



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK
Federal Aid Student Guide
2023-24

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Introduction

UCC participates in the U.S. William D. Ford Direct Loan programme. Eligible students can obtain Subsidized and Unsubsidized loans and Parent PLUS or Graduate PLUS loans from the U.S. Department of Education. UCC manages the loan origination and disbursement process.

It is imperative that you read the following information to fully understand the application process. Please note that US Federal Government regulations for Foreign Schools differ to those for US domestic schools and that the process which we follow at University College Cork is in accordance with the regulations for Foreign Schools. It is important to adhere to deadlines and to plan early as the process takes time from initial application to loan origination.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

UCC provides all students with the following [Data Protection Notice](#) upon registration. This notice sets out how the University uses students' personal data, who we may disclose it to, data subject rights (e.g., students' right to request access to /rectification of their data, etc.).

UCC will provide information published by the US Department of Education to students at any time that information regarding loan availability is requested, including the rights and responsibilities of students and schools under Title IV HEA (Higher Education Act) loan programs.

Data Protection Policy

Data Protection is the means by which the privacy rights of individuals are safeguarded in relation to the processing of their personal data. University College Cork ("the University") needs to collect and use personal data about its students, staff and other individuals who come into contact with the University. Those individuals ("data subjects") have privacy rights in relation to the processing of their personal data. The University must therefore comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") and the Irish Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018 (the "DPA") – known collectively in this policy as "the Data Protection Acts". The Data Protection Acts confer rights on individuals as well as responsibilities on those who process personal data.

For further information see the full [Data Protection Policy](#) at UCC.

Programmes

A list of programmes offered at UCC can be found on the Study [Courses](#) webpage.

Costs

A list of international student fees for undergraduate and post-graduate programmes can be found on the [Fees Schedule 2023-24](#) webpage.

Misrepresentation

UCC does not engage in misrepresentation, which is prohibited by US Department of Education regulations.

Misrepresentation is defined as a false, incorrect, or misleading statement made directly or indirectly to a student, prospective student, any member of the public, an accrediting agency, a government agency, or the Department.

A statement is any communication made in writing, visually, orally or through other means. This definition applies to statements made by an eligible institution, the institution's representatives, or any ineligible institution, organization, or person with whom the eligible institution has an agreement to provide educational programmes or those that provide marketing, advertising, recruiting, or admissions services.

Substantial misrepresentation occurs when a misrepresentation upon which a person could reasonably be expected to rely causes harm. Substantial misrepresentations are prohibited in all forms, including those made in any advertising or promotional materials or in the marketing or sale of courses or programs of instruction offered by the Institution. An institution, one of its representatives, or a related party engages in substantial misrepresentation when it does so about the nature of its educational program, its financial charges, or the employability of its graduates.

If the U.S. Department of Education determines that an eligible Institution has engaged in substantial misrepresentation, it may impose sanctions against the institution.

Eligibility for US Federal Aid

Students from the United States of America who choose to study at foreign institutions are not eligible for grants from the US Federal government e.g., Pell Grants but they may apply for US Federal loans to fund their study. The Federal Direct Loan programme is available to US citizens or eligible non-citizens who are enrolled at least half-time, making satisfactory academic progress and are not in default on a previous loan or exceeding federal loan limits.

Eligible Programmes

- Degree (Undergraduate or Postgraduate)
- Medical programmes*
- Masters
- PhD

Non-Eligible Programmes

- Nursing
- Diploma Programmes
- Foundation Programmes
- Programmes That Include Distance Learning
- Adult Continuing Education Programmes
- Adult Continuing Education short courses
- Continuing Professional Development courses
- Programmes leading to Micro Credentials
- Programmes more than 25 percent of which takes place in the USA. Study in the USA can only be at institutions of higher education that are themselves eligible for the US Title IV aid programs.
- Programmes, including dual degree programmes, more than 25 percent of which take place at an institution outside the USA that is itself not eligible for the US Title IV aid programmes.

** Medical Programmes for the 2023-24 academic year are eligible only for continuing students who have previously borrowed US federal loans at University College Cork. UCC will take steps to seek full eligibility for 2024-25 but whether or not US federal loans are available to medical students for that academic year will not be known until sometime in 2024.*

Eligible students at University College Cork can apply for the following Federal Aid loans:

- Direct Loans (Subsidized and Unsubsidized)
- Direct PLUS Loans (Undergraduate Parent or Graduate Student)

Study Abroad Information

A student's enrolment in a programme of study abroad approved for credit by University College Cork is considered enrolment at UCC for the purpose of applying for assistance under the Title IV, HEA programmes. US Students should note, however, some limitations. (These limitations were modified as of 1 July 2021.) US students receiving Direct Loans or Direct PLUS loans can only go on study abroad on locations in the USA for no more than 25 percent of their programme of study and only to locations themselves eligible for the US Title IV aid programmes. They can go on study abroad at institutions outside the USA that are not themselves eligible for the US Title IV aid program for no more than 25 percent of their programme of study. They can only take up to 25 percent of their programme of study at an ineligible foreign institution with which UCC offers a joint degree programme.

