



FINANCIAL AID ASSISTANCE POLICY

TUITION & FEES

All programs offered at First Institute are considered full time. Tuition and fees are subject to change. The schedule of charges is for a period of enrollment and the estimated total charges for the entire educational program are listed in the catalog:

- Dental Assisting program and Massage Therapy program are not offered in Libertyville or Aurora.

PERSONNEL AND/OR DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED

Director of Financial Aid; Senior Management

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Financial Aid Office is available to assist students in meeting their educational goals by providing information on appropriate financial resources. First Institute is aware of concerns students may have regarding financing their education and wants to assist by providing the best service possible. Our goal is to meet individual needs in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner. Students may receive aid in the form of scholarships, grants, loans or a combination thereof. Information regarding Financial Aid programs can be found by visiting <https://studentaid.gov/>. It is important for students to understand the Financial Aid programs they are applying for and the requirements of those programs.

Financial Aid is awarded and based on “need” with the exception of an institutional scholarship at First Institute. Need is defined as:

- Cost of Attendance - Student Aid Index (SAI) - Grants or other Financial Aid = Student Unmet Financial Need

Students who wish to apply for Financial Aid must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each award year (July 1 to June 30). If the student is enrolled during the cross-over period (from one award year to the next) a new FAFSA must be completed for Pell Grants only. If the Student Aid Index (SAI) changes, the Financial Aid Office will review any Title IV recalculations needed with the student and an addendum to the enrollment agreement will be signed. Students may also be chosen for verification (see Verification of Title IV Funding).

Financial Aid funds will be released according to Federal guidelines and will be disbursed in two payments; the first half within 30 days of the first class date and the second half after the mid-point of the program.



Students receiving Financial Aid are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as outlined in the catalog (See Satisfactory Academic Progress). All aid will be credited to the students account as long as the student is eligible, is not on a leave of absence and all verification documents are complete.

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

First Institute offers Title IV Financial Aid to applicants who qualify. First Institute is an approved provider with the Veterans Administration. Some students may qualify for grants from Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs within their counties. First Institute also offers financing through a loan program for students who require additional funding to meet their individual tuition requirements.

First Institute is approved to participate in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Title IV Financial Aid program and offers the following Financial Aid programs to those who qualify:

Federal Pell Grant

Grant amounts vary based on the financial need of each applicant. Grants are available through the federal government to all students who are U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens and if they do not have a prior Bachelor's Degree. Grant aid assistance does not have to be repaid unless you withdraw from school and owe a refund.

Applications for grants can be submitted by completing the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). You and your Contributors must provide consent to share their tax information in the application so that the IRS can share this information with Federal Student Aid (FSA). All parties whose Federal Tax Information (FTI) is included on a student's FAFSA form must consent annually. The data is considered "verified" for FAFSA purposes, however a student can still be chosen for verification.

Federal Direct Student Loan Program

Subsidized/Unsubsidized Student Loans

The Direct Loan program is available for students who need to cover costs of their education. Interest is charged and loans must be repaid. Interest rates vary from year to year and students have up to ten years to pay back a direct loan. Students who want to apply for a Direct Loan at First Institute must first complete the FAFSA online or with a member of Financial Aid.

An origination fee will be deducted from student loans by the Department of Education (ED). Repayment of the loans begins six months after completing the program or ceasing attendance. There is a minimum required payment of \$50 per month.



The maximum loan amount per academic year for the Subsidized Student Loan is \$3,080 to \$3,500. Students must demonstrate financial need for Subsidized Student Loans. Subsidized loan interest is paid by the Federal government until the last date of attendance.

The maximum loan amount per academic year for Unsubsidized Student Loans are: dependent students is \$1,760 to \$2,000; independent students is \$5,280 to \$6,000. Students do not need to show financial need for Unsubsidized Student Loans. The student is responsible for the interest accrued based on the date of disbursement.

Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)

Once a FAFSA has been completed by both the student and parent(s), a credit check must be completed on the parent to determine eligibility for a Direct Plus Loan. An origination fee will be deducted from the Direct Plus loans by the Department of Education (ED). Repayment begins 60 days after the loan is fully disbursed. There is a minimum required payment of \$50 per month.

Note: It must be made extremely clear to all who do qualify for Title IV Loans that these are indeed loans from the U.S. government and must be repaid per the terms of the loan.

If a student should withdraw at any time during their program the refund policies set forth shall apply. In no way does withdrawal of any kind release the student from their obligation to pay the school for all scheduled attendance or from repayment of borrowed monies.

