Federal Direct Student Loans: What You Need to Know for 2026–2027

Federal Direct Loans are a form of financial aid provided through the U.S. Department of Education. These loans can help eligible students pay educational expenses while attending Georgia Military College (GMC).

Federal Direct Student Loans

There are two types of Direct Student Loans available to eligible students.

Direct Subsidized Loan

A Direct Subsidized Loan is awarded based on financial need.

The federal government pays the interest while you are:

- Enrolled at least half-time
- In your grace period
- In an approved deferment period

Direct Unsubsidized Loan

A Direct Unsubsidized Loan is not based on financial need.

You are responsible for all interest that accrues, including while you are enrolled in school. Unpaid interest may be added to your loan balance when repayment begins.

How to Request a Direct Student Loan

1. Complete the FAFSA.
2. Submit a Direct Loan Request Form through gmc.studentforms.com.
3. First-time borrowers at GMC must complete:
   - Entrance Counseling
   - A Master Promissory Note (MPN)

   Both are available at https://studentaid.gov/

Eligibility Requirements

To receive Direct Loan funds, students must:

- Be admitted into an eligible degree program
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Be enrolled at least half-time (6 credit hours) at the time of disbursement
- Meet all federal financial aid requirements

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Important Loan Information

Loan Period

Your loan period is the timeframe during which you are scheduled to receive loan funds.

Cost of Attendance

Federal regulations limit borrowing based on your Cost of Attendance, which may include estimated:

- Tuition and fees
- Books and supplies
- Housing
- Food
- Transportation
- Personal expenses

Enrollment Changes

Changes in enrollment can affect future loan disbursements.

If you:

- Withdraw from classes
- Stop attending
- Take a break in enrollment

you may need to submit a new loan request for future terms.

Late Requests

Loan requests submitted after the loan period has ended cannot be processed.

First-Time Borrowers

Students who are first-time borrowers and first-time attendees at GMC may be subject to a federal 30-day delay before receiving their first loan disbursement.

One-Term Loans

Loans covering only one term are disbursed in two installments.

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Annual Student Loan Limits

Grade Level	Subsidized Base Amount	Additional Unsubsidized (Dependent)	Additional Unsubsidized (Independent*)
Freshman (0–44 credits)	$3,500	$2,000	$6,000
Sophomore (45–89 credits)	$4,500	$2,000	$6,000
Junior (90–135 credits)	$5,500	$2,000	$7,000
Senior (136+ credits)	$5,500	$2,000	$7,000

**Additional independent loan amounts may also apply to dependent students whose parents are unable to obtain a PLUS Loan.*

Lifetime (Aggregate) Loan Limits

Student Type	Maximum Total Borrowing
Dependent Undergraduate	$31,000
Independent Undergraduate, Post-Baccalaureate, or Additional Degree Student	$57,500

No more than $23,000 may be received in subsidized loan funds.

Direct PLUS Loans for Parents

Parents of dependent undergraduate students may apply for a Federal Direct PLUS Loan to help cover educational expenses.

To Apply

1. Student completes the FAFSA.
2. Parent submits a PLUS Loan Authorization Form through gmc.studentforms.com.
3. Parent completes the required credit review.
4. First-time parent borrowers complete a PLUS Master Promissory Note at studentaid.gov.

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PLUS Loan Eligibility

- Parent borrower must not have an adverse credit history.
- Student must be enrolled at least half-time (6 credit hours).
- Maximum eligibility equals:

  Cost of Attendance – Other Financial Aid Received

Adjusting or Canceling Loans

Students or parents may request to:

- Reduce a loan amount
- Increase a loan amount (if eligible)
- Cancel a loan

Forms are available at: https://gmc.studentforms.com

Important Update: Annual Enrollment and Loan Eligibility

Beginning with the 2026–2027 academic year, federal student loan eligibility will be based on your enrollment throughout the entire academic year, not just your enrollment in a single quarter. These changes are required under new federal regulations.

How Annual Enrollment Is Calculated

A full academic year at GMC is:

- 48 credit hours per year
- Equivalent to 12 credit hours per quarter for four quarters

Your annual loan eligibility may be adjusted based on the number of credits you complete during the academic year.

What This Means for You

If You Attend Fewer Than Four Quarters

Your loan eligibility may be reduced proportionally.

Example:

- Full annual loan eligibility: $7,500
- Enrollment: 3 of 4 quarters
- Credits earned: 36 of 48 credits (75%)

Adjusted loan eligibility: $5,625

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If You Reduce Your Course Load

If you begin the year at full-time enrollment but later drop courses:

- You generally keep loan funds already disbursed.
- Future loan disbursements may be reduced.
- You must remain enrolled in at least 6 credit hours (half-time status) to maintain federal loan eligibility.

If You Graduate Early

If you only attend one or two quarters before graduating, your loan amount will be adjusted to reflect your shorter enrollment period.

Loan Eligibility Proration Scenarios

The academic full-time (FT) year is 48 hours.
Loan eligibility is prorated based on the fraction of 48 hours a student completes.

Scenario	Student	Hours Enrolled (out of 48)	Eligibility (Proration)	Loan Cap (Annual Limit)	Loan Amount (Prorated)	Explanation
1. Full-Time Student	Jordan Miller	48	100%	$5,500	$5,500	Jordan qualifies for the full annual loan limit.
2. Near Full-Time Student	Avery Nguyen	42	~88%	$6,500	$5,688	Avery's loan is slightly reduced based on enrollment.
3. Three-Quarter Time Student	Marcus Lopez	30	~63%	$7,500	$4,688	Marcus receives about two-thirds of eligibility.
4. Half-Time Student	Taylor Brooks	24	50%	$10,500	$5,250	Taylor receives half of the annual limit.

Remember: Your federal loan eligibility is now tied to your enrollment for the entire academic year. Staying enrolled and maintaining your planned course schedule can help maximize your eligibility.

Need Help?

We understand these federal changes may create questions about your financial aid eligibility.

If you need assistance:

1. Contact your Graduation Coach first.
2. Visit:
    - www.gmc.edu

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  - studentaid.gov

Our team is committed to helping you understand your options and successfully plan for your educational expenses.