

**CLARKSON UNIVERSITY**

*Your*

# **FINANCIAL AID**

**PLANNING WORKBOOK // 2026-27**

*Save  
for  
later!*

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A Message to Students and Parents About Financing a Clarkson Education

We understand that navigating financial aid can sometimes feel overwhelming for students and families. This packet is designed to guide you through the available options and help you choose the best way to finance your Clarkson University education.

Inside, you'll find detailed information and easy-to-follow instructions for:

- **Clarkson University Payment Plan** – an interest-free monthly payment option
- **William D. Ford Federal Direct Student Loan**
- **William D. Ford Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan**
- **Alternative student loan options**

The Clarkson Payment Plan is often the most effective way to minimize borrowing by spreading your costs across manageable, interest-free monthly payments. If your remaining balance after financial aid is more than what you can pay monthly, there are several loan programs available to help bridge the gap. Using the Payment Plan in combination with loan options can help reduce overall borrowing and interest charges.

Please review the enclosed information, determine what you and your family can comfortably contribute, and, if additional financing is needed, follow the provided instructions to complete the necessary applications. In this packet, you'll find:

- How to finalize a Federal Direct Student Loan
- How to apply for a Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan
- How to set up the Clarkson University Payment Plan

This information is accurate as of November 2025. As Congress finalizes the FY2026 budget, including sequestration, any information pertaining to Federal Student Aid is subject to change.

If you have any questions or would like assistance reviewing your options, our office is here to help. We are committed to making your Clarkson education as affordable and accessible as possible.



Clarkson

Clarkson University, 8 Clarkson Avenue, Potsdam, NY 13699  
clarkson.edu

New Students: 800-527-6577/315-268-6480 | Fax: 315-268-7647  
Email: [newstudentfa@clarkson.edu](mailto:newstudentfa@clarkson.edu)

Continuing Students: 315-268-6451 | Fax: 315-268-6452  
Email: [sas@clarkson.edu](mailto:sas@clarkson.edu)

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Financing Your Clarkson Education: A Guide to Your Options

There are many resources available to help you finance your Clarkson education, and this guide is designed to help you choose the options that best fit your needs.

If a Federal Direct Student Loan is included in your financial aid package, it is generally the most affordable borrowing option, offering flexible repayment terms, deferment opportunities, and borrower benefits.

After your financial aid has been applied, the remaining balance represents the amount you'll need to cover your educational expenses. You can:

- Pay this balance in full once you receive your eBill, or
- Enroll in the Clarkson University Payment Plan, which allows you to spread payments out over time.

Combining Payment Plans and Loans Strategically

If the monthly Payment Plan amount is higher than your budget allows, you may choose to combine it with low-interest borrowing options such as:

- Federal Direct Student Loan
- Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan
- Alternative student loans

Using a combination of the Payment Plan, current income, and savings can help minimize your borrowing, maintain good credit, and reduce overall costs.

The Clarkson University Payment Plan: Pay Interest-Free

The Payment Plan lets you spread your balance over up to four months per term for a \$30 fee per term, with no interest charges. This means you can keep your funds earning interest or investment income while paying in manageable installments throughout the year – up to eight months annually.

Key Highlights:

- Interest-free repayment
- Open to anyone with a U.S. address (including international students with a U.S. address)
- Minimum balance: \$1,000 (up to total direct costs minus financial aid)
- Eligible direct costs: tuition, fees, housing and meals

How to View Your Financial Aid Notice

You will be notified by email when your financial aid notification (FAN) has been uploaded to your CU portal.

- Step 1:** Login to your CU application status portal.
- Step 2:** Click Financial Aid.
- Step 3:** Click View Financial Aid Decision.
- Step 4:** Scroll to the bottom of the page to view all Financial Aid letters.

