



## Accepting Your Offer Letter

**Please review your Official Offer Letter; use the checklist below to complete additional steps required to finalize your awards.**

\_\_\_ **1. Carefully review your Official Offer Letter (both sides).** If you have any questions regarding your awards, please contact our office at 301-696-3411 or email us at [finaid@hood.edu](mailto:finaid@hood.edu). If you would like to schedule an appointment or zoom meeting with the Office of Financial Aid to discuss your awards, please contact us.

\_\_\_ **2. How do I calculate the estimated balance owed to Hood College?** Your estimated balance is determined using the following formula: **Direct Charges - Financial Offer Letter = Estimated Balance**. The estimated balance is annual. For students living on campus, your Direct Charges include tuition, fees, housing, and meal plan. For students living off campus, your Direct Charges are tuition and fees.

\_\_\_ **3. What are the requirements to maintain my Merit Scholarship?** Merit scholarships are determined through the admission process and may be renewed based on the following : being enrolled full-time (minimum of 12 credits per semester) and making satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Scholarships are for a maximum of eight (8) semesters or completion of a bachelor's degree, whichever comes first. Please refer to the form "Merit Scholarship Standards" for scholarship renewal criteria.

\_\_\_ **4. Are you accepting your student loans?** - All newly enrolled students accepting Federal Direct Loans (Subsidized and/ or Unsubsidized), must complete the following documents online at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov):

- William D. Ford Federal Direct Master Promissory Note (MPN)
- Entrance Counseling (information on your rights and responsibilities as a borrower)
- Annual Student Loan Acknowledgment

\_\_\_ **5. Are you a Resident of Maryland?** - If you (and your parents, if a dependent student) are a resident of Maryland, you may be eligible for scholarships and/ or grants through the State of Maryland Higher Education Commission. Please review the State website ([mhec.state.md.us](http://mhec.state.md.us)) regarding the various programs. Please note: in order to be considered for State aid, you must have a processed, valid FAFSA completed by March 1, 2025. You must plan on attending a Maryland college for the 2025-2026 academic year. You will also need to submit all required documents for the program to the State of Maryland.

\_\_\_ **6. Are you entitled to receive VA educational benefits?** To process your VA benefits, we will need your Certificate of Eligibility (contact the VA Call Center at 1-888-442-4551 or visit the VA website at <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/> to obtain this document), a Declaration of Intent form available on the Hood College website at <https://www.hood.edu/admission-aid/financial-aid/forms-resources> and if you are the veteran, a copy of your DD-214.

\_\_\_\_ **7. Are you receiving outside scholarships or grants?** – If so, you are responsible for notifying the Office of Financial Aid about the award details and any award restrictions. Outside resources include scholarships and grants received from charitable organizations, employers, tuition benefits, veteran benefits, and other external private sources.

\_\_\_\_ **8. Do you need assistance in financing your remaining balance?** – For your convenience, Hood College participates in a number of financing options to assist with remaining balances; please see the enclosed "Meeting the Difference" information sheet. All financing options may be used in a combination that best fits your family's need (i.e. partial payment plan and partial loan).

\_\_\_\_ **9. Loan Options:** Loans are not required, but available should you need additional resources to assist with your remaining balance. Please log into the NetPartner portal <https://netpartner.hood.edu/NetPartnerStudent/> and indicate if you wish to accept, decline or reduce the loan(s) offered to you.

Once you are in the NetPartner portal from the Menu tab, select "Awards" to review your awards. Next, go back to the Menu tab and select "Accept Awards" to accept or decline your loans. Where it says pending to the right of the loans, select "Accept" or "Decline" and submit.

\_\_\_\_ **10.** Institutional awards are supported in part through our endowed and named funds. An award name may change; however, the value will remain the same.

**Please Note:**

- You may upload the documents to our secure document exchange (SDE) at <https://hoodcollege.tfaforms.net/217806>.
- You may bring the documents to the Office of Financial Aid: Apple Building Third Floor  
Hood College  
401 Rosemont Avenue  
Frederick, MD 21701.
- You may send by regular mail to:  
Hood College, Office of Financial Aid  
401 Rosemont, Avenue,  
Frederick, MD 21701.
- Please send only copies of documents and keep your originals.
- You may fax, with a cover sheet to (301)696-3812.
- You may send via encrypted email and sent to our office at [finaid@hood.edu](mailto:finaid@hood.edu) with a password sent in a separate email.

