



INSTITUTE FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE VISUAL ARTS

FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK

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Top Takeaways

1. IDSVA students are eligible for **Unsubsidized federal student loans**, up to \$20,500 per year. The cap on graduate loans is \$100,000.
2. Loan disbursements occur **after classes begin**. If you cannot attend the residency as planned, your loan disbursement will be delayed.
3. Loan refunds occur approximately **two weeks after the semester starts**.
4. During a **leave of absence**, you must complete **exit counseling** and start a repayment plan six months after your last attendance.
5. If you **withdraw during a semester**, you or IDSVA may need to return part of your loan disbursement. Consult with the Director of Financial Aid before withdrawing.
6. **Dissertation students** receive **two disbursements per year** (fall and spring). There is no summer disbursement, unless you are enrolled in summer Diss Prep.
7. Dissertation students may take federal loans for a maximum of **six semesters of dissertation preparation**. Additional semesters must be funded personally.
8. Students are no longer eligible for loans **after submitting the dissertation** to the registrar.

Please review this document in its entirety to ensure you understand the IDSVA Financial Aid and Federal Student Loan process.

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Scholarship Awards

IDSVA offers scholarship support based on a combination of financial need and academic merit. Students should complete the [IDSVA Scholarship Award Application](#) and the [FAFSA](#), using IDSVA's school code: G41888. Students will be notified of any scholarship award at the time of admission.

Scholarships are awarded annually and are renewable for up to three years over the course of the program. Annual renewal is contingent upon maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 (equivalent to a B+ average). Failure to maintain this level of academic performance may result in a reduction or discontinuation of the scholarship.

Admitted and enrolled students may submit an appeal for additional scholarship consideration if their financial circumstances change or if extenuating circumstances are not reflected on the FAFSA. Appeals must be submitted to the Scholarship Committee, care of Amy Curtis, via email.

Federal Student Loans

IDSVA participates in the Federal Direct Loan Program and offers access to Unsubsidized Direct Loans. Students who received a loan through IDSVA prior to July 1, 2026 are also eligible for Graduate PLUS Loans. Olker Alva, Director of Financial Aid, assists students with the loan packaging process. Amy Curtis, Chief Executive Officer, oversees tuition billing and the issuance of loan refunds.

At the beginning of each loan packaging period, the Director of Financial Aid will contact students to initiate the loan process. During this time, borrowing options are reviewed to determine how loan funds may be used to cover tuition, educational costs, and eligible living expenses. "Loan packaging" refers to determining loan eligibility, selecting borrowing amounts, and completing the required loan documentation.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

To be considered for federal student aid, U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and eligible non-citizens must complete the FAFSA annually. The FAFSA uses a federally defined formula to assess financial strength and ability to contribute toward educational expenses. Factors considered include income (taxable and non-taxable), household assets, household size, and the number of family members enrolled in postsecondary education.

FAFSA uses tax information from two years prior (e.g., 2020 tax data for the 2022–2023 FAFSA). Students should submit the FAFSA each year beginning in October, using IDSVA's school code: **G41888**.

Loan Options

IDSVA students may borrow federal loan funds to cover tuition, educational costs, and eligible living expenses.

Direct Unsubsidized Loans

Graduate students may borrow up to \$20,500 per packaging period (one academic year). After the federal loan origination fee is deducted, the net disbursed amount for a \$20,500 loan is approximately \$20,284. The borrowing limit for Unsubsidized Direct Loans is \$100,000 for graduate degrees.

Graduate PLUS Loans

Students who received a loan through IDSVA prior to July 1, 2026 may also be eligible for additional funding through the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan program. Eligibility is based on the student's cost of attendance and other financial aid received. Graduate PLUS Loans require a credit check; however, low income or a low credit score alone does not automatically result in denial. Students must reapply for Graduate PLUS Loans each year and remain creditworthy throughout enrollment.

Determining How Much to Borrow

Approximately two months prior to the start of the academic year, students receive a Tuition Worksheet outlining tuition charges and estimated costs for the award year (typically three semesters). Scholarship awards are applied directly to tuition. Estimated costs may include travel to residency locations, meals during residencies, and books. These costs are averages and are paid by the student.

Students may also elect to borrow funds for eligible living expenses. The Director of Financial Aid will review the Tuition Worksheet with each student to determine the total amount to be borrowed.