Step 2



Step 3



# The Clarkson University Payment Plan: General Information and Enrollment

- Participation in the payment plan is extended to any student with a U.S. address.
- You, the applicant, determine the amount to be financed.
  - The maximum amount financed can be your total charges less anticipated financial aid.
  - The minimum amount financed is \$1,000 per term.
  - Use the term's eBill to assist with calculating the amount of your payment plan.
    - Fall eBills are generated in early July, and spring eBills are generated mid-November.
  - If completing the payment plan application prior to receiving the term's eBill, use your Financial Aid Notification in conjunction with guidance from your Student Achievement Services specialist.
    - If using your Financial Aid Notification, keep in mind that this will be an estimate and your payment plan will most likely change.
    - Also note that financial aid is dependent upon academic standing, financial need and budget availability. You should compare the estimates used on this application to the actual charges and credits on your Nelnet account.
- although they may not personally receive any goods and/or services.
  - The financially responsible person(s) may be sued for payment even if the person who has received the goods and/or services is able to pay.
- Miscellaneous charges, such as parking tickets, residence hall damages, ID replacements and fire safety violations (to name a few), are not to be calculated in the payment plan. With this being stated, you will need to review your Nelnet account frequently for these charges so that they can be paid in a timely fashion.
  - Clarkson University partners with Nelnet to provide services such as eBilling and online payments. Your Nelnet account is where you will be able to review your student account transactions and make online payments.
- Payment options include in person, by mail and online.
  - In-person payments can be made at the Student Achievement Services Office (in TAC 208 on the Potsdam campus) and include cash, checks and money orders as options.
  - Checks and money orders can be mailed to:
    - Student Achievement Services  
Clarkson University  
Box 5548  
Potsdam, NY 13699-5548
    - Please allow ample time for postal delivery when you mail your payment.
    - Please do not postdate checks as all payments are deposited the day that they are received.
    - There is a \$20 charge for any checks returned to us by the bank.
  - Online payments such as ACH (electronic check) and credit card can be made through Nelnet.
    - ACH payments can only be accepted on U.S. bank accounts and must be from a standard checking or savings account. There are no fees associated with making an ACH payment; save the cost of a stamp!
    - Credit cards that are accepted are VISA, MasterCard, American Express and Discover.
    - There is a service fee of 2.75% of the payment amount associated with credit card payments. This service fee also pertains to debit cards.
    - Nelnet also offers the ability to authorize parties, such as parents, who will receive their own access to view their student's eBill and financial transactions and to make online ACH and credit card payments.

## Payment Plan Schedules

### Fall term:

- 1st payment is due by July 20.
- 2nd payment is due by August 20.
- 3rd payment is due by September 20.
- 4th (last) payment is due by October 20.