A list of eligible foreign schools can be found on the [Participating Schools](#) webpage.

More details on UCC's policies for study abroad options including exchange programs with partner institutions can be found on the [Go Abroad with UCC](#) webpage.

You must contact the International Office to ensure that your desired options are allowed for students receiving US federal loans.

Support for Students with Disabilities

UCC provides services to students with disabilities. Disability Support provides a confidential, professional, and accessible service for students with disabilities or those requiring adjustments for other reasons. We have a team of Advisers who are available to help students ensure equal opportunity, access, and attainment for students within University College Cork. Details can be found on [Disability Support](#) webpage.

Direct Loans

These are fixed-rate student loans from the US Department of Education for undergraduate and postgraduate students attending college at least half-time.

Direct Subsidized Loans

Direct Subsidized loans are federal loans based on financial need as determined by the Department of Education regulations. Interest does not accrue on the loan while you are in school at least half-time, for the first six months after you leave school (referred to as the grace period) and during any future deferment periods. The federal government does not charge interest during these times.

Direct Unsubsidized Loans

Direct Unsubsidized loans are federal loans that are not based on financial need. Interest accrues from the time the loan is disbursed to the student. If you choose not to pay the interest while you are in school and during grace periods and deferment or forbearance periods, your interest will accrue (accumulate) and be capitalized (that is, your interest will be added to the principal amount of your loan).

Direct PLUS Loans

Direct PLUS loans are available from the US Department of Education and are not based on financial need. The parents of an undergraduate dependent student (as defined by the US Department of Education) are eligible for a Parent PLUS loan if they meet certain credit guidelines. Graduate students are eligible for a Graduate PLUS loan if they meet certain credit guidelines.

Private Loans

Eligible students at University College Cork may also apply for private loans. Private loans may be obtained from a bank/lender subject to the applicant's credit rating and may often require a co-signer/guarantor. Private loans are usually offered at commercial rates which may be less favourable than Federal Aid loan rates. Private loans also need to be certified by the educational institution. Students choose their private lender, and University College Cork does not recommend a particular lender. Some University College Cork students have worked with

Sallie Mae who offers a Smart Option Student loan. Students may apply at [Salliemae.com](https://www.salliemae.com). Sallie Mae will then send a notification to the school that there are student loans pending certification.

Important Tips

US Federal loans are educational loans and Direct, Direct Plus and any Private loans are expressly for the purpose of covering the primary costs of educational study e.g., tuition, student accommodation and board, books/academic requisites, commuter travel etc. The primary costs of education cannot exceed the student's 'Cost of Attendance (COA)' e.g., the educational institute's official estimate of the student's tuition and living costs for the academic year of study. Loans are not intended to cover other expenses that are not directly related to academic study. It is advisable that students plan a budget to make sure that they have enough funding to cover their period of study. Students should bear in mind that exchange rates fluctuate so when the US Federal loans are disbursed, the student may receive less than they had initially planned. It is important to keep this in mind when planning on how much to borrow. Students should note that it is important to borrow what they need but to remember at all times that they will have to repay it in the long term.

Direct Loan Application Guidelines

Step 1: FAFSA/SAR

The student must log onto the [U.S. Department of Education FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) website and make an online application. The school code for University College Cork is **G06704**.

Once the student has completed their online application, they will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) in the mail approximately two weeks after their application has been processed.

If the student provides an email address, then they can request that their Student Aid Report be sent via email.

Step 2: Required Documents

The following documentation is required and can be accessed online by the Financial Aid Administrator in University College Cork.

1. Student Aid Report (SAR).
2. Official Offer Letter/Acceptance to University College Cork.
3. Scholarship Letter/Funding Letter if applicable.
4. Copy of current passport.
5. Signed Master Promissory Note (MPN) for Subsidized/Unsubsidized loans via the [StudentLoans.gov](#) website.
6. Signed Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Credit Check by selecting 'Complete PLUS Request Process' via the [StudentLoans.gov](#) website for Parent PLUS or Graduate PLUS loans.
7. Completed Loan Entrance Counselling via the [StudentLoans.gov](#) website.
8. Copy of High School diploma or equivalent showing receipt of a secondary school credential.

Step 3: Entrance Counselling

The purpose of loan entrance counselling is to help students to better understand their responsibilities in relation to their loans. It is a federal requirement.

All students attending the University College Cork and who wish to apply for US Federal loans must complete loan entrance counselling.

Loan Entrance Counselling can be completed at the [StudentLoans.gov](#) website.

