



# INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK



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DOLLARS



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Robert E. Ru  
Secretary of the Treasury

ONE HUNDRED

**Are You  
Missing out  
on Money?**





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## **FINANCIAL AID AT INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE**

The decision to invest in a quality higher education may be one of the most important decisions you and your family will ever make. Indian River State College offers a variety of Financial Aid options to students including institutional scholarships, federal and state grants, Federal Work-Study and federal student loans. Financial Aid is available to most students to assist with paying tuition and fees. Aid can also be used to help pay education-related expenses such as books, rent, food and transportation.

Read this guide carefully and use it as a reference when applying for financial assistance. If you have questions, call, email or stop by Student Success Services (located in Crews Hall - Building W). We look forward to working with you as you pursue your educational goals.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Indian River State College

3209 Virginia Avenue ▪ Fort Pierce, FL 34981

1-866-792-4772

[www.irsc.edu](http://www.irsc.edu)

### **STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES**

Crews Hall—Building W

(772) 462-4740 or toll-free 1-866-792-4772

Email: [studentsuccessservice@irsc.edu](mailto:studentsuccessservice@irsc.edu)

### **FINANCIAL AID OFFICE**

Crews Hall—Building W

(772) 462-7450 or toll-free 1-866-900-3243

Email: [financialaid-info@irsc.edu](mailto:financialaid-info@irsc.edu)

### **VETERANS AFFAIRS\***

Crews Hall—Building W

(772) 462-7450 or toll-free 1-866-900-3243

Email: [veterans-info@irsc.edu](mailto:veterans-info@irsc.edu)

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Summer Hours: Monday - Thursday 7:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Friday - closed

\* VA advisor also available during evening hours. Call to confirm times.

NOTE: Financial Aid Advisors are also available at Chastain, Pruitt and Mueller campuses.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID?

To qualify for most types of Financial Aid, you must satisfy the following requirements:

- Be fully admitted to an eligible degree program (all Associate and Bachelor’s programs). Check with your advisor if you are in a Certificate program.
- Be a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Be enrolled at least half time (for most aid programs). Some students are eligible for Pell Grants for less than half time enrollment
- Have a High School Diploma or its equivalent (i.e., GED®). If you don’t have either of those, check with IRSC Adult Education to find out how you can earn your diploma or GED®.
- Not be in default on prior federal student loans or in “overpayment” on any prior federal grant
- Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. (You must have at least a 2.0 cumulative Financial Aid GPA, have completed at least 67% of all classes attempted, and have not attempted over 150% of your selected program – all prior credits are included in these calculations.)
- Have a complete Financial Aid file – all documents turned in as necessary

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## ENROLLMENT STATUS DEFINITIONS

(summer enrollment is the same for Financial Aid purposes)

Full time	12 credits or more
Three Quarter time	9–11 credits
Half time	6–8 credits
Less Half time	1–5 credits

## GRADE LEVEL DEFINITIONS

Grade Level	Earned Credits
Freshman	0-29
Sophomore	30-59
Junior	60-89
Senior	90-120

(Junior and Senior levels apply to students in Bachelor’s Degree programs only.)

## **DO I HAVE TO APPLY AND/OR RE-APPLY FOR AID EACH YEAR?**

You must re-apply for Financial Aid each year. Be sure when you are completing the Financial Aid application, it is for the correct year. Aid applications at IRSC go from Fall term through the following Summer II term. For example, the 2014-15 academic year includes Fall 2014 through Summer 2015.

## **APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID**

### **\_\_\_STEP ONE:** Apply for Admission to IRSC.

You do not have to complete the admissions process prior to applying for Financial Aid, but you must be an admitted student prior to being awarded Financial Aid funds. This includes requesting and having all transcripts evaluated from previously attended institutions.

### **\_\_\_STEP TWO:** Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Financial Aid applications for the academic year (Fall, Spring and Summer) are accepted from January 1 through June 30 of the following year. A FAFSA must be completed for each academic year you want to be considered for Financial Aid.

**NOTE:** Beginning October 2016 with the 2017/2018 academic year, FAFSA applications will be accepted for a twenty-one month period beginning October 1 through June 30.

Electronic applications may be submitted online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Our school code is 001493.

You can print a pre-application worksheet from the U.S. Department of Education FAFSA website. (Search “Worksheet.”) The FAFSA on the Web Worksheet consists of all questions related to the student’s and/or the student’s parents’ finances. It is made up of all application questions in the same order as you would see them in the online version of the FAFSA.

### **The FAFSA on the Web Worksheet is helpful to:**

- Inform you of the documents you will need to fill out the FAFSA online
- Familiarize yourself with the kinds of questions you’ll need to answer
- Familiarize your parents with the required information. (You will need to provide information about your parent(s) if you are a dependent student – as determined by FAFSA.)

Your FAFSA will not be considered VALID, and IRSC cannot prepare an award for you, unless you sign your FAFSA. If you do not have a PIN, you may apply for one at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) or print the signature page, sign it and mail it when you transmit your FAFSA online. (Be aware, this will delay the processing of your FAFSA.)