Loan Packaging and Processing

Olker Alva, Director of Financial Aid, will prepare a loan packaging worksheet that details loan amounts. Students must complete and sign the loan packaging worksheet no later than two weeks prior to the start of the semester. Loan packaging is completed annually, and students must renew their loan package each year.

Entrance Counseling

Before borrowing federal student loans for the first time, students must complete federal entrance counseling. Entrance counseling explains loan terms, borrower responsibilities, repayment obligations, and the consequences of default, and provides sample repayment scenarios.

Disbursements

IDSVA requests federal loan funds from the U.S. Department of Education on the first day of each enrolled semester, up to three times per year. Prior to requesting funds, IDSVA must confirm that the student has begun academic participation. Loan funds are applied directly to the student's tuition account.

Refunds

Students who borrow funds in excess of tuition and institutional charges will receive a loan refund. To receive refunds via direct deposit, students must complete the [IDSVA Direct Deposit Form](#). Refunds are typically issued approximately two weeks after the start of the semester.

Loans During the Dissertation Period

Students may borrow federal loans during the dissertation phase to cover the Dissertation Preparation Fee, books, and eligible living expenses. Dissertation students typically receive loan disbursements in the fall and spring semesters only. Summer disbursements are not available unless the student is enrolled.

Once a dissertation is submitted to the registrar, the student is no longer eligible for federal student loans, and the dissertation defense date is used as the last date of enrollment for repayment purposes.

Important: In accordance with Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements, students may receive federal student loans for no more than six semesters of dissertation preparation. Additional dissertation semesters must be self-funded.

Eligibility Requirements for Federal Student Aid

To be eligible for federal student aid, students must meet one of the following citizenship or eligible non-citizen criteria:

- U.S. citizen or national
- Permanent resident (Green Card holder)
- Holder of an Arrival–Departure Record (I-94)
- Battered immigrant-qualified status
- T-Visa holder

Students must also:

- Possess a valid Social Security number (with limited exceptions)
- Complete the FAFSA annually
- Be enrolled at least half-time
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Certify that they are not in default on federal loans and do not owe a federal grant overpayment

Enrollment Status

Although IDSVA does not formally record attendance, students are required to participate in all scheduled academic activities, including videoconference sessions, on-site seminars, individual calls with faculty, and required online discussions. Students who intend to withdraw or take a leave of absence must notify the Director of the School in writing. Failure to do so may result in an unofficial withdrawal determination.

Students in the course of study who are taking two courses in the fall and spring semesters and a 1 or 2 credit residency in the summer are considered to be enrolled full-time. The exception to this is first year students who are taking one course in the fall semester and two courses in the

spring semester. They are also considered to be enrolled full-time. Students who are enrolled full-time should be on track to earn 20 credits in the year (fall, spring, and summer semesters).

Students in the course of study who are taking one course in the fall and spring semesters are considered to be enrolled half-time.

Dissertation students are considered to be enrolled half-time.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

IDSVA's SAP standards for federal aid recipients meet or exceed institutional academic requirements.

Qualitative Standard

A minimum grade of B is required for satisfactory academic performance at the PhD level.

Quantitative Standard (Time Frame)

Students must complete their program within 150% of the published length of the program. This equates to completing at least two-thirds of attempted credits.

The registrar evaluates SAP twice annually.

Credits attempted	Minimum credits completed for SAP
10	7
20	13
30	20
40	27
50	33
60	40

Financial Aid Warning, Probation, and Appeals

a) Financial Aid Warning

If a student receiving Federal Student Aid fails to meet either the qualitative or quantitative standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), the student will be placed on **Financial Aid Warning** for the next evaluation period.

A student on Financial Aid Warning remains eligible to receive Federal Student Aid during the warning period without submitting an appeal.

If the student meets SAP standards by the end of the Financial Aid Warning period, the student will be returned to good SAP standing with no loss of Federal Student Aid eligibility.

If the student does not meet SAP standards by the end of the Financial Aid Warning period, the student will lose eligibility for Federal Student Aid and may continue enrollment only through self-funding unless an appeal is approved.

b) Appeal Process

A student who loses eligibility for Federal Student Aid due to failure to meet SAP standards may submit a written appeal. Appeals must be submitted within five (5) calendar days of notification and must be directed to the Director of the School.

The appeal must include:

- A written explanation of the circumstances that prevented the student from meeting SAP
- A description of what has changed that will allow the student to meet SAP standards by the next evaluation period
- Supporting documentation, where applicable

Acceptable grounds for appeal include, but are not limited to: death of a relative, serious illness or injury of the student, or other documented extenuating circumstances.

