Financial Need

Financial Aid eligibility is largely based on the concept of financial need. Financial need is calculated as Cost of Attendance (tuition, fees, books, and living expenses) minus the Expected Family Contribution or EFC (student/spouse contribution and parents' contribution for dependent students). A student's EFC is assigned directly from the information provided on the FAFSA application.

Cost of Attendance is the estimated annual cost to attend CU Denver, including tuition and fees, room, board, books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses. The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office determines COA based upon average tuition and fees charged and other items established by the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Current COA figures are available on our website at https://www.ucdenver.edu/tuition-cost/cost-of-attendance (https://www.ucdenver.edu/tuition-cost/cost-of-attendance/).

The EFC from the student/spouse and from the parents (if applicable) are calculated by a standardized formula that is determined by data provided on the FAFSA and is required by federal law. The formula considers income, savings and other assets, family size, number of children in post-secondary school and other factors and then assigns a student an EFC.

Financial Aid is intended to supplement and not replace financial contributions from the student and parents. If the EFC is equal to or greater than the COA, a student will not qualify for need-based financial aid, but can still receive non-need based financial aid such as Direct Unsubsidized Loans or Direct Parent PLUS Loans. Students may appeal for special consideration if they are experiencing unusual or extenuating circumstances that are negatively impacting their finances such as a job loss.

Determining Dependency Status

The federal government provides specific guidelines that define dependency status for federal financial aid. Dependency status is determined by a series of questions on the FAFSA. Students classified as dependent are required to provide student and parent household and financial information when applying for financial aid. If a student is classified as independent, the student's parental information is not considered when the calculation of the Expected Family Contribution is made. Students may review dependency questions by visiting https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency (https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency/).

A dependency status may be appealed to the financial aid office if unusual circumstances exist. Contact the office for appeal guidelines.

Enrollment Status

Most undergraduate financial aid programs require at least half-time enrollment (6 credit hours per semester) to be eligible for awards. Higher or lower minimums may be required for specific individual awards (review your award notification for the exact number of credits required for aid eligibility).

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

To continue to be eligible for financial aid, students must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress. If a student is not meeting SAP standards, they may be ineligible for financial aid and scholarships. For more information, students should review the Satisfactory Academic Policy by visiting https://www.ucdenver.edu/student-finances/financial-aid/eligible/sap (https://www.ucdenver.edu/student-finances/financial-aid/eligible/sap/).

A student may appeal financial aid suspension by submitting a SAP Appeal. The SAP appeal should document the extenuating circumstances that led to the student's suspension. All appeals should include third party supporting documentation.

Course Withdrawals and Repayments

Financial aid is disbursed based on the assumption a student will attend courses for the entire semester and earn passing grades. A student who withdraws or fails all courses and received financial aid must have a Return of Title IV (R2T4) calculation performed to determine the percentage of aid that was earned based on the amount of time the student attended their courses. Students are entitled to aid that was earned. The University will return any unearned aid to the appropriate Federal Title IV program, which may create a balance owed to the University.

The University will also determine the earned and unearned portions of any state or institutional aid. This calculation is separate from the R2T4 aid calculation.

If you withdraw on or before the University's census date, you will be required to return all state and/or institutional aid received for the term. The Bursar's Office will bill your account for the amount owed.

If you withdraw after the census date, you will be required to repay a portion of any state and institutional received for the term based on your withdrawal date.

CU Denver is required to verify a student began attendance in any course a student withdraws from or fails. If the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office receives notification that a student never began attendance.