If you are a dependent student (dependency status is determined as you complete the FAFSA), a parent signature is also necessary on your FAFSA. A parent will need a separate PIN number to sign your FAFSA electronically. (If your parent already has a PIN, they can use it to sign your FAFSA.)

Keep your PIN. You can use it to:

- Electronically sign your FAFSA each year
- Correct your FAFSA information online
- Review your Student Aid Report information as soon as your FAFSA is processed
- Review personal financial aid history information maintained in the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) [www.nsls.ed.gov](http://www.nsls.ed.gov)
- Complete your loan promissory note
- Complete loan entrance counseling

**STEP THREE:** Review your Student Aid Report (SAR).

Within two to three weeks (sometimes sooner) of completing the FAFSA, your SAR will be sent to you electronically. If you did not provide a valid email address on your FAFSA, your SAR will be mailed to you. The SAR is a listing of the information you reported on your FAFSA. Read through your SAR carefully. If you need to make corrections to any of the information, follow the instructions or stop by Student Success Services for assistance. Make sure to keep your SAR for your records.

**STEP FOUR:** Turn in all other required documents to the Financial Aid Office.

You can check your status online to see if additional documents are required. If tax returns are required, you will need a “tax transcript” from the IRS. (IRSC cannot accept copies of tax returns done by you or outside agencies.)

## IRSC PRIORITY FAFSA DEADLINES

Fall	<b>July 15</b>
Spring	<b>October 15</b>
Summer 1	<b>March 16</b>
Summer 2	<b>May 19</b>

In order to have their Financial Aid awarded before classes begin, students should have their processed FAFSA and all necessary documents to the Financial Aid Office by the priority deadline.

If the date falls on a weekend, the deadline is extended until the next business day.

If the priority date is missed, students should apply as soon as possible to be considered for Financial Aid that is still available (such as Pell Grants, Direct Federal Loans and Direct PLUS (parental) Loans.

## VERIFICATION

The FAFSA processing center determines who is selected for verification. If selected, students are notified on the Student Aid Report (SAR) they receive from the processor. The IRSC Financial Aid Office also has the authority to select files for verification if there appears to be a conflict of information. If a student’s application has been selected for verification by the processor or Financial Aid, the student will be notified and must submit additional documents. An email will

be sent informing student to check his/her application requirements to see which documents are needed.

Copies of tax returns may no longer be accepted. Students must either link to the IRS to retrieve their tax data while filing the FAFSA (or when making corrections) or contact the IRS to request an IRS tax transcript. If you don’t have copies of your W-2’s, ask for a W-2 transcript.

If selected, Federal verification regulations require the following:

- Federal Financial Aid cannot be disbursed until verification is complete.
- Verification may result in corrections that change your award amounts.
- Direct Student Loans cannot be certified until verification is complete.

The Financial Aid Office may require other documentation on a case-by-case basis for certain data elements, such as child support, proof of separation or divorce, Social Security/SSI benefits, Veteran’s benefits or any other items deemed necessary.

Corrections must be made for information that is not accurate, which could affect your ability to receive aid. The Financial Aid Office will send your application for corrections electronically if the correction is due to verification. All other corrections must be made by the student online. If you are unsure if your information needs to be corrected, contact the Financial Aid Office or Student Success Services.

## YOUR AWARD INFORMATION

When all required steps are complete, your Financial Aid file will be processed. You will receive an email with instructions on how to view your awards online. **Make sure your RiverMail account is activated.** Your Financial Aid award is based on:

- Demonstrated financial need as defined by the FAFSA results
- Cost of attendance assuming full-time enrollment; if your enrollment changes, your award will be reduced
- Grade level (freshman, sophomore, etc.)

## AWARD ADJUSTMENTS

If you withdraw from classes (at any time) and have registered for a special registration class that begins later in the term, your Financial Aid award will be recalculated based on your new enrollment, and you may have to repay funds to the Pell Grant program.

## SUMMER AID

Financial Aid is available during the summer terms for eligible students. For students who do not have Pell monies left over (those who attended full time Fall and Spring), aid is available until funds run out. Schedules should be turned in to the Financial Aid Office ASAP after registration starts.

## ATTENDANCE

Students who do not attend a class during the first week will be withdrawn from that class by the instructor. Your Financial Aid award will be recalculated based only on the classes you have started attending, and this may result in you owing money to IRSC.

Students must also attend classes at least 60% of the semester in order to be eligible to keep the Financial Aid they have received. If you do a TOTAL withdrawal prior to 60% completion, you may be required to repay funds. The 60% dates are located on the Financial Aid website under "Receiving Aid."

*Note: Special registration classes (classes that do not start on the regular term start date) may have a different 60% date cutoff. If you are unsure, check with Financial Aid before withdrawing.*

## CLOCK-HOUR PROGRAMS

Students in clock-hour programs (such as Cosmetology, AC & Refrigeration, etc.) must contact the Financial Aid Office each semester after registering for classes. Clock-hours are paid as students register for each section. Funds are disbursed as each clock-hour section is completed. Contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information.

