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Andrea Estrada

# UCSB Financial Aid Office's Online Tutorial for Federal Student Aid Form Receives National Award, Rolls Out 2013-14 Edition

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships at UC Santa Barbara is once again offering its online tutorial to assist current and prospective students in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used by nearly all colleges and universities to determine a student's eligibility for federal-, state- and college-sponsored financial aid, including grants, educational loans, and work-study programs.

Produced by the financial aid office at UCSB, "7 Easy Steps to the FAFSA: A Student's Guide to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid" is designed to help prospective students complete the 2013-14 FAFSA in seven clear and easy-to-understand steps. It can be found at https://www.finaid.ucsb.edu/Media/

FAFSASimplification/index.html

The tutorial was recently awarded a Gold Star by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, a nonprofit membership organization focused primarily on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators. The award recognizes innovation in the financial aid arena.

"A number of studies over the last several years have shown that students who complete the FAFSA will be more successful overall," said Michael Miller, director of the UCSB Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. "Studies also tell us that an alarming number of students fail to complete the FAFSA because they find it too complicated. And a lot of those are first-generation college students."

When the financial aid office created the tutorial in 2009, it was intended to assist UCSB students. However, it proved so beneficial that the office made it available on a national level. To date, 310 colleges and universities have included it on their Web sites, according to Miller. In addition, the tutorial is included on the UCSBFinAid channel on YouTube. "It's being used by hundreds of thousands of people," Miller said.

To determine the kind and amount of financial aid for which a student is eligible, the U.S. Department of Education conducts a "need analysis" using the financial information included on the FAFSA. The analysis considers factors, such as income, assets, and other household information, which the student and his or her parents are asked to provide. The completed form is then submitted to a federal processor contracted by the Department of Education, and results are electronically transmitted to the financial aid offices of the schools listed on the student's application.

The form is also required for participation in UC's Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, which covers mandatory systemwide tuition for California residents whose families earn less than $80,000, and who qualify for financial aid.

Even students who don't qualify for need-based financial aid must complete a FAFSA in order to be considered for most federal student loans. Nearly every student is eligible for some form of financial aid, including low-interest Federal Stafford and/or parent PLUS loans, regardless of income or circumstances.

The deadline for submitting a 2013-14 FAFSA for UCSB financial aid is March 2, 2013.

Related Links

FAFSA Online Tutorial

Office of Financial Aid

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The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.