Step 4: Master Promissory Notes (MPN)

The Master Promissory Note (MPN) is a legal document in which the student promises to repay their loan(s) and any accrued interest and fees to the US Department of Education. It also explains the terms and conditions of their loan(s).

All MPNs issued in respect of foreign studies at a foreign school are valid for one year only. New MPNs are required to be completed for every year of study at a foreign school. The school code for University College Cork is **GØ67Ø4**.

One MPN is completed in respect of the Subsidized/Unsubsidized loans. A separate MPN is required should the student wish to take out a Graduate PLUS or Parent PLUS loan.

Master Promissory Notes can be completed online at the [StudentLoans.gov](https://studentloans.gov) website.

Step 5: Plus Loans

Students must request all PLUS loans on the [StudentLoans.gov](https://studentloans.gov) website.

In applying for a PLUS loan a credit check will be carried out on the individual requesting the loan. No PLUS loan can be certified until this credit check is completed. The student must select **Complete PLUS Request Process** to initiate the credit check.

If the student or parent has an adverse credit history, they may still be eligible to receive a Direct PLUS loan. They can obtain an endorser who does not have an adverse credit history. An endorser is someone who agrees to repay the Direct PLUS loan if the student/parent is unable to repay the loan. In the case of a parent borrowing on behalf of their dependent student, the endorser cannot be the student on whose behalf the parent is obtaining the Direct PLUS loan.

Please note in the case of dependent undergraduate students, the Parent PLUS loan is borrowed in the name of the parent.

Step 6: Loan Entitlements

On receipt of the necessary documentation, students will be emailed with information on their Loan Award including the loan amounts that they are eligible to borrow. Students must complete the online Loan Amount Declaration form indicating the various loan amounts that they wish to borrow.

Students must notify the Financial Aid Administrator if they have been approved for a US Private Scholarship, any other US Scholarship or a Scholarship from University College Cork. This may affect the student's borrowing limits.

Step 7: Loan Approval

All loans will be originated by the University College Cork with the US Department of Education.

Step 8: Origination Fees

There is an origination fee on all Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized and PLUS Loans. The origination fee is a percentage of each loan amount. For Subsidized and Unsubsidized loans disbursed on or after October 1st, 2021, through 30th September 2023, the loan origination fee is 1.057%. The loan fee will be proportionately deducted from each loan disbursement. For PLUS loans disbursed on or after October 1st, 2021, through 30th September 2023, the loan origination fee is 4.228%. The fee will be proportionately deducted from each loan disbursement. These fees may be changed for subsequent years by the U.S. Government.

Step 9: Disbursements

Loans will be disbursed in two payments to coincide with the start of each semester of study in September and January.

Excess funds (credit balance) beyond UCC fees will be disbursed to students by way of refund directly to their Irish bank account. Students are strongly encouraged to open bank accounts on campus.

It is important for students to note that they will not have immediate access to their loan funds when they arrive in Ireland. Students will need to bring sufficient sums of money to cover their first 3 - 4 weeks of expense

Step 10: Payment of Tuition Fees

Students in receipt of US Federal Aid loans to fund their tuition are permitted to pay their tuition fees in two instalments, one in September and one in January to coincide with the Federal Aid disbursements. The loan funds are disbursed directly to University College Cork, the Fees Office deducts the necessary tuition fee instalment, and any excess funds (credit balance) will be refunded directly to the students' bank accounts. Any credit balance must be disbursed to the student as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the University College Cork receives funds from the US Department of Education. If the University College Cork is not able to disburse funds to the student's bank account within 14 days, the credit balance will be returned to the US Department of Education, delaying availability to the student.

Step 11: Accommodation Costs

Students should note that on-campus accommodation costs are not deducted from their loans by the Fees Office.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students who are in receipt of Direct Loan Federal Funds from the US Department of Education must comply with Satisfactory Academic Progress Regulations to maintain their eligibility to receive loan funds. Satisfactory Academic Progress means that students are required to maintain minimum grades and course completion to confirm they are making satisfactory progression.

University College Cork will assess each student's SAP at the end of each academic semester. Please see Appendix 1 – SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress) Policy on page 11.

Withdrawal and the Return of Federal Aid Loan Funds – R2T4 Policy

If the student withdraws or fails to attend their programme, they must inform the Financial Aid Administrator in University College Cork and the US Department of Education no later than 5 working days after withdrawal. Students who withdraw from their programme of study are required to inform University College Cork in writing, so they are advised to please call to the Student Records and Examinations Office if they decide to withdraw. Students should please note that failure to attend after enrolment is deemed to be a withdrawal. Students should note that when they withdraw, any disbursed unearned loan funds must be returned to the US Department of Education. Please see Appendix 2 – US Federal Loans: Return to Title IV (R2T4) Policy on page 17.