## WHAT IS FINANCIAL NEED?

When a type of Financial Aid is based on financial need, generally it is referring to the federal definition of financial need. To determine a student's federally defined financial need, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed. The federal processor takes the information from the FAFSA and determines a student's Expected Family Contribution or EFC. This is the number used by schools to determine a student's financial need at their school. Federal financial need is defined by subtracting a school's Cost of Attendance minus a student's EFC. The difference is a student's federally defined financial need. The EFC will be constant regardless of which school the student chooses to attend. The cost to attend the school is what will determine the financial need.

### **Cost of Attendance (minus) Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = Federally Defined Need**

Schools use the federally-defined financial need as a starting point in determining what types and amounts of aid a student may qualify for. Schools try to fill as much of a student's financial need as possible. In some instances, Financial Aid can exceed a student's financial need depending on what type of aid a student qualifies for (for example, applying for unsubsidized loans). However, most aid is limited by a student's overall Cost of Attendance (COA). These estimated costs can be found on the Financial Aid website under "Applying for Aid" and "School Costs" (an example is provided here):

## COST OF ATTENDANCE BUDGET

	DEPENDENT				INDEPENDENT			
	<i>Full Time</i>	<i>3/4 Time</i>	<i>Half Time</i>	<i>Less than Half Time</i>	<i>Full Time</i>	<i>3/4 Time</i>	<i>Half Time</i>	<i>Less than Half Time</i>
<b>TUITION (FL RESIDENT)</b>	\$2,804	\$2,104	\$1,402	\$702	\$2,804	\$2,104	\$1,402	\$702
<b>ROOM &amp; BOARD</b>	\$3,280	\$3,280	\$3,280	\$0	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$0
<b>BOOKS &amp; SUPPLIES</b>	\$1,000	\$750	\$500	\$250	\$1,000	\$750	\$500	\$250
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$3,850	\$3,850	\$1,924	\$1,924	\$3,850	\$3,850	\$1,924	\$1,924
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$1,020	\$766	\$510	\$0	\$1,020	\$766	\$510	\$0
<b>TOTAL COSTS (FL RESIDENT)</b>	\$11,954	\$10,750	\$7,616	\$2,876	\$14,374	\$13,170	\$10,036	\$2,876
<b>TUITION (NON-FL RESIDENT)</b>	\$10,374	\$7,780	\$5,188	\$2,594	\$10,374	\$7,780	\$5,188	\$2,494
<b>TOTAL COST (NON-FL RESIDENT)</b>	\$19,524	\$16,426	\$11,402	\$4,768	\$21,944	\$18,846	\$13,822	\$4,768



## **TYPES OF AID AVAILABLE**

IRSC's financial assistance program includes institutional grants and scholarships, federal and state grants, federal loans, Federal Work-Study, Veteran's benefits and external resources.

## **INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

These are IRSC scholarships awarded to students based on academic achievement, athletic abilities, talent and financial need. Students must apply for admissions and file a FAFSA to be considered for this type of aid. Scholarship applications are available every October at [www.irscfoundation.org](http://www.irscfoundation.org). For a description of each scholarship, go to [www.irsc.edu](http://www.irsc.edu) and click on the Financial Aid link, then Scholarships.

## **OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS**

The IRSC Foundation awards more than \$2 million in scholarships annually to deserving IRSC students. To apply for these scholarships, go to the IRSC Foundation website at [www.irscfoundation.org](http://www.irscfoundation.org). There are also other scholarship opportunities available on this website.

## **FEDERAL PELL GRANT**

This grant is awarded to undergraduate students who are admitted to and enrolled in a degree-seeking program. The application (FAFSA) for this grant is accepted throughout the academic year. Award amounts are determined through a mandated federal formula that takes into account the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and enrollment status of the student. Students can receive this grant up to the equivalent of 12 full-time semesters (approximately 144 credits).

## **FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (SEOG)**

SEOG grants are awarded to undergraduate students based on demonstrated financial need. Only students who are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant can be considered for this funding source. These grant funds are extremely limited and are awarded until funds run out. Submitting your aid application early is recommended if you want to be considered for SEOG funds.

## **FEDERAL TEACHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FOR COLLEGE AND HIGH EDUCATION (TEACH) GRANT PROGRAM**

The TEACH grant program provides grants up to \$4000 per year to students (\$16,000 total for four-year programs) who intend to teach in a high-need field in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves students from low-income families. As a recipient of a TEACH grant, you must teach for at least four academic years within eight calendar years of completing the program of study for which you received a TEACH grant. If you do not fulfill this obligation, the grant turns into a loan. For more information on this program, go to the Financial Aid website at [www.irsc.edu](http://www.irsc.edu), click on Financial Aid/Veterans and check under "Types of Aid" and "Grants."

## **STATE GRANTS**

There are several different types of state grants available through the Financial Aid process, including: Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG), First Generation Matching Grant (FGMG) and Florida Student Assistance Grant for Certificate Programs (FSAGCE).

