



Financial Aid Handbook

2017 - 2018

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Vision/Mission Statements

Commitment to Quality

We are committed to providing quality instruction and services to the satisfaction of our students and other stakeholders.

Vision

Our vision is to provide a safe learning environment where each student is valued and prepared to succeed.

Mission

Our mission is to prepare all students for successful careers and higher education through a highly acclaimed, integrated academic and technical educational experience.

Quality Standards

Accreditation

Berks Career and Technology Center is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Secondary Schools 3624 Market Street Philadelphia, PA 19104.

ISO 9001: Certified

Berks Career and Technology Center is registered as an ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System (QMS) organization for its commitment to providing high quality career and technical education to its customers. ISO 9001 is an international quality standard for business and education that demonstrates commitment to producing a quality product of service and providing customer satisfaction.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Berks Career and Technology Center will not discriminate in its employment practices or its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, domicile, veterans status, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, handicap/disability or genetic information or any other legally protected characteristics in its admission procedures, educational programs and activities or employment practices, as required by the Pennsylvania School Code and related regulations, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 and will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups. Students are encouraged to consider enrolling in career programs non-traditional to their gender. Berks Career and Technology Center will take steps to assure that the lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in career and technical education programs and will make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities. Furthermore, harassment in any form, including bullying, by any individual will not be tolerated. All policies, regulations and practices of BCTC shall be guided by this statement. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Section 504 or Title VI should be directed to the Office of the Executive Director at 1057 County Road, Leesport, PA 19533, 610-374-4073.

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FINANCIAL AID STUDENT HANDBOOK

The administration and faculty of Berks Career and Technology Center believe that education is a family investment. Therefore, the primary responsibility for financing a student's education rests with both the student and the student's family. Financial aid is intended to supplement, not replace, a family's resources. The Financial Aid Office strives to assist qualified students needing financial assistance. This assistance includes counseling students to understand the financial expenses of attending school, informing students of the types of aid available, and assisting students with the application process. The application process outlining the steps needed in which to apply for aid is located at the end of this handbook.

Eligibility and Financial Need Determination

Program Eligibility

Berks Career and Technology Center participates in various federal, state and local financial aid programs. The purpose of financial aid is to provide assistance to students with financial need who, would otherwise be unable to pursue an education. Listed below are the Financial Aid resources available to BCTC students who qualify.

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program
 - Subsidized Stafford Loan
 - Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
 - Federal Parent PLUS Loan
- Veteran's Education Assistance
- CareerLink
 - WIA/ITA
 - TRA/TAA
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Student Eligibility

Each applicant for Federal Financial Assistance must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for processing. The FAFSA is available on-line at www.studentloans.gov, www.fafsa.ed.gov or a paper copy can be obtained by contacting the US Department of Education at 1-800-433-3243. The new award year begins each July 1 and students attending a program that crosses over into the new award year are required to complete a renewal application annually.

Financial Aid recipients must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements in addition to demonstrating need:

1. Have a high school diploma, GED or state authorized high school equivalent certificate, or be home schooled in a setting that meets state law.
 - *Students who previously attended an eligible Higher Education program prior to July 1, 2012 and need to establish Title IV eligibility may seek eligibility through the Ability-to-Benefit alternative.*
2. Be enrolled as a regular student working toward a diploma or certificate in an eligible program.
3. Be a U.S. Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen.
4. Have a valid Social Security Number.
5. Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.
6. Register with Selective Service, if required.
7. Not be in Default on a Previous Student Loan

The Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended (HEA) suspends aid eligibility for students who have been convicted under federal or state law of the sale or possession of drugs, if the offense occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving federal student aid (grants, loans, and/or work-study). If you have a

conviction(s) for these offenses, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). Even if you are ineligible for federal aid, you should complete the FAFSA because you may be eligible for nonfederal aid from states and private institutions. If you regain eligibility during the award year, notify your financial aid administrator immediately. If you are convicted of a drug-related offense after you submit the FAFSA, you might lose eligibility for federal student aid, and you might be liable for returning any financial aid you received during a period of ineligibility.

Citizenship Requirements

In order to be eligible for federal financial aid, the student must be one of the following:

- A U.S. citizen
- A U.S. national (including natives of American Samoa or Swain's Island)
- A U.S. permanent resident who has an I-1551, I-551, or I-551C Alien Registration Card

OR

The student must have an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94 Form) from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing one of the following designations:

- "Refugee"
- "Asylum Granted"
- "Indefinite Parole" and/or "Humanitarian Parole"
- "Cuban-Haitian Entrant, Status Pending"
- "Conditional Entrant" (valid only if issued before April 1, 1980)

Students are **NOT** eligible for federal financial aid if they:

- have only a Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence (I-171 or I-464)
- have been granted relief from deportation under the Family Unity Program (previously this category of students were eligible for federal student aid)
- are temporary residents allowed to live and work in the U.S. under the Legalization or Special Agricultural Worker program (previously this category of students was eligible for federal aid)
- are in the U.S. on an F1 or F2 student visa
- are in the U.S. on a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa
- have a G series visa (pertaining to international organizations)
- have another nonimmigrant visa, including those with work visas and foreign government officials and their dependents
- are undocumented

Selective Service Requirements

Men over the age of 26 who have not registered with the Selective Service must contact the Selective Service office at 1-847-688-6888 and request a Status Information Letter. The Status Information Letter and a written explanation for your failure to register with the Selective Service must be submitted to the Office of Financial Aid prior to aid being processed. A non-registrant may not be denied any benefit if he can "show by a preponderance of evidence" that his failure to register was not knowing and willful. Offer as much evidence supporting your case, in as much detail, as possible.

Default / Overpayment Requirements

Students who are in default on a previous student loan or owe an overpayment to the U.S. Department of Education must resolve the default or overpayment prior to being eligible to receive aid.

How Financial Need is Determined

The Office of Financial Aid encourages all students to file the FAFSA. Excluding the Federal PLUS Loan, the FAFSA is used to determine what sources and amount of aid you are eligible to receive through the Student Financial Aid Programs.

Financial need is determined using the students and parents (if applicable) financial information specified on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), FAFSA on the Web, or the renewal FAFSA, if you applied for aid last year. (The application was created to determine the student's need for the Federal financial aid programs.)

The Office of Financial Aid also uses this information in awarding need-based financial aid from state, institutional, and private funding sources.) Frequently asked questions regarding parent information that must be included on the FAFSA are in the Frequently Asked Questions section of this handbook.

The information you provide on the FAFSA is processed using a formula, established by the U.S. Congress that calculates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is the amount you and your family are expected to contribute toward your education. *Please note: The outstanding balance of your bill and the EFC may differ. You are responsible for the outstanding balance.* The federal processor will send this information to you on your Student Aid Report (SAR) which also serves as an acknowledgment that the application was processed. You may receive this acknowledgment electronically (known as an e-SAR) via email, if you provide an email address on the FAFSA. The federal processor also electronically transmits the analysis of the data you submitted to each of the institutions you specified on the FAFSA.

Each school determines how much it will cost for you to attend school, including tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, personal expenses, and transportation expenses. This is called your Cost of Attendance or cost of education and is unique to each school to which you apply. (This is one reason you may be eligible for more financial aid at one school than another--it may cost more to attend another school.) The Cost of Attendance at BCTC is based upon research done by school staff members who review the costs annually to ensure that they are realistic.

To determine your financial need, your expected family contribution is subtracted from the Cost of Attendance as shown in the example provided below.

Cost of Attendance
-Expected Family Contribution
=Financial Need

Example: Sara is a Pennsylvania Resident who is entering her first year of school at BCTC for 2017-2018. Sara filed her FAFSA using her and her parents' information, since she is a dependent student. When she received her SAR, the EFC was listed at \$5,782. We determine her financial need by the following figures:

Cost of Attendance	\$16,675
<u>- Expected Family Contribution (EFC)</u>	<u>- 5,782</u>
= Financial Need	\$10,893

Special Circumstances/Professional Judgment

Although the process of determining your financial aid eligibility is basically the same for all applicants, there is some flexibility in specific circumstances. If your family experiences a change in income due to an unusual circumstance (loss of job or reduction in hours, separation or divorce, death in the immediate family) contact the Office of Financial Aid regarding your situation. It may be possible to reevaluate your financial aid eligibility.

