

UNIVERSITY  
OF  
CALIFORNIA



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
for Entering Freshmen and Transfer Students

UC MERCED OFFICE OF  
Financial Aid and Scholarships



## Message From The Director | Heather Nardello

Our goal is to ensure that all students who are eligible to attend UC Merced have the financial resources necessary to do so.

We are pleased that you are considering attending UC Merced. We know that choosing an institution of higher education is a daunting but important decision. Cost should be the least important factor in this decision, but we understand that cost along with the amount of financial aid and scholarship support you receive are critical pieces of information as you consider your options. Our goal is to ensure that all students who are eligible to attend UC Merced have the financial resources necessary to do so. We can't guarantee that you will receive all of the financial support you feel you deserve, but we can guarantee that you will be given maximum consideration and we will be there to assist you throughout the entire process.

**In 2014-15, 93% of all UC Merced undergraduate students applied for financial aid.\***

- 87 percent received some form of financial aid\*
- 82 percent received gift-aid (grants/scholarships)\*
- 86 percent qualified for need-based financial aid\*

\*AS OF DATE OF PUBLICATION

In this publication, we have answered the most frequently asked questions and provided you with the top 10 things we think you should know about applying for financial aid and scholarships at UC Merced. If you have any additional questions or need assistance, please contact our office. We are here to help.



### Annual Cost of Attendance (COA)\*

It is important to remember that the Cost of Attendance (COA) is just an estimate and includes all expenses to attend the university for one year, not just expenses paid directly to UC Merced. The COA includes average tuition/fees, books and supplies, room and board, personal expenses, transportation expenses and a health insurance allowance and varies depending on whether you live on campus, off campus or at home with relatives.

Your actual expenses may be different and most items are not paid directly to the university. The only Cost of Attendance items paid directly to the university are tuition/fees and on-campus room and board if you choose to live on campus.

Standardized COA budgets are expressions of average costs. They are intended to provide sufficient funds for most students under most circumstances to pay for their educational expenses. If there are unusual documented expenses, the OFAS can sometimes allow a higher individualized COA. Whether additional financial aid can be made available to the student based on the revised budget depends on the availability of funds. Since scholarship and grant assistance is limited, an increase in the budget will usually be reflected in an adjustment to self-help financial aid (loans and/or work).

\*Amounts available at [financialaid.ucmerced.edu](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu)

### What Types of Aid are Available?

UC Merced coordinates federal, state and outside agency resources, and our own Institutional aid programs.

**There are four primary categories of financial aid:**

- **SCHOLARSHIPS** are awarded on the basis of merit, academic achievement or special talents and do not have to be repaid. Some scholarships also consider financial need.
- **GRANTS** are awarded on the basis of financial need and do not have to be repaid. Some grants also consider academic merit.
- **LOANS** are financial aid awards that require repayment with interest under varying terms and conditions.
- **WORK-STUDY** awards are given to students so that they have the opportunity to earn money by working part time. Work study is not a guarantee of employment. Students need to apply for and be hired into a position.

## HOW AND WHEN DO I APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS?

New students apply for financial aid and scholarships by submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the Department of Education and a GPA verification form to the California Student Aid Commission as soon as possible after Jan. 1 but no later than March 2 each year. With that, new students are automatically considered for all forms of federal, state and institutional aid.

We also encourage all students to conduct their own search for private outside agency scholarships (scholarships not awarded through the university). We have compiled a variety of resources to assist you including an Outside Agency Scholarship Listserve. For more information, visit [financialaid.ucmerced.edu](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu).

### How Much Financial Aid Can I Expect?

Eligibility for financial aid is determined by the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that is calculated based on the information you submit on the FAFSA. Financial need is the difference between the cost of attending UC Merced and your EFC. The costs of attending UC Merced will vary depending on individual circumstances.

However, standardized Cost of Attendance budgets are used for determining eligibility. Students with no financial need are usually eligible for non-need based student and parent loans. UC Merced offers a Net Price Calculator to assist you in obtaining an early estimate of your fulltime cost of attendance and financial aid. Visit our website to access the calculator and more detailed information.



**Cost of  
Attendance**



**Expected Family  
Contribution**



**Student  
Financial Need**

### Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan

If you're ready to attend the University of California, money shouldn't stand in your way. UC's Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan will cover your systemwide fees if you are a California resident whose family earns less than the approved income guideline and you qualify for financial aid. Detailed information about this program is available at [financialaid.ucmerced.edu](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu).

### Tips for completing the FAFSA

Most errors on the FAFSA ([fafsa.ed.org](http://fafsa.ed.org)) are made because students and/or parents fail to read the instructions or don't fully understand the instructions. Please read the FAFSA instructions carefully to ensure that you understand what information is requested. If you need additional information, visit our website [financialaid.ucmerced.edu](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu) or contact the Department of Education at 1-800-433-3243 for assistance.