Exit Counselling

Students who withdraw from their course of study or fall below at least half-time study at any point during the current academic year will be required to complete Exit Counselling via the [NSLDS](#) website. The US Department of Education will also be notified.

Graduation

Exit Counselling

Federal regulations require that all Direct Loan borrowers who graduate or withdraw from their programme of study complete a Loan Exit Counselling Session. This session is designed to provide borrowers with important information regarding their responsibilities as well as repayment information. Students can complete Exit Counselling on the [StudentLoans.gov](#) website by selecting 'Exit Counselling' in the 'Tools and Resources' section.

Student should receive repayment information from their loan servicer approximately 3 months after they leave school. If students do not receive this information, it is their responsibility to contact the US Department of Education or loan servicer before the end of their grace period to arrange for the repayment of the loan. It is important that students plan for the repayment of their loan.

Students will have the opportunity to estimate their monthly repayments as they process through the online counselling session.

Loan Repayment

Federal Aid loans are specifically to cover the cost of education. The primary cost of education is tuition followed by associated expenses. Once students are no longer enrolled at least half time in an eligible programme, they'll receive a 6-month grace period on their Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans during which they are not required to make loan payments. Students must begin repayment at the end of their grace period. Students should note that the 6-month grace period commences from the date of programme completion as opposed to their graduation date. Students must check with the US Department of Education for full details on the repayment of their loan.

Default

If a student defaults on their loan (fails to make repayments) and are delinquent for more than

270 days, a report is filed by the U.S. Department of Education or their loan servicer to all national credit bureaus which may result in potential garnishment of wages, inability to secure other forms of credit which includes credit cards, mortgages, or other loans. Students will also remain ineligible for all other forms of financial aid. It is important to note that defaulted loans are reported to the Internal Revenue Services and the US Department of Education may proceed with action in order to recover defaulted loans.

Student Responsibilities

- Students must notify the US Department of Education of any changes in their status including enrolment, graduation, changes to their address, telephone number and email.
- Students must notify University College Cork and the Financial Aid Administrator at UCC of any change to their semester dates, permanent correspondence address and telephone number.
- Students must notify the US Department of Education if they fail to enrol at University College Cork.
- Students must notify the University College Cork and the Financial Aid Administrator at UCC if they withdraw their Federal Aid application before the start of the semester or withdraw/take leave of absence from the UCC after enrolment.
- Students must complete Exit Counselling once they graduate or withdraw from their course of study.
- Students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP)

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the term used to denote a student's successful completion of coursework toward a degree award. The Federal Aid Administrator must monitor the progress of each student toward the completion of a degree in order to meet federal guidelines governing the administration of student financial assistance. Students who fall behind in their coursework or fail to achieve minimum standards may lose their eligibility for all types of US Federal Aid. At UCC students must maintain the equivalent of a 'C' Grade Point Average in each Semester Period before loans are disbursed.

UCC does not operate a GPA system, it has a percentage system of grading. Our policies in relation to progression, as it is termed at UCC, are laid out in the [UCC College Calendar](#) and the [UCC Marks and Standards](#).

Course Load

Students must be registered full-time to maintain loan eligibility. Please note that for immigration purposes, international students must maintain full-time status at the University College Cork.

Important: As per regulation #34 CFR 600.51(d), students taking online/distance education courses are not eligible to receive US Direct Loans at University College Cork. (This prohibition was temporarily waived by U.S. law though 30 June 2023.)

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) -- recipients of US Direct Loan Funds

The US government regulations (Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Eligibility, Federal Regulation - 34 CFR 668.34) stipulate that students must maintain certain academic standards in order to remain eligible for all types of US Direct Loans.

The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) applies to all students applying for US Direct Loans under Title IV of the US Higher Education Act. These types of loans include Direct Loans (Subsidized and Unsubsidized), Direct Parent PLUS and Direct Graduate PLUS loans.

All students will have their academic progress reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who have not fulfilled the SAP requirements will not be eligible for US Direct Loan funds for the subsequent semester.

To maintain US Direct Loans eligibility, students must fulfil these requirements:

SAP components

- Quantitative component (Time Based): students must finish their degree within 150% of the published length of degree completion time.
- Qualitative component (Grade Based): Maintain the equivalent of a Grade C average.

University College Cork will assess each student's SAP at the end of each semester. The University SAP Policy is in line with the University's academic policy e.g., if the University allows you to progress then you will be typically allowed to continue to receive Federal Aid within the constraints of the SAP academic components above. For example, in compliance with the 'Completion Rate' component, a student must complete their studies within 150% of the programme length. All periods of a student's enrolment count when assessing SAP, even periods when the student did not receive any Federal Loan Funds.

Maximum Time Frame, Pace of Completion and Minimum Grades

Students must pass all credits attempted in each evaluation period to successfully progress to the next academic year of study. A student should pass the course/modules with a minimum of grade 40% to confirm they are making satisfactory progression. This will be checked at the end of each evaluation period (end of semester). This requirement applies to all students, regardless of programme.

