FINANCIAL AID NOTES

1. Please write your name, UNI, school, and Class Year on any papers you submit to our office, and if leaving voice mail, please say your name, UNI, and phone # clearly and slowly.

2. It’s very important to have your permanent and local addresses as well as your cell phone # on “Student Services On Line” (SSOL) via www.columbia.edu. Please complete/update as needed.

3. Acceptance Forms - hand in, even if you are requesting a review or appealing your award. If you are requesting Federal Direct Unsubsidized (Stafford) and/or Graduate PLUS loans we need them in order to know if you wish to borrow an amount that is different from the amount on your award letter. We review appeals on a rolling basis. Do not accept your awards via Net Partner.

4. Keep copies of everything for your own records. Organize by lender, and then by loan type.

5. Changes in financial circumstances need to be reported:
   - outside awards - scholarships or loans
   - marriage
   - children
   - divorce
   - death/inheritance
   - unemployment
   - retirement
   - income/jobs
   - # of siblings in college or graduate school
   - spouse changes enrollment status in college or graduate school
   - if you live “at home” and commute or if you are an “RA” in a University dorm

6. Stipend checks – If you do not sign up for direct deposit, in order to pick up a check in person, you must be registered and present a picture ID card.

7. In order for us to originate (certify) Federal Direct Unsubsidized (Stafford) and GradPLUS loans, there are a number of steps you must complete first:
   - accept your loans via our Financial Aid Acceptance Form;
   - complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) – one for Unsubsidized (Stafford) and one for GradPLUS, if you are borrowing the latter;
   - complete Entrance Counseling for Unsubsidized Stafford and GradPLUS – one covers both loan types;
   - if you are borrowing the GradPLUS you must also complete the Credit Authorization Form – the link is available in our Award Letter Checklist;
   - you must have a valid street address in the US on SSOL (not a PO Box).
8. **Deferment Forms for Prior Educational Loans** – Once you are registered, you can go to “Student Services OnLine” (SSOL) via [www.columbia.edu](http://www.columbia.edu). Go to “Certification Request”, to request a "Certificate of Enrollment" from the Registrar's Office on this campus. This form will be available the next day for pick-up from the Registrar's area in 141 BB, or you can request that they mail it to you. Attach this form to your lenders’ deferment forms. In the event your lender/holder/billing servicer/guaranty agency notifies you that the "Certificate" is not appropriate documentation, bring the letter to the Registrar so that appropriate documentation may be issued.

If you are not sure who has your Staffords, Perkins, GradPLUS, or Consolidation Loans, you can go to NSLDS at [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov) and print out loan details. Other educational loans not tracked on this database may be found on your credit reports. Once a year you are entitled to free credit reports from each of the 3 major credit bureaus, Experian, Equifax, and Trans Union. Go to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) and follow the instructions.

9. For veterans, please keep in mind that you should explore Veterans’ education benefits. Contact Eric Halperin at [eh2549@columbia.edu](mailto:eh2549@columbia.edu) and visit [http://sfs.columbia.edu/veterans](http://sfs.columbia.edu/veterans) for more information. Also, let us know if you are a veteran and if you are eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program by emailing us at [cumc-sfp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:cumc-sfp@cumc.columbia.edu).

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR BILL

1. **The Bill is NOT** managed by our office, Student Financial Planning. It is managed by Registration and Student Financial Services (aka the Registrar and Bursar)

   A. Columbia sends E-Bills. The first E-Bill will be sent to your official Columbia email address, your “UNI”, in August. You can refer to this Student Financial Services website for more details. It should be updated for 2015-16 around mid-July at [http://sfs.columbia.edu/](http://sfs.columbia.edu/).

   B. **Timing issue** - Your bill will reflect all aid awarded or recommended by August 5th. It will also show Federal Stafford loans as "anticipated credits". If your Stafford or Graduate PLUS money is not be here by the bill due date, you can still estimate the amount of the Fall disbursement when computing the amount you owe out-of-pocket. The Fall bill is due in September.

   C. If you are paying your bill by check or money order, please visit [http://sfs.columbia.edu/billing/ways-to-pay](http://sfs.columbia.edu/billing/ways-to-pay) for instructions.

   D. We have a monthly payment plan available with an enrollment fee, but no late payment charges. You can also pay online by debiting a U.S. bank account. Information is available at [http://sfs.columbia.edu/billing/ways-to-pay](http://sfs.columbia.edu/billing/ways-to-pay).

   E. You can view your Student Account Statement online via SSOL. To see the actual activity click on ‘Account Details by Term.’

2. You can reach Student Financial Services in 141 BB at 342-4790.
3. 3rd party payments (sometimes called “sponsored payments”) – visit the RSFS website to initiate third party payments and for more information or email cumc-sponsoredbilling@columbia.edu. In addition, please provide us with a copy of your contract/agreement from the agency to be billed for our records.

4. CU Tuition Exemption (TE) – print the Tuition Exemption form from the Benefits website or go to Human Resources, 101 BB if you need assistance getting the TE form. Once your relative, the Columbia employee, has signed the form, drop it off at 141 BB or email at cumc-tuitionexemptionstudents@columbia.edu. The form is usually due the first week of September.

5. If you live in Bard Hall or the Georgian, your dorm charges will be listed on your bill.

6. Federal Direct Unsubsidized (Stafford), Graduate PLUS, and other “outside loans” - Checks & Refunds

   A. All Direct Stafford, Graduate PLUS, and most private alternative loans will be applied electronically to your account and you will not have to endorse a check. How will you know if your funds have hit your account electronically? You can check on SSOL under ‘account detail by term’ or call Student Financial Services at 342-4790 between 9am and 4:30pm.

   If a check arrives for a private educational loan, the Cashier’s office will send you an email to advise you to go to their office, 127 BB, to endorse or pick up the check.

   B. It’s important to endorse "outside" loan checks promptly. Checks are usually good only for 45 days and then become stale-dated. Banks will cancel loans after 45 days and you will need to reapply. CU-issued checks good for 120 days. CU reissues its own checks within 30 working days.

   C. Federal Stafford and Graduate PLUS loans are split in ½ - the second disbursement (applicable only for the spring term) will hit your school account during the 1st or 2nd week of January. Alternative loan check disbursement dates are determined when we certify the loan. The spring bill will be due in January.

   D. There is an automated refund process when any outside loans or other financial aid has overpaid your account; a refund for the balance should occur without your needing to request it. A representative from Student Financial Services will explain the process in more detail.

   If you sign up for direct deposit via SSOL, refunds (as well as stipend checks, if applicable) will be deposited electronically to the account you designate. It takes approximately 5 days after the refund process is started. If you haven’t signed up for direct deposit, refund checks are mailed to your local address or to the one you specify when you apply for the refund. Paper refund checks go out within 7 - 10 working days after the refund process is started. Direct deposit is faster.