Congratulations! You have now completed your checklist. Please refer to the Financial Aid website for detailed information regarding requirements to maintain your awards and more at <https://www.hood.edu/admission-aid/financial-aid> We look forward to assisting you in the upcoming semester!



### Hood College Merit Scholarship Standards

Trustee Scholarship, Presidential Scholarship, Dean Scholarship, Leadership Award and Recognition Award are renewable throughout the student's undergraduate career. Scholarships may be received for eight semesters or until the completion of a bachelor's degree, whichever comes first. Students must be enrolled full-time (minimum of 12 credits per semester) and maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP)\*.

\*Overview of SAP policy: Undergraduate students receiving financial aid must demonstrate qualitatively and quantitatively the ability to make measurable progress toward a degree.

#### Qualitative - GPA Requirements

Total Credit Hours Attempted	Minimum Cumulative GPA
1 - 25	1.50
26 - 38	1.60
39 - 50	1.70
51 - 63	1.90
64+	2.00

#### Quantitative – Pace Requirements

Example:
$\frac{\text{All earned credit hours}}{\text{All attempted credit hours}} = \text{a minimum of 67\%}$
$\frac{24 \text{ earned credit hours}}{30 \text{ attempted credit hours}} = 80\%$



## Meeting the Difference

### **Payment Plan:**

Hood College offers families the option of paying tuition bills over a three, four or five month period covering one semester. Paying your tuition over a period of months allows you to avoid paying in one lump sum. Payment plan options are not available for the summer sessions.

For detailed information regarding the Hood College Monthly Payment Plan, please visit [hood.edu/paymentplan](http://hood.edu/paymentplan) or contact the Accounting Office at 301-696-3607.

### **Federal Student Loans:**

Students who apply for federal aid using the FAFSA may be offered federal direct student loans. Two types of loans that are offered are:

- **Direct Subsidized Loan:** Generally no interest accrues on these loans while in school at least half time, during the grace period, and during deferments
- **Direct Unsubsidized Loan:** Interest accrues on these loans during all periods

First time student borrowers at Hood College accepting federal loans are required to complete the following documents using your FSA ID on **studentaid.gov**:

- Entrance Counseling
- Master Promissory Note (MPN)

### **Federal Parent PLUS Loan: (for Parents of Dependent Undergraduate Students)**

A parent of a dependent student may apply for a Parent PLUS Loan to assist with remaining educational expenses. The parent may apply for the Parent PLUS Loan annually by logging into [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov) using the parents' FSA ID. Part of the application process is a credit check.

*Parent PLUS Loans typically enter repayment after funds are fully disbursed. Parent borrowers may request a deferment while the student is enrolled at least half time or may elect to make interest-only payments.*

*First time Parent borrowers are required to complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) for a Parent PLUS Loan and an Annual Student Loan Acknowledgment, and may be required to complete PLUS Credit Counseling before loans are applied to the student's account.*

*Please Note: Per the U.S. Department of Education, the term "parent" refers to be your biological or adoptive parents. Your legal guardian is not considered your parent for federal student aid purposes. For more information visit [studentaid.gov/afsa-parent](http://studentaid.gov/afsa-parent).*

### **Alternative Educational Loan :**

Private educational loans are available to students, parents, and others interested in helping students obtain a loan for their education. Most students will need a credit worthy co-signer such as a parent or other relative in order to obtain a private loan. For a list of approved lenders visit [hood.edu/financialaid/loans](http://hood.edu/financialaid/loans).