A normal Undergraduate academic year of full-time study over two semesters is 60 ECTS credits. In most cases where assessment is by written examination, there is an option of a resit examination, normally held in August. Please see [University College Cork Marks and Standards](#).

A full time or part time undergraduate student is entitled to receive aid for 150% of the credits for the course in which they are enrolled. At each evaluation point, undergraduate students who have taken or will need to take more than 150% of the published length of degree completion time, as measured in credits, are not considered to have fulfilled SAP requirements and, therefore, become ineligible for US Direct Loans at University College Cork for that degree. Normal pace of completion progression is 67% at a minimum on a cumulative basis.

Postgraduate, graduate research and professional students are required to complete their course of study within 150% of the standard timeframe for that programme. Postgraduate, graduate research and professional students enrolled in programs of more than two years in length must at the end of two years have achieved academic standing that will allow for completion within the maximum timeframe.

Progression is measured at each evaluation point to determine if a student is on pace to complete their programme within the maximum timeframe.

$$\frac{100\% \text{ Scheduled Limit}}{150\% \text{ Maximum Time}} = 67\% \text{ Pace Requirement}$$

Transfer credits that have been accepted by the University will be counted as both attempted and completed when measuring the quantitative SAP requirement (the 150% timeframe).

Students who withdraw from or fail to complete required courses or modules will have those courses or modules counted in the denominator in determining pace of progression. However, a student who is permitted to complete an incomplete course or retake a failed examination before the commencement of the following academic year, and who passes, will have that course or module counted as successfully completed in SAP calculations.

University College Cork operates a percentage system of grading. Our policies in relation to progression, as it is termed at UCC, are laid out in the [UCC College Calendar](#) and the [UCC Marks and Standards](#).

Students who are not meeting SAP requirements:

What happens	Student financial aid status	What student needs to do
If your results drop below 40% at the specified time	All types of US Direct Loan denied	Raise grades to required standard. A student may appeal if they have extenuating circumstances.
If you take more than 150% of the published length of time to finish your Degree or it becomes apparent that you will not be able to finish your Degree within 150% of the published length of time.	Ineligible for all types of US Direct Loans	You must complete your studies without US Direct Loans unless you successfully appeal.

SAP Warning

SAP is a measurement of (1) academic standing, (2) maximum time frame and (3) pace of completion. A student is *not* making Satisfactory Academic Progress if he/she is not meeting all three measurements each evaluation period.

Students who fail to meet academic standards following their most recent semester of study will be issued with a Financial Aid warning and will be permitted to receive financial aid for the next semester of study. However, after one semester of warning, students who fail to return to good academic standing will be ineligible for financial aid. A student who fails to meet SAP standards will be notified by email that they are ineligible for further disbursements of US student loans

SAP Appeals

Students may appeal ineligibility by providing information on extenuating circumstances and indicating how these issues have been resolved in order for them to return to successful academic progress. In this event, extenuating circumstances must be serious in nature, such as illness or a death in the family, and documentary evidence must be provided. Frivolous or spurious reasons will not be considered and will result in denial of the appeal. Students must submit an appeal within 7 days of their notification of ineligibility. The results of the appeal will be provided to the student within 14 days following its submission. The SAP Appeals Board is selected from a panel of senior administrative and academic staff of University College Cork. Decisions of the SAP Appeals Board are final. If a student is denied US Direct Loans after an appeal but in subsequent semesters meets SAP requirements, the student may again be eligible for US Direct Loans. The Financial Aid Administrator will verify SAP requirements have been met prior to drawing down any US Direct Loans.

SAP Probation

If an appeal is granted, students may be placed on financial aid probation for one payment period and asked to follow an academic plan that will lead to meeting minimum SAP requirements in the future. If students do not meet the terms of probation, eligibility for financial aid will cease and all remaining aid will be cancelled. Students should note that subsequent appeals of the same nature are not permitted. Once a student loses eligibility, the only way to regain eligibility for financial aid is to meet SAP requirements.

Appendix 2: US Federal Loans: Return to Title IV (R2T4) Policy

US federal aid regulations mandate a Return to Title IV Funds (R2T4) calculation when a student receiving Title IV financial aid (US Direct Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), Parent PLUS loans or Grad PLUS loans) withdraws from University College Cork during a payment period. If a student fails to attend University College Cork in the payment period, the student does not qualify for any loan amount and the full loan is cancelled and returned to the US Department of Education.

The R2T4 calculation may result in a reduction of the student's US federal loan(s) if the student attended 60 percent or less of the semester. The R2T4 calculation is based on the following:

- The number of days the student attended
- The number of days in the semester
- The institutional charges assessed
- The total amount of US Direct Loan aid awarded, accepted and/or disbursed.