## FLORIDA STUDENT ASSISTANCE GRANT (FSAG AND FSAGCE)

FSAG is a Financial Aid program funded by the State of Florida available to students who meet all eligibility criteria and demonstrate substantial financial need. Funds are available for students in degree and certificate-seeking programs. FSAG awards are subject to change if any corrections or changes are made to your file, including receipt of other aid that decreases or eliminates your eligibility. Funds are available until they run out. You must file a FAFSA and have the error-free results on file with IRSC by the end of the Fall Semester Drop period. (See Financial Aid website for additional information.)

## FIRST GENERATION MATCHING GRANT

The First Generation Matching Grant program is a need-based Financial Aid program supported with both institutional and state funding. It is for students whose parents have not earned a Bachelor's Degree or higher. This award may not be available every year.

A separate application or request for consideration is not required; however, students must indicate on their admissions application that they are first generation college students.

Students who have completed the FAFSA, indicated they are first generation, met the criteria and have the highest financial need will be selected. First priority is given to students who received the grant the previous year.

*NOTE: This is not a renewable award; however, students may be considered each year if they meet the criteria and if funding is available.*

## LOANS

The Federal Direct Student Loan is a non-credit based student loan that is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Students enrolled in 2 or 4-year degree-seeking programs and eligible certificate programs can apply for these loans. There are three basic types of Direct Loans: subsidized and unsubsidized that students can apply for and Direct PLUS Loans that parents may apply for to assist students. The subsidized and unsubsidized loans have the same fixed interest rate, which is determined each year on July 1st. Students must meet Financial Aid eligibility criteria to be considered for Federal Direct Student Loans.

## SUBSIDIZED LOANS

Subsidized Loans are need-based loans where the government pays the interest while the student is in the deferment period. Once in repayment, the student is responsible for paying the interest on the loan as well as the principal amount borrowed. Your need is based on information collected from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). As of July 1, 2013, new student loan borrowers can only borrow up to 150% of their program under the subsidized program. For example: a student in a 2-year program can borrow this loan for up to three (3) years, even if there is a program change. The new program must be of the same length or shorter.

## UNSUBSIDIZED AND PLUS LOANS

With these loans, the Government does not pay the interest on behalf of the student. Instead, the borrower is responsible for all the interest that accrues and capitalizes from the time the loan disburses. Though it is non-need based aid, the amount of the unsubsidized loan combined with other aid cannot exceed the student's total estimated cost of attendance. Parental Loans (PLUS) must be taken out by the parent on behalf of the student. Parents apply online at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov). Click the PLUS request link.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON WHAT TYPE OF LOAN YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR, CONTACT THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE.**

## HOW TO APPLY FOR LOANS

1. Students should file the FAFSA for the current aid year.
2. After your FAFSA has been received, you can request a loan by completing the online loan request. (You will need to sign in to MYIRSC on the IRSC website and click on the Financial Aid link to access this information).
3. Once the loan has been certified, borrowers will receive notification with instructions on how to complete the Master Promissory Note (MPN) and loan entrance counseling. **Do not complete your MPN or loan entrance counseling before IRSC certifies your loan.**
4. Students and/or parents should contact the Financial Aid Office to let IRSC know they are interested or have applied for a PLUS Loan.
5. For PLUS Loans, parents will determine how they want the loan funds to be disbursed after fees are paid (to the student or to them).

*NOTE: A dependent student whose parent has been denied a PLUS Loan during the current aid year may be eligible to receive Federal Direct Student Loans at the independent level with proof of PLUS Loan denial. A PLUS Loan Letter of Denial is only valid for one aid year.*

## DEADLINE FOR LOAN REQUEST

Fall only	<b>Nov. 20</b>
Fall and Spring	<b>April 1</b>
Spring only	<b>April 15</b>
Spring & Summer I	<b>June 3</b>
Summer I & II	<b>July 15</b>

If dates fall on a weekend, the deadline will be the next business day. Students awarded loans must complete Entrance Counseling and sign a Promissory Note. Information will be emailed to the students on how to complete this process. Students may go to [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov) to complete the process once notification has been received. You will need your FAFSA Pin to log onto this website.

## FEDERAL WORK STUDY (FWS)

The FWS program provides funds for part-time employment to help needy students finance the costs of post-secondary education. Hourly wages are no less than federal minimum wage. Students apply through FAFSA. Work Study funding may be used on or off campus; however, IRSC has only on-campus jobs available at this time. Funds are limited, so students are encouraged to apply early. Funds are awarded until they run out. Completed work study applications are then made available to departments that have positions available. Students are interviewed and hired by the departments. Receiving an award does not guarantee a Work Study job.

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

Federal regulations require IRSC to establish Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress as a general eligibility requirement for financial assistance. A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in a course of study regardless of whether the student previously received Financial Aid.