### Spring term:

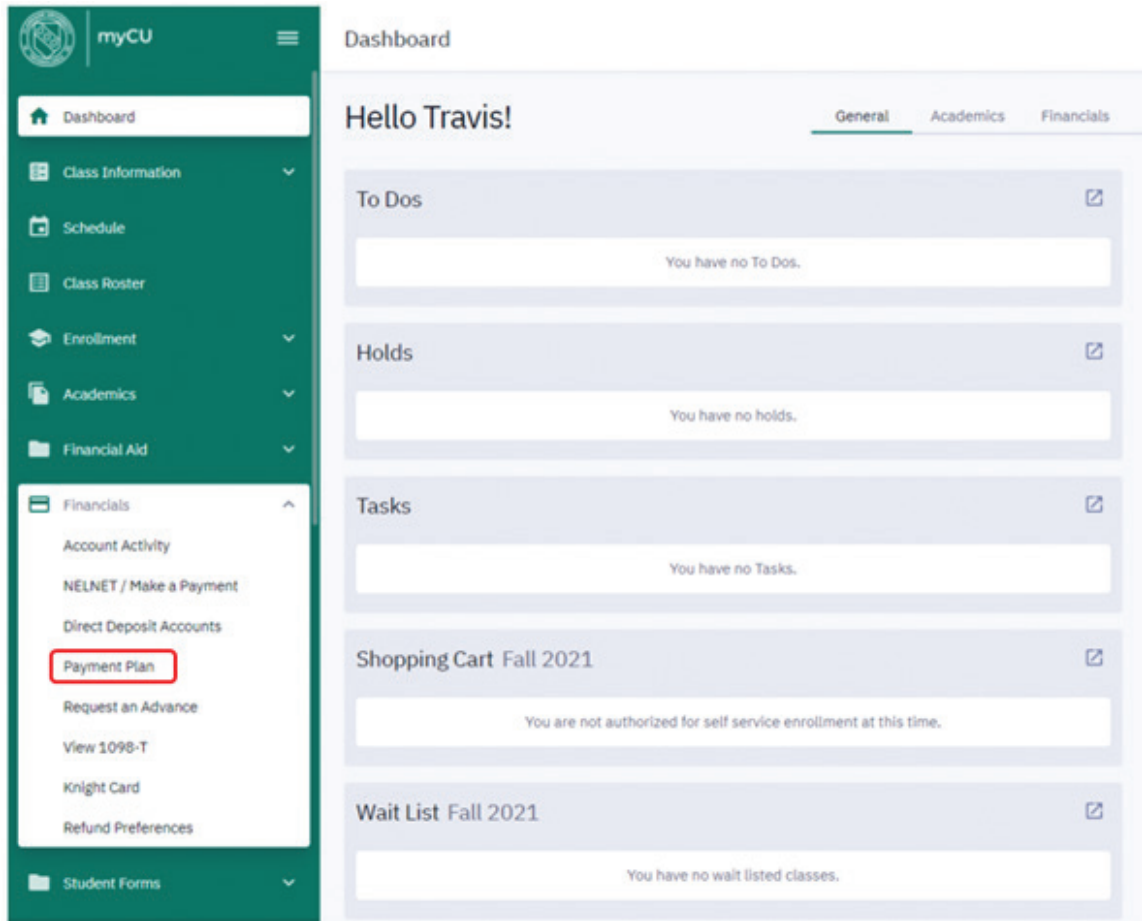
- 1st payment is due by November 20.
- 2nd payment is due by December 20.
- 3rd payment is due by January 20.
- 4th (last) payment is due by February 20.

- Payment plan schedules are the same for all students. With this being stated, students and parents looking to join the payment plan after the first (or first and second) payment due date has passed will need to catch up on any missed payments immediately upon enrollment in the payment plan.
- If you submit an application for the fall term, you will be automatically enrolled in the spring payment plan as long as there is not an outstanding balance on your student account at the end of the fall term.
- The application should be completed by the person who is financially responsible for payment.
  - The financially responsible person(s) agrees to pay the debt identified and incurred on the student's account

# Payment Plan Instructions

The payment plan application is electronic and can be found in your myCU account.

Once in myCU, go to the Student Center Dashboard. On the left-hand navigation there is a Financials icon; the application can be found by clicking on the Payment Plan link.



Payment Plan Terms and Conditions

1. Clarkson University reserves the right to review all applications for acceptance into the payment plan based upon previous payment history and information provided on the application.

2. A continuing student’s prior term balance MUST be paid in full before an application will be processed and/or approved.

3. Payment plans will be canceled if two consecutive payments are outstanding.

4. Future term enrollments will be held if all payments for the payment plan are not current.

6. Subsequent participation in a payment plan will be denied to anyone who knowingly misrepresents information on his/her application.
7. In the event the student withdraws from the University prior to registration, payments made under the payment plan will be refunded to the student after all outstanding financial obligations have been met.

a. Refunds will not be given until 30 days from the date on which the University has received official notification of the student’s withdrawal.

8. In the event this agreement is referred to an attorney for collection, the student shall pay attorney fees, reasonable collection costs and charges necessary for the collection of any unpaid amount.

