



Fall 2016 for the 2017–2018 academic year.

Dear Messiah College Student and Parents:

The instructions and applications for financial aid for the 2017–2018 academic year are now ready for your review. These forms are available via [our 2017-2018 on-line forms page](#). Included are most of the forms necessary to apply for Federal, state, and institutional aid.

The 2017-18 academic year brings the biggest changes in the application process in many years. Both the Early FAFSA and Prior Prior Year concepts are being implemented at the same time. It is very important that you visit our [Early FAFSA/Prior Prior Year](#) webpage to understand what each of these things means and how they will affect the application process.

Since most people file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) electronically, the United States Department of Education does not provide the paper FAFSA booklet to colleges. If you wish to file using the paper FAFSA, you will need to contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243. You should receive your FAFSA in 3 to 7 business days. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU MUST FILE A FAFSA EACH YEAR IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FORMS OF AID THAT ARE BASED ON YOUR FAFSA RESULTS. Please see the [Financial Aid Instructions](#) for a listing of those types of aid, and be aware that the Messiah College Grant is one of these forms of aid.

If you filed an electronic FAFSA or electronic correction last year, you should receive a reminder from the Federal government instructing you to use your FSA User ID to file electronically for the upcoming year. This reminder will be in the form of an email message (if you provided a valid email address) sent **only to the email address given as the student's email address when completing the FAFSA**, or a letter if you did not provide a valid email address. Please read our [Financial Aid Instructions](#) very carefully for more details on the FSA User ID, options for filing your FAFSA electronically, and other aspects of the financial aid process.

Federal government regulations do not allow you to mail or electronically submit the FAFSA before October 1, 2016. It could take as long as one month for the FAFSA to be processed and to reach our office. Electronic filing options might shorten processing time, but we urge you to file as soon as possible in order to allow for processing delays. Despite the earlier start date for filing the FAFSA, we are not changing our financial aid priority deadline.

Our deadline will remain April 1, 2017.

This means you should submit your FAFSA to the processor as early as possible so that it will arrive in our office by April 1st.

Communications from our office will be almost exclusively via your Messiah College email address, so please check this email account regularly. A common request that we receive is to have copies of all Financial Aid communications forwarded to parents. While our system is not able to function in this fashion, we have created a set of instructions that students can use to forward emails to parents or anyone whom they would like to receive copies. Click [here](#) to see these instructions.

The time line for the processing of financial aid applications should be as follows:

- **New students:** Please understand that Early FAFSA/Prior Prior Year brings a lot of unknowns, including the dates that certain things will happen. Although you may file your FAFSA beginning October 1st, we won't be able to send you a financial aid package that early. **We hope to begin sending financial aid packages to new students in mid to late November, but this may happen earlier or later depending on the implementation process of this major change to the financial aid delivery system.** Once your package is completed, you will receive an email message (at your Messiah College email address) with instructions for viewing your on-line Financial Aid Award Notice via MCSquare. If you file your FAFSA after the date we begin sending financial aid packages, you should expect to receive notification of the availability of your award within a few days of the date we receive your FAFSA results, unless you have additional items you are required to submit in order to complete your processing. All of these dates could vary depending on outside factors.

• **Continuing students:** Neither Early FAFSA or Prior Prior year will change the timeline for continuing students to receive their financial aid packages for the 2017-18 year. Please keep in mind that we don't start financial aid packages for continuing students until May and they won't be finished until mid-July. The main advantage to you in filing earlier will be to give you more time to complete any needed paperwork so that your applications will be ready for the completion of your financial aid package in July. It is not necessary for you to contact us about the status of your package until July 15, unless you have reason to believe there is a problem.

• **All students:** If there are any items that are needed to complete your file, you will be notified via your Messiah College email account.

Please call us at 717-691-6007, FAX us at 717-691-2349, or contact us by email at FINAID@MESSIAH.EDU, if we can assist you in completing these forms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Gearhart". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Greg Gearhart
Director of Financial Aid