



19+ Years and Counting – The Conundrum of Credit, Debt and Student Loan Repayment After Graduate School

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Important Things for Students to Know

- ▶ Know your loan portfolio – loan types and relative cost
- ▶ Know your deferment and forbearance options
- ▶ Know the decision points and keep a calendar
- ▶ Know the cost before choosing a repayment plan
- ▶ Know your available resources
- ▶ Stay abreast of changes that might impact your loans



Know Your Loan Portfolio

- ▶ Know what types of loans students have
 - Perkins Loans
 - Federal (Stafford, PLUS, Consolidation) Loans
 - Direct Loans
 - Perkins Loans
 - FFELP Loans (no longer originated as of 7/2/2010)
 - Private/Alternative Loans
- ▶ Identify your servicers
 - Who do they need to pay?
- ▶ Know how much they owe
- ▶ Know what borrower benefits are available





Understanding Loan Repayment or This is Greek to me.....



Understanding Grace Periods

Grace Period - period of time after a borrower graduates, leaves school or drops to less than half-time

- Payments may not be required during this period
- No application required
- Loan specific, varies according to loan – once used completely, it's gone
 - Stafford loans have a six-month grace period*
 - Perkins loans have nine-month grace
 - Perkins loans may also have a 6-month grace after deferment
 - Private and Institutional loans: check your promissory note
- All Direct Stafford loans accrue interest during the grace period. The U.S. Department of Education pays the interest on Direct Stafford Subsidized loans during the grace period unless the loan was first disbursed between July 1, 2012 and July1, 2014.
- Taking advantage of a grace period does not adversely impact credit



Understanding Federal Loan Deferments

Deferment: period when a borrower who meets certain criteria may postpone loan payments

- Application may be required depending on deferment type. Recertification for subsequent deferment periods may also be required
- Stafford deferments are "borrower" specific, meaning eligibility is attached to the borrower and there is a max deferment time allotted for certain deferments
- The government pays interest on a borrower's behalf for subsidized loans during authorized deferment periods
 - Unsubsidized loans continue to accrue interest for which the borrower is responsible. Unless the interest is paid by the borrower, it may be capitalized (added to your principal balance) at the end of the deferment period. To keep your total loan cost lower, you may want to consider paying all or some of the interest that accrues during this time.

Common Types of Deferments:

- In-School
- Economic Hardship
- Unemployment
- Military
- Graduate Fellowship



Understanding Federal Loan Forbearances

Voluntary Forbearance: allows a borrower who cannot make scheduled payments to temporarily delay or reduce the payments

- Interest continues to accrue on subsidized and unsubsidized loans during a forbearance period.
- Interest that accrues during the forbearance remains the borrower's responsibility.
- Unpaid interest may be capitalized as often as quarterly and at the end of the forbearance depending on the loan type and when the loan was disbursed. Additionally there is a max forbearance time allotted.
- Capitalization of interest increases the amount to pay back, and will result in a higher payment amount after the forbearance. To keep your total loan cost lower, you may want to consider paying all or some of the interest that accrues during this time.

Tips:

Be careful, the use of forbearance adds expense!

Forbearances can be a great tool to help you stay out of delinquency and default!



Federal Forbearance During Residency

- Medical and dental school residents are eligible to receive a forbearance during their residency as long as the residency meets certain criteria such as being required for a degree, certificate, or licensing for professional practice or service.
 - Renewable on an annual basis in 12-month increments



Paying Loans Off Early

- Borrowers can always prepay federal and most private student loans without penalty.
- Be aware of the relative cost and make payments towards unsubsidized loans that have the highest rates and/or most frequent capitalization. This should save more money over time.
- Unless otherwise noted in the loan agreement, loan payments typically are applied first toward fees, then interest, and finally principal.



Delinquency & Default (Federal/Private Loans)

DELINQUENCY & DEFAULTS ON STUDENT LOANS CAN ADVERSELY IMPACT YOUR CREDIT HISTORY

- **Delinquency**
 - Failure to make payment(s) when due
 - Can be reported to credit bureaus; affects borrowers history
- **Default**
 - Collection agencies may take over adding to cost
 - Lender can take legal action
 - School can withhold records
 - Federal defaults could result in wage garnishment & withholding of federal loan tax refunds
 - Student loans are rarely discharged in bankruptcy



Federal Loan Repayment Plans

- **Standard Repayment**
 - Level monthly payments that cover accruing interest and a portion of principal over a 10-year period
 - Higher monthly payments
 - **Lowest overall cost**
- **Graduated Repayment**
 - Payments start low, increase over time
 - Interest only payments followed by standard principal & interest
 - Finish in 10 years
 - Higher overall cost – but provides lower initial payment amounts
 - Can be combined with Extended Repayment



Federal Loan Repayment Plans (Continued)

- **Income Sensitive Repayment (Non-direct Federal Loans)**
 - Payments are based on percentage of your monthly income
 - Payments must be sufficient to cover accruing interest
 - Finish in 10 years (may be extended to 15 years)
- **Income-Contingent Repayment (Direct Loans Only)**
 - Payment is based on income
 - Negative amortization is allowed
 - Up to 25 years to repay
 - Balance remaining after 25 years' worth of payments can be forgiven