9. This agreement is subject to and subordinate to other documents signed involving a contractual relationship with Clarkson University. If any portion of this document shall be held to be inconsistent with those documents or illegal, such portions of this agreement shall be void, but all remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.



Loan Comparison Quick Reference 2026-27

The following pages contain information about applying for various educational loans. Use this comparison chart as a quick, convenient reference guide to the features, terms and repayment details for Federal Direct Student Loans, Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loans and alternative loans. Direct loan interest rates are fixed, and loans for each year may have new rates.

Federal Direct Loans do not automatically renew each aid year. You must file a FAFSA annually.

Graduate Direct Loans currently have different interest rates.

| Federal Direct Undergrad Student Subsidized Loan                                                                                                        | Federal Direct Undergrad Student Unsubsidized Loan                                                                                                             | Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan                                                          | Alternative Loan                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Currently 6.39% fixed                                                                                                                                   | Currently 6.39% fixed                                                                                                                                          | Currently 8.94% fixed                                                                    | Variable and fixed, varies by lender                                                        |
| No credit check                                                                                                                                         | No credit check                                                                                                                                                | Must be creditworthy                                                                     | Must be creditworthy                                                                        |
| Only student loan borrower responsible for repayment; no cosigner needed                                                                                | Only student loan borrower responsible for repayment; no cosigner needed                                                                                       | Only parent borrower responsible for repayment; no student responsibility                | Student loan borrower responsible; most lenders require a creditworthy cosigner             |
| Loan limits                                                                                                                                             | Loan limits                                                                                                                                                    | Loan limits                                                                              | Varies by lender                                                                            |
| Death/disability benefit                                                                                                                                | Death/disability benefit                                                                                                                                       | Death/disability benefit                                                                 | Some lenders offer death/disability benefit; varies by lender                               |
| Deferment/forbearance eligibility                                                                                                                       | Deferment/forbearance eligibility                                                                                                                              | Deferment/forbearance eligibility                                                        | Possible deferment/forbearance eligibility                                                  |
| Federally guaranteed                                                                                                                                    | Federally guaranteed                                                                                                                                           | Federally guaranteed                                                                     | Not federally guaranteed                                                                    |
| Can be consolidated with other federal guaranteed loans through federal guarantee agency                                                                | Can be consolidated with other federal guaranteed loans through federal guarantee agency                                                                       | Can be consolidated with other federal guaranteed loans through federal guarantee agency | Cannot be consolidated with other federal guaranteed loans through federal guarantee agency |
| Generally, no interest is charged on subsidized loans while you are in school at least half time, during the grace period and during deferment periods. | Interest is charged on your loan from the time the loan is disbursed to the school. You can make payments or capitalize (defer) interest until leaving school. | Interest is charged on your loan from the time the loan is disbursed to the school.      | Interest is charged on your loan from the time the loan is disbursed.                       |

Federal Direct Student Loan Program:  
The First Choice for Students

Subsidized

A subsidized loan is based on financial need. In general, the federal government will pay the interest on the loan while you are enrolled at least half time in school, during the grace period and during deferment periods.

Unsubsidized

An unsubsidized loan is not based on financial need. You must either pay the interest monthly/quarterly, or have the interest capitalized (added to the principal loan amount). Payments on both the interest and principal must begin six months after the student graduates, leaves school or drops below half-time enrollment.

The following are the federally set limits on Federal Direct Student Loan amounts based on the student’s class standing (number of credit hours earned) and at least half-time enrollment.

| Class     | Earned Hours<br>Year Loan Limit | Dependent Student<br>Year Loan Limit | Independent Student<br>Year Loan Limit | Additional Unsubsidized<br>Loan – Dependent |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Freshman  | 0-23                            | \$5,500                              | \$9,500                                | \$4,000                                     |
| Sophomore | 24-53                           | \$6,500                              | \$10,500                               | \$4,000                                     |
| Junior    | 54-83                           | \$7,500                              | \$12,500                               | \$5,000                                     |
| Senior    | 84+                             | \$7,500                              | \$12,500                               | \$5,000                                     |

Disbursements

There are two disbursements per year, usually at the beginning of each term. Disbursements of these funds will be applied to the student’s account when all required documentation is received, the U.S. Department of Education approves the loan, and the student has accepted the federal loan(s), completed the federally mandated entrance counseling requirement and has a signed Master Promissory Note (MPN) on file.