If your family has high unreimbursed medical expenses or pays private school tuition for elementary or secondary school (K-12), your financial aid eligibility may be re-evaluated. If you feel you have any special circumstances that might affect the amount you and your family are expected to contribute, be sure to contact the Office of Financial Aid.

Students requesting special circumstances and whose SAR was flagged for verification are required to complete the Verification Process prior to being eligible to have their application reviewed. See the Verification section of this handbook for additional information.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Financial aid recipients are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in order to remain eligible to receive federal financial aid. Three categories of academic progress are evaluated at the midpoint and end of each payment period to determine Satisfactory Academic Progress; 1) cumulative GPA, 2) number of hours completed (attendance), and 3) maximum time frame to complete the program of study.

Cumulative GPA

When computing grades, knowledge, including theory and application, and work ethic will be assessed. Assessments in each area will be averaged, independently graded and constitute a percentage of the overall final grade. Students must achieve a GPA of 2.0 or a grade of C (70%) or higher.

Computation of Grades

All evaluations shall be provided in a numerical form and, at the conclusion of the marking period, translated into a percentage and an actual grade using the following system:

A = 90 - 100

B = 80 - 89

C = 70 - 79

D = 60 - 69

F = 0 - 59

M = Medical

W = Withdrawal

I = Incomplete

Programs are not considered complete if student receives a grade of "F", "W", "M" or "I" and will be immediately suspended from financial aid.

Attendance

All students whose absences exceed ten percent of the payment period hours for their program of study (54 clock hours) will have their financial aid assistance either delayed or cancelled.

Maximum time frame

Federal requirements state that students may continue to receive their financial aid as long as they maintain the ability to complete their training within 110% of the scheduled program time. For example, if a program is designated as 60 weeks, a full-time student must complete this program within 66 weeks. Part-time students must complete this program within 132 weeks.

SAP will be reviewed at the end of each grading period. It is the student's responsibility to stay informed of BCTC's SAP standards and to monitor their own progress. Students who fail to meet one or more of the SAP standards will have their financial aid assistance either delayed or cancelled and may be required to repay all or part of the funds received.

Any student not meeting SAP at the end of a payment period (540 hours) will receive a warning letter and disbursement will be delayed until the 540 hours have been completed. The warning letter is good for the next payment period only. If, at the end of the next payment period, the student does not meet SAP for a second time, the student becomes ineligible for Financial Aid. This will include Grants and Direct Loans. All future Financial Aid will be canceled unless the student appeals following the Appeal Process section of this handbook.

Considerations – Satisfactory Academic Progress

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress is not the same as academic progress required to earn a certificate of competency. Being declared ineligible for financial aid does not mean you have been academically dismissed from school and you have the right to appeal financial aid ineligibility. Any appeal of ineligibility is good for only one payment period. SAP must be reviewed each payment period. Approval of an appeal will place the student on financial aid probation for the next payment period. During the probationary period, SAP will be monitored at the half way point. No federal loans, or grants may be paid to your account for a subsequent payment period until

AFTER grades for the probationary period have been reviewed and your status determined to be satisfactory. Failure to meet the minimum standards again after an appeal was approved will place the student in ineligible status again.

Reinstatement of Financial Aid

Once suspended from financial aid, students may have their eligibility reinstated by meeting all of the following conditions:

- 1) Achieve a GPA of 2.0 or a grade of C (70%) or higher.
- 2) Maintain satisfactory attendance
- 3) Maintain a pace of completion of coursework as defined by the course guidelines of at least 33%.

Appeal Process

Students may appeal financial aid suspension by submitting a completed SAP Appeal Form along with required documentation to Berks Career and Technology Center. Forms are available at the Continuing Education Office. Mail the SAP Form and documentation to:

Berks Career and Technology Center
Financial Aid Specialist – Continuing Education
1057 County Road
Leesport, PA 19533

If approved, students will be required to follow an educational plan contract they create with assistance from instructor and approved by Continuing Education for continuation of aid. SAP will be monitored, for improvement, at the half way point of the payment period.

Academic Year Definition

Berks Career and Technology Center's academic year for financial aid purposes is defined in Clock Hours and Weeks of Attendance. Berks Career and Technology Center's Academic Year for Adult Day School full-time students is defined as 1080 hours and 40 weeks.

Full time students enrolled in the various Adult Day School programs will be eligible to apply for financial aid in both their first and second year of training. Upon successful completion of the first year, the financial aid received for the partial second year will be prorated per federal guidelines based upon the number of hours and weeks remaining in the second year of the program.

Part time students enrolled in the various Adult Day School programs will be eligible to apply for financial aid and upon successful completion of the first year can reapply for financial aid in the second and third year.

Grade Level Advancement

Upon successful completion of the first academic year a full time student is considered to have advanced to Grade Level 2 for financial aid purposes. The student is then eligible to borrow additional pro-rated Stafford Loan funds at Grade Level 2 for the remaining hours and weeks in the program.

Upon successful completion of the first and second academic year a part time student is considered to have advanced to Grade Level 2 for financial aid purposes. The student is then eligible to borrow additional pro-rated Stafford Loan funds at Grade Level 2 for the remaining hours and weeks in the program.

Repeated Course Work

Students who are unsuccessful in their first attempt at coursework and are required to repeat class work, clinical experiences or an entire level of training are NOT eligible to continue to receive financial aid during the repeat period nor are they eligible to apply for additional financial aid to cover the cost of the repeated coursework. All financial aid is cancelled during the repeat period and then re-instated when the next payment period is reached as long as the student maintains the ability to complete the training with 110% of the scheduled clock hours.

Students are responsible to pay costs incurred for repeated coursework on their own. Students who withdraw from training for 180 days or more and then return to training regain full financial aid eligibility upon their return.

Verification Policy

Verification is a process where the financial aid specialist must verify that information reported on the financial aid application is true and correct. Applicants are selected for verification through computer edits by the Department of Education or selection by the school. Applications selected for verification by the Department of Education are flagged with an "*" next to the EFC number on the Student Aid Report (SAR) and the student is notified of selection in Part I of the SAR as well as by a letter from the school. Applications selected by the school will not have an "*" next to the EFC so these students will be notified of selection by a letter from the school only.

Specific items to be verified are:

1. Adjusted gross income (AGI)
2. U.S. Income Tax paid
3. Income Earned from work
4. Untaxed Portions of IRA Distributions
5. Untaxed Portions of Pensions
6. IRA Deductions and Payments
7. Tax Exempt Interest Income
8. Education Credits
9. Other Untaxed Income
10. Number of Household Members
11. Number in College
12. SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps)
13. Child Support Paid by the student (or spouse), the student's parent, or both
14. High School Completion Status – **Must submit to school verifiable documentation of high school completion or its equivalent.**
15. Identity/Statement of Educational purpose – **Required to be provided in person by the student to an authorized official at the school. The student must be prepared to present a valid government-issued photo ID, such as but not limited to a driver's license, other state-issued ID, or passport, etc.**

The Office of Financial Aid will notify all students selected for Verification by letter detailing what specific FAFSA items from above must be verified. Included with the letter will be all supporting documentation that must be completed, signed and returned to the school. In the event the student is selected for Verification of item 15 above, **Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose**, the student is required to report to the school in person, with appropriate ID, to sign all necessary documentation. Students who are unable to appear in person must notify the Office of Financial Aid **immediately** to obtain appropriate forms that must be completed in the presence of a Notary. The original notarized Statement of Educational Purpose form must then be provided to the school.

Selected students are required to provide documentation as specified by a letter from the Office of Financial Aid within 30 days of receipt of notice. Late applicants may be provided a shorter time period in which they must return required documentation in order for verification to be completed and aid processed prior to the end of their award year or program, whichever is earlier. Failure to do so will result in non-payment of awards for Pell, and loans will not be originated. Students will be responsible to pay all tuition costs.

