ Purpose of OWCC's Financial Aid Program

The purpose of financial aid is to make up the difference between what you can afford to pay and the actual cost of your education. This difference is what we call a student's financial need. The amount of financial assistance a student receives is generally determined by the results of the application process and the availability of funds from federal, state, institutional and private sources. The final decision as to the types of aid received rests with the Director of Financial Aid.

Financial assistance administered by OWCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, religion, marital status or handicap. Specific additional non-discriminatory criteria and academic standing status may be required for particular assistance or scholarships.

### ❖ College Costs

Okaloosa-Walton Community College's fees are designed to make college affordable for most students. Allowance should be added to these figures for room and board, personal expenses, medical insurance, transportation and supplies. Dependent students (living at home) usually have parental support, reducing direct education costs. Students should refer to the college schedule of classes each semester for offerings which involve special fees.

### ❖ Steps in Applying for Financial Aid

Entering students seeking financial assistance should contact the Student Financial Aid Office which is located in the Student Services Center on the Niceville campus. The following procedures need to be followed when applying for financial aid at OWCC:

1. Complete the OWCC Application for Admission and return it to the Office of Enrollment Services.
2. Request appropriate supporting documents for Admission (i.e. high school transcript, GED, college transcripts) as specified by the Enrollment Services personnel. If you have previously attended any other postsecondary institutions during the 2000-2001 school year, a Financial Aid Transcript must be requested and received by OWCC before the college can determine your eligibility for aid.
3. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) packet. Packets are available in area high schools or at any OWCC location.
4. Complete the OWCC application for financial aid form.
5. After mailing the FASFA, the student will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) in approximately four weeks. The SAR must be reviewed by the student for accuracy.
6. Additional information/forms might be requested by the Financial Aid Office (i.e. Income Tax forms) if the student is selected for a process called Verification.
7. If a student's financial aid file has been considered to be "complete" then an award letter will be mailed to the student by OWCC's Financial Aid Office. Awards listed on a student's award letter are tentative and are not final. Awards can be either adjusted or cancelled at any time due to enrollment, academic standing or availability of funds.

Students needing assistance in completing application forms should contact the Financial Aid Office. Students have a right to understand how their financial aid award is determined. OWCC's Financial Aid Office is always willing to discuss financial aid decisions with students and parents to promote a better understanding of financial aid opportunities.

**❖ Deadlines for Applying for Financial Aid at OWCC**

Applications for financial aid should be made well in advance of registration. The PRIORITY CONSIDERATION DEADLINES for applying for financial aid at OWCC for 2000-2001 year for each term are:

- Fall Term.....April 1, 2000
- Spring Term .....October 1, 2000
- Summer Term.....February 1, 2001

STUDENTS NOT MEETING THE PRIORITY DEADLINE MAY STILL QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL AID BUT MAY EXPERIENCE LENGTHY DELAYS IN RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID.

The absolute deadline for determining enrollment status (i.e. part-time, three-quarter time, or full-time) is the last day to register for Session 1 courses during each term. (These dates are listed in the Schedule of Classes each term and the calendar section of this catalog.)

All applications for the Florida Student Assistance Grant dated May 15, 2000 or earlier will be given first priority in determining eligibility. All applications for the Federal Work-Study Program and the Federal Supplemental Education Grant dated April 1, 2000 or earlier will be given first priority in determining eligibility.

**❖ Enrollment Status**

The amount of Title IV aid a student is eligible to receive at OWCC is dependent on the student's enrollment status, each term, based on the following table. Credits are computed using all of the vocational, college prep and college credits in which the student is enrolled.

- Full-Time  
Enrollment .....12 or more credit hours
- Three-Quarter Time  
Enrollment.....9-11 credit hours
- Half-Time  
Enrollment.....6-8 credit hours
- Less Than Half-Time  
Enrollment.....1-5 credit hours

Financial aid award status (full-time, three-quarters time, or half-time) will be based on the number of credit hours at the END OF LATE REGISTRATION FOR EACH TERM. For award letters sent after these dates, status will be determined by the number of credit hours in which a student is enrolled at the time the award letter is sent. If not enrolled for the appropriate number of credit hours at that time, a student's award will be revised

downward to reflect this change. Awards will not be revised upward if students add classes after the end of late registration. NOTE: The end of late registration is considered to be the last day to register for Session 1 courses during each term (Fall, Spring and Summer), as listed in the College Catalog. These dates are firm.