Fees

For loans first disbursed October 1, 2025-September 30, 2025, the federal government charges a loan fee of 1.057%. The amount disbursed to your student account will reflect the deduction of this fee from your loan amount.

Interest

For undergraduates, the federal government pays the interest during your in-school and deferment periods for subsidized borrowers. Since interest accrues from the disbursement date on unsubsidized loans, it is highly recommended that borrowers contact their servicer to make payments of this interest while enrolled. Unpaid interest is capitalized at the end of the grace period.

Interest Rates for Undergraduate Students

Currently, the interest rate on both subsidized and unsubsidized federal direct loans is 6.39% fixed. This is the rate for loans disbursed during the current academic period, until further notice.

Grace Period

Federal Direct Student Loan borrowers are not required to make repayment of principal during the six-month period that occurs after graduating, withdrawing or dropping below half-time enrollment.

Term

Repayment normally may extend up to 10 years; flexible extended repayment plans may be available. A minimum payment of \$50 per month is required while in repayment.

Repayment

Repayment begins after the grace period. It may be delayed by deferment options available to borrowers.

Maximum Eligibility Period

You may not receive Direct Subsidized Loans for more than 150% of the published length of your program. Additional information at: [studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/subsidized-unsubsidized](https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/subsidized-unsubsidized)

How to Complete the Entrance Counseling Session

Before receiving a Federal Direct Student Loan, student borrowers must complete an Entrance Counseling Session. Once you do this, it will carry over to future years at Clarkson. This loan will not disburse to your student account until an Entrance Counseling Session is completed.

The student completes the entrance counseling requirement at the following website: [studentaid.gov/counseling-selection](https://studentaid.gov/counseling-selection).

You will need your FSA ID to sign in. This is the same FSA ID you created when filing the FAFSA. Sign in by clicking on the “Log In To Start” button. Once signed in, go to “Complete Loan Counseling” and then choose “Entrance/Counseling.”

Confirmation of your completion of this requirement is automatically sent to the school.

How to Complete an Electronic Master Promissory Note for Federal Direct Student Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized)

The Master Promissory Note (MPN) is completed only once to cover all student Federal Direct Student Loans, for up to 10 years of study. Students must actively confirm with Clarkson acceptance of federal loans each year.

Clarkson University does not print an MPN for Direct Loans. If you have never before completed an MPN, you must go to the following Department of Education website: [studentaid.gov/mpn](https://studentaid.gov/mpn) and sign in by clicking on the “Log In To Start” button. Once signed in, click the “loans and grants” tab, go to Master Promissory Note (MPN), then click start next, “I am an undergraduate student.” It is estimated that it will take 30 minutes to complete this electronic process. The MPN process must be completed in a single session, so be sure you have sufficient time to finish. You will need to enter personal data, including the name, address and phone numbers for two personal references. Be sure to continue the process to the end; you should receive an e-mail in response, once you have successfully completed a master promissory note. If you decide not to take a Federal Direct Student Loan, you may cancel this process at any time before submitting your electronic MPN. You may also notify SAS that you do not want the loan, anytime up to 10 days after disbursement.

Direct Loan Servicing

Federal Direct Loans are now serviced by one of many servicers. Borrowers will receive notification informing them of which servicer they have. This information can also be found by signing in to [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).



Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan

Sometimes the Federal Direct Student Loan eligibility does not cover total costs. Therefore, many families look to other loans to pay the bill. When compared to alternative loans, the Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan is typically the most cost-effective choice for families, offering federal protection and more repayment options. The choice is yours to make; we hope the information in this packet will help you make an informed one.

Eligible parents may borrow a Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan for each dependent undergraduate student who is enrolled at least half time. Your student must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before your application can be processed. A FAFSA must be submitted each academic year.

The Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan is a credit-based loan. Family income is not a factor in the approval of a PLUS loan. However, the lender will access the borrower’s credit report in order to make its decision.

To ensure timely processing before the due date of the fall invoice, we encourage you to submit an application by July 15. Parents who are not approved for the Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan will have the option of appealing the credit decision or securing a creditworthy co-borrower to help them become PLUS eligible through the Endorser Addendum Option. Online loan counseling is required for PLUS applicants who were approved through the extenuating circumstances and for approved applicants with endorsers. In addition, voluntary PLUS loan counseling is available online.

Loan Periods and Amounts

Starting in 2026, parents have a \$20,000 per year cap per dependent student and a \$65,000 aggregate limit per dependent student.

Students enrolled in both the fall and the spring semesters will have a loan period from August 26, 2026–May 10, 2027. The loan amount will be divided equally between the fall and spring semesters. When deciding how much you wish to borrow, be sure to include both semesters and consider the loan origination fee deduction.

Borrower Repayment Incentives

Electronic payments will reduce the interest rate by 0.25%.

Application Process

This is required each year.

- 1. You can apply online for a Federal Direct PLUS Loan at [studentaid.gov/plus-app/parent/landing](https://studentaid.gov/plus-app/parent/landing). The parent borrower will need to sign in using their FSA ID. This is the same parent FSA ID created when the student filed the FAFSA. If you are not the parent who signed the FAFSA you will need to create an FSA ID. Go to the “I am a Parent of an Undergraduate Student” box, then click on the blue “Log In To Start” box. The U.S. Department of Education will run a credit check as part of the application.
- 2. Also at [studentaid.gov/mpn](https://studentaid.gov/mpn), new borrowers will also need to complete a PLUS Master Promissory Note. You will have an opportunity to do so after you complete this Direct PLUS Loan application

Interest Rates

The Federal Direct Parent PLUS has a fixed interest rate of 8.94% for loans disbursed between July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026.

Fees

The Federal Direct Parent PLUS has a fee of 4.228%, for loans first disbursed from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026, until further notice. This fee is deducted from the loan disbursement amount.

Disbursements

A Federal Direct PLUS Loan is disbursed in two equal installments — at the beginning of each semester.

Repayment

The parent is responsible for repayment of a Parent PLUS Loan. Depending on the amount borrowed, the repayment term can be up to 10 years. The minimum monthly payment is \$50, and there are also extended and graduated plans to help make repayment affordable. Repayment on PLUS loans begins approximately 60 days after the loan is fully disbursed unless the parent borrower contacts their servicer after the loan is fully disbursed to request deferment of repayment while the student is in school. This is not an automatic deferment and must be requested; not all borrowers will qualify. Borrowers will receive notification of servicer contact information or may log in at [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) to obtain servicer information.

PLUS Credit Denied Policy

If a parent is denied a PLUS loan and does not wish to obtain an endorser or appeal the credit decision, the student may request an additional unsubsidized Federal Direct Student Loan of \$4,000 per year for freshmen and sophomores and \$5,000 for junior and senior year. The parent must also submit written notification that they will not appeal the credit decision.

Alternative/Private Student Loan Programs

Alternative or private loans are credit-based loans provided by private lenders, not the federal government. Approval is based on the credit history of the student and/or a cosigner, and most lenders require a creditworthy cosigner — who does not need to be a parent. Applicants with stronger credit generally qualify for lower interest rates.