If corrections need to be made to the SAR, the student will receive a letter stating the corrections needed and directions to resolve the issues. The school may be able to make the required changes and the student will be notified in writing of the changes made on an updated SAR sent to the student from the US Department of Education. No payments for federal student aid will be made until the updated ISIR/SAR is received by the aid office. Students will be notified by the school in writing of award changes within 30 days of receipt of all required verification documentation.

Students requesting a review of their application due to special circumstances whose FAFSA application was selected for verification must complete the verification process before the school can make any changes or adjustments to the students' cost of attendance or to the values of the data items required to calculate the EFC.

The verification process is complete when all signed documents are reviewed by the aid officer and a valid ISIR/SAR is submitted to the aid office. A final and correct ISIR/SAR must be received at least four weeks prior to the earlier of the last day of the award year or the last day of attendance in order to receive direct loan payment. A final and correct ISIR/SAR received after this time is not eligible for verification or direct loan payment.

In the case where the student is responsible for an overpayment of federal aid to the U.S. Department of Education, the student will be notified in writing requesting full reimbursement of the overpayment. If, after notification, the student has not repaid or made satisfactory arrangements to repay the overpayment, the school will refer the overpayments to the United States Department of Education Student FSA's Management Collections (ED Collections) and notify NSLDS of the overpayment. At this point, the student becomes ineligible to receive Title IV funds until the overpayment is resolved.

Federal Pell Grant (FAFSA application)

Federal Pell Grants provide the "foundation" of financial aid to which other assistance may be added. Pell Grants provide money for tuition that does not have to be repaid unless a student withdraws from school and is determined to owe a refund. The U.S. Department of Education determines student's eligibility for this source. A student cannot receive a Pell grant if he/she already holds a bachelor's degree. If you qualify for a Pell Grant for 2017-2018, you can currently receive between \$596 to \$5,920 annually depending on your family income and cost of education. Although your Pell Grant awards are paid through the school, your eligibility and the actual amount of your award is determined by the U.S. Department of Education through the completion of the FAFSA application and your program of enrollment.

The FAFSA application award year begins July 1 and ends June 30. Students attending a program that crosses over into the next year beginning July 1, have to complete a renewal FAFSA application, for the upcoming year.

Federal Direct Stafford Loan Programs

Federal Stafford Loan Entrance Counseling

The Federal Government requires that all first time Federal Stafford Loan borrowers complete an entrance counseling session before they receive any loan proceeds. This session is designed to provide the borrower with important information about the Federal Stafford Loan program, including your rights and responsibilities as a borrower.

Disbursement of your loan funds will not occur before you complete this session. When you have successfully completed the required Loan Entrance Counseling, you will have the opportunity to print a Confirmation page that you can keep with your records.

The counseling session is provided through a link on the U.S. Department of Education's Direct Loan web site-- <https://studentloans.gov>. However, there are some specific issues of which you should be aware. Federal Stafford Loan borrowing levels are broadly defined on the Department's web site by the student's year in school. At BCTC, a student's year in school is specifically defined by the number of hours the student is scheduled to attend at the time of loan processing. Borrowing levels are described in the Loan Limits section of this handbook.

Federal Stafford Loan Exit Counseling

The Federal Government requires that all Federal Stafford Loan borrowers who withdraw or graduate complete an exit counseling session. This session is designed to provide borrowers with important information regarding rights and responsibilities as well as repayment information. Exit Counseling is also a requirement for all programs and MUST be completed before a student's last day of attendance for graduation or withdrawal. Student earned certificates will not be awarded until the required Exit Counseling has been completed.

BEFORE BEGINNING THIS PROCESS, gather the following information because you will need to enter it on the Student Information Form.

- Your permanent address & phone number (If this is new information, you must contact your servicer to update your record.) Data entered on this form is for tracking purposes only.
- Your driver's license number.
- The complete name, address, and phone number of your next of kin.
- The complete name, addresses, and phone numbers of 2 other references.

This session is provided through a link on the Federal Student Aid web site—www.studentloans.gov.

You should receive repayment information from your loan servicer approximately 3 months after you leave school. If you do not receive this information, it is your responsibility to contact your servicer before the end of your 6-month grace period to arrange for the repayment of your loan. It is important that you plan for the repayment of your loan. You will have the opportunity to estimate your monthly payment as you proceed through the online exit counseling session. If you don't know your outstanding Stafford Loan balance but know who your loan is serviced through, you can contact them directly to receive your outstanding balance. If you do not know the name of your loan servicer and/or guarantor, you may search using the National Student Loan Data Services website at: www.nslsds.ed.gov.

At the end of the session, you will be asked to complete a Student Information Form. You must provide all required information. When you have entered the required information and it has been accepted, you will receive a congratulations page stating that you have successfully completed your exit counseling. You can print this page for your records. At this point, you have successfully completed the session and your information is available to the Office of Financial Aid.

Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program

The Federal Direct Stafford Loan is a guaranteed student loan (only in the student's name). In order to obtain the Federal Direct Stafford Loan, all first-time borrowers must indicate on their FAFSA application that they want to take a student loan AND complete the Federal Direct Stafford Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN). This note is valid for a period of up to 10 years.

Direct Stafford loans are monies that students are eligible to borrow while attending school that must be repaid.

- The student is the borrower.
- Student has up to 10 years to repay the loan depending on the size of the student's debt.
- Amount borrowed is based on the student's academic level at the time the loan is processed. If the student receives other financial aid, the loan amount may be less.
- The loan **MUST BE REPAYED** to the US Department of Education.
- Payments are deferred while students are attending school.
- Students enter repayment six months following graduation or date of withdraw.
- During the repayment period, under certain circumstances, the US Department of Education may grant deferments, forbearances, or cancellations. A list of deferments and cancellations is provided at the time the student signs their Master Promissory Note.
- The school can refuse to certify a student's loan application OR certify the loan for an amount less than the student would otherwise be eligible. The school must document the reason for its action and explain the reason to the student in writing. The decision of the school is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.
- A student can receive a subsidized and unsubsidized loan for the same period.
- Fees of up to 4% may be deducted from the total loan amount at the time of disbursement. *
- Loan funds are disbursed in at least 2 installments.

*Loan fees are determined by the U.S. Department of Education and are in effect from October 1 through September 30 of each year.

Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan

Eligibility for a Subsidized Stafford Loan is based on family income and financial need established by standards set forth by the federal government. The federal government subsidizes the interest on behalf of the student by paying the interest for the student during the deferment period if the family meets the federal income and financial needs standards. The maximum Subsidized loan eligibility for the first academic year is \$3,500. These loans must be repaid and payments are deferred while you are in school and during a six-month grace period you are given after completing or discontinuing study. **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 has eliminated the subsidy payment (the payment of interest) during the grace period for loans with a first disbursement on or after July 1, 2012 and before July 1, 2014.**

- **Effective July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018**, interest on Federal Subsidized Stafford Loans is a fixed rate of 4.45%

Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan

The Unsubsidized Stafford Loan provides an opportunity for students to benefit from the low interest cost of the loan program. These loans are monies that students are eligible to borrow while attending school that must be repaid. Benefits of an Unsubsidized Loan are extended to other eligible applicants who fail to meet the federal income and financial need standards. The Unsubsidized Loan can be issued for the full amount of eligibility or in combination with a subsidized loan. On any portion of the Unsubsidized Loan the interest must be paid by the student on a quarterly basis while the student is enrolled in school, or the student can elect to capitalize the interest during the deferment period. These loans are deferred while you are in school and during a six-month grace period you are given after completing or discontinuing study.

