International Student Financial Aid & Scholarship Search

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What does this presentation include?

To go directly to section of interest, click on the links below

- Financial Health Tips
- What is Financial Aid & Common Questions
- Aid from UC Berkeley
- Employment Options (in brief)
- BIO Financial Aid Program
- Scholarships & Search Tips
- Loans
- 3 Tips for Handling Financial Stress
Financial Health Tips

1. Live within your means
2. Create & use a budget
3. Make good choices – learn to say no
4. Manage your accounts wisely
5. Protect your financial reputation
6. Learn to save
What is Financial Aid?

“Financial Aid” has several definitions

1. Federal & state funds: limited to U.S. citizens & some others (NOT F&J)
   - FAFSA, Pell Grants, Federal Work-study, Stafford Loans, etc
   - Used on UC Berkeley Admissions & Financial Aid website

2. Any financial assistance including:
   - Scholarships, Grants, Fellowships
   - Need-based and merit-based private funds
   - Some U.S. government programs & home country programs
   - Loans
   - International students may qualify for certain
Financial Aid Common Questions

• **What is the difference between a grant, fellowship, & scholarship?**
  – Not much difference & often used interchangeably
  – Wording can depend on funding source and purpose of funding

• **What is Work-study?**
  – On-campus federally subsidized hourly-wage job program
  – Awarded with financial aid package
  – Int’l students NOT eligible
  – However, if position is not filled, non-work study students may be considered (it never hurts to ask when looking for on-campus jobs)

• **What is the role of a Co-Signer in a loan?**
  – Someone who is legally obligated to repay the loan if you do not/cannot make payments
Financial Aid Common Questions

What is the difference between need & merit based aid?

• Merit-based aid: Usually given as a scholarship, grant or prize
  – Need to show that you deserve the money based on ability/category
  – Awarded for:
    • outstanding academic achievements
    • special talents
    • leadership potential
    • nationality
    • other personal characteristics

• Need-based aid: Can be given as any sort of aid
  – You will need to show that you need the money to continue your studies
  – Bank statements, tax reports, personal essays
Aid from UC Berkeley

- **Admissions Office**
  - Evaluated & offered as part of your Admission package
  - Int’l students are not eligible for Federal & State “Financial Aid”

- **Students are automatically (by invitation only) considered for certain awards & prizes**
  - Regents & Chancellors Scholarship
  - Cal Opportunity Scholarship
  - Award for Freshmen
  - University Medal
  - Departmental Citations

- **College/Department funds**
  - Mostly for Graduate students & researchers, but it never hurts to ask
Aid from UC Berkeley cont’d…

• **Prizes & Honors Office**
  – Rewards creative expression & scholarly achievement
  – Open to any major
  – Categories in Film/video, Folklore, Latin Translation, Integrity, Jewish Studies, Humanistic thought, Music, Philosophy, Photography, Poetry, Political Science, & Writing
  – Undergraduate: [http://students.berkeley.edu/finaid/undergraduates/types_prizes.htm](http://students.berkeley.edu/finaid/undergraduates/types_prizes.htm)
  – Graduate: [http://students.berkeley.edu/finaid/graduates/types_prizes.htm](http://students.berkeley.edu/finaid/graduates/types_prizes.htm)

• **Graduate Fellowships Office**
  – 2/3 of graduate students receive awards
  – Outreach & counseling for undergraduates & post-docs
Aid from UC Berkeley cont’d...

- **Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program**
  - [http://research.berkeley.edu/](http://research.berkeley.edu/)

- **Berkeley International Clubs**
  - [http://international.berkeley.edu/international-berkeley-clubs](http://international.berkeley.edu/international-berkeley-clubs)

- **Cal Student Central**
  - Deferred Payment Plans: 5 installments
    - Pay attention to deadlines
  - Emergency Loans
    - Living Expense Loan (up to $1,000)
    - Loans for Fees (up to $1,300) to get you registered
    - Interest-free & due within 60 days
  - [http://studentcentral.berkeley.edu/](http://studentcentral.berkeley.edu/)
Aid from UC Berkeley cont’d…

- **Parent Support**
  - Transfer, Re-entry & Student Parent Center ([http://trsp.berkeley.edu/](http://trsp.berkeley.edu/))
  - Student Family Assistance
    - [http://grad.berkeley.edu/financial/student_family.shtml](http://grad.berkeley.edu/financial/student_family.shtml)
  - Subsidized Early Childhood Education Program
  - Emergency Back-Up Child Care Program
  - Int’l Graduate Parent Grants
  - Child Care Reimbursement for GSRs & Student Employees

- **Cal Alumni Association (Undergraduates only)**
  - The Leadership Award
  - [http://alumni.berkeley.edu/community/scholarships](http://alumni.berkeley.edu/community/scholarships)
Employment Options

• **On-Campus Employment**
  – Find one through Callisto or word of mouth
  – Library, Residence Halls, Labs, Academic dept, RSF
  – Limited to 20 hrs/week during semester

• **CPT/AT**
  – Internship (can be paid)
  – Part time in Fall/Spring, Full-time in summer
  – Need to be enrolled in units (CPT only)
  – Need authorization from the Berkeley International Office