Federal Loan Interest Rates

The “Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act of 2013 amends the Direct Loan interest rate section of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The new rates will be the sum of a uniform “Index Rate” plus an “add on” that varies depending on the type of loan (Subsidized/ Unsubsidized/PLUS) and the borrower’s grade level. Interest rates for Subsidized/Unsubsidized loans will be the same for undergraduates, with a different rate for graduate/professional students and for PLUS Loans taken out by parent/graduate/professional student borrowers. The index rate is determined each year as the “high yield of the 10 year treasury note” plus a statutorily defined “add-on”. The interest rate, once established, will apply for the life of the loan (fixed rate). Any loans originated on or after July 1 through June 30 will be locked into the established rate. There will be a new interest rate published each year for loans originated from July 1 to June 30.

Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits – Massage Therapy Program

The Massage Therapy Program is approved to train veterans and qualified dependents that are eligible for Veteran’s Administration Educational benefits. Those depending solely on VA benefits should have all paperwork completed with First Institute’s Financial Aid Office at least two weeks before the first day of class. If you believe you are eligible, contact the VA at 888-442-4551 or www.gibill.va.gov to confirm your eligibility and begin the process of activating your benefits. More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.va.gov/education/>.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA brings together, in strategic coordination, the core programs of Federal investment in skill development.

Eligible students prepare for these careers through WIOA eligible training programs, approved by local workforce boards. As of the date of this publication, all programs offered here at First Institute are eligible training programs for WIOA. Information on WIOA training programs in Illinois is available at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/>.

Scholarships

First Institute offers a scholarship opportunity for students who qualify. Unlike student loans, scholarships do not have to be repaid. See Scholarship section in the catalog for information on eligibility and submission requirements for First Institute Performance Scholarship.

VERIFICATION OF TITLE IV FUNDING

Each year the U.S. Department of Education (ED) selects Financial Aid recipients whose documentation will be verified. First Institute verifies only the students selected by the department for verification. First Institute notifies the student that they have been selected for verification and they must fill out the verification worksheet and provide any required documentation

When completing the FAFSA you will be prompted to enter your FSA ID. You and your Contributors will also be prompted to provide consent to share their tax information in the application so that the IRS can share this information with Federal Student Aid (FSA). All parties whose Federal Tax Information (FTI) is included on a student's FAFSA form must consent annually. If a student, spouse, or parent (Contributor) does not provide consent on the FAFSA, the Student Aid Index (SAI) will not be calculated, and the student will not be eligible for financial aid.

Verification Deadline

Once a student is selected for verification, the Financial Aid Office will notify the student in-person, via email or phone call. It is communicated to the student that they were chosen for verification and are required to submit all documentation within 30 days of the date the notification was sent. If the verification documents are not received within the required time frame, the student's program may be interrupted and the school cannot disburse any funds until such documents are received.



Eligibility Changes Resulting from Verification

If the verification process results in a change of a student's Financial Aid eligibility, First Institute will repackage the student for Financial Aid based on their new eligibility status and will notify the student with an Amendment to the Enrollment Agreement. If a change to the FAFSA needs to be completed by the student they will be asked by the Financial Aid Office to complete the necessary changes. Any changes to eligibility may result in receiving less Financial Aid than was originally anticipated.

TUITION PAYMENT OPTIONS

Students utilizing Financial Aid who have a balance due after the Title IV/Federal funding has been applied, must pay any remaining balance in full on or by the first day of class or make arrangements for a payment plan through TFC Credit Corporation.

Students opting to pay for their selected program with an "All Cash" payment plan (not utilizing Title IV/Federal funding) will be required to make a 20% deposit prior to the start of their program date. The remainder of payments must be made monthly and the balance must be paid prior to the program completion date, or continue the arranged payment plan through TFC Credit Corporation.

If a student's financial obligation is not met, the student will be notified to meet with the Direct of Financial Aid and/or the Chief Operating Officer to discuss their payment status. If the student does not deliver upon the terms discussed with the Direct of Financial Aid and/or the Chief Operating Officer, they may be dismissed from the program.

If a student has an unpaid balance at the time of graduation, the Certificate of Completion (Diploma) will be withheld until tuition is paid in full. If the account is not current based on previously arranged payment plans, any balance that is more than 60 days past due will be handed over to a third-party agency for further action.

ENTRANCE COUNSELING

If you have not previously received a Direct Loan or Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL), the federal government requires you to complete entrance counseling to ensure that you understand the responsibilities and obligations you are assuming.

During entrance counseling, you will learn about the following:

- What a [Direct Loan](#) is and how the loan process works
- Managing your education expenses
- Other financial resources to consider to help pay for your education
- Your rights and responsibilities as a borrower

You must complete entrance counseling at <https://studentaid.gov/entrance-counseling/> before you



can receive the proceeds of your first Direct Loan for both Subsidized Loans and Unsubsidized Loans.