- **Effective July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018**, interest on Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans is a fixed rate of 4.45%

Differences between the Federal Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans

Federal SUBSIDIZED Stafford Loan	Federal UNSUBSIDIZED Stafford Loan
Eligibility is based on financial need.	Eligibility is NOT based on financial need.
The Federal Government pays the interest on the loan as long as the student enrolled and during the six month grace period.	The Federal Government DOES NOT pay the interest on the loan. Interest is charged from the time the loan is disbursed until it is paid in full. The student has two options in the repayment of the interest. It can be paid while enrolled in school (check the box on the MPN indicating you wish to pay the interest) OR the loan interest can be capitalized - that is, the interest will be added to the principal amount of the loan and additional interest will be based upon the higher amount.
Repayment on both the interest and principal begins SIX months after the student graduates or withdraws from training.	Repayment on both the interest and principal begins SIX months after the student graduates or withdraws from training.
Fixed rate of 4.45%	Fixed rate of 4.45%

Federal Direct PLUS Loan

Parent PLUS loans are available to parents of dependent students to assist in meeting the costs of education. Parents are urged to apply for the PLUS Loan source of funding before submitting additional loan applications. In many situations, the combination of maximum Stafford Loans and PLUS loans will meet most of the financial need of the student. Repayment of the PLUS loan principal and interest begins within 60 days after receipt of the loan proceeds. Parents can elect to have the PLUS loan placed into forbearance until the student completes their training.

Effective July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, interest on Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loans is a fixed rate of 7.00%

Loan Limits

Independent students are eligible to borrow up to a total \$9,500 in their first academic year. Dependent students, as defined by government criteria during the FAFSA application process, are not permitted to borrow more than \$5,500 in their first year. However, parents of dependent students may obtain a PLUS loan if additional funds are needed. If a parent is denied a Parent PLUS loan, the dependent student then becomes eligible to apply for additional loan money on his/her own. Upon successful completion of their first academic year, students are considered to have advanced to Grade Level 2 for financial aid purposes. Dependent students as defined by government criteria, are not permitted to borrow more than \$3,250 in their second academic year. Independent students are eligible to borrow up to a total of \$5,250 in their second academic year.

Aggregate Limits for Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans

Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford loans also have aggregate limits, these loans limits represent the total of all subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loans.

	Subsidized	Total of Subsidized and Unsubsidized
Dependent Undergraduates (excluding those whose parents can't borrow PLUS)	\$ 23,000	\$ 31,000
Independent Undergrads & Dependent Students whose parents can't get PLUS.	\$ 23,000	\$ 57,500

Maximum Eligibility Period to Receive Direct Subsidized Loans

On July 6, 2012, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (Public Law 112-141) was enacted. MAP-21 added a new provision to the Direct Loan statutory requirements (see HEA section 455(q)) that limits a first-time borrower's eligibility for Direct Subsidized Loans to a period not to exceed 150 percent of the length of the borrower's educational program. Under certain conditions, the provision also causes first-time borrowers who have exceeded the 150 percent limit to lose the interest subsidy on their Direct Subsidized Loans.

For Example: You are enrolled in a 1.5 year program, the maximum eligibility for which you can receive Direct Subsidized Loans is 2.25 years (150% of 1.5 years = 2.25 years).

Your maximum eligibility period is based on the published length of your current program. This means that your maximum eligibility period can change if you change programs. Also, if you receive Direct Subsidized Loans for one program and then change to another program, the Direct Subsidized Loans you received for the earlier program will generally count against your new maximum eligibility period.

Note: Only first-time borrowers on or after July 1, 2013 are subject to the new provision. Generally, a first-time borrower is one who did not have an outstanding balance of principal or interest on a Direct Loan or on a FFEL Program Loan on July 1, 2013.

Loan Limits for Transfer Students

Students who transfer midyear to BCTC may see lower loan amounts available to them for the completion of the first academic year. This occurs when the academic year at the school from which the student is transferring overlaps the academic year at BCTC. In this situation, the student is restricted to receiving only the remainder of the original annual loan limit until the completion of the first academic year. For example, a student was enrolled at School A as a grade level 1 student from September 3 to May 25, but then transfers to a BCTC program that begins Mar 4, the loan amount for the academic year cannot exceed the amount of a full year's aid minus the amount already received at School A prior to the transfer.

Annual loan limits are based on an academic year, which is at least 36 weeks in length. The 36 week limit applies to all students including those who change programs or those who transfer to another school.

Third Party Loans

Third Party Loans / Alternative Loans are loans obtained by students on their own. Private alternative education loans require the borrower to be a creditworthy student, parent or co-borrower. Generally the loans have a variable interest rate and charge a fee. Alternative loan funds are either transferred electronically (EFT) to the school or checks made co-payable to the student and the school. Therefore, if a check is made co-payable to the student and the school, the student must come in to the office to endorse the check. Students are notified when Third Party Loan/Alternative Loan checks or EFT funds arrive. Third Party Loan funds are credited to the student's tuition account, and any credit balance is refunded to the student unless the school has been directed otherwise.

Loan Cancellation

Students must notify the Office of Financial Aid in writing within 30 days of the date of disbursement if they wish to cancel all or a portion of their subsidized and/or unsubsidized loan or loan disbursement. If students request to cancel their subsidized and/or unsubsidized loan after the 30 day period, the school is not required to return the loan proceeds, cancel all or a portion of the loan or loan disbursement(s) or do both. The school will notify students in writing of the outcome of the cancellation request. Loan Cancellation Request Forms may be obtained from the Financial Aid Office.

Your Financial Aid Package

Once the Office of Financial Aid has received your FAFSA results and other required forms, a financial aid package is developed for you based on your financial need. At this time the Office of Financial Aid will package your aid and send you an award letter outlining the financial aid included in your package. Students who receive additional assistance from any additional sources are required to notify the Office of Financial Aid immediately. Students will determine the amount of the award they will accept and return the completed form to the Financial Aid Office. No loans will be disbursed until the completed form is received by the Financial Aid Office.

Disbursement Policy

Federal Pell Grants and Stafford Student Loan proceeds must be disbursed to students in multiple installments. Disbursements of these funds are made in periods of enrollment termed Payment Periods. The first payment period begins at the start of training and ends when the student successfully completes one half of the scheduled academic year clock hours at which time the second payment period begins.

The first disbursement of PELL Grant funds are transferred electronically to the school and credited directly to the student's tuition account. PELL Grant payments generally arrive after the first 30 days of training.

The first disbursement of student loan funds occurs after a student has been enrolled for 30 days. To be eligible for the second disbursement of grant and loan proceeds students MUST maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined in the program's handbook and MUST have completed one half of the academic year's scheduled clock hours. Failure to meet these standards will result in financial aid funds being either delayed or cancelled.

Student Loan disbursements are transferred electronically to the school and credited directly to the student's tuition account. Students are notified in writing when loan disbursements have been posted to their account. Students then have 30 days in which they can cancel all or a part of the loan.

Scholarships and payments from other sources, such as a student's employer, a student's parent, or other, are posted to the students' accounts as they arrive at the school.

If at any time a student's account is overpaid creating a credit balance after all tuition and fees are paid, the credit balance will be refunded to the student in the form of a check from the school. Refund checks will be available no later than 14 days after the credit balance occurs in the student's account. Students can elect to have their credit balances returned to the USDE to reduce loan debt or held on account for a future tuition bill.

In the case where your financial aid disbursements do not cover your total cost of your program, you are responsible for paying the balance owed to the school. Students must pay any remaining balance owed to the school immediately after all aid for the current payment period has been disbursed and posted to their account. A second disbursement may be delayed until the student account is in good standing.

Tuition Refunds

Tuition Refunds for Class Cancellation

If a class is cancelled by Berks Career and Technology Center, all students will be refunded 100% of all pre-paid tuition and fees. Students are not required to request that prepaid tuition and fees be refunded. Refunds of pre-paid tuition and fees occur automatically and shall be made within 30 days of the planned start date of the class.

Tuition Refunds for Students who Withdraw On or Before the First Day of Class

If a student fails to commence class or withdrawals from class on the first day of school, the school will retain no more than \$100 of pre-paid tuition or fees. Students are not required to request that any prepaid tuition and fees in excess of the first \$100 be refunded. Refunds of pre-paid tuition and fees in excess of \$100 occur automatically and shall be made within 30 days of the planned start date of the class.

Tuition Refund Schedule

Students withdrawing from their program are eligible for partial tuition refunds. The following refund schedule for tuition applies beginning on the first full day of class.

