
FINANCIAL AID CHECKLIST



1. APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

- Create an FSA ID from the United States Department of Education at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://fafsa.ed.gov> and be sure to include our school code: 003449.
- After you submit the FAFSA, review your Student Aid Report (SAR) for precision.
- Check your personal email account for an email from FAFSA verifying your FAFSA has been submitted.
- Two weeks after submitting the FAFSA, check your USCA email account for an email from the university stating that your FAFSA has been received. You will also be notified whether or not you have outstanding requirements. Your award status and requirements can also be viewed by logging into your Self Service Carolina account.

2. VERIFICATION

- If you are selected for verification, your requirements will be listed in Self Service Carolina. You will be required to turn in certain documents, like a tax return transcript and a verification form. If you are not selected for verification and do not have any requirements listed in Self Service Carolina, you do not have to submit tax documents or verification forms.
- If you are required to submit a tax return transcript, you have three options:
 - 1.) Request the tax return transcript at www.irs.gov:
 - a. On the homepage, click "Get Your Tax Record"
 - b. Click "Get Transcript Online" (recommended) or "Get Transcript by Mail"
 - c. Create an account or sign in
 - d. Follow the instructions to order a Tax Return Transcript
 - 2.) You may also request the tax return transcript by telephone:
 - a. Available from the IRS by calling 1-800-908-9946
 - b. Follow the prompts to request an IRS Tax Return Transcript for 2016
 - c. If successfully validated, tax filers can expect to receive a paper Tax Return Transcript at the address on file with the IRS within 5 to 10 days from the time the IRS receives the request
 - 3.) Complete the IRS data retrieval in the FAFSA:
 - a. Log into your account at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>
 - b. Select "Make FAFSA Corrections"
 - c. Click "Next"
 - d. Click the "Financial Information" tab at the top of the application page
 - e. From there you should read carefully until you see the IRS Data Retrieval option

3. ACCEPTING YOUR AID

- Once USC Aiken has received your FAFSA and any verification requirements have been satisfied, the Financial Aid Counselors will put together an aid package for you. To view your award package, you must:
 1. Log into your Self Service Carolina account
 2. Select the “Financial Aid” tab
 3. Select “Award,” then “Award for Aid Year”
 4. From the Select Campus dropdown, select USC Aiken and click Continue
 5. From the Select Aid Year dropdown, select USC Aiken 2018-2019 and click Continue
 6. Select the “Award Overview” tab to view your awards

- To accept your award (loans, grants, or scholarships) click the “Accept Award Offer” tab. You have the option of accepting a partial amount, accepting the full amount, or declining.

- If you accept a **Federal Direct Loan**, after accepting your award you **MUST** complete your Master Promissory Note and your Entrance Counseling at <https://studentloans.gov>. Your completed Master Promissory Note and Entrance Counseling will connect to your loans.

- If you are a recipient of a **SC State Scholarship** (HOPE, LIFE, Palmetto Fellows), you will have to sign your State Scholarship Certification and Accept the Award. Your SC Residency must also be completed before a SC Scholarship can be awarded.
 - To sign your State Scholarship Certification:**
 1. Log into Self Service Carolina
 2. Under the “Financial Aid” tab, click “Award” and then “Award for Aid Year”
 3. Select USC Aiken as the Campus and USC Aiken 2018-2019 for the Aid Year
 4. Select the “Terms and Conditions” Tab and Agree or Disagree to the conditions
 5. Select the “Accept Award Offer” tab
 6. Accept the award
 - To complete your SC Residency:**
 1. Log into Self Service Carolina
 2. Select the “Student” tab
 3. Select “South Carolina Residency Certification”
 4. Complete the residency certification for the correct term

- After you have completed all of this, your financial aid will be ready to disburse onto your account on the financial aid disbursement date.

4. EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- You will want to apply for as many scholarships as possible. Some great resources for students include www.fastweb.com and <https://www.usca.edu/financialaid/types-of-aid/scholarships/outside-scholarships/>. You can apply for scholarships throughout the academic year. Many of the scholarships have deadlines that range through the entire year.

- Check out the USC Aiken Financial Aid Facebook and Twitter for external scholarship information posted by our scholarship coordinator.