Cost of Attendance

COA

2024-2025

Cost of Attendance

AKA Budget

• Must be established and used in determining a student’s eligibility for all Title IV financial aid programs.
  • Pell Grant
  • Iraq & Afghanistan Service Grant (IASG)
  • Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship (CFHS)
  • Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
  • Federal Work Study (FWS)
  • Federal Direct Student Loan Programs
    • Subsidized Loans
    • Unsubsidized Loans
    • PLUS Loans
  • Teacher Education Assistance for College & Higher Education Grant (TEACH)
Development of COA Principles

- Not intended to be used to attract students by suggesting low cost, to ration FA, or limit borrowing.
- Follow these principles
  - Reasonableness
  - Professional Judgement to Accommodate Special Circumstances
  - Time Period
  - Document & Documentation
  - Localization

Responsibilities & Best Practices

- COA is set by combination of institutional cost and other elements determined by financial aid administrators.
- Periodic reviews are necessary
  - Not necessarily annually
  - Expenses not controlled by the institution on periodic review,
  - Expenses controlled by institution will need to be adjusted annually
- Pressure from people/offices when building the COA
  - May want to hold cost estimates down to enhance competitiveness while others may want higher cost to enable more scholarships.

Gathering Information

- Student Surveys
  - Gather information based on different student populations
  - Be specific in the questions asked to ensure accurate responses
- Labor and statistic
- U.S. Census Bureau for your community(ies)
- College Catalog
- Realistically tracking request from students for more funds
COA Components

General

• Tuition and fees
• Living expenses
  • Includes housing and food
• Books, course material, supplies, equipment
• Transportation
• Miscellaneous personal expenses

* Be mindful of components that are not considered part of COA *

Tuition & Fees

• Amount normally assessed by students carrying the same academic workload
  • This can be different COA for different programs– LPN, ADN, etc.
• Tuition for each enrollment component
  • Full-time
  • Three quarter-time
  • Half-time
  • Less than half-time
• Required fees for all students

Books, Course Material, Equipment

• Amount normally assessed by students carrying the same workload
  • Charges per credit hour
  • Certain fees that are charged per program
  • Different charges for different enrollments
• Can include digital or electronic books
• Purchase or rental of computer
Transportation

- Allowance of transportation between campus, residences, and place of work
- Typically, separate categories will set the allowance:
  - On-Campus
  - With Parents
  - Off-Campus (own residency)
- No need to differentiate between enrollment statuses
- Allowances can include: gas, oil changes, license, insurance, repair

Living Expenses

- Previously categorized as Room & Board
- Allowance for food & housing cost
  - Standard food allowance for three (3) meals a day
  - Whether provided by institution cafeteria or not (outside food vendors)
  - If on-campus meal plan does not include 3 meals equivalency, this component could be more than meal plan charges on student’s accounts
- Average housing allowance
  - On-campus or institutionally owned and operated housing (dorms, apartments, etc.)
  - Off-campus housing (rent, lease, mortgage, etc.)
  - If considered with parent, must include reasonable standard, cannot be $0
  - Military base: allowance for food on or off campus only if military housing provides allowance for housing

Miscellaneous Personal Expenses

- Allowance determined by FAA
- Can include:
  - Clothing
  - Personal items (e.g. toiletries, laundry, personal hygiene)
  - Mobile phone plan
  - Recreation/entertainment
  - Uninsured health related expenses
- If using outside surveys, such as Bureau of Labor Statistics, be mindful of components because the survey may not align with COA components
Additional Allowances
License & Certification

- Cost for obtaining a license, certification for credentials
- Allowance for the first professional credential
- Can be actual or average cost based on program
- Can be included even if credentialing activity occurs after the enrollment period ends
- Can include cost for multiple attempts, but can set a reasonable limit
- Travel to and from

Additional Allowances
Federal Loan Fees

- Federal educational loan fees
  - Must include loan fee allowance if the student or parent borrower borrows a Direct Loan
  - Not available for non-federal loans (private or bank loans)
  - Can be actual or average loan fees based on type of loan
- Three (3) Methods
  1) Calculate a single average for all students by multiplying the average loan amount borrowed by the school's students by the loan fee percentage,
  2) Calculate separate loan fee averages for undergraduate and graduate students (Recommended if offer both types of programs),
  3) Calculate an average loan fee amount for each annual loan limit (freshman, sophomore, junior, etc.)
- If loans are packaged as estimate, can include as a component even if the student has not yet accepted the loan.
  - Not required to adjust the loan after accepted, reduced or denied (suggested to make adjustments accordingly, but not required)

