The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program

**Basic Eligibility Requirements**
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen with a valid social security number (SSN)
- be working toward a degree in an eligible full time undergraduate or postgraduate degree program

For the complete list of eligibility requirements, please click [here](#).

**Application Procedures**

**Step 1  Registration**
Eligible students may start to apply for Direct Loan Program only after they have completed the registration for the University, which means after acceptance of the admission offer and paid the first instalment of the composition/tuition fee.

**Step 2  Check the eligibility of study program**
Students may enquire the eligibility of the study program under the Direct Loan Program by sending an e-mail to sfas@cuhk.edu.hk.

**Step 3  Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**
Please click [here](#) to fill out the FAFSA online and list the University’s name on the FAFSA. The “Federal School Code” for CUHK is G22074.

Federal Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes all the information students provided on their FAFSA. Please inform the Scholarships and Financial Aid Section by e-mail (sfas@cuhk.edu.hk) after you have filled out the FAFSA. You will then be required to provide your SSN and DOB to the University for downloading the SAR from the Federal Student Aid website.

**Step 4  Sign the Master Promissory Note (MPN)**
Borrowers have to sign a Master Promissory Note to get a Direct Loan. It is a binding legal document that borrowers will repay their loans to the Department. There are two types of MPNs for Direct Loans, one for student borrowers receiving Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized loans, and the other for parent borrowers or graduate/professional students who are receiving a Direct PLUS loan.

Please complete the MPN online at [https://studentaid.gov/mpn/](https://studentaid.gov/mpn/). Please note that a new MPN is required for each academic year.
Step 5  Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement
Student and parent borrowers are required to view how much they currently owe in federal student loans and acknowledge that they have seen this amount before a school can make a first disbursement of the first Direct Loan that a student or parent borrower receives for each new award year. Please complete the Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement at https://studentaid.gov/asla/.

Step 6  Documents to be submitted to the University
Please submit the following documents to the Scholarships and Financial Aid Section, Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (Room 1206, 12/F, Yasumoto International Academic Park, The Chinese University of Hong Kong):

(1) Cost of Attendance Evaluation Form
   Please click here to download the Cost of Attendance Evaluation Form. Supporting documents are required to prove the costs specified on the Form. Please note that the amount certified will be determined by the University.

(2) Other documents:
   - For current students: photocopies of CUHK student ID card, student visa and passport
   - For new students applying before commencement of program: photocopies of admission notification, acceptance of admission offer, documentation showing payment of first instalment of the composition/ tuition fee, student visa and passport

Step 7  Direct PLUS Loan Request and Credit Check (for PLUS Loan borrowers)
To be eligible to receive a PLUS loan, borrowers must not have an adverse credit history. The Department conducts a credit check once it receives confirmation that the borrower has consented to the Department checking his or her credit. Please complete the Direct PLUS Request process electronically. For details, please visit https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/plus.

Step 8  Entrance Counseling
Students are required to complete the Direct Loan Entrance Counseling electronically https://studentaid.gov/entrance-counseling/. For PLUS loan, please visit the website https://studentaid.gov/app/counselingInstructions.action?counselingType=plus.

Step 9  Notifications Sent to Borrowers
The University will notify the student of the amount of Direct Loan Program funds the student/ his or her parent (for PLUS loan) can receive, and how and when the funds will be disbursed. Student is then requested to sign the loan acceptance form.
Step 10  School Certification
After checking that the applicant has completed the above procedures, the University will create origination, disbursement, and other records in the COD System.

Step 11  Loan Disbursement
The University will credit the loan payment to the University charges on student’s account (tuition and fees, hostel fees and other authorized charges). The credit balance will be disbursed to the student by check. The student will be notified of the disbursements once available.

If you wish to make a change to your loan amount or cancel the loan during the year, please contact Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.