These rules apply to all coursework you have taken at IRSC or any college or university, (including college-level classes taken during high school) whether or not you received Financial Aid for those classes. There are three parts to the SAP rules:

1. Maintain a 2.0 cumulative Grade Point Average.
2. Your cumulative completion rate must be at least 67% for all classes you have ever taken.
3. You cannot attempt more than 150% of the credits required for your degree or certificate program. For example, a student in a 60 credit-hour program can attempt 90 credit-hours (60 hours times 150%). A typical Bachelor's Degree program is 120 credits; so 150% of that program would be 180 credit-hours. If you have questions about your program's maximum eligibility, contact Student Success Services or the Financial Aid Office.

*Note: The total credits counted in these calculations include all credits attempted by you, including failed, withdrawn or repeated courses. A student who has exceeded the 150% standard is no longer eligible for Financial Aid whether or not rules one or two (above) were met.*

## **WARNING**

If your cumulative GPA and/or your cumulative completion rate fall below the standards of SAP, you will be placed on one (1) term of warning. At the end of that term, both of your cumulative rates must be at the necessary levels to remain on Financial Aid. If you receive a W, I, F or U while you are on warning, you may be suspended for the next semester.

## **SUSPENSION**

If you do not meet the required GPA and/or completion rate after the warning semester, you are no longer eligible for Financial Aid until you have taken classes using your own funding and have raised your cumulative GPA and completion rate to meet the standards.

## **APPEALS (PETITION)**

Occasionally a student does not meet SAP due to an extraordinary circumstance beyond the control of the student. Such a student may appeal to the IRSC Scholarship and Loan Committee for consideration of restoration of Financial Aid eligibility. A student must complete an appeal form and must supply documentation of the circumstance. The committee will review the information supplied by the student and will render a final decision. The committee's decision is not open to further appeal. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include serious illness, hospitalization or a death in the immediate family. When an appeal is approved, it is done on a probationary basis, and you must meet all rules of probation and any other criteria stated by the committee. **STUDENTS MAY APPEAL ONLY ONCE PER ACADEMIC YEAR.**

## **FINANCIAL AID PLAN (FAP)**

Students receiving aid under a petition approved by the Scholarship and Loan Committee must be on a Financial Aid Plan if approved for more than one semester. These plans are signed by the student and must be adhered to in order to remain Financial Aid eligible until SAP is clear. FAPs give the student a clear plan for bringing their GPA and/or completion rate up to the required level.

## **PAYMENT OF TUITION/ FEES, BOOKS AND DISBURSEMENT**

After the Drop period has ended each semester, students' awards are updated, as needed, based on the number of hours a student is enrolled in for the semester. (Courses must count towards student's degree program.) After this has occurred, disbursement of Financial Aid begins (first disbursement is approximately 14 days after the Drop period ends) and continues each week throughout the semester.

If you have been awarded Financial Aid, your fees will be deferred until disbursement is made. Once disbursement is made, fees and books are paid and any residual balance is mailed to you at the address on file in Student Services. If your Financial Aid award is not enough to fully cover your fees, you must pay the balance due before the end of the Drop period. Housing deferments may be granted (for on-campus housing) if there is enough Financial Aid to fully cover the amount of tuition and fees and housing costs for the semester. Check with the IRSC Foundation for more information on housing deferments.

If for any reason an award is taken away due to ineligibility reasons, tuition and fees will become the student's responsibility to pay.

If a student who has already registered for classes decides not to attend IRSC, that student must officially drop his/her classes by the end of the Drop period; otherwise, the student will be obligated to pay all charges owed to the College. **REMEMBER**, your award may change if classes do not count towards your program.

## **EXTENSION OF PAYMENT**

If students have not been awarded by the time payment for classes are due, it is possible they may be eligible for an extension of tuition payment. (**BOOKS ARE NOT INCLUDED.**) The following requirements must be met before an extension is granted:

- Complete admissions to the College
- Valid FAFSA must be on file
- Complete Financial Aid file (all documents received)
- If not eligible for grants, must request loan
- Clear Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status

# VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

Indian River State College is proud to welcome veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and their dependents into our educational programs. We recognize the enormous contribution military personnel make to society when they dedicate much of their lives to serving our Country.

The Office of Veterans Affairs at Indian River State College can assist you with your VA Educational Benefits:

- Students must apply at the Office of Veterans Affairs on the Main Campus. Certification of eligibility may be obtained from the VA Regional Office at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)
- Benefits will be awarded based on the regulations and policies of the VA Educational Benefit Program.

## APPROVED ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

In order to receive VA benefits, all veterans/eligible dependents must be enrolled in a VA eligible program. You can only receive educational assistance payments for one approved program at a time. Although you are allowed to take various courses, VA benefits will only be paid for those courses included in your approved program. Check with your Counselor/Advisor to make sure you are taking the courses that are included in your degree program.

