Buffalo State College
Federal Financial Aid for
Graduate & Post-Baccalaureate Students

Eligibility for federal financial aid is based on many factors including matriculation status, enrollment status, financial need, satisfactory academic progress and program pursuit. <u>Students must maintain a minimum of 6 credit hours in required graduate courses in order to be eligible for federal loans each semester</u> (exception: teacher certification students may enroll in a combination of graduate and undergraduate courses to reach six credits). Listed below are the classifications and the types of federal aid available.

Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certification: Students with bachelor's degrees who are matriculated into a teacher certification program may be eligible to borrow Federal Direct Stafford Loan funds even though they are not actually pursuing a degree. Maximum loan limits are $12,500 for the academic year for an independent student and $5,500 for the academic year for a dependent student. A student may be eligible for TAP if it was not exhausted as an undergraduate student and they are registered full-time (12 or more hours) in undergraduate coursework.

Graduate Degrees: Students who are matriculated into a master's degree program and are taking graduate level courses may be eligible to borrow a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan. The maximum loan limit for full time graduate students is $20,500 for the academic year. Students that need more than $20,500 may also apply for a Federal Graduate PLUS Loan at www.studentloans.gov.

Graduate Certificates: Students who are matriculated into a graduate advanced certificate program in Art Conservation, Adult Education, Creativity and Change Leadership, Educational Leadership, Human Resource Development, Museum Studies, Public Management, or TESOL may be eligible to borrow a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan at the same limits as students pursuing graduate degrees above. Students enrolled in other certificate programs are not currently eligible for federal or state aid.

Pre-Major (Undeclared): Students given pre-major status (maximum 6 required graduate credit hours) may receive up to $12,500 as an independent student and $5,500 as a dependent student in a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan. If a student is taking coursework necessary for enrollment in an eligible graduate program (**e.g. preparatory coursework**), he/she may receive a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan (not to exceed 12 consecutive months). Preparatory coursework does **not** include courses taken solely to raise one's grade point average and/or to meet graduate admission standards and cannot include required courses for the graduate degree program. For those students not eligible for a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan please see the Financial Aid Office for information on alternative/private loans.

Visiting and Non-Matriculated Students: Visiting students and non-matriculated students are not eligible for Federal Direct Stafford Loans. Contact the Financial Aid Office for information on alternative/private loans.

To apply for a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, a student must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form after October 1st of each year to receive aid for the following fall and spring semesters. Complete the FAFSA annually at www.fafsa.gov. Once the Financial Aid Office receives the FAFSA information from the federal processor, it will be reviewed. A request for additional documentation will be sent if necessary; otherwise an award letter will be sent to the student. Students interested in summer aid must complete a separate application; available in the Financial Aid Office starting in early April.

Information about graduate assistantships, graduate EOP tuition waivers and Graduate Diversity Fellowships is available in the Graduate Office, GC204. Assistance in locating outside scholarships is available in the Financial Aid Office, MH 230. Loan limits may be reduced due to any scholarships, fellowships or grants awarded to the student.