Student Financial Services

Awarding and Packaging Policy

Effective date	September 2025
Office responsible	Foreign Loans Unit, Student Financial Services
Approved by	Odette Collard-Woolmer, Head of Financial Operations
Data Policy and Procedure was last reviewed	November 2026 (K.Newman, Foreign Loans Officer/ Primary-DPA)
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What is Awarding?
Awarding refers to the process of determining what types and amounts of aid a student is eligible to receive.

What is Packaging?
Packaging refers to combining different types of funding options to fully meet a student's financial need without exceeding it. Students will receive an email with their Financial Aid Package which will show the Cost of Attendance (CoA) and the amounts of aid they may be eligible for.

At the University of Kent, the following types of loans may be included in your Financial Aid Package:

- Subsidized Direct Loans
- Unsubsidized Direct Loans
- Parent PLUS loans
- Graduate PLUS loans (legacy students only)
- Private loans (We currently work with Sallie Mae and Earnest. Sallie Mae and Earnest are not endorsed or recommended by The University of Kent. The University will work with any other private lender you decide, if they are willing to lend to students at a Foreign School).

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
The FAFSA is the application used to apply for US Federal Student Aid. You can submit your application at: studentaid.gov.

After completing your FAFSA application, the school will receive a FAFSA Submission Summary, previously called the Student Aid Report (SAR). This provides a summary of all the information you submitted on your FAFSA form. The University of Kents Foreign Loans Office will use this information to determine your Federal Aid eligibility, including for need-based funds.

The Foreign Loans Office will contact you in May with details regarding your Financial Aid Package.

The FAFSA submission summary will calculate your Student Aid Index (SAI).

Student Aid Index (SAI)
The SAI, previously called Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is a formula-based number ranging from -1500 to 999999, used to estimate a student's financial need for Federal Student Aid for a specific award year.

A negative SAI is converted to 0 when calculating need-based aid for Title IV Direct Loans.

Please note that Foreign institutions are not eligible to administer PELL grants or Work-Study funds.

To learn how federal student aid is calculated, visit: studentaid.gov - How Aid is Calculated.

The Foreign Loans Office will review each application individually and allocate funding based on eligibility.

Students receiving Direct Loans may request a review of their Federal Aid eligibility in certain special circumstances or unusual circumstances. The Foreign Loans Office may make adjustments that are appropriate to each students situation with appropriate documentation. If you require further information, please see our Professional Judgement Policy.

Other Financial Assistance (OFA)
The term OFA replaces Estimated Financial Assistance (EFA), It includes:

- Internal and external scholarships
- Bursaries
- Grants
- Other loans

This is used to determine your eligibility in both need and non-need based Financial Aid.

COA
The total Financial Aid a student receives, including both need-based and non-need-based aid, cannot exceed the student's overall cost of attendance.

Your Cost of Attendance is the estimated average and reasonable cost of completing an academic year at the University of Kent. The University of Kent bases your COA on the average costs for students with the same enrolment status rather than your actual expenses.
The Cost of Attendance includes:

- Tuition fees
- Accommodation
- Food
- Living costs and miscellaneous (which includes books and materials).
- Travel
- Visa expenses (First years only)
- UK Immigration Health Surcharge (First years only, for the duration of your course).
- Purchase of a laptop/computer (First years only)
- Origination fees

For further details, please visit our Cost of Attendance webpage.

Professional Judgement
Students receiving Direct Loans may request a review of their Federal Aid eligibility in certain special circumstances or unusual circumstances. The Foreign Loans Office may make adjustments that are appropriate to each students situation with appropriate documentation. If you require further information, please see our Professional Judgement Policy.

Eligibility review process
Before issuing your Financial Aid Package, we review your FAFSA Submission summary and Kent Vision portal to assess:

- Any issues with the FAFSA Submission Summary
- Citizenship or residency status
- Dependency status
- Student Aid Index
- Loan history
- Remaining eligibility
- Whether you are in default
- Whether you have a high school diploma or equivalent
- If you have an application to study at Kent
- Enrolment (or pending enrolment) in an eligible programme
- Academic Grade Level
- Whether you are enrolled at least half-time
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (for returning students)

For more information regarding eligibility, please see our Direct Loans webpage.