CREDIT BALANCE

First Institute has a voluntary Credit Balance Authorization Form that the student has the option to sign at the time of enrollment to allow the school to manage their Title IV credit balance. If the student has elected to sign the authorization form, the credit balance will remain on their account and be applied toward future tuition and fees. A refund will be issued for any credit balance remaining on the account within 14 days of the graduation date.

If the student chooses not to sign the voluntary Credit Balance Authorization Form, the Financial Aid Office will monitor the students' account to identify when a credit balance has been created. A check will be issued to the student within 14 days of the date the credit balance appears on the students account.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Rights

Student Rights for applying for and receiving Financial Aid have a right to:

1. Information on all financial assistance available.
2. Disclosure of deadlines for applications of each Financial Aid program and for any supporting documentation.
3. Specific information regarding fees, tuition and the refund policy for those who withdraw from a program.
4. Knowledge of how Financial Aid is determined.
5. An explanation of various programs awarded in the students' Financial Aid package.
6. An explanation of the portion of Financial Aid received that must be repaid and what portion is grant aid that does not need to be repaid. If the aid is a loan, the student has the right to know what the interest rate is, any fees due as a result of a loan, the total amount to be repaid, when the repayment is to begin and the conditions of deferment and cancellation.
7. Knowledge of how First Institute determines whether students are making "Satisfactory Academic Progress" and the consequences of not meeting this requirement.
8. A student has the right to challenge or appeal the students' Financial Aid award or any other decision of the Financial Aid Office pertaining to the student, when it does not fall under the jurisdiction of federal or state regulations. The right includes answers to questions, explanations of policies and decisions and request for reconsideration.



Student Responsibilities

Student Responsibilities for applying for and receiving Financial Aid are responsible for:

1. Reviewing and considering all information about First Institute's academic programs before enrolling.
2. Completing all the application forms accurately and completely and submitting them to the correct department on time. If this is not done, Financial Aid could be delayed. Since errors can cause misunderstanding and misrepresentation of information provided, errors must be corrected before any Financial Aid can be received. Intentional misreporting of information on application forms for federal Financial Aid is a violation of the law and is considered a criminal offense subject to penalties under the U.S. Criminal Code, and subjects the students' application to denial. Additionally, regulations require that all cases of suspected fraud emanating from misrepresentation be reported to the Office of the Inspector General.
3. Promptly returning all additional documentation, verification, corrections and/or new information requested by either the Financial Aid Office or the agency or agencies to which an application was submitted.
4. Reading and understanding all forms that the student is asked to sign.
5. Notifying the lender (if the student has a loan) of changes in the name, address or school enrollment status.
6. Knowing and complying with the deadlines for application or reapplication for aid.
7. Knowing and complying with the First Institute Cancellation, Withdraw & Refund Policy.
8. If it is determined that the student was ineligible to receive the funds, the student will need to repay Financial Aid funds received.

TITLE IV CODE OF CONDUCT

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 requires educational institutions participating in a Title IV Loan Program to adhere to a Code of Conduct which prohibits conflicts of interest between First Institute officers, employees, and agents with any lender, lender servicer, and/or guarantor. Sections 487 (a) (25) and 487 (e) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, require the development, administration, and enforcement of a code of conduct to govern federal student aid programs. Staff members of the First Institute Financial Aid Office are bound to act in compliance with the First Institute Code of Conduct, the Illinois State Code of Conduct, and the Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct from NASFAA.

Officers, employees, contract employees, trustees, professional organizations, and other organizations directly or indirectly associated with or authorized by First Institute, agree to the provisions of the First Institute Code of Conduct and will refrain from the following:

1. Revenue Sharing

No officer, employee, or agent of First Institute shall enter into any revenue-sharing or profit-sharing arrangement with any lender.



2. Accepting Gifts, Goods, and/or Services

No officer, employee, family member or agent shall solicit or accept impermissible gifts, goods, and/or services from a private/alternative lender, lender servicer, and/or guarantor.

Gifts, goods, and/or services include:

Gratuities, meals, travel, lodging, entertainment (expenses for shows, sporting events, or alcoholic beverages), favors, loans, discounts, hospitality (such as private parties of select training or conference attendees), and in-kind services, such as printing customized consumer information for borrowers with the First Institute school logo.

An officer, employee, family member or agent may accept only items of nominal value, certain services, and/or certain materials.

Permissible gifts would include:

Pens, pencils, notepads, sticky-notes, rulers, calculators, small tote bags, and other individual office supply items, any general items of value from a lender, lender servicer, and/or guarantor provided that the item is also offered to the general public, informational brochures and can participate in meals, refreshments, and receptions in conjunction with meetings and trainings that contribute to his/her professional development, as well as conference events open to all attendees.