Withdrawal during the first 7 Scheduled days of the payment period	- 75%
Withdrawal during the first 7 scheduled days but within the first 25% of the payment period	- 55%
Withdrawal after 25% but within 60% of the scheduled payment period	- 30%
Withdrawal after 60% of the payment period	- no refund

Refunds will be made on tuition charges for each payment period once a student is determined to be withdrawn from Berks Career and Technology Center. Tuition refunds will be calculated using the student's actual last day of attendance. Any refunds will be made within 30 days after withdrawal date is determined.

Title IV Refund Policy

Students benefiting from receiving Title IV federal funds will have their federal financial aid refunds calculated as per federal regulations.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) specifies that BCTC must determine the amount of financial aid program assistance that you earn if you withdraw from your program of study. The USDE requires that when you withdraw during a payment period, the amount of the financial aid program assistance that you have earned up to that point is determined by a specific Title IV formula. If you received, or BCTC received on your behalf, less assistance than the amount that you earned, you will be able to receive those additional funds. If you received more assistance than you earned, the excess funds must be returned.

The amount of assistance that you earned is determined by using the Title IV Refund Calculation. That is, if you completed 30% of the payment period, you earn 30% of the assistance you were originally scheduled to receive. Once you have completed more than 60% of the payment period, you earn all of your assistance.

When a student withdraws and refunds are required to be returned, the following distribution list is used to return the funds. Funds are returned in the order listed until all required amounts have been returned.

1. Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
2. Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
3. Federal PLUS Loan
4. Federal Pell Grant
4. Sponsoring Agency
5. Student

If the Office of Financial Aid is not required to return all of the excess funds, you must return the remaining amount. Any loan funds that you must return, you (or your parent for a PLUS loan) repay in accordance with the terms of your loan agreement, or you make scheduled payments to the holder of the loan over a period of time.

If you are responsible for returning grant funds, you do not have to return the full amount. The law provides that you are not required to return 50% of the grant assistance that you receive that is your responsibility to repay. Any amount that you have to return is a grant overpayment, and you must make arrangements with BCTC or the U.S. Department of Education to return the funds.

The requirements for Title IV program funds when you withdraw are separate from any school refund policies. The amount of refund determined by the Title IV calculation determines how much financial aid you have earned for the current payment period, whereas the school refund policy determines the amount of tuition owed for the current payment period. Therefore, you may still owe funds to the school to cover unpaid institutional charges and/or for any Title IV program funds that the school was required to return. The school's refund policies are located above.

Overpayment of Federal Student Aid

An overpayment is created whenever the student receives FSA funds that exceed his/her eligibility. Overawards are one cause of overpayments; overpayments can also be caused by misreported FAFSA information, unreported scholarships and private loans, miscalculated costs or EFC, payments to an ineligible student, or payments in excess of grant or loan maximums.

In the case where the school is liable for the overaward, the school will immediately restore an amount equal to the overpayment to the appropriate FSA account. If the restoration of the overpayment leaves a balance due to school from the student, the student will be responsible to pay the balance due.

In the case where the student is responsible for the overpayment, the student will be notified in writing requesting full reimbursement of the overpayment. If, after notification, the student has not repaid or made satisfactory arrangements to repay the overpayment, the school will refer the overpayments to the United States Department of Education Student FSA's Management Collections (ED Collections) and notify NSLDS of the overpayment. At this point, the student becomes ineligible to receive Title IV funds until the overpayment is resolved.

Credit Balance Refunds

Credit balances occur when payments to a student's account exceed the tuition and fees charged to the student. Credit balances can be returned to the USDE to reduce loan debt, held on account for a future tuition bill or refunded to the student to be used for living/transportation expenses. If at any time a student's account is overpaid creating a credit balance, the credit balance is refunded to the student in the form of a check from the school unless the school has been directed in writing to either return the money to the USDE or hold the balance on account. Refunds to students will be processed through the BCTC Continuing Education Office. Refund checks will be available no later than 14 days after the credit balance occurs in the student's account. Students will be notified when refund checks are available. At a student's request, a check may be picked up at the office. A credit created by Financial Aid awards must be refunded to the student within 14 days after the academic year.

Tips on Finding Scholarships

Local Organizations - You can increase your odds of being awarded a scholarship by checking local organizations first.

Employers - Have your parents ask their personnel administrator if their company offers any sort of financial aid, tuition reimbursement, or scholarships, for employee's children. Most major companies do offer this benefit. If you have a job, ask your own company if they offer this sort of benefit.

Volunteer Work - If you have done any volunteer work at your local hospital, food bank, etc., these organizations may provide scholarships in recognition for unpaid assistance.

Organizations - Check foundations, religious organizations, and town or city clubs to see if they offer any kind of scholarship. Include community organizations, and civic groups such as the American Legion, 4-H Clubs, YMCA, Elks, Kiwanis, Jaycees, and the Girl or Boy Scouts of America in your search. If you are NOT a member of any organizations, the next thing is to check with the organization that represent what you are planning on studying.

Unions - If you or your parents are members of a Union, most major labor unions offer scholarships for members and their dependent children (AFLCIO, Teamsters, etc.)

Church - Check with your church. Your local parish may or may not have any scholarships for their members, but the Diocese or headquarters may have some available.

The Library - Your public library is an excellent source of information on state and private sources of aid. Ask the librarian to help you research sources of scholarships. Your financial need is usually considered, but other factors may also be taken into account.

Chamber of Commerce - Check with your local Chamber of Commerce. Many offer (usually small, less than \$500) grants to students in the community, especially those planning on careers in business or Public Service. Even if they do not offer any themselves, you can usually get a listing of members, and many of them may offer small scholarships to local students.

High School - Check with your High School Guidance Counselor, Principal, Teachers, and other high school administrators on scholarship information that has been sent to the school.

BCTC Website – visit www.berkscareer.com. Under the Adult/Continuing Education tab look for Adult Day School Scholarship Opportunities.

The Internet - Hit the major search engines, and run searches on scholarships, financial aid, organizations, colleges, universities, and grants - anything you can think of. Be wary of any organization or company that charges you a fee for their services. Please see the next section for information on "Scholarship Scams."

Scholarship Scams- Don't Pay Money to Get Money

Some deceitful companies will go about swindling dollars by promising students free scholarship money in exchange for an up-front fee. Others claim to have access to untapped sources of financial aid, charging students for information on various scholarship awards. Many parents will receive letters in the mail promoting "free financial aid seminars" or "open interviews" for financial assistance, not knowing that the real purpose of the event is to plug unnecessary products and/or services. When a sales pitch implies that purchasing such a product is a prerequisite to receiving federal student aid, it violates federal regulations and state insurance laws. While some of these profit-making companies do offer legitimate services, there are several alternative routes students can take to acquire a wealth of scholarship information - for FREE. The bottom line: if you have to pay money to get money, it's probably a scam and you're better off looking elsewhere.

Six Signs of a Scam

The Federal Trade Commission urges students and parents to look out for six signs that a scholarship offer is a scam:

1. "The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back." No one can guarantee students that they'll receive scholarship money. Always look for strings attached. FinAid (www.finaid.org), an acclaimed web site dedicated to providing students with comprehensive scholarship information, alerts that "some companies will not refund your money, but instead will offer to rerun the search for a specified number of times at no charge." It also has found that numerous organizations define the word "receive" ambiguously - students will receive information about scholarships, not the scholarships themselves.
2. "We will need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship." Never give out an account number without getting all the information in writing first.
3. "You can't get this information anywhere else." Don't believe a company that claims its search engine is entirely unique. Different scholarship databases overlap significantly since many utilize the same information-gathering techniques. There are several free search services on the Internet where students can enter information about themselves and instantly see a list of valid scholarships for which they may qualify.
4. "The scholarship will cost some money."
5. "We'll do all the work for you." There are thousands of legitimate scholarship opportunities out there. However, these award donors often require substantial materials from their applicants - essays, letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc. For these applications, you can't hire a company to do the work for you.
6. "You've been selected" by a "national foundation" to receive a scholarship or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered. Before sending anything, call directory assistance to see if the company has a listing. Find out how the company acquired your information and then be on guard for hidden fees.