For other types of aid, the enrollment status for block time, condensed or off-term classes will be determined by the Director of Financial Aid in consultation with the Vice President for Instruction and the Director of Enrollment Services.

**❖ Student Eligibility**

**FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

For a student to be eligible for federal financial aid at OWCC –

- A student must be a regular student, accepted for enrollment in a PROGRAM OF STUDY, and
- A student must be a U.S. CITIZEN, or an eligible non-citizen, and
- A student must maintain satisfactory academic progress standards. Financial Aid Standards of Academic Progress includes the following three standards:
  1. Satisfactory grade point average on all college work. OWCC uses the following scale in determining eligibility:

<u>Semester Hours Attempted</u>	<u>Grade Point Average</u>
0-11	n/a
12-23	1.50
24-35	1.70
36-47	1.80
48-59	1.90
60 +	2.00

2. Progression within a time frame towards adequate completion of all college coursework. OWCC requires students to successfully complete (A, B, C or D) 67% of all college coursework, whether or not financial aid was received. Only the final attempt of a repeated course will count towards a student's rate of successful completion.
3. There is a maximum time frame in which the student must complete his or her educational objective (degree or certificate). The maximum time frame is 150% of the credits required for the educational objective. A degree requiring 60 credits hours has a limit of 90 credit hours of attempted college coursework. This includes all college coursework, whether or not financial aid was received.

- A student must NOT OWE A REFUND or REPAYMENT on a federal grant at any institution, and
- A student must NOT BE IN DEFAULT on a federally-funded or insured student loan.

### STATE OF FLORIDA PROGRAMS

For a student to be eligible for State of Florida financial aid (i.e. FSAG) at OWCC –

- A student must have demonstrated a FINANCIAL NEED (Complete the FASFA application), and
- A student must have met the ADVERTISED DEADLINE, and
- A student must have been a RESIDENT OF FLORIDA for one-year, and
- A student must have a 2.0 or higher GRADE POINT AVERAGE on all previous college work, and
- A student must have earned 24 SEMESTER HOURS of college work during the terms of the academic year in which aid was received, and
- A student must enroll as a full-time student (minimum 12 semester hours).

NOTE: An applicant who believes State of Florida financial aid has been wrongly denied has a right to appeal. The applicant may appeal if he believes an error has been made in determining eligibility. The OWCC Financial Aid Office will provide information concerning the appeal process.

### ❖ Additional Information and Requirements

**Financial Aid Suspension.** Students who do not meet eligibility standards shall be suspended from federal financial aid until they have regained eligibility in accordance with the Academic Standards of Progress. (See FEDERAL PROGRAMS eligibility criteria listed under Standards of Academic Progress on previous page in this section for more information.)

**Notification.** The Financial Aid Office will send a letter to all current financial aid recipients who are to be suspended. This letter goes to students not meeting standards of satisfactory progress or academic good standing. Suspended students will not receive financial aid for the following semester even if already enrolled. The notice will be addressed to the student's most current local address on file with the Office of Enrollment Services. IT SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO

KEEP OWCC INFORMED OF A CORRECT MAILING ADDRESS AT ALL TIMES. The cost of enrollment during financial aid ineligibility must be borne by the student. Financial aid will not be available.

**Reinstatement and Appeals Process.** A student who loses eligibility has an opportunity to appeal through an appeal process. The appeal must be submitted to the Director of Financial Aid IN WRITING by the student. (Special appeals forms are available in the Financial Aid Office.) Members of the Student Financial Aid Committee will act as an appeals committee. The appellant is required to provide documentation as necessary for determination of financial aid eligibility and shall fulfill reasonable requests by the committee with reference to time of meeting, personal appearance, and supporting evidence. The committee will determine if mitigating circumstances exist. Mitigating circumstances are defined as:

1. Death of a close relative affecting the student's academic performance.
2. Illness of the student or close family member having direct effect upon the academic record.
3. Poor past record resulting from youthful carelessness, social or psychological immaturity.
4. Special circumstances of a substantial nature or of a unique kind as determined by the committee.

If mitigating circumstances are found to exist, the student may be restored to satisfactory academic standing for one semester after which the general standards will apply. Further restoration to satisfactory standing may occur only if progress during the intervening semester(s) clearly gives sound, documented evidence of progress. Progress must be acceptable to the appeals committee.