• **OPT/AT**
  – After you graduate
  – Full time work authorization
  – Apply in your last semester

• **Career Center Resources**
  [https://career.berkeley.edu/](https://career.berkeley.edu/)
  • Callisto

  [Callisto login students & alumni](https://career.berkeley.edu/InternlStudents/IntnlStudents.stm)
Berkeley International Office (BIO)
Financial Aid Program
BIO Aid Basics

Goal
• To help students who have short-term, unexpected need
• Emergency funding towards your tuition, fees & living expenses
• Will not fully fund your tuition & fees
• Does NOT need to be repaid but may be taxed (Parent Grant)

When?
• Offered 2 times per year – Fall & Spring, next cycle around Jan 15
• Announced through Friday News & on BIO Aid website

How?
• Applications through Bspace
• Must be complete & on-time
Undergraduate BIO Aid

Types of Awards (Undergraduate)
- Undergraduate Need-Based Award
- Undergraduate Merit-Based Scholarship
- Both are applied directly to your Tuition & Fees (CARS account)

Eligibility
- Demonstrate financial need by explaining changes in financial situation
- Have completed 2 consecutive semesters at UC Berkeley
- Have completed at least 60 units
- Registered full-time (unless you have approval to be less)
- Have received no more than 2 semesters of BIO aid in the past (need-based only)
Undergraduate BIO Aid cont’d...

How to Apply

• Need-based
  – Bspace online application
  – Requires personal statement to explain unexpected financial situation
  – Upload a Parent Statement (financial information & essay)

• Merit-based Scholarship
  – Bspace online application
  – Upload complete Scholarship Data Form to Bspace
  – Based on GPA and also need
Graduate BIO Aid

Types of Awards (Graduate)

• Graduate Tuition & Fee Award
  – Applied directly to Tuition & Fees (CARS)

• Graduate Parent Grant
  – Choice to apply to remaining CARS account or issued as a stipend
  – Stipend will be taxed
  – Requires Glacier Account & SSN/ITIN to receive stipend

How to Apply

• Bspace online application
• 2 personal statements: 1) explaining your situation & 2) describing your plan if you are not awarded aid
Graduate BIO Aid cont’d...

Eligibility

• Demonstrate financial need by explaining unexpected changes in financial situation
• Have completed 2 consecutive semesters at UC Berkeley
• Registered full-time (unless you have approval to be less)
• **Parent Grant**: must have a child/children living with you in California

NOT Eligible

• Student on self-supporting programs such MFE and LLM
• Students on filing fee status
• Students on *in absentia* are not eligible for the Parent Grant but are eligible for the Tuition & Fee Award
BIO Aid cont’d...

Evaluation criteria (for all need-based awards)
- Statement of need & changes in financial situation from initial enrollment
- Financial need evaluated by BIO Financial Aid Committee
- Representation across academic disciplines
- A review of each student’s CARS account
- Student enrolled in Doctoral programs (Graduate aid only)
More BIO Aid

Shih Loan Program

• Made possible by Mr. & Mrs. Jeff & Constance Shih’s generous donation
• Must have been enrolled for 2 semesters
• Co-signer (US Citizen or PR) & Social Security Number is required
• Loan is interest free while you are in school
  • Must be repaid beginning 6 months after completing studies
  • 5% interest charged at time of 1st payment
• Limited to one loan per academic year (Fall/Spring)
• Maximum amount per year = Tuition & Fees for one semester
• Total amount of debt cannot exceed 1 year of Tuition & Fees
• Applications available at BIO & will require an interview
• [http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/current/shih_loan](http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/current/shih_loan)
More BIO Aid cont’d...

Medical Fund

• Provides assistance to students with outstanding medical bills for unanticipated medical expenses
• Fund pays the provider/bill directly
• Bills must be attached to the application
• Lifetime limit of $500
• Applications available at BIO

Bottom-line

• Students in severe financial distress should meet with a BIO Advisor in person during Drop-In Advising Hours
  – Monday-Friday 10am-12pm and 1:30pm-2pm
Scholarships

The basics of scholarships

• Many are limited to U.S. Citizens or PR, but some are available for YOU!
• Usually, will not cover all educational costs
• Mostly highly competitive
• Process can be highly time-consuming, even for small grants, examples:
  – Essays or Projects
  – Transcripts
  – 2 or 3 Recommendation/reference letters
  – Interviews
• Not only based on GPA
  – Personal characteristics, leadership qualities, and extracurricular activities such as clubs, & volunteering/public service can be important
Scholarships cont’d…

Where to start your search

- Scholarship Connection
  
  http://scholarships.berkeley.edu/
  
  - Search the Database
  - Search by “Type of Award”
  - Select your categories
    - Undergrad, Grad, major, etc
  - Citizenship: Other Visa Status
Scholarships cont’d...

Where else to search?