## VA BENEFITS ARE BASED ON ENROLLMENT STATUS:

### FALL/SPRING

Full Time	<b>12 or more credits</b>
Three Quarter	<b>9 to 11 credits</b>
Half time	<b>6 to 8 credits</b>
Less than Half time	<b>1 to 5 credits</b>

*Note: Only tuition is covered for less than half-time status. The number of required credits is subject to change during summer semesters. Check with an IRSC Veterans Affairs representative for further clarification.*

## TRANSCRIPTS

Official transcripts must be received from the high school showing graduation information. Transcripts must also be provided for previously attended colleges. These official transcripts must be received directly from the school(s) attended.

All recipients of GED® diplomas should supply a copy of the GED® diploma. In some instances, the official scores from the GED® will have to be submitted.

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## CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING

At Indian River State College, students who have been in the military may be awarded credit by the following methods:

1. Direct evaluation of transfer credits from regionally-accredited colleges attended while in the military that provide an official transcript. Schools such as Community College of the Air Force or Central Texas College are examples.
2. By instructors and deans of those departments.
3. Veterans may request an official military transcript from DANTEs. These credits are evaluated based on the coursework that would apply directly to their IRSC degree program, usually in the Associate in Science Degree field. Examples of credit awarded are in the computer science field and electronics, if pursuing the A.S. Degree in that field.
4. Competency credit could be awarded in certain areas such as criminal justice or health science, based on standards approved.

## STANDARDS OF PROGRESS

The law requires that educational assistance benefits to veterans/other eligible dependents be discontinued when the student ceases to make Satisfactory Progress toward completion of his/her training objective.

Satisfactory Progress is considered to be the maintaining of a 2.0 cumulative GPA. When a veteran's CGPA falls below 2.0, the veteran will be given two probationary semesters in which to raise his/her CGPA to 2.0 or better. If at the end of the probationary period, the student fails to achieve a 2.0 CGPA, future VA educational benefits will be terminated. Benefits may be reinstated after the student achieves a 2.0 cumulative GPA or above.

## CHANGES THAT AFFECT BENEFITS:

**1.** A non-punitive grade of "W" or "I" may result in a reduction of benefits effective the beginning of the semester, depending on the student's course load. "I" grades: If a veteran takes an "I" grade and then re-registers for the same course, the "I" grade becomes non-punitive, and the course must be decertified for the period that it was previously taken. This means the veteran may then be in an overpayment status.

**2.** Reduction of a course load after the Drop period may result in a reduction of your benefits effective from the beginning of the semester. Students must inform the Office of Veterans Affairs of any withdrawals and the reasons such action is necessary. Mitigating circumstances can be submitted and may be given special consideration.

**3.** Report change of address immediately to Veterans Administration at 1-888-442-4551 and complete a change of address form at the IRSC Office of Veterans Affairs and the IRSC Records Center.

## ATTENDANCE

Students receiving VA benefits for vocational clock-hour programs should note that excessive absences will result in termination of benefits. Absences totaling more than the equivalent of ten percent (10%) of the total hours of the program are considered excessive and, unless there are mitigating circumstances, the student will be terminated from receipt of VA benefits due to unsatisfactory attendance.

## WHERE IS MY VA CHECK?

Wondering where your VA check is? Have you done the following:

- 1.** Have you turned in your VA approved list of courses (schedule) for the term? (Notify the Office of Veterans Affairs regarding your semester enrollment at veterans-info@irsc.edu.)
- 2.** Have you allowed enough time for processing? Chapter 30, 33, 1606 and 1607 require 30-45 days for continuing certification and 60-90 days for new applications. Chapter 35 requires 30-40 days for continuing certifications plus 7-14 business days to process and mail a check. New application requires 90-120 days for processing.
- 3.** Did you owe money due to withdrawing or dropping class(es)?
- 4.** Have you verified your certification on WAVE (online) or by phone? (Chapter 30,1606,1607).

Additional information on VA benefits and scholarships can be found on the IRSC website at [www.irsc.edu](http://www.irsc.edu) under the "Financial Aid/Veterans" link.

## FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIPS

Students must meet the initial eligibility criteria set by the State of Florida in order to receive a Bright Futures scholarship. The eligibility criteria can be found at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf).

### AWARDS

Estimated Bright Future (BF) awards for incoming freshmen are projected based on high school information. The award will become official after IRSC receives confirmation from the State of Florida. **However, awards cannot be entered for students who have not completed the FAFSA ([www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)).** You will be notified by the State regarding your eligibility. The estimated BF award amounts are based on an average enrollment of 14 hours per term and will be calculated after confirmation from the State and enrollment.

The Bright Futures program consists of the three awards listed below.

- Florida Academic Scholars
- Florida Medallion Scholars
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars

Each scholarship has its own academic eligibility requirements and duration. However, the award amounts are per credit and will also be dependent upon your degree program.

Every year in July or August, the IRSC Financial Aid Office hosts a Bright Futures Orientation workshop to assist students in understanding how their Bright Futures scholarship works. Students will receive notification when the workshop is scheduled. Notification will also be posted on the Financial Aid website.

## BRIGHT FUTURES REPAYMENT

Students are now required to repay the tuition amount received for all classes they withdraw from or drop (including special registration classes) after the Drop period for each semester. A hold will be placed on your account until the amount due for these withdrawn classes is paid. This hold will prevent future registration and transcript release.