3. Accepting Philanthropic Contributions

No officer, employee, or agent shall accept philanthropic contributions from a lender, lender servicer and/or guarantor that are related to the educational loans provided by the lender, lender servicer, and/or guarantor or that is made in exchange for any advantage related to the educational loan. Educational loans here include loans made by First Institute under the private/alternative loan program. First Institute will not accept scholarships or grants from a lender or guarantor in exchange for applications or referrals.

4. Advisory Board Compensation

First Institute employees with responsibility for any Financial Aid services will not accept anything of value for serving on or otherwise participating as a member of an advisory council or advisory board for a lender, lender affiliate or lender servicer, except that the employee may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred while serving in such capacities.

5. Accepting Compensation for Consulting

No officer, employee, or agent shall accept from a lender or its affiliate any fee, payment, or other financial benefit, including the opportunity to purchase stock, as compensation for any type of consulting arrangement or other contract to provide education loan-related services to or on behalf of the lender.

6. Lender Staff Assistance

First Institute will not request or accept from any lender any assistance with call center



staffing or Financial Aid Office staffing. First Institute may accept, from a lender, professional development training and training materials, educational counseling materials, or staffing services on a short-term, nonrecurring basis during emergencies or disasters.

7. Competitive Rates Based on Loan Volume

The First Institute Financial Aid Office shall not request or accept competitive rates on private/alternative loans in exchange for a specified amount of loan activity or in exchange for endorsing the lender's FDLP loans.

8. Lender Affiliated Employment

First Institute Financial Aid Office members shall not accept full time or part time employment with any educational loan lender, lender servicer, and/or guarantor. Staff members who are approached by these entities shall immediately disclose this information to the Executive Management.

First Institute will not use a Preferred Lender List; however, the Financial Aid Office may make use of a Recommended Lender List. The First Institute Financial Aid Office may request and accept assistance from lenders and/or guarantors to conduct entrance and exit loan counseling. First Institute Financial Aid Office shall always be in control of the counseling sessions and will not permit the lender and/or guarantor representative to promote in any way the specific lender's products or services. First Institute will make use of the various lender and/or guarantor's materials and products to aid students in financial literacy.

First Institute is committed to providing the information and resources necessary to help every student achieve educational success and will consider the individual needs of each student.

The information contained herein has been provided to all First Institute officers, employees, and agents affiliated with this college.

EXIT COUNSELING

Federal regulations and First Institute's policy and procedures require that all recipients of federal student loans to participate in student loan exit counseling upon graduation, change of enrollment status to less-than half-time (6 credit hours), or withdrawal from the institution (official withdrawal, dismissal due to academic suspension or other reasons). The federal student loan programs include the Direct Subsidized Stafford, Direct Unsubsidized Stafford, and Direct PLUS loan programs.

The purpose of the student loan exit counseling is to provide the student borrower general information to manage his or her loan debt, to assist in the preparation of loan repayment, to provide for a smooth transition from borrowing to repayment, and assist the student in understanding his rights and responsibilities as a borrower of federal student loans.

Approximately 30 days prior to the anticipated graduation date the student is advised of the requirements to complete the loan counseling exit interview. Typically, group exit interviews are scheduled within a week of the expected cohort graduation date. Student borrowers must



complete the federal student loan exit counseling online at <https://studentaid.gov/exit-counseling/>. If a student is unable to arrange an individual appointment or group session, federal student loan exit counseling information is sent via mail or email.

First Institute offers student borrowers the option to complete the federal student loan exit counseling interview via group sessions or individual appointments at the institution. All student loan borrowers are advised to utilize the NSLDS website (<https://studentaid.gov/h/manage-loans>), as a reference for any questions in regards to their student loan repayment obligations.

FINANCIAL AID ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES

Title IV Funding: Following the initial interview with an Admissions Advisor the applicant's Financial Aid requirements and eligibility are reviewed by the Financial Aid Office. A FAFSA is completed and an award letter is created to determine what type of Title IV funds the student will receive and if any money is due from the student.

Veterans Administration Funding: Eligible applicants will work with the Financial Aid Office to navigate the process of applying for Veterans Administration funding to assist with educational costs.

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funding: If a student qualifies for WIOA assistance, the Financial Aid Office receives a voucher from the county and will invoice the county according to the WIOA terms.

Loan Program Funding: TFC Credit Corp. services these loans for the institution. The Financial Aid Office assists students in the process of securing these loans.

First Institute utilizes GEMCOR for the processing of Pell Grant awards and Direct Loans. A report is generated from the Financial Aid Office requesting funds based on students Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).