If you're unsure about your programme / grade level or eligibility or have any questions relating to Federal Aid or Private loans, email us at foreignloans.ac.uk.

Financial Aid Packaging steps and Loan amount

1. Review your eligibility
2. Determine your Cost of Attendance
3. Professional Judgement amendments can be made on a case-by-case basis.
4. Obtain the SAI from the FAFSA Submission Summary
5. Identify any Other Financial Assistance (OFA)
6. Assess eligibility for loan types:
    a. Subsidized, Unsubsidized and Parent PLUS / Private loans for undergraduate students
    b. Unsubsidized, Grad PLUS / Private loans for postgraduate students.
7. Review prior Federal Loans to ensure your limits haven't been exceeded.
8. Identify maximum Subsidized/Unsubsidized loan values based on aggregate limits and dependency status.
    - Undergraduate students who are independent (and dependant students whose parents are unable to obtain a PLUS loan) may have an increased unsubsidized loan.
    - Determine if a student is eligible for a Subsidized loan.

        i. CoA – SAI – OFA = need. If a students need is more than their CoA, student is eligible. If a students need is less than their CoA, student is not eligible.
    - Determine the value of Subsidized loan a student is eligible to borrow.
    - Determine The value of Unsubsidized.
        i. Maximum combined yearly aggregate for programme & year of study minus eligible Subsidized amount = Maximum Unsubsidized Amount. Please see the helpful link.
    - Determine PLUS / Private amount
        i. CoA – OFA – Subsidized and or Unsubsidized.
9. Email you a Financial Aid Package outlining your eligibility.
10. You and your parent (if you are an undergraduate), should complete the required supporting documents as stated in the Financial Aid Package.

Supporting documentation
We will require proof of scholarships, bursaries or other education-related loans or awards. We will download your supporting documentation and will contact you if anything Is missing. Please note that your Financial Aid process will be delayed until we receive all necessary documentation.

We will check National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) to confirm your eligibility and that you are not in default. Please note we cannot award new federal aid until we receive proof from an authorised agency confirming that your default status has been resolved, or until NSLDS reflects the updated status.

Steps you take to secure your loan
- Entrance counseling is required by Federal regulations for all students prior to receiving their loan disbursement. Entrance counselling ensures you understand the terms and conditions of your loan and your rights and responsibilities.
- Master Promissory Note (MPN) is a legal document in which a borrower promises to repay a loan and comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement. This will need to be completed once for Subsidized/Unsubsidized and another for Parent PLUS/ Grad PLUS loans.
- Credit check that determines whether the Parent/ Graduate borrower has any adverse credit history. A parent/ graduate who has adverse credit may still borrow a PLUS loan by securing an endorser who does not have adverse credit history.
- Confirm the amounts and loan types you wish to borrow.

Private Loans
Private loans can be used to cover all or part of your Cost of Attendance (CoA). If you choose to fund your studies using a private loan instead of US Federal Loans, your CoA budget will be amended to exclude/ reduce the Federal Loan origination fees depending on whether you are using only private loans or using a combination of Private loans and Direct Loans.

Notifications
Confirmation of Loan notifications are sent out to students year-round, depending on when students apply for Federal Aid. The FAO starts sending these out from June onwards and will include the award amount, loan types and anticipated disbursement dates.

Students will receive further notifications before each disbursement with details about their loan and how to cancel full/part of their loan.

Financial Aid Offers are valid for that award year only. Students must be registered and meet all other eligibility criteria to receive their Financial Aid disbursement.

Recalculation
Recalculation of award packages may occur if:

- Your SAI changes
- Change of enrolment status
- New OFA is offered (e.g. Scholarship confirmed after Aid is packaged)
- The University of Kent reserves the right to issue adjusted award letters when errors occur.

In this case, you will be notified as soon as possible. Depending on how much you have borrowed, your loans may be lowered, or the award letter is for information only.

Overawards
Overawards exist if a student's aid package exceeds their need. If this happens, the Foreign Loans Office may be required to adjust the federal student aid to eliminate the overaward.

Refusals
The Foreign Loans Office at the University of Kent can refuse to certify a student's loan application or certify the loan for an amount less than the student would otherwise be eligible. The Foreign Loans Office will document the reason for its action and explain the reason to the student in writing. The decision of The Foreign Loans Office is final and cannot be appealed to ED.