In addition, if you have not repaid IRSC by the end of the Spring Semester, your Bright Futures scholarship will not be renewed by the State of Florida for the next academic year (even if you meet the renewal eligibility criteria). For additional information, visit the Bright Futures website or contact Bright Futures at 1-888-827-2004.

## BRIGHT FUTURES RENEWAL ELIGIBILITY

Renewal eligibility is an automatic process that occurs at the end of the Spring Semester for those students who received funding during the previous year. The institution(s) where the student received funding reports the overall cumulative GPA and hours completed for the year to the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA). Renewal students must earn the GPA and the required hours in all college coursework attempted. (GPA includes high school Dual Enrollment and out-of-state coursework.) The student may request exclusion from the GPA of Dual Enrollment courses completed while attending high school, if needed to meet requirements, by completing the Bright Futures Re-evaluation Form (found on the Financial Aid website under "Forms") and sending or faxing (772-462-4606) it to the IRSC Financial Aid Office. Students who have withdrawn/dropped classes and owe the College will not have their Bright Futures Scholarship renewed until payment is received.

### Florida Academic Scholars Award (FAS)

The GPA requirement for the FAS is 3.0.

### Florida Medallion Scholars Award (FMS) & Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award (FGS)

The GPA requirement for the FMS and the FGS is 2.75.

## Renewal Hour Requirements for All Bright Futures Scholarships:

Hours Funded (per term)	Required earned hours (per term)
12+ credit-hours	<b>12 earned hours</b>
9-11 credit-hours	<b>9 earned hours</b>
6-8 credit-hours	<b>6 earned hours</b>
360+ clock-hours	<b>360 earned hours</b>
270-359 clock-hours	<b>270 earned hours</b>
180-269 clock-hours	<b>180 earned hours</b>

*Note: Students are not required to complete withdrawal hours that have been repaid.*

## WHAT IF I DID NOT MEET THE SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL CRITERIA DUE TO A VERIFIABLE ILLNESS OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCE BEYOND MY CONTROL?

If you do not meet the renewal GPA and /or required hours due to a verifiable illness or other emergency, you may complete a Reinstatement of Financial Aid/Scholarship Petition (form found online on the Financial Aid website) and drop it off with the Financial Aid Office or Student Success Services. Make sure you indicate an appeal for Bright Futures on the form. The medical or emergency circumstances that affected the semester(s) in question must be documented. You should provide as much documentation as possible regarding the illness or emergency to the IRSC Financial Aid Office when you submit the form.

*NOTE: Students may file the scholarship appeal any time after they have received notification from the State or our office indicating they did not meet the renewal requirements.*

The appeals must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date. Contact Student Services for scheduled meeting dates. The Scholarship Committee meets twice a month to review appeals. You will be notified by mail of the decision of the Committee. OSFA has the right to reject an approval decision by the IRSC Appeals Committee.

## GRADE CHANGE OR CLASSES TRANSFERRED

Students should contact the Bright Futures Coordinator in the IRSC Financial Aid Office to have updated grades reported due to grade changes and/or classes transferred.

## SUMMER GRADES AND HOURS

Summer grades and hours earned after the Spring Semester evaluation may be used, if necessary, to meet the scholarship renewal requirements. Contact the Bright Futures Coordinator in the IRSC Financial Aid Office to have the updated information reported (if the required criteria are met).

## REINSTATEMENT

Reinstatement application refers to an eligible student (someone who has not previously failed to meet renewal requirements for the award) who did not receive funding during the previous academic year. An academic transcript is not required to be submitted with a reinstatement application.

## RESTORATION

Restoration application refers to a student who did not meet the GPA renewal requirement during a prior renewal evaluation period but met the GPA requirement in a subsequent renewal evaluation period. Restoration is a one-time opportunity.

Students should go to the Bright Futures website to check reinstatement/restoration requirements and deadlines and to complete the required application.



## TAX CREDITS

The American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), which was created in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has again been extended through December 2017. The AOTC builds on the previous Hope Scholarship Tax Credit but is much more beneficial to community college students. Some of its features include:

- A credit of \$2,500 with benefits geared to students attending low-cost institutions
- Inclusion of “course materials” when calculating the credit, which were not allowable under the Hope Tax Credit
- 40% refundability, which helps direct benefits to the neediest students.

*Note: You cannot take the AOTC for more than four (4) tax years for the same student.*

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

Cashcourse provides financial literacy for IRSC students. It's online, it's free, and it's designed to help you make important financial decisions during your educational journey. Cashcourse provides information on the following:

### Financial Basics:

- Budgeting & Financial Planning
- Overspending
- Banking Your Money
- Dealing with Debit & Credit Cards
- Mixing Money & Family
- Protecting Your Credit
- Preventing Identity Theft
- Avoiding Quick Financial Fixes
- Setting Financial Goals
- and more ...