**Incomplete Grades.** A grade of "I" will not affect a student's grade point average in determining financial aid eligibility. The "I" grade will revert to an "F" grade if not removed by the last class day in the next 16-week term. Such a grade may contribute to suspension of financial aid eligibility. A grade of "I" will affect a student's progression within a time frame towards adequate completion of all college coursework and the maximum time frame in which the student must complete his or her educational objective in determining financial aid eligibility.

**Repeated Courses.** A student may use financial aid to repeat a course in which an "N", "D", or "F" has been earned. A student may not repeat a course for credit in which a grade of "C" or better was earned (unless permission of the Vice President for Instruction is obtained). The student may improve a grade in a course and the repeat credit(s) will be included in the total number of credits when determining enrollment status. The student must be making satisfactory progress.

**Remedial Courses.** Okaloosa-Walton Community College approves remedial courses for the use of financial aid and includes remedial courses where necessary when determining a student's enrollment status. Admission placement testing requirements will determine if remedial courses are needed in a student's degree program.

**Verification.** The U. S. Department of Education randomly flags a student's Student Aid Report (SAR) for verification. Students selected must provide all the necessary documents needed for this process (i.e. income tax forms, W-2 forms). Okaloosa-Walton Community College's Financial Aid Office retains the right to request supporting documents it deems necessary from any student to determine financial aid eligibility. For this reason, OWCC suggests that students do not file financial aid applications until the tax forms for the family are complete and correct. Inaccurate estimates of income and taxes paid may require extensive processing delays and verification of corrected data. All financial information reported **MUST BE CORRECT**. Penalties or delays may occur if the data is incorrect or incomplete.

### ❖ Return of Title IV Financial Aid Funds

When a student awarded federal Title IV aid withdraws from or ceases attendance in **ALL COURSES** prior to completing more than 60% of a term, a portion of the student's Title IV aid must be returned to the federal programs. Title IV aid includes the Federal Pell Grant, Federal SEOG, Federal Stafford Loans, and other grant assistance authorized by Title IV. Federal Work-study aid and FSAG aid are not included. OWCC must determine the percentage of Title IV aid earned by the student. Up to the 60% point of the term, the percentage of earned aid is equal to the percentage of the term completed based on the day the student withdraws from or ceases attendance in **ALL COURSES**. After the 60% point of the term, the percentage of aid earned is 100%. If the student received more Title IV aid than the amount earned, the unearned amount is considered an overpayment and must be returned to the Title IV programs. OWCC will be responsible for returning to the Title IV programs the lesser of the unearned amount of Title IV aid or the institutional charges (tuition & fees) incurred for the term, multiplied by the percentage of unearned aid. The student will be responsible for returning to the Title IV programs the unearned amount of aid (overpayment) minus the amount OWCC returns, and the amount of any unpaid institutional charges to OWCC. **In most cases, when a student receives federal Title IV aid greater than the amount of institutional charges (tuition & fees),**

**he or she will have to return a portion of the federal funds. A student will lose Title IV eligibility unless he or she returns the amount of unearned aid (overpayment) in full to OWCC within 45 days from the date OWCC notifies him/her of the overpayment, or signs a repayment agreement with the U.S. Department of Education.**

**Note: This policy is derived from new provisions of federal law and may be subject to further clarification. Students should contact the OWCC Financial Aid Office regarding the latest information on this policy. Students receiving Title IV aid should consult with the OWCC Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawing from any or all classes.**

### ❖ OWCC Student Leave of Absence Policy

The OWCC Student Leave of Absence Policy is designed to provide financial aid students with the ability to withdraw from all classes for an approved period of time without financial penalty during the term of withdrawal. Students receiving federal financial aid at OWCC who withdraw from all courses prior to the 60% point of a term may be required to repay a portion of their financial aid awards. Students who have been granted an approved leave of absence and return to resume course work following the expiration of this approved leave are exempt from federal financial aid repayment requirements.

A leave of absence may be approved only under extraordinary circumstances. A written request, including reasons for requesting the leave and an estimate of its duration must be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. The request must be submitted during the term of withdrawal. The duration of a leave of absence may not exceed a total of 180 days in any 12-month period. If a leave of absence is approved, a grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript for all courses during the term of withdrawal, and these grades will be considered "attempts" for purposes of full cost regulations, repeat course rules, and Financial Aid Standards of Progress. Students are expected to return to OWCC and resume course work following an approved leave of absence. Failure to do so may result in a financial debt to the college and the inability to access federal financial aid in the future.