If you or someone you know suspects that a scholarship offer may be a scam, you can report it to the National Fraud Information Center at 1-800-876-7060, the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP, or by email to [Finaid.org](mailto:scams@finaid.org) at scams@finaid.org. You can also contact your State Attorney General's Office, the Better Business Bureau, U.S. Postal Inspection Service (if any part of the transaction was through the mail), U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General, or your high school counselor for more assistance.

National Scholarship Databases

Listed below are several scholarship databases available to assist students in finding private sector scholarships, fellowships and loans for which he/she may be eligible. Upon entering student-specific information (i.e. grade level, major, email address, etc.) the search will retrieve information about scholarships pertaining to that student and send this information to his/her email account. This may include more detailed information about the scholarship, as well as how to request an application.

Scholarship Databases	http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/other.phtml
Hispanic College Fund	http://www.hispanicfund.org/
Scholarships for Native Americans	http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/natamind.phtml
AXA Achievement Scholarship Program - for current high school seniors.	http://www.axa-achievement.com/
General Scholarships	
Scholarships	http://www.scholarships.com/
SuperCollege	http://www.supercollege.com/
Major-Specific Database	http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/majors.phtml
Scholarships for Students with Disabilities	http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/disabled.phtml
Scholarships for Minorities	http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/minority.phtml
Education Planner	http://educationplanner.com

Disclaimer: The Office of Financial Aid at BCTC does not monitor nor control the information provided on the web sites listed above.

Frequently Asked Questions FAFSA/ Applying For Financial Aid

How Do I Apply For Financial Aid?

To be considered for the Federal Pell Grant and Federal Direct Student Loan programs you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students who are selected to undergo this process will be mailed a written notification of the selection. The written notification will include a Verification Form to complete and a list specific documentation that must be returned to the Office of Financial Aid prior to financial aid being awarded.

Where Do I Get The Applications?

The paper FAFSA is no longer available. You must complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. If you do not want to complete the FAFSA online, you can contact Federal Student Aid at 1-800-433-3243 to have one mailed to you.

Returning students who were awarded financial aid in the previous award year will be able to complete a Renewal FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. If you do not want to complete the Renewal FAFSA online, you can contact Federal Student Aid at 1-800-433-3243 to have one mailed to you.

Only returning students who borrowed a Federal Direct Student loan in the prior award year will not be required to complete a new Master Promissory Note (MPN). Their initial MPN is good for a period of up to ten years once it has been signed.

Do I Need To Be Admitted Before I Can Apply For Financial Aid?

NO. You can fill out the FAFSA and list up to 10 schools to receive the information before admission. However, to actually receive an award (estimated or actual) offer, you must be admitted to the school.

What Are The Deadlines Or Suggested Completion Dates For Financial Aid?

Students can generally complete their applications at any time prior to the start of the program. It is important that students contact the Office of Financial Aid to receive appropriate deadlines.

When Will I Receive Information Regarding The Action Taken On My Applications?

The anticipated dates for receiving information are as follows:

Federal Pell Grants (FAFSA application) - Four to six weeks after the FAFSA has been mailed to the federal processor, a Student Aid Report (SAR) will be sent to the student (sent via mail through the postal service or sent via email if an email address is provided or the application is done online). If you apply on-line, you will receive a response via email within one to three days. Please refer to the SAR for an initial indication of your eligibility for a Pell Grant.

Federal Direct Stafford Loans - The student's maximum eligibility will be indicated on the student's award letter. Award Letters will be mailed to students When all paperwork has been completed.

I Received A PHEAA State Grant Notice And It Says I Can't Get a State Grant. Why is that? - When you complete the FAFSA application you are actually completing two applications in one--both a Federal and State Grant application. You will receive a PHEAA State Grant notice in the mail explaining to you that you are not State Grant Eligible because our institution does not participate in this program. This is an accurate statement. We are not a 2- or 4-year degree granting institution, therefore, our institution is not eligible to participate in the State Grant Program. You do not have to complete and return the State Grant Notice.

Why Do I Have To Put My Parents' Tax Information On The FAFSA If They Are Not Paying For School?

The federal government expects both the parents and the student to contribute to the student's educational cost. Regardless of whether a parent will or will not contribute to your education, their income and assets must be reported and be used to determine your financial aid. Even if you do not live with your parents, if you are considered dependent by the federal government, you are required to provide parental information. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has questions for you to answer to determine if you are dependent or independent. Refer to the FAFSA instructions for instructions regarding parental information.

What Do I Do When I'm Considered Dependent But My Parent(s) Won't Provide Information Or Sign My FAFSA? Can Someone Else Sign It?

NO. No one other than your parent may legally sign the FAFSA (refer to the FAFSA to determine who is considered a parent). Unless your parent(s) provide the required information and sign the FAFSA, you cannot be considered for any need-based financial aid, including Federal Stafford Loans. If you find yourself in this situation, you should contact your Financial Aid Counselor at the Office of Financial Aid to help you explore other possibilities.

I Do Not Live With My Parents, But Live With Another Relative. Should I Put Their Information On The FAFSA As My Parent?

NO. No one other than your parent may provide financial information or sign the FAFSA. If you reside with grandparents, aunt/uncle, or someone other than your parents, contact the Office of Financial Aid as soon as possible to speak to a Financial Aid Counselor about your situation.

My Parents Make A Lot Of Money, So I Probably Won't Qualify For Financial Aid. Should I Still Apply?

YES! Many families mistakenly think they don't qualify for aid and prevent themselves from receiving financial aid by failing to apply for it. In addition to grants, there are sources of aid, such as low interest loans - Federal Stafford and Federal PLUS loans - that are available regardless of need. It is wise to have something to fall back on, in case your family finds themselves in a financial crunch.

I Want To File My FAFSA But I Have Not Yet Completed My Tax Returns Or My Parents Haven't Filed Theirs. What Should I Do?

You may use estimated tax information on the FAFSA based on you and your parents' W-2 forms. When the federal taxes are completed, you can update your Student Aid Report (SAR) or make corrections online (if you filed using FAFSA on the Web) using the correct information. It is recommended that you have your taxes prepared early so the information you report is accurate and you avoid having to make updates later. If you initially file using estimated amounts, no financial aid can be awarded until taxes are filed and updates have been made.

My Parents Are Divorced. The Parent I Reside With Is Remarried. Do I Have To Provide My Step-Parent's Income And Assets On The FAFSA, Even If I Am Not Supported By The Step-Parent?

YES, provided that the parent you are living with is the one completing the FAFSA (your custodial parent). If your parent is married to your step-parent at the time you complete the FAFSA, both your parent and step-parent must report their income and assets, even if they weren't married the previous year (i.e. filed separate tax returns).

Why Should I Get A Federal ID And Apply Online?

The paper FAFSA is no longer available so students must complete the FAFSA online at www.studentloans.gov or www.fafsa.ed.gov and a FSA ID is required in order to sign the on-line application. The online application assists you in filling out the information correctly and helps minimize mistakes. It also allows you to access your application to make updates to your FAFSA online. If you do not want to complete the FAFSA online, you can contact Federal Student Aid at 1-800-433-3243 to have one mailed to you.

When Will My Financial Aid Award Be Ready?

To receive an award letter, the student must first complete the FAFSA. Once the school has received information from the FAFSA, an estimated award can be made for most students. Students can contact the Office of Financial Aid to discuss their estimated awards. Actual awards are not made until students have been admitted to school and all required paperwork has been submitted to the Office of Financial Aid.

Incoming students - Award letters are sent to admitted students prior to the start of their program. Students who have not received an award letter prior to the start of school have either not completed the required applications or have not submitted all the required paperwork to the Office of Financial Aid. Students will continue to receive new award statements if their financial aid changes.

Transfer students - Award letters are sent to admitted transfer students prior to the start of their program provided that the school has their complete financial aid transcript on file for determination of remaining eligibility and all remaining financial aid has been cancelled at their previous school. Transfer students must contact the school they had previously attended and direct the school to cancel all remaining disbursements. Students will continue to receive new award statements if their financial aid changes.

Students crossing over into a new FAFSA award year - Students who ARE currently enrolled and are crossing over into to new FAFSA award year (July) your award letters will not be ready until approximately July of each year. In order to receive a new award for the next year, students must have renewed a FAFSA application for the upcoming year. Students who do not receive their new award letter by the end of July have either not submitted a FAFSA renewal application for the upcoming year or have not submitted all required paperwork.

