

Reviewing Opportunity Applications in Academic Works

Frequently Asked Questions

In reviewing and ranking applications, financial need is sometimes a consideration. The following definitions will help you understand the financial aid information provided on the student's application.

Cost of Attendance (COA)

The total amount it will cost a student to attend school—usually stated as a yearly figure. COA includes tuition and fees; room and board (or a housing and food allowance); and allowances for books, supplies, transportation, loan fees, and dependent care. It also includes miscellaneous and personal expenses, including an allowance for the rental or purchase of a personal computer; costs related to a disability; and reasonable costs for eligible study-abroad programs. For students attending less than half-time, the COA includes tuition and fees and an allowance for books, supplies, transportation, and dependent care expenses, and can also include room and board for up to three semesters or the equivalent at the institution.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

This is the number used to determine eligibility for federal student financial aid. This number results from the financial information provided on the FAFSA® form, the application for federal student aid. The EFC is reported on the Student Aid Report (SAR). 0 indicates the MOST need and a larger number would indicate less need.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA® form is the application for federal student aid. Completion of the FAFSA results in the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which is a number used to determine eligibility for federal student financial aid. By completing the FAFSA annually after October 1st students are applying for federal and state aid programs. The FAFSA is also required to determine eligibility for some institutional aid programs.

Unmet Need (COA – EFC = NEED)

Need is determined by finding the difference in a student's Cost of Attendance and EFC. Unmet need is how much of this number has not been met by financial aid, which may include loans.

- *A negative number would indicate a student's "need" has been met, usually this also reflects a high EFC. Scholarships awarded to students with a negative unmet need would likely reduce a loan if one has been accepted.*
- *A positive number would indicate a student has unmet need, and reflects a lower EFC.*
- *A 0 unmet need may indicate that a student has borrowed loans totaling the COA – it is a good idea to look at the EFC and also the student's total loan accepted to determine if there is still a "need" for the scholarship.*