This policy covers the following topics:

- University College Cork's procedure for withdrawing or taking leave of absence.
- University College Cork's fee refund policy.
- Requirements regarding the treatment of Title IV funds when a student withdraws or takes leave of absence

University College Cork: Withdrawal or Leave of Absence (LOA):

For the purpose of Title IV funding, **approved LOA** is only allowed if students can return at the point, they left off academically at a given payment period or period of enrollment. Otherwise, it is considered unscheduled leave and students have to be withdrawn, in this case Return of Title IV funds will be performed for these students.

- Students should follow the withdrawal or 'leave of absence' process as outlined below and also consult with Student Records and Examinations Office. Students wishing to take leave of absence of a year or more from a programme of study are advised that they must obtain advance approval from the relevant College
- Applications to the relevant College for a leave of absence must be made **within four working weeks of the formal start date of Semester 1**. Applications will not be accepted after this time.
- Medical students intending to take leave of absence of a year or more must make an

application to the Dean of the School of Medicine and to the Deputy President and Registrar not later than March of the preceding academic year. Permission will only be granted for specific reasons which will be considered in each case by the School's Executive/Heads of Department.

- Students funding their studies through US federal student loans are required to inform the Financial Aid Administrator of their withdrawal/leave of absence at the same time as notifying their department.
- More details regarding UCC policies on student leave of absence can be found on the [UCC Academic Calendar](#).

Important Note

A Leave of Absence (LOA) should be only a temporary interruption to a student's programme of study. For the purposes of US Federal Aid, a Leave of Absence is considered to be the equivalent of a withdrawal from the University if it exceeds 180 days (6 months) in any 12-month period. The borrower will be considered as withdrawn from the University for loan repayment purposes if they fail to return within the 180-day timeframe and at that point, the university is required to calculate the amount of financial aid the student earned and the amount of financial aid that must be returned.

University College Cork Policy: Refunds of Fees

The amount of Title IV funds due for return as a result of a withdrawal is calculate independently of the tuition fee liability charged by the University. The general University refund policy is available on the [Fees Refund Policy](#) webpage.

Withdrawal and the Return of Federal Aid Loan Funds

Who to notify:

If you withdraw or fail to attend your programme, you MUST inform the Financial Aid Administrator in University College Cork no later than five working days after withdrawal. Students who withdraw from their programme of study are required to inform the University in writing, so please contact the Federal Aid Administrator in the Student Records and Examinations Office if you wish to withdraw.

Failure to attend after enrolment is deemed to be a withdrawal.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to repay loan funds in accordance with the terms of the loans and conditions according to the promissory note.

If you withdraw from your course of study at any point during the current academic year, the US Department of Education will be notified, and you will be required to complete Exit Counselling via the StudentLoans.gov website.

Withdrawal before completion of 60% of programme of study:

US Department of Education regulations state that **a school must return loan funds if a student has not completed a minimum of 60% of the payment/enrollment period as soon as possible but no later than 45 days after determining the student has withdrawn.** If a student received more loan funding than was "earned," the excess funds must be returned by the school and/or the student. The amount of money to be returned is determined by a calculation that includes the number of school days completed less any unscheduled leave of five days or more divided by the total number of school days in the payment/enrollment period, based on the amount of institutional charges fees paid ("Return to Title IV" Calculation).

If you withdraw from University College Cork, you may be required to:

Repay the University any "unearned" US Direct Loan funds that the University returned on your behalf (as stipulated by US Department of Education regulations), and/or if the student did not receive all of the funds that were earned, the student may be eligible for a post withdrawal disbursement.

Return of loan funds does not cancel your liability to the University College Cork for any tuition-fee balance outstanding on your account.

Example:

Student A borrows \$10,000 which she puts towards her tuition fees. She withdraws from her course 45% of the way through the payment period. As a result:

- 45% of the loan is kept by the university as "earned"
- 55% of the loan must be returned to the USDE as "unearned"

Students who do not attend initial lectures are ineligible to receive any Title IV funds and all loan proceeds will be returned to the US Department of Education no later than 45 days from the date it

was determined that the student withdrew. The student will be liable for any fees or outstanding balances owed to University College Cork.

Federal Loan Funds are returned in the following order:

1. Federal Direct Unsubsidized loans
2. Federal Direct Subsidized loans
3. Federal Parent PLUS and Grad PLUS loans

Withdrawal after completion of 60% of program of study:

Once the student has completed more than 60% of the payment period, all the loans that the student was scheduled to receive for that period are considered to have been earned and are not required to be returned to the US Department of Education.