### California Dream Act

As a public state institution, UC Merced provides aid to students who qualify under the California Dream Act Legislation. Visit [financialaid.ucmerced.edu/CADreamAct](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu/CADreamAct).

### Is Financial Aid Renewable?

Most forms of financial aid and some scholarships are renewable while you are an undergraduate. However, we do our best to offer a few additional gift aid programs to entering freshman whose work and borrowing opportunities are more limited the first year. Those sources of funding are not renewable. And, you must reapply each year by the deadline to be reconsidered for all financial aid.

As a continuing student, you will also need to submit a Continuing Student Scholarship Application each year if you wish to be considered for institutional scholarships.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

- › **STUDENTS FIRST CENTER – Financial Aid, Admissions and Registrar**  
located on the first floor of the Kolligian Library  
**PHONE:** 209-228-7178
- › **UC Merced Financial Aid and Scholarships**  
5200 North Lake Road, Merced, CA 95343  
**EMAIL:** [finaid@ucmerced.edu](mailto:finaid@ucmerced.edu)  
**WEBSITE:** [financialaid.ucmerced.edu](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu)



**TWITTER:** [twitter.com/UCMOFAS](https://twitter.com/UCMOFAS)



**FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/UCMOFAS](https://facebook.com/UCMOFAS)



**YOUTUBE:** [youtube.com/user/UCMercedOFAS](https://youtube.com/user/UCMercedOFAS)



**FATV:** [ucmerced.financialaidtv.com](http://ucmerced.financialaidtv.com)

# 10 Things You Should Know

## ABOUT APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS AT UC MERCED



- 1. Apply For Financial Aid!** We encourage all students to apply for financial aid and scholarships even if they don't think they will be eligible. Financial aid is intended to remove financial barriers for families who cannot afford the cost of an education beyond high school and to fill in the gap for families who can afford only part of the cost. A number of factors, in addition to family income, are considered in determining your financial eligibility, including the size of your family and number of family members in college. Although most grant awards are based on financial need, some loans and scholarships are available regardless of need.
- 2. Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after Jan. 1 as possible and no later than March 2 each year.** The FAFSA is available each year on Jan. 1 and the deadline for state and Institutional grants and scholarships is March 2. However, some aid is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 3. List UC Merced's school code on the FAFSA.** Be sure to include UC Merced's school code on the FAFSA: 041271.
- 4. Bookmark UC Merced Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship [financialaid.ucmerced.edu](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu).** Our website is an excellent resource to learn more about financial aid. Be informed and empowered by reviewing the information on our website.
- 5. Submit a GPA verification to CSAC.** To be considered for a Cal Grant and the UC Blue and Gold Opportunity Program, you must submit a GPA verification to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) before March 2. Please contact your high school or college registrar to verify the submission of your GPA.
- 6. We encourage you to take advantage of using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.** We encourage you to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) [youtube.com/watch?v=QJYE4PTYRfs](https://youtube.com/watch?v=QJYE4PTYRfs) to link federal income tax data to your FAFSA. The IRS DRT allows students or parents who have already filed their federal income tax returns to transfer tax data directly into their FAFSA. It's quick and easy to link tax data to your FAFSA! It may also reduce the likelihood of your FAFSA being selected for verification. [financialaid.ucmerced.edu/receiving-your-aid/verification-process](http://financialaid.ucmerced.edu/receiving-your-aid/verification-process).
- 7. Respond immediately to requests for additional information.** When we receive new information regarding your financial aid eligibility we are required to make the appropriate adjustments. We are also required to verify and/or clear up any inconsistencies in your application. It is not uncommon for us to request additional information from you. It is very important that you respond to these requests so that we can make the appropriate adjustments and provide you with the most accurate assessment of your financial aid eligibility.
- 8. Check your email often for updates.** The first communication we send to you is paper. From that point on, we communicate with you via email. It is important that you check your email often for updates. We will use the email you submitted on the FAFSA until the first day of classes and then we will only use your UC Merced email address.
- 9. Keep your mailing address and email address current with our office.** It is very important that we are able to communicate with you regularly. Please be sure your contact information is current.
- 10. Contact us if you need assistance.** We know the financial aid process can often be confusing. We do our best to simplify the process, but we know that you may have additional questions. Please do not make assumptions. We find that students and families often make incorrect assumptions about financial aid. Please ask us if you are unsure.

NOTE: While every effort has been made to provide accurate information, the information in this publication is subject to change without notice based upon federal, state and university funding limitations, and changes in laws, policies, or university procedures.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

› UC Merced Financial Aid and Scholarships  
5200 North Lake Road  
Merced, CA 95343

**SCHOOL CODE:** 041271  
**EMAIL:** [finaid@ucmerced.edu](mailto:finaid@ucmerced.edu)

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