Additional Allowances
Dependent Care

- Dependent care expenses
  - Components include:
    - One or more dependent
    - Estimated or actual expenses incurred based on number and age of dependent
    - May have different expenses for child, spouse or spouse
    - Cost incurred during period of time - class times, study times, field of work, commuting, etc.
  - These components can be determined from an application with supporting documentation.
  - The amounts can be based on documentation provided or can use an estimated amount if this information is gathered through a survey or facilities on campus.
  - Take into consideration special assistance from public welfare or vocational rehabilitation agencies. If the institution is aware of lower student expenses, then you will use the lower amount. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of the lower amount/expenses.
  - This can evaluated on PJ
Additional Allowances
Disability Expenses

• Disability-related expenses
  • Disability expenses that are not covered by another organization
  • This can be physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities
  • Can include
    • Special services
    • Personal assistance
    • Transportation
    • Equipment
    • Supplies
  • May consult with disability resource centers on campus when determining the type of expenses that could be taken into consideration
  • No necessarily a PJ, but needs to be reviewed and documented on case-by-case basis

Additional Allowances
Cooperative Education Program

• Cooperative education program expenses
  • For students placed in work experience under a cooperative education program
  • Allowance for reasonable cost with such employment
  • Determined by the institution
  • Can include:
    • Commuting or transportation cost
    • Meals away from home
    • Work clothes or uniforms
    • Other cost the student incurs as a result of the work experience
  • Determined on a case-by-case basis with documentation

Additional Allowances
Student Abroad

• Study abroad expenses
  • For students enrolled in a program of study abroad approved for credit by the student’s home institution
  • This can include:
    • Additional transportation cost
    • Surcharges or administrative fees charged by the institution of coordinating agency, and
    • Required documents and vaccinations required to travel (passport, visa, etc.)
  • Determined on a case-by-case basis
Distance Education

- Online programs
  “No distinction shall be made with respect to the mode of instruction in determining cost.”

However, also states that student’s eligibility to receive Title IV grants, loans or work “shall be reduced” if the FAA determines under their professional judgement “that distance education results in a substantially reduced cost of attendance to such student.”

COA Restrictions

- There are some categories of the cost that must be modified if the student is
  - Enrolled or considered less than half time enrollment
  - Enrolled in correspondence programs, or
  - Confined or incarcerated

COA Restrictions

- Less Than Half Time
  - COA may include
    - Tuition and fees
    - Books, course material, supplies, and equipment
    - Transportation cost
    - Professional licensure, certification, or a first professional credential cost
  - Additional Allowance
    - Dependents care
    - Disability-related expenses
    - Study abroad
    - Cooperative Education cost
  - Living expense allowance restrictions may be added to the less than half time COA
  - Miscellaneous personal expenses may not be included
COA Restrictions
Correspondence Study

• A correspondence course is one for which the school provides instructional materials and exams for students who do not physically attended classes at the school.
  • Not the same as distance education courses
• Correspondence COA components are limited to-
  • The student's actual contractual tuition and fees,
  • The student's actual contractual cost of books, course materials, supplies, and equipment if required, and
  • Transportation, housing, and food cost incurred specifically for a period of residential training if the student has the cost.

COA Restrictions
Incarcerated Students

• Incarcerated students may only include
  • Tuition and fees,
  • Books, course materials, supplies, and equipment, and
  • Cost of obtaining a license, certification, or the first professional credentials.

What Has Changed?

• Cost of rental/purchase of equipment moved out of tuition and fees
• Components of transportation
• “Room and Board” is now “Living Expenses”
• Living expenses break out cost
• Loan fees for non-federal student loans
• No longer of one-time allowance for license, certification, and first professional credential
• Incarcerated COA can include “course materials” and “cost of license, certification, and first professional credential”
• Less than half time enrollment components
Published COA

- COA must be publicly available
  - Must be available on the website
  - Will need to disclose all COA elements, both the must have & optional components
  - Must appear on any portion of the website that describes tuition, fees and other charges
    - This can be a link/hyperlink that directs the student to the website that outlines the COA

Resources & Contact Information


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