Payment/Due Dates

What Are The Anticipated Payment Dates For School Tuition And Fees? Because students enroll on a continuous basis, tuition and fees are charged and payments are made based on payment periods. Each academic year is divided into two equal payment periods. Payments generally arrive one month following the start of the program for the first payment period with the second payment arriving shortly after the start of the second payment period. Payments are in two installments and generally arrive in October and February.

Will The School Extend Credit To Me Until My Aid Is Received?

For those individuals who have been officially approved for financial aid, the school will extend credit until financial aid is received. Any balance due to the school after all aid has been awarded is the responsibility of the student. Payable by cash, check Visa, MC or Discover. Payment Plans are available upon request at the Continuing Education Office.

Are Credit Cards Acceptable For Payment?

Yes. The School will accept Discover®, MasterCard® and Visa®

How Do I Pay For Books?

Books, tools and uniforms are required for most of the approved programs at BCTC. Students are required to have their books, tools and uniforms for the first day of school. Students will pay out-of-pocket for books, tools and uniforms. It is possible that any credit, created on your account, from your financial aid may cover these costs.

My Tuition Account

How Do I Check On My Account Balance?

You can check on your tuition account balance by contacting BCTC Continuing Education Department. Contact information is located in the contact information section of this booklet.

My Federal Direct Stafford Loan Has Not Been Credited To My Account Yet. Why Is That?

Be sure that you have signed your electronic Master Promissory Note (MPN) on-line and have submitted it to the US Department of Education. If all requirements are satisfied and you have previously signed the MPN, contact the Office of Financial Aid for further information.

I Received My Award Letter And I Still Need More Money. What Can I Do?

If you are a dependent student, your parents may consider applying for a Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). They can borrow any amount, up to the cost of your attendance. If they are denied for any reason, the student may borrow more money in Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans. A copy of the denial must be on file at the Office of Financial Aid and the student or parent must contact the Office of Financial Aid to indicate the amount the student wants to borrow additionally in Stafford Loans. See the section on Federal Stafford Loans to determine the maximum amount the student can borrow additionally. Students who are independent are automatically eligible for the additional Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans. Students may also apply for private student loans from institutions such as: Well Fargo.

Will The School Allow Me Or My Parents To Make Monthly Payments To The School?

YES. Students and/or parents can setup a Monthly Payment Plan directly with the school. Contact the Adult Education Department for details on how to initiate a payment plan. Students making payments to the school are required to have all tuition and fees paid before the end of each payment/billing period. Students who have not made satisfactory payments and have a balance at the end of the payment period may not be eligible to return to class for the next payment period until the balance is paid.

Special Circumstances Affecting Aid Eligibility

One Of My Parents Lost His/Her Job And My Family Is In A Financial Bind. Can The Office Of Financial Aid Help Me Out?

If your family experiences a change in income due to an unusual circumstance (loss of job, reduced hours, separation or divorce, death in the immediate family) contact the Office of Financial Aid regarding your situation. It may be possible to reevaluate your financial aid eligibility.

If your family has high unreimbursed medical expenses or pays private school tuition for elementary or secondary school (K-12), your financial aid eligibility may be re-evaluated. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for further information.

Loans (Plus and Stafford)

My Parents Know They Will Be Denied A Plus Loan. Is There A Way To Quickly Apply For A Plus Loan?

If parents know they will be denied, they can complete an Online Pre-Approval through the US Department of Education website www.studentloans.gov. If a parent is denied the PLUS loan, the parent has the right to request that the credit check be reviewed a second time prior to making a determination.

What Is The Difference Between A Subsidized Stafford Loan And An Unsubsidized Stafford Loan?

The school determines the amount of Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans the student is eligible to receive. You must have financial need in order to receive a Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan.

A **SUBSIDIZED** loan means that the government subsidizes the interest while you are in school - you are not required to pay interest, nor does it accrue on your loans until you are out of your grace period and in repayment.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 has eliminated the subsidy payment (the payment of interest) during the grace period for loans with a first disbursement on or after July 1, 2012 and before July 1, 2014.

An **UNSUBSIDIZED** loan means that you do not have financial need; therefore the federal government requires that you start paying the interest on your loan as soon as it is disbursed, or it will capitalize and you will have to pay it back when you start paying on your loans. It is recommended that, if you have an unsubsidized Stafford Loan, you pay the interest while you are in school to avoid larger payments when you enter into repayment on your loan. You will receive an interest statement every 3 months whether you elect to pay the interest now or have it capitalized.

How Do I Reduce The Amount Of My Federal Stafford Loan Or Cancel The Entire Loan?

Students may cancel all or a portion of the loan prior to receiving the loan or within 30 days after the date the school has sent notification that the loan funds have been credited to the student's account. To cancel all of or a portion of your loan, contact the Office of Financial Aid to request a [Loan Cancellation Request Form](#). Complete the loan cancellation request form and return it to the Office of Financial Aid for processing.

General Questions

Who May Inquire About My Financial Aid Record?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects the confidentiality of student records. Only those individuals, who provided information on a student's FAFSA, can request information regarding the student's financial aid file. Therefore, if a student would like their financial aid information released to another individual and/or agency, the student must complete the [FERPA Release Form](#) and submit it to the Office of Financial Aid.

What Records Should I Retain?

Keep copies of all your applications along with the base year federal income tax form used to complete your FAFSA application in order to document your adjusted gross income or other data which appears on the 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ form. Also keep copies of all award letters as well as any letters you send to or receive from various agencies.

If I Withdraw From Class, Will It Affect My Financial Aid?

If students are considering a withdraw from school, they are urged to discuss their student account status with someone in the Office of Financial Aid prior to making their final determination. Students who withdraw may end up owing a balance to the school, a balance to the U.S. Department of Education, a balance on a Stafford loan or a balance to all parties listed.

If I Repeat A Class, Will It Affect My Financial Aid?

If students are required to repeat a class or an entire level of training, it will affect your future financial aid disbursements. When students are required to repeat coursework, all financial aid is cancelled during the period in which the student is repeating the coursework and then re-instated when they reach the next payment period within the program.

I Was Selected For Verification. What Does That Mean?

The U.S. Department of Education requires that 30% of all students who apply for financial aid must be verified. Verification is the process to make sure that the information reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is accurate. Some applications are selected because of inconsistent information, while others are randomly selected. Any student who is selected will be notified by the Office of Financial Aid. The following are items required to complete verification (this is not an all inclusive list):

- Verification Form
- Student's Federal Tax Return and/or IRS Tax Transcript
- Parents' Federal Tax Return and/or IRS Tax Transcript (for dependent students)

The Office of Financial Aid will compare the information on the tax returns to the FAFSA and correct any errors. Any corrections made will generate a new Student Aid Report (SAR). After the verification process is complete, the student will be notified of his/her financial aid eligibility. **Failure to complete the verification process will prohibit you from receiving any federal financial aid for the academic year.**

What Is Identity Theft And Should I Be Concerned About It?

Identity theft is a serious crime and can affect anyone. It occurs when someone uses your personal information without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes. As with any crime, you cannot completely control whether you will become a victim. But according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, you can minimize your risk by managing your personal information cautiously. You can help to protect your own identity by monitoring your own credit history report. A free copy of your credit report can be obtained from all three credit agencies one time per year by accessing the www.annualcreditreport.com website.

How Do I Check On My Financial Aid?

You can check on your financial aid by contacting the Office of Financial Aid. Contact information is located in the contact information section of this booklet.