According to University policy, if a student completes more than 60% of their course, they are not entitled to a refund of tuition fees as the University College Cork has maintained their study place and allocated resources thereof for their academic progress

If the student received (or the University received on the student's behalf) less assistance than the amount earned, the student may be able to receive those additional funds as a post-withdrawal disbursement. The requirements for Title IV program funds when students withdraw are separate from University College Cork's refund policy. Therefore, the student may still owe funds to University College Cork to cover unpaid institutional charges. University College Cork may attempt to collect from the student any Title IV program funds that the University is required to return to the US Department of Education.

Unofficial withdrawals (No notification)

An unofficial withdrawal occurs when a student ceases to attend the University, but the University has not received notice of this from the student. College administrators are required to advise the Financial Aid Administrator of any unofficial withdrawals of federal loan recipients and the date the withdrawal occurred within 14 days of the date of withdrawal. The withdrawal date for students who unofficially withdraw will be the last date upon which the student's attendance was recorded.

If you withdraw from your course before the end of the academic year, you will still have to pay any unpaid tuition fees.

Post-withdrawal Disbursements

University College Cork will provide written notification to students within 30 days of determination of withdrawal, identifying type and amount of loan, and outlining options to accept or decline some or all funds. Obligations to repay any funds disbursed will be explained, students will be given a deadline to respond within at least 14 days. The school will receive confirmation from the student or parent borrower prior to disbursement; this will be documented. In the case where this confirmation is received after the deadline, the school may choose to accept the late response, but will not accept a response after 180 days after date of determination. If the R2T4 calculation results in a credit balance, the Credit Balance must be disbursed as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the calculation of R2T4. Any post-withdrawal disbursement will be made as soon as possible but no later than 14 days after the confirmation is received.

Appendix 3: Interest Rates

Interest Rates for Subsidized, Unsubsidized and PLUS Loans Effective 1 st July 2022		
Loan Type	First Disbursed from 1 st July 2022 through 30th June 2023	First Disbursed from 1st July 2021 through 30 th June 2022
Direct Subsidized Loans (Undergraduate Students)	Fixed at 4.99%	Fixed at 3.73%
Direct Unsubsidized Loans (Undergraduate Students)	Fixed at 4.99%	Fixed at 3.73%
Direct Unsubsidized Loans (Graduate or Professional Students)	Fixed at 6.54%	Fixed at 5.28%

Direct PLUS Loans (Parents of Undergraduates and Graduate or Professional Students)	Fixed at 7.54%	Fixed at 6.28%
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Note:

The interest rates for federal student loans are fixed for the life of the loan as determined by federal law.

Appendix 4: Direct Loan Annual Loan Limits 2022/2023

Dependent	Subsidized	Unsubsidized	Combined (Max)
First Year	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$5,500
Second Year	\$4,500	\$2,000	\$6,500
Third Year & Beyond	\$5,500	\$2,000	\$7,500
Independent Undergraduates & Dependent Students whose Parents are ineligible for PLUS loan	Subsidized	Unsubsidized	Combined (Max)
First Year	\$3,500	\$6,000	\$9,500
Second Year	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$10,500
Third Year & Beyond	\$5,500	\$7,000	\$12,500

Graduate & Professional Students	Subsidized	Unsubsidized
All Years	\$0.00	\$20,500

PLUS Loans

A parent of a dependent undergraduate student can receive a Direct PLUS Loan for the remainder of their child’s college cost of attendance, as determined by University College Cork, not covered by other financial aid such as Direct or private loans or scholarships.

A Graduate or Professional Student can receive a Direct PLUS loan for the remainder of their cost of attendance, as determined by University College Cork, not covered by other financial aid, such as federal Direct Loans or private loans or scholarships.

Appendix 5: Aggregate Loan Limits

	Subsidized	Unsubsidized	Combined (Subsidized & Unsubsidized)	Notes
Dependent Undergraduates	\$23,000	\$8,000	\$31,000	No more than \$23,000 of the combined amount may be in subsidized loans
Independent Undergraduates & Dependent Students whose Parents are ineligible for PLUS loan	\$23,000	\$34,500	\$57,500	No more than \$23,000 of the combined amount may be in subsidized loans
Graduate & Professional Students	\$65,500 (Up to 06/30/2012)	\$73,000	\$138,500	No more than \$65,500 of the combined amount may be in subsidized loans. The Graduate debt limit includes Subsidized and Unsubsidized

From 1st July 2012, graduate and professional students are no longer eligible to receive subsidized loans. Graduate and professional students now qualify for up to \$20,500 in unsubsidized loans each year.

Appendix 6: Required Documentation

Master Promissory Note (MPN)

Students must complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) in order to apply for Direct Loan (Subsidized or Unsubsidized). The Master Promissory Note (MPN) is the student's signed agreement to pay back the loan. In order to complete an MPN, students need to visit the StudentLoans.gov website and from the 'Manage My Direct Loan' section, select 'Sign Master Promissory Note'.