❖ **Veterans' Educational Benefits**

The college is certified for training by the State Approving Agency under the various veterans' training laws. Veterans planning to enroll at OWCC should consult with the Veterans Affairs Office well in advance of registering. The veteran must complete a special form (available in the Veterans Affairs Office) which is required by the Veterans Administration for initial certification and, there upon, assume responsibility for all fees from his/her own resources or out of monies paid to the individual by the Veterans Administration.

Veterans are normally expected to pay all fees at registration. Because the "advanced payment" first check is sometimes delayed, it is advisable that the veteran be prepared to meet all expenses until that check is received. Veterans attending the college under Public Law 894 (disabled veterans) who have approval from the Veterans Administration will have registration fees paid directly to the college by the federal government.

For VA purposes, training time is usually computed as follows:

- 12 or more credit hours . . . . . Full-time
- 9-11 credit hours . . . . . 3/4-time
- 6-8 credit hours . . . . . 1/2-time

For the summer term and any accelerated session of any term, training time is computed differently. Veterans are advised to contact the Veterans Affairs Office before registering for summer term and accelerated term classes to determine training status.

Any student-veteran enrolled in a Non-College Degree Program (NCD) who is absent three consecutive class sessions or school days without pre-notifying the Veterans Affairs Office (and confirming that notice in writing) will be interrupted from training for pay purposes, and the Veterans Administration will be notified. The veteran who has been interrupted from training for pay purposes will have to request enrollment recertification through the Veterans Affairs office to request the VA payments be resumed.

A veteran who wishes to receive VA benefits should notify the OWCC Veterans Affairs Office prior to registration to expedite the request for subsistence allowance. Veterans, widows of veterans, and war orphans desiring information about benefits, requirements, and registration procedures should contact OWCC's Veteran's Office at 729-5375 or the VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000.

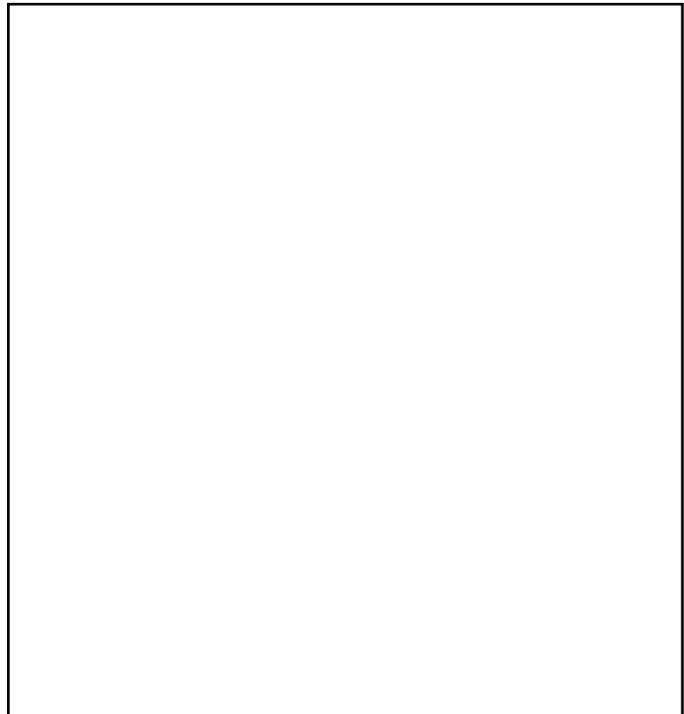
❖ **Veterans' Fee Deferment Policy**

Any eligible veteran or other person who wishes to pursue an approved program of education or training at Okaloosa-Walton Community College (within the meaning of Chapter 32, 34, or 35, Title 38, United States Code) and who meets the conditions stated in 240.345(2)(b)1 shall, in the first term of enrollment in any fiscal year, be granted upon request a sixty (60) day deferment for full payment of fees from the last date to pay fees, provided the period of deferment shall not extend beyond 10 days before the end of the term.

VA Deferments are available on a limited basis for half-semester courses offered during the fall, spring and summer semesters.

Deferment of fee payment for eligible persons after the first enrollment period in any fiscal year is not authorized. An eligible person who can document a substantial, unique financial hardship may petition the Financial Aid Office to seek special consideration for a 60-day deferment. This must have the approval of the Director of Financial Aid.

Under no circumstances shall any person be allowed to enroll or re-enroll at OWCC who has unpaid fee deferment. A student who does not comply with the terms of the deferment policy will lose the right to receive future deferments.



*OWCC operates full-time centers at Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field.*