## Scholarship Information

College takes drive, passion and resources. We recognize that families often need to look outside their immediate resources in order to help their students take full advantage of the Hood College experience. It is the mission of the Office of Financial Aid to help you and your family develop a financial plan to make your education attainable. Below is a list of various scholarship resources to consider:

### Scholarship Search Engines:

<https://collegeboard.org>

[www.central-scholarship.org](http://www.central-scholarship.org)

[www.salliemae.com/plan-for-college](http://www.salliemae.com/plan-for-college)

<https://myscholly.com>

[www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)

<https://fastweb.com>

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

[www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)

[www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com)

[www.chegg.com/scholarships](http://www.chegg.com/scholarships)

### Scholarship Websites:

[www.hsf.net/scholarship](http://www.hsf.net/scholarship) - Hispanic Scholarship Fund

[www.asa.org](http://www.asa.org) - American Student Assistance

[www.uncf.org](http://www.uncf.org) - United Negro Fund

[www.gmsp.org](http://www.gmsp.org) - Gates Millennium Scholars Program

<https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx> - Department of Labor Scholarships

### State:

[www.mhec.maryland.gov](http://www.mhec.maryland.gov) - State of Maryland

[www.osse.dc.gov](http://www.osse.dc.gov) - District of Columbia

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us> - State of Delaware

[www.riopc.edu](http://www.riopc.edu) - State of Rhode Island

[www.vvac.org](http://www.vvac.org) - State of Vermont

### Frederick County:

[www.cffredco.org](http://www.cffredco.org) - Community Foundation of Frederick County

[www.fwccinc.org/education](http://www.fwccinc.org/education) - The Frederick Women's Civic Club

[www.frederickrotaryclub.org](http://www.frederickrotaryclub.org) - The Frederick Rotary Club

### Military:

[www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov) - Department of Veterans Affairs

[www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) - Department of Veterans Affairs, Educational Benefits Status

[www.armyscholarshipfoundation.org](http://www.armyscholarshipfoundation.org) - Army Scholarships

[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) - Veterans of Foreign Wars

[www.goarmy.com/rotc/scholarships](http://www.goarmy.com/rotc/scholarships) - Army ROTC Scholarships

The Office of Financial Aid at Hood College provides information regarding outside scholarship searches as a courtesy to students and families. Hood College does not endorse any private scholarship search websites. Although we have made an effort to ensure these scholarship search websites are legitimate, this does not imply that Hood College or the Office of Financial Aid agree with the material contained on or links provided by the websites.

## Tips for Scholarships

Scholarships can be found in several ways; contacting your high school counselor, public library, religious or community organizations, local businesses, or civic groups.

### Search Tips

Searching for private scholarships can be time intensive. Make it easier by having a system to find and apply for these opportunities!

- Open an email account specifically for scholarships using a professional name and check the account frequently
- Start a spreadsheet to track deadlines and application requirements
- Make sure your resume is updated

### Application Tips

Keep your information updated. If you have a LinkedIn profile or a resume, make sure it's up-to-date.

Be concise. Instead of listing everything you've ever done, highlight the activities you would like the donor to know about you.

Show initiative. Donors who invest in a student's future like to reward those who show initiative. If you have started your own business, created a club, or organized clubs or an event, highlight it!

### Essay Tips

Do:

- Tailor your essay to each application to address specific questions or topics
- Be creative, organized and succinct
- Get feedback from a trusted mentor
- Proofread

Don't:

- Use slang or jargon
- Compare yourself to other students
- Submit the same essay for multiple applications

#### TIPS FOR WRITING A WINNING SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

Scholly website, Posted September 19, 2021

[myscholly.com/how-to-write-a-scholarship-essay/](https://myscholly.com/how-to-write-a-scholarship-essay/)

### Tips for Recommendation Letters

Many private scholarships ask for a recommendation letter. The best letters come from someone (not a parent) who can speak not just to your accomplishments, but can applaud your character, work ethic and professionalism to showcase your intangible, positive character traits.

To get a great recommendation letter:

- Provide the recommender with a description of the scholarship and a list of skills or qualities that are important to highlight
- Give the reference a current copy of your resume and at least two weeks' notice for when the letter is due

### Final Steps

- If you receive a scholarship, write a thank you letter to the donor
- Inform the Office of Financial Aid about the awarded scholarship

### Beware of Scams!

Make sure scholarship information and offers you receive are *legitimate*. Remember that you don't have to pay to find scholarships. Avoid any scholarship that asks for application or processing fees. Check out [studentaid.gov/resources/scams](https://studentaid.gov/resources/scams) for information on how to avoid scams.