Income Based Repayment (IBR) – Additional Details

- Program is designed for federal loan borrowers experiencing "partial financial hardship"
- Borrower qualifies if annual monthly student loan payments under a standard repayment plan exceed 15% of "discretionary income" or if such payments exceed 10% of "discretionary income" for "new borrowers"
 - AGI minus 150% of Poverty Income Guidelines x 15% or 10% for "new borrowers"
- If eligible for IBR, borrower's monthly payment will be determined by a formula that takes into account household size and adjusted gross income
- Negative amortization may occur with this option because it allows minimum monthly payments to be less than accruing interest
- IBR provides for up to a 36-month interest subsidy period when a scheduled monthly payment amount on a subsidized loan is less than accrued interest
- Your monthly payment will never be more than the 10-year Standard Repayment Plan amount, even if your income increases.
- Unpaid balance may be forgiven after 25 years of scheduled monthly payments (or after 20 years of scheduled monthly payments for "new borrowers" which includes periods of economic hardship deferral, but not other periods of deferral and forbearance)



Income Based Repayment (IBR) – Additional Details

- IBR eligibility test is based on larger of:
 - Balance of IBR-eligible loans at beginning of repayment
 - Balance of IBR-eligible loans when enrolled in IBR
- Spouse loans are factored into the eligibility test if they file a joint tax return
 - Payment formula will take spouse's loans into account
 - Example: If IBR payment is \$750, borrower has \$150,000 in loans and spouse has \$75,000 in loans, borrower's share of the payment is \$500—since borrower has 2/3 of the total loan balance



IBR Eligibility Example

Balance at start of repayment*	\$150,000
Total standard payments for IBR-eligible loans	\$1,726
12 months' worth of payments	\$20,714
AGI	\$47,000
State of Residence	Florida
Household size	1
2014 Poverty Income Guideline	\$11,670
150% of Poverty Income Guideline	\$17,505
15% Discretionary Income to 151% (\$47,000 - \$17,505)	\$4,424
Is borrower experiencing partial financial hardship? Does a year's worth of payments exceed 15% discretionary income?	Yes
Initial Monthly Payment Under IBR	\$368



Income Based Repayment (IBR) – Additional Details (continued)

Effective for new borrowers July 1, 2014:

- Under current legislation, IBR limits for FFELP and Direct student loan payments to 15% of discretionary income, and provides for loan forgiveness after 25 years of payments
- Congress passed legislation in 2010 to change the IBR payment cap to 10% of discretionary income and to forgive all debt after 20 years of payments, effective for Direct Loans made to new borrowers on or after July 1, 2014



Private Loan Repayment

- Private loans are almost always unsubsidized for the life of the loan
- Repayment terms vary
- Choice of repayment plans may be available
- Residency and internship deferments may be available
- Forbearances may be available
 - Consult your loan servicer

Tip:
Refer to your promissory note and/or your servicer to determine your available options



Student Loan Interest Deduction

- Borrowers may be eligible to deduct student loan interest
- Deduction may not exceed \$2,500 per year
- Voluntary payments of interest during school, deferment or forbearance may be eligible for deduction
- Interest paid on consolidation loans may be deducted
- There are eligibility rules, including income limits
 - The limits for Federal Tax Year 2013 are shown in the table below:

	Full Deduction	Partial Deduction	No Deduction
Single	Modified Adjusted Gross Income is ≤ \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or more
Married Filing jointly	Modified Adjusted Gross Income is ≤ \$125,000	\$125,001 to \$154,999	\$155,000 or more

Source - http://www.irs.gov/publications/p970/ch06.html#enr16_2013_public100878289

NOTE: For information about your specific tax situation and any tax advice, please contact a tax professional



The Budgeting Process

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Communicate
- Consider personal or family situation
- Set goals
- Estimate income
- Estimate expenses
- Balance the budget plan
- Put the budget into action
- Keep track of income and spending
- Adjust the budget as necessary
- Use for future planning





Budgeting Tips

- Keep it simple
- Be realistic and consider all expenses
- Build in a margin of safety
- Keep working until you find a system that works well for you
- Provide for personal allowances in your plan
- Don't try to use someone else's budget
- Distinguish between wants and needs
- Borrow with care
- Develop an emergency fund



Keep Good Records

- Get all loan documents together: keep them on file!
 - Promissory notes
 - Disclosure statements
 - Award Letters
 - Exit interview information
- Open and READ student loan mail
- Bookmark loan servicer's websites
- Notify loan servicer(s) of name & address changes
- Document calls to servicer: date/time of call & person who handled the call
- Keep important numbers available





Recognize The Signs of Financial Difficulties

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, ONCE STARTED, TEND TO GET WORSE IF THEY ARE LEFT UNSOLVED

- **Some warning signs of financial problems:**
 - You have to wait for your paycheck or other income to pay bills
 - Your credit cards are charged up to the maximum
 - The amount you owe gets bigger every month
 - You bounce checks
 - You've received letters or calls from creditors
- **Actions you can take:**
 - Review your spending plan/budget
 - Ask for assistance from parents or mentor
 - Consider credit counseling



If I could do it all over again....

- I would begin paying my loans during my studies
- I would have taken all subsidized loans and no unsubsidized ones
- I would have taken out just enough and not the maximum amount
- I would pay interest as I went
- Pay some early on loans
- Rethink how to spend my loan
- Take more classes per semester to cut down on cost
- I would borrow less, have a better understanding of loan repayment options, and not accept refund checks to make my loan smaller
- Find out exactly how much I am borrowing
- Found other resources and researched how much education would cost
- Get a loan counselor



Resources

- School financial aid office
- Lender/servicer
- Federal Student Aid Ombudsman
 - U.S. Department of Education – FSA Ombudsman
 - <http://www.ombudsman.ed.gov> or 1-877-557-2575
- Federal Loan Servicers:





Questions?