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Students should note that while a MPN is valid for 10 years within the US, a new MPN must be signed every year if the student decides to attend a foreign school.

Entrance Counselling

Students must complete 'Entrance Counselling' online. This online session will explain the rights and responsibilities of students in regard to their Federal Aid loans. Students should complete 'Entrance Counselling' on the [StudentLoans.gov](https://studentloans.gov) website and from the 'Manage My Direct Loan' section, select 'Entrance Counselling'. Students should note that there are different types of Entrance Counselling available when they click on the link. Students are advised to complete 'DLP' (Direct Loan PLUS) counselling as it covers both Direct Loans and Direct PLUS loans.

Direct PLUS/Private Loans

Students must request all PLUS loans on the [StudentLoans.gov](https://studentloans.gov) website.

In applying for a PLUS loan a credit check will be carried out on the individual requesting the loan. No PLUS loan can be certified until this credit check is completed. The student must select Complete PLUS Request Process to initiate the credit check.

If the student or parent has an adverse credit history, they may still be eligible to receive a Direct PLUS loan. They can obtain an endorser who does not have an adverse credit history. An endorser is someone who agrees to repay the Direct PLUS loan if the student/parent is unable to repay the loan. In the case of a parent borrowing on behalf of their dependent student, the endorser cannot be the student on whose behalf the parent is obtaining the Direct PLUS loan.

Please note in the case of dependent undergraduate students, the Parent PLUS loan is borrowed in the name of the parent.

Eligible students at University College Cork may also apply for private loans. Independent Undergraduate students are not eligible for either a Parent PLUS loan (because they are not dependent) or a Direct PLUS loan (because they are not graduate students). In this case, a credit based Private loan may be an option.

Private loans may be obtained from a bank/lender subject to the applicant's credit rating and in the case of undergraduate students may often require a co-signer/guarantor. Private loans are usually offered at commercial rates which may be less favourable than Federal Aid loan rates. Private loans also need to be certified by the educational institution. Students choose their private lender, and University College Cork does not recommend a particular lender. Some University College Cork students have worked with Sallie Mae who offer a Smart Option Student loan. Students may apply at Salliemae.com. Sallie Mae will then send a notification to the school that there are student loans pending certification.

Application Checklist

The following documentation is required and can be accessed online by the Financial Aid Administrator in University College Cork.

1. Student Aid Report (SAR).
2. Official Offer Letter/Acceptance to University College Cork.
3. Scholarship Letter/Funding Letter if applicable.
4. Copy of current passport.
5. Signed Master Promissory Note (MPN) for Subsidized/Unsubsidized loans via the StudentLoans.gov website.
6. Signed Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Results of Credit Check by selecting 'Complete PLUS Request Process' via the StudentLoans.gov website for Parent PLUS or Graduate PLUS loans.
7. Completed Loan Entrance Counselling via the StudentLoans.gov website.

Appendix 7: Glossary of Terms

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

SAR: Student Aid Report – This report is generated when you complete your FAFSA online.

FSA: Pin: Federal Student Aid Pin.

EFC: Expected Family Contribution - This amount is reported in the student's SAR, and it affects how much they are eligible to borrow in Direct Subsidized loans. The EFC does not affect the Direct Unsubsidized or Direct PLUS loans.

COA: Cost of Attendance - This is based on the student's anticipated costs and defines the limit on how much they can borrow.

MPN: Master Promissory Note – Student's signed agreement to pay back their loan.

SAP: Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Appendix 8: Forms

Once all required documentation is received the student will be emailed a link to the online:

- Loan Amount Declaration and
- Satisfactory Academic Progress Statement.

The student's supervisor will be required to complete an online Satisfactory Academic Progress Report confirming their eligibility to progress at end of each semester.

Appendix 9: Cost of Living

The following links will provide you with further information on tuition and accommodation expenses:

- Programme [Fees Schedule 2023-24](#)
- [UCC Campus accommodation Rates](#)
- Off-Campus, own studio/apartment - €850 - €1,300 per month (approx.)

Living Expenses

The below figures will vary based on your accommodation type but can be used as a useful guide.

Expense	Approximate cost per month
ELECTRICITY/GAS/BINS (Public Utilities)	€50
FOOD (including lunches)	€400
TRAVEL (Monthly)	€200
BOOKS AND MATERIALS (incl. photocopying & printing)	€150
CLOTHES/MEDICAL	€70
MOBILE PHONE	€30
SOCIAL LIFE/MISCELLANEOUS	€150

Approximate Cost of Living per month (without accommodation) - €1050

It is also important to keep in mind that when you first arrive you are also likely to have some one-off costs. **The estimates above do not include the cost of flights, registration with Immigration or insurance.** You should also budget for any initial costs you will likely incur (e.g., you might need to budget for short term accommodation upon arrival in Cork or make a deposit for accommodation which might be the equivalent of 4 weeks rent).