## Financial Aid Terms

**Official Offer Letter** - The document sent by Hood College that explains the terms of the financial awards offered to you. The information includes the types and amounts of financial awards offered, what you are expected to do to maintain the awards, and a deadline for accepting the awards.

**Cost of Attendance (COA)** - The total cost of attending a college. This includes tuition, fees, housing, food plan, books & supplies, and other living expenses, such as transportation.

**Demonstrated Need** - The difference between the Cost of Attendance (COA - see above) and the Student Aid Index (SAI - see below) (COA-SAI = Demonstrated Need).

**Dependency Status** - A student is either dependent or independent. Dependent students must report parental information on the FAFSA. To determine dependency status visit [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov).

**Direct Charges/ Costs** – Educational expenses assessed by the college and posted to the student's billing statement.

**FAFSA** – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used by the federal government to determine a student's eligibility for grants, loans, and work-study to pay for college.

**Federal Student Aid (FSA)** – Financial aid from the federal government to help with educational costs. Grants, loans, and work-study are types of federal student aid. The FAFSA must be completed annually to apply for this aid.

**Financial Aid** - Funds awarded, loaned, or earned to help with educational costs. Financial aid can come from federal and state governments, colleges, and private sources.

**FSA ID** – A username and password combination that serves as a student's or parent's identifier to allow access to personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems and acts as a digital signature on some online forms.

**Gift Aid** - Funds that do not need to be repaid such as grants, scholarships, fellowships and tuition waivers.

**Grants** - Funds awarded that you do not have to repay and are generally based on financial need.

**Indirect Costs** – Educationally related expenses that are paid to a third party (not to the college).

**Loans** - Funds that are borrowed from a lender and must be repaid. Funds can come from many sources: the federal government, private alternative lenders, and other lenders. Funds can be used to pay for tuition, fees, housing, food plan, books & supplies, as well as other costs associated with a student's education.

**Federal Student Loans** - Loan funds from the U.S. Department of Education, with congress setting the interest rate. There are two types of federal loans that a student may be offered: subsidized (the federal government pays the interest while the student is in school), and unsubsidized (the student is responsible for the interest while they are in school and after). Full repayment begins 6 months after the student leaves school.

**Parent PLUS loan** – This is a loan for a dependent student that is in the parent’s name and the parent is responsible for repayment. A credit check is required.

**Alternative/Private loans** – Loan funds that come from banks and other financial institutions. The lenders determine the interest rate of the loan based on a person’s FICO score. Payment terms can vary depending on the lender. Frequently, a co-signer is needed. These loans can be in the student’s name or another person’s name who is willing to borrow the funds to assist the student.

**Merit Aid** - Financial assistance offered in recognition of student achievements.

**Non Need-Based Aid** - Financial assistance offered based on criteria other than financial need. This includes Federal student aid programs where the SAI is not factored, such as unsubsidized loans.

**Need-Based Aid** - Funds awarded based on a student's financial circumstances. Need-based aid may come in the form of grants or scholarships, but it can also be loans with lower interest rates.

**Net Cost** - The amount you will actually pay for college; this is usually less than the published price.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** - Standards used to ensure that a student is successfully completing the coursework in order to continue to receive financial aid. SAP includes quantitative and qualitative measures of a student’s progress toward a degree or certificate. Students must generally maintain at least a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale, complete 67% of the courses attempted and pass the required classes to graduate within 150% of the normal time frame for the degree or certificate.

**Scholarship** – A form of financial assistance that does not require repayment or employment. Generally awarded to students based on merit, such as academic achievements.

**Self-Help Aid** – Financial assistance in the form of loans or student employment.

**Student Aid Index (SAI)** - An eligibility index number that a college's financial aid office uses to determine how much federal student aid you may be able to receive. The SAI is calculated using information from the FAFSA form.

**Student Employment** - A program that provides students an opportunity to work part-time while attending college. Federal work-study is a need-based program, funded by the federal government. To qualify you must complete the FAFSA.

For additional information refer to: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/glossary>  
[https://www.nasfaa.org/Glossary of Terms for Award Notifications](https://www.nasfaa.org/Glossary_of_Terms_for_Award_Notifications)  
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-glossary-learn-the-lingo>