The Director of the School will review the appeal in consultation with the Director of Financial Aid and will issue a written decision within ten (10) business days. The decision of the institution is final.

c) Financial Aid Probation

If an appeal is approved, the student will be placed on **Financial Aid Probation** and will regain eligibility for Federal Student Aid for **one subsequent evaluation period only**.

As a condition of Financial Aid Probation, the student must agree to and comply with a written academic plan designed to ensure the student can meet SAP standards by a specified point. The academic plan may include, but is not limited to:

- Required meetings with the Director of the School
- Repeating coursework previously failed or withdrawn from
- Enrollment limitations or academic monitoring

If the student meets SAP standards at the end of the probationary period, full Federal Student Aid eligibility will be reinstated.

If the student fails to meet SAP standards or the terms of the academic plan, Federal Student Aid eligibility will be terminated, and the student may continue enrollment only through self-funding.

d) Reinstatement of Federal Student Aid

Reinstatement of Federal Student Aid eligibility occurs only after a student meets all SAP requirements at the conclusion of a warning or probationary period. Eligibility is reinstated prospectively and is limited to the period evaluated.

Title IV Verification Policy

Verification is a federal process required by the U.S. Department of Education to confirm the accuracy of information reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students may be selected for verification either randomly or due to incomplete, inconsistent, or estimated data.

Students selected for verification must submit all requested documentation before Federal Student Aid can be disbursed. Required documentation may include, but is not limited to, IRS tax transcripts, W-2 forms, verification worksheets, and documentation of untaxed income.

Verification Deadlines

The priority deadline for verification documentation is six (6) weeks prior to the start of the term. The Financial Aid Office will issue an initial request and one follow-up reminder before issuing a final request with a two-week response deadline.

Students selected for verification must submit all required documentation within 120 days of the last date of enrollment or by the applicable federal deadline for the award year, whichever occurs first. Failure to complete verification will result in cancellation or return of Federal Student Aid.

If verification results in a change to eligibility, aid will be recalculated accordingly, and any overpayments will be returned to the U.S. Department of Education or the loan servicer.

Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4)

This policy applies to students who officially withdraw, unofficially withdraw, or are dismissed from the institution. It is separate from the institutional tuition refund policy.

Federal Student Aid is earned based on the percentage of the payment period completed. If a student withdraws before completing the payment period, IDSVa is required to calculate the amount of aid earned and return any unearned funds in accordance with federal regulations. This may result in unpaid tuition owed to IDSVa.

Veterans Benefits

IDSVA is approved for the use of GI Bill® benefits and participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program. Students using VA education benefits must submit a valid Certificate of Eligibility no later than the first day of the semester.

Loan Deferment

Students enrolled at least half-time may defer repayment of existing federal student loans. Deferment forms are available through the student's loan servicer and must be submitted to the Director of Financial Aid for certification.

Exit Counseling

Students who graduate, withdraw, or drop below half-time enrollment after borrowing federal student loans are required to complete exit counseling through the U.S. Department of Education's Direct Loan website.

Loan Repayment

Repayment options for federal student loans include standard repayment for an income-driven repayment plan. Repayment typically begins six (6) months after graduation or withdrawal.

Failure to repay federal student loans may result in delinquency or default, damage to credit, wage garnishment, and withholding of tax refunds.

Personal Financial Management

Students are strongly encouraged to borrow responsibly and to fully understand their rights and obligations as federal student loan borrowers. Federal student loans represent a long-term financial commitment.

Students should adhere to the following financial management best practices:

- Borrow only the amount of federal student loan funds necessary to cover educational expenses.
- Review loan disclosures carefully and understand interest accrual, fees, and repayment obligations.
- Excess loan funds may be reduced, canceled, or returned in accordance with federal regulations and institutional timelines.
- Promptly notify loan servicers of any changes to name, address, telephone number, or Social Security number.
- If unable to make a scheduled loan payment, contact the loan servicer **before** the payment due date to discuss repayment plan options, deferment, or forbearance.
- Maintain access to the loan servicer's website, which provides account details, repayment calculators, and repayment plan comparisons.
- IDSVA can assist students in identifying their federal loan servicer upon request but does not act as a financial advisor or loan servicer.

Students are responsible for understanding the long-term impact of borrowing and for managing repayment obligations following enrollment.

Contact Information

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(Loan packaging and federal aid questions)

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