• Berkeley International Office http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/aid
  – List of additional external scholarships for int’l students
• Student & Professional Organizations (campus, community, and national)
  – Honor Societies & Major/field specific professional organizations
• Non-profit organizations
  – Think, who do they serve?
• Religious Groups
• Your home government/embassy
• Immigrant community
  – Cultural Centers & Associations
Using External Search Engines

- Use only free search engines
  - If someone wants you to pay for access to a database or pay to apply for a scholarship, it is a SCAM! Don’t do it!
- There are many, many free and very good databases out there
- **Pro**: large database, searchable, customizable to your profile, email alerts
- **Con**: can be overwhelming to sort through, can take a lot of time to research
- **Pro**: because of the time & effort scholarship searches and applications require, some scholarships go unclaimed because no one applies for them
Scholarships cont’d…

Some External Search Engines

http://www.iefa.org/
For international students & study abroad only; information on loans & blogs about the scholarship search

http://www.abroadplanet.com/
Online community of int’l students with many articles & tips. Financial Aid section has list of scholarships, but is not searchable
Scholarships cont’d…

Some External Search Engines

http://www.edupass.org/finaid/

For int’l students; incl. financial planning tools, lists of scholarships & links to other databases for specific majors, countries. Links to Fastweb.

http://edu.fastweb.com

Huge, comprehensive database (not just for int’l students). Can create your profile & manage your applications. Very popular.
Scholarship Search Tips

Tips for Applying

• Finding Scholarships
  – Define your search well – use a database. Will save you time & energy by filtering out ones you do not qualify for

• Choosing Scholarships: Be selective!
  – Who are the scholarship selectors looking for?
    • Demographics, majors, citizenship, what you plan to do with the $
  – Is the scholarship worth the time I will spend on it?

• Obtaining Applications
  – Most will be online, but many still are paper-based & may require calling for more information & mailing in an application
  – Figure this out early so you have enough time!
Scholarship Search Tips cont’d...

Tips for Applying

• Gathering Materials
  – Pay attention to the details: components, deadlines, ink color, type of file, etc
  – Scholarship application:
    • Basic Biographical cover page; recommended to TYPE, not hand write

• Personal Statement
  – One of the most critical parts of the application
  – Opportunity where you get to present a real whole picture of yourself as a person and a student
  – Do not just repeat what is on your resume/transcript
  – Cater it to the purpose of the scholarship
Scholarship Search Tips cont’d...

Tips for Applying

- Letters of Recommendation
  - Extremely important
  - Make a point of establishing relationships with your professors early
  - Should come from faculty who are familiar with you academically & personally
  - Letters from people who know you well are far more valuable than letters from well-known people who know you less well and who might write, at best, a form-like letter.
  - Ask in person (if possible) & have a conversation about your plans & aspirations
  - Recommenders should also focus the letter on the purpose of the scholarship
  - Provide your recommender with enough information about the scholarship, your resume (if applicable) and with enough TIME (a few weeks)
  - Career Center video: [https://career.berkeley.edu/Letter/Letter.stm](https://career.berkeley.edu/Letter/Letter.stm)
Scholarship Search Tips cont’d...

Tips for Applying

• Transcripts
  – Unofficial: you can print yourself from Bear Facts
  – Official: Order through Bear Facts from the Office of the Registrar (regular, rush & special processing times); sent by mail or pick-up

• Resume
  – Remember to list all activities, involvement, honors, community service, etc

• Completing the process
  – Pay attention to deadlines: postmark vs receipt
What can you do now to prepare & make yourself competitive?

• Maintain a high GPA (3.0 & above is really great)
• Take challenging classes
• Get involved in campus activities & take leadership roles
• Participate in community service activities
• Pursue academic activities
• Be aware of current events (political, cultural, literary)
• Get to know your professors and GSIs!
  – Office hours
  – Show interest in their research
  – Volunteer to help
Loans

- Institutional loans for international students are very limited
- Federal loans are not an option for F & J
  - Stafford, Pell, Perkins
- Private loans
  - Will usually require a U.S. citizen/Permanent Resident as a co-signer
  - Beware of very high interest rates due to lack of credit history
  - Check with your bank about loan options
  - Shop around & always read the fine print
Handling Financial Stress

1. Discern between what you can control or do & what you cannot control or do

2. Pay attention to your own stress level

3. Seek help & support
   - Berkeley International Office
     • Advising: Monday-Friday 10am-12pm and 1:30pm-4pm
   - Tang Center - Self Help Resources
     • Appointments, group talks, & workshops on stress management
     • Self-Help Resources: http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/selfhelp.shtml
Reminder of Key Resources

• Berkeley International Office
  – [http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/aid](http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/aid)
  – Advising: Monday-Friday 10am-12pm and 1:30pm-4pm

• Scholarship Connection
  – [http://scholarships.berkeley.edu/](http://scholarships.berkeley.edu/)
  – ourscholarships@berkeley.edu

• Career Center
  – Special section just for international students
  – [https://career.berkeley.edu/IntnlStudents/IntnlStudents.stm](https://career.berkeley.edu/IntnlStudents/IntnlStudents.stm)

• Tang Center
  – Appointments, group talks, & workshops
  – [http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/](http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/)
Thank you!

Questions?

BIO Contact Info

internationaloffice@berkeley.edu