### Paying for College

### College Life

### World of Work

### Economic Survival Tips

Cashcourse has all you need and more. Stop by to start your journey to financial freedom at [www.cashcourse.org/irsc](http://www.cashcourse.org/irsc).

## STAY CONNECTED ...

**IRSC STUDENT ID:** When you first apply to Indian River State College, you will be given an IRSC Student ID Number. Your Student ID is your primary identifier for all IRSC records and transactions. You should keep your ID handy for transacting any college business.

### Your IRSC ID vs Your Social Security Number (SSN):

When you apply for Financial Aid, you will also be asked for your SSN. Your SSN is required by the federal government to process your Financial Aid application. However, you should use your IRSC Student ID for all other purposes at the College.

**MyIRSC:** Students can conduct most IRSC business through MyIRSC, such as: checking Financial Aid status, viewing awards and disbursements, completing online loan requests, registering for classes, viewing transcript/grades, paying tuition, etc. You can access MyIRSC by going to [www.irsc.edu](http://www.irsc.edu) and clicking on the MYIRSC link. You will need your IRSC Student ID and pin to access your account.

**RiverMail:** IRSC uses email (RiverMail) as the primary way to communicate with Financial Aid applicants and recipients. Emails are generated to inform students of requirements they must complete to receive aid and when awards are made. Make sure to check your RiverMail daily for important Financial Aid correspondence.

**Facebook:** To better communicate with students, IRSC maintains a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/IRSC.fanpage](http://www.facebook.com/IRSC.fanpage). While our Facebook page is not a forum for the discussion of specific Financial Aid situations, it is a great resource for students (and parents) wishing to find out what's happening at the College.

**Twitter:** You can also find us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/#!/IRSCTheRiver](http://www.twitter.com/#!/IRSCTheRiver). We enjoy staying in contact with our students and providing them with up-to-date information.

## FAFSA HELP

To avoid mistakes and delays in processing, it is crucial that students and parents carefully read and follow all directions on the FAFSA. Help with the application is available via a live, one-on-one online “chat” with a customer service representative as the student completes FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). The student should click on the “Contact Us” icon to access this feature.

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IRSC hosts a Financial Aid workshop called “Finding Cash For College” every year around March or April to assist students in completing the FAFSA online. Students and/or parents should bring a copy of their current year tax forms to complete the FAFSA for the upcoming Fall Semester. Contact the Financial Aid Office at 772-462-7450 in early March to find out the date of the event.

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Applying is easier with the IRS Data Retrieval Tool! Beginning February 1 (or shortly thereafter) of each year, students and parents who have completed their IRS tax return will be able to use FAFSA online to electronically view their tax information. With just a few simple steps, the tax information can also be securely transferred into the FAFSA. Colleges are not able to accept copies of tax returns for students who are selected for verification. If students do not link to IRS, they will be required to request a tax return transcript from the IRS to turn in to the IRSC Financial Aid Office.

**Do not pay to fill out the FAFSA.**

**The FAFSA is a FREE application.**

**Fill it out at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)**

**Other sites will charge you.**

## DON'T GET SCAMMED ON YOUR WAY TO COLLEGE

**“If you use our services, you’re guaranteed to get at least \$5,500 in student aid for college, or we’ll give you your money back.”**

This claim doesn’t mean anything. Most students are eligible for at least \$5,500 in unsubsidized student loans anyway—and because a student loan is considered student aid, you won’t be able to ask for a refund if that’s all you’re offered. No one can guarantee to get you a grant or scholarship. Remember, that refund guarantees often have conditions or strings attached. Get refund policies in writing.

**“Applying for aid is complicated. We’re the only ones who can help you through the process and find all the aid for which you’re eligible.”**

Unlikely. There are many places to get free help applying for student aid. Check with your school counselor or college Financial Aid Office for help filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and be sure to try the free scholarship search at [www.studentaid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/scholarship).

**“I’d like to offer you a scholarship [or grant]. All I need is your bank account information, so the money can be deposited and a processing fee charged.”**

**Watch out!** It’s extremely rare for a legitimate organization to charge a processing fee for a scholarship. Some people imitate legitimate foundations, federal agencies and corporations. They might even have official-sounding names to fool students. **Don’t give anyone your bank account or credit card information or your Social Security Number (SSN) unless you initiated the contact and trust the company.** Such personal identification information could be used to commit identity theft. **If you’ve been contacted by someone claiming to be from the U.S. Department of Education and asking for your SSN or bank account information, do not provide it. The U.S. Department of Education does not make such requests.**

**MY FINANCIAL AID TO DO LIST:**

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**Indian River State College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or genetic information in its programs and activities.**

**The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:**

**Anthony J. Iacono, Ph.D.**

**Vice President of Academic Affairs/Equity Officer/Title IX Coordinator**

**IRSC Main Campus • 3209 Virginia Ave. • Fort Pierce, FL 34981**

**(772) 462-7215**





FEDERAL RESERVE NOTE

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FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

*Mary Ellen Withrow*  
Treasurer of the United States.

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*Mary Ellen Withrow*  
Treasurer of the United States