Before pursuing an alternative loan, you should fully explore all available scholarships, grants, and federal student loan options. While some alternative loans may offer lower interest rates, these rates are often variable. Additionally, alternative loans cannot be included in Federal Loan Consolidation and may offer fewer deferment options and borrower benefits.

You have the right to select any alternative loan lender, and your choice will not affect your standing with Clarkson University. Terms and conditions vary because these are administered by private lenders. Clarkson University does not endorse or recommend any specific lender and does not maintain a preferred lender list.

**Elm Select** is a helpful resource for exploring and comparing alternative loan programs. It is an independent tool with no affiliations to student loan lenders. We encourage you to visit their website for more information. [www.elmselect.com](https://www.elmselect.com).



All alternative loan borrowers are required to complete a “Private Education Loan Applicant Self-Certification” form. This form is available from your lender and can also be obtained from [intranet.clarkson.edu/student-life/sas/financial-aid-forms](https://intranet.clarkson.edu/student-life/sas/financial-aid-forms). After the loan is certified by the school, disbursement of the alternative loan will not occur prior to the borrower’s acceptance of the terms via the lender’s website.

Questions to Ask Before Choosing an Alternative Loan

Fees & Costs

- Origination fees: Are there any upfront charges?
- Interest rate: What rate do I qualify for?

Timing and Payments

- Grace period: Is there one? When does repayment start?
- In-school payments: Will I need to pay while enrolled?

Loan Servicing

- Payment process: Where will I send payments?
- Loan transfers: Could my loan be sold to another servicer?

Flexibility & Options

- Deferment: Are there opportunities to pause payments if needed?
- Incentives: Are there rewards for on-time payments or auto-pay enrollment?

Repayment Terms

- Repayment period: How long will it take — possibly 15–20 years?
- Cosigner release: Can a cosigner be released after on-time payments? Does it require a new credit check?

Interest Type

- Fixed or variable: Which is offered?
- If variable: How is it calculated, how often can it change and is there a maximum cap?

# Secure Your Financial Aid: Next Steps

## Checklist

### Before depositing:

- ☐ Review financial aid notice.
- ☐ Read this guide.
- ☐ Compare financial aid packages.
- ☐ Ask questions; contact your counselor.
- ☐ Make a final visit to Clarkson.
- ☐ Submit the \$500 admission deposit.
  - If Early Decision, within two weeks of receiving financial aid offer.
  - If Regular Decision, by May 1.

### After depositing:

- ☐ Activate your myCU Account.
- ☐ Look for new To-Do Items via your App Status Page.
- ☐ Start researching how to pay/finance any estimated balance not covered by financial aid by exploring the options included, as well as those not included, in this brochure.
- ☐ If “Estimated NYS TAP Award” is listed on your financial aid notice, apply at **hesc.ny.gov** if you have not already done so (for New York state residents).

## Student Responsibilities

### To ensure you receive financial aid while a student at Clarkson, you must:

- ☐ Complete To-Do Items by deadlines.
- ☐ Submit any requested additional information.
- ☐ Submit the FAFSA each year.
- ☐ Remain enrolled full time.
- ☐ Maintain SAP (satisfactory academic progress).
- ☐ Notify us of any changes.



# Clarkson™

#### New Students

##### Undergraduate Admissions

Holcroft House      800-527-6577  
Box 5605      315-268-6480  
8 Clarkson Avenue      315-268-7647 (fax)  
Potsdam, NY 13699 USA      [newstudentfa@clarkson.edu](mailto:newstudentfa@clarkson.edu)

[clarkson.edu/admissions](https://clarkson.edu/admissions)

#### Current Students

##### Student Achievement Services

Technology Advancement      315-268-6451  
Center 208      315-268-6452 (fax)  
Box 5575      [sas@clarkson.edu](mailto:sas@clarkson.edu)  
8 Clarkson Avenue  
Potsdam, NY 13699 USA

[clarkson.edu/sas](https://clarkson.edu/sas)