CONTACT AND WEBSITE INFORMATION

Application to Complete	Web Site Address	Technical Support	
FSA ID	studentloans.gov	800-433-3243	
FAFSA Application	studentloans.gov or www.FAFSA.ed.gov	800-433-3243	
Loan Entrance Counseling Master Promissory Note Direct PLUS Loan Pre-approval Direct PLUS Loan Application	studentloans.gov	800-433-3243	
Loan Exit Counseling	studentloans.gov	800-433-3243	
For questions regarding:	Office to call	E-mail	Phone
Financial Aid	Financial Aid Specialist	Vickie Foreman vickie.foreman@berkscareer.com	610-743-7630
Payments & Credit Balance Refunds	Continuing Education Administrative Assistant	Carol Frye carol.frye@berkscareer.com	610-987-2706
Admissions, Registration, Payment Plans and Enrollment Information	Continuing Education Administrator	Kim DeHart kim.dehart@berkscareer.com	610-743-7642
For questions regarding:	Agency to call	Phone	
Tax Transcripts	IRS	800-829-1040 www.irs.gov	
Status Information Letter or Waiver	Selective Services	847-688-6888 703-605-4100	
Correction of Social Security discrepancies.	Social Security Administration	717-299-5261	
Information on all of your Title IV Funding	National Student Loan Data System	www.nslds.ed.gov	

Financial Aid Application Process

Students are required to complete their financial aid applications on-line. The school cannot determine your financial aid eligibility until your financial aid applications have been processed and verified if required, so, it is important to complete your applications **as early as possible**. Some FAFSA applications are flagged for a process called verification. If your application is flagged, additional information will be required by our office. You will be notified in writing of what documentation is needed and no financial aid will be processed until it is received and verified. Once you have completed and submitted your financial aid applications AND the Office of Financial Aid has received all required paperwork from you, our office will have everything required to determine your financial aid eligibility.

1. Gather required Information for FAFSA application.

Before you begin completing the FAFSA application, you will want to gather the information required to apply. Listed below are some of the data items you will need in order to complete this application. You will be notified in writing if your application is flagged for verification.

- Your Social Security Number and your parents' Social Security number if you are providing parent information.
- Your driver's license number if you have one.
- Your Alien Registration Number if you are not a U.S. Citizen.
- Information on savings, investments, and business and farm assets for yourself, your spouse if you are married, and for your parents if you are providing parent information. When calculating investments, do not include IRA accounts or the home in which you live.
- Child Support Received or Paid

2. Complete your financial aid application requirements on-line at studentloans.gov.

Create an FSA ID Go to studentloans.gov webpage, select "Create an FSA ID" above the green Log In button. Follow the on screen prompts to create your User ID and Password. If you have previously had a PIN to use the system, you will be given an option to connect your PIN information to the new User ID, during the process.

Complete the 2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

School Code -- 040413

In the Tools & Resources section of the studentloans.gov webpage, select "FAFSA". You must complete a FAFSA application in order to receive any federal assistance. This step cannot be omitted.

When completing the tax section of this application, it is highly recommended that you import and do not change your 2015 Tax Return information from the IRS. If you do not use the IRS Data Retrieval tool when completing your initial FAFSA application, you can return to FAFSA.gov, log in to your FAFSA record, select "Make FAFSA Corrections," and navigate to the Financial Information section of the form. Follow the instructions to determine if you are eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer 2015 IRS income tax information into your FAFSA. It takes up to two weeks for IRS income information to be available for the IRS Data Retrieval Tool for electronic IRS tax return filers, and up to eight weeks for paper IRS tax return filers.

Complete Loan Entrance Counseling.

Sign-in to the www.studentloans.gov website using the green "Sign In" button. Next select the Loan Entrance Counseling option and follow the on-screen prompts.

Complete a Master Promissory Note.

School Code – 040413

Sign-in to the www.studentloans.gov website using the green "Sign In" button. Next select the Complete a Master Promissory Note option and follow the on-screen prompts.

BCTC Student Lending Code of Conduct

Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) is committed to providing students and their families with the best information and processing alternatives available regarding student borrowing. In support of this and in an effort to rule out any perceived or actual conflict of interest between BCTC officers, employees or agents and education loan lenders, BCTC has adopted the following:

- Berks Career and Technology Center does not participate in any revenue-sharing arrangements with any lender.
- Berks Career and Technology Center does not permit any officer, employee or agent of the school who is employed in the financial aid office or is otherwise involved in the administration of education loans to accept any gifts of greater than a nominal value from any lender, guarantor or servicer.
- Berks Career and Technology Center does not permit any officer, employee or agent of the school who is employed in the financial aid office or is otherwise involved in the administration of education loans to accept any fee, payment or other financial benefit (including a stock purchase option) from a lender or affiliate of a lender as compensation for any type of consulting arrangement or contract to provide services to a lender or on behalf of a lender relating to education loans.
- Berks Career and Technology Center does not permit any officer, employee or agent of the school who is employed in the financial aid office or is otherwise involved in the administration of education loans to accept anything of value from a lender, guarantor, or group of lenders and/or guarantors in exchange for service on an advisory board, commission or other group established by such a lender, guarantor group of lenders and/or guarantors. Berks Career and Technology Center does allow for the reasonable reimbursement of expenses associated with participation in such boards, commissions or groups by lenders, guarantors, or groups of lenders and/or guarantors.
- Berks Career and Technology Center does not assign a lender to any first-time borrower through financial aid packaging or any other means.
- Berks Career and Technology Center recognizes that a borrower has the right to choose any lender from which to borrow to finance his/her education. Berks Career and Technology Center will not refuse to certify or otherwise deny or delay certification of a loan based on the borrower's selection of a lender and/or guarantor.
- Berks Career and Technology Center will not request or accept any offer of funds to be used for private education loans to students from any lender in exchange for providing the lender with a specified number or volume of Title IV loans, or a preferred lender arrangement for Title IV loans.
- Berks Career and Technology Center will not request or accept any assistance with call center or financial aid office staffing.

Disclosure of Records

Berks Career and Technology Center will disclose information from student education records to:

1. School officials and regulatory agencies that have a legitimate educational interest in the record. School officials refer to administration, academic or support staff employed by BCTC. Officials may also be a contractor such as an attorney or auditor employed by BCTC for a special function. A legitimate educational interest includes functions related to monitoring and evaluation of educational program, service functions such as counseling, financial aid and functions related to discipline.
2. School officials, upon request of student.
3. Officials of the Department of Education, federal, state and local authorities in connection with state or federal education regulations.

4. Judicial officials upon order of subpoena.
5. Accrediting organizations for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
6. To appropriate parties in health and safety emergency.

Any further disclosure of information other than the above will require student written consent. A record of request for disclosure of information from a student record will be maintained in the student's file.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students and parents have certain specific rights regarding confidentiality of student educational and financial aid records and a right to privacy. Education records of Berks Career and Technology Center's Continuing Education Program are defined as information related directly to the student including financial aid information, course grades, counseling records, transcripts and application information. Records may be in the form of files, documents, and other materials in various medium such as handwritten, printed, monitor screen, tapes, disks or notes.

Student's Rights under FERPA

Students have the right to inspect and request an amendment of personally identifiable information from education records. The procedure is as follows:

- Student must request in writing to the Continuing Education Administrator to inspect educational records.
- Student must request in writing to the Continuing Education Administrator to amend his/her educational file. The request must detail the item(s) to be changed and rationale for change.
- The Continuing Education Administrator will review the request, discuss with faculty if necessary, and notify students of decision. Students have the right to grievance procedure upon denial of request.

Students have the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information from educational records, except when FERPA permits disclosure without consent. A FERPA Waiver form must be on file with the Continuing Education Office.

Parents Right under FERPA

When a student turns 18 years old or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, all rights afforded to you as a parent under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) transfer to the student ("eligible student"). However, FERPA provides ways in which a school may – but is not required to –share information from an eligible student's education records with parents, without the student's consent. For example:

- Schools may disclose education records to parents if the student is claimed as a dependent for tax purposes.
- Schools may disclose education records to parents if a health or safety emergency involves their son or daughter.
- Schools may inform parents if the student, under age 21, has violated any law or policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- A school official may generally share with parent information that is based on that official's personal knowledge or observation of the student.
- The release of final results of a disciplinary proceeding against a student who is an alleged perpetrator of a "crime or violence or non-forcible sex offense" and who was found responsible for violating BCTC policies in perpetrating the crime.
- Berks Career & Technology Center requires a FERPA Waiver form to be on file, from the student, giving us the authority to share any information, not related to the FAFSA, with parents.