Exit Counseling
Exit counseling is required before the borrowers graduate or drop below half-time attendance. It helps the students understand their rights and responsibilities as student loan borrowers and provides useful tips and information to help them manage their loans. Please complete the exit counseling at https://studentaid.gov/exit-counseling/.

Borrower’s Responsibilities and Obligations
Students must inform the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid any changes in name, address, telephone number, SSN, enrollment status (e.g. leave of absence, do not enroll at least half-time/ drop below half-time enrollment and withdrawal). Students are also required to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Satisfactory Academic Progress
In order to remain eligible to receive the U.S. Direct Loan, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP). A review will be conducted at the end of each academic year to determine whether the student has made a satisfactory academic progress. Students must have a grade point average (GPA) of C (2.0) or its equivalent by the end of the academic year or have an academic standing consistent with the requirement for graduation. Exceptions may be permissible if a student’s failure to meet satisfactory academic progress requirement is due to injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstance. Students who fail their SAP check may appeal to the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid for one-time waiver to continue receiving financial aid.

The maximum allowable time to be eligible for Federal Student Aid for both full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students cannot exceed 150% of normative study period regardless of whether the students receive Federal Student Aid during any enrollment period.
Please also refer to the University academic standing requirements as stipulated in the following regulations:

- General Regulations Governing Full-time Undergraduate Studies
- General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies

**Leave of Absence**

Leave of Absence (LOA) is a temporary interruption in a student's program of study. Students must follow the school's policy in applying for the LOA. For postgraduate students, please refer to the General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies. For undergraduate students, please refer to the website of Registration and Examinations Section.

For students who are receiving Direct Loan, in order to maintain their eligibility for the assistance, the LOA together with any additional leave of absence must not exceed a total of 180 days in any 12-month period including days in which school is not in session. The days of the LOA must be excluded from the calculation of the percentage of the loan payment period or period of enrollment completed. If a student does not return to the University at the expiration of an approved LOA (or a student takes an unapproved LOA), the student's withdrawal date is the date the student began the LOA. A student who has exhausted his or her grace period and is unable to begin repayment of a loan may apply for deferment or forbearance of payment. Any LOA that does not meet all of the conditions for an approved LOA is considered a withdrawal for Direct Loan.

**Withdrawal and Return of Funds**

If student withdraws from the University or reduces course load to less than half-time, return calculation will be conducted according to the regulations stipulated by the US Department of Education. For students completed less than 60% of their studies of payment period at the University, all unearned funds must be returned to the lender.

**Enquiries**

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid
Scholarships and Financial Aid Section
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Website: [http://admission.cuhk.edu.hk](http://admission.cuhk.edu.hk)
E-mail: sfas@cuhk.edu.hk
Tel: (852) 3943 1716   Fax: (852) 2603 7491
Consumer Information

Financial Assistance

University Financial Assistance

The University and its constituent colleges administer their own scholarships, bursaries, loans and student campus work schemes. Students can approach Office of Admissions and Financial Aid or their respective Colleges to apply for financial assistance. Please visit the website of Office of Admissions and Financial Aid and Colleges for more details. A summary of the existing scholarships and financial aid is available at CUHK Calendar.

U.S. Federal Student Financial Aid Program

U.S. students attending CUHK on a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate degree program as approved by the U.S. Department of Education may apply for The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (Direct Loan Program) to help pay their education expenses.

Type of Loans

- Stafford Loans

  (i) Direct Subsidized Loans

  Direct Subsidized Loans are awarded to undergraduate students who have financial need. The U.S. government subsidies the interest while borrowers are in school, during grace and deferment periods. Students must enroll in school at least half-time.

  The total Subsidized Loan award may not exceed the student’s cost of attendance minus the student’s Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and financial assistance available. The EFC which is on the Student Aid Report is based on the information the student reported on the Fee Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

  (ii) Direct Unsubsidized Loans

  Direct Unsubsidized Loans are not awarded based on financial need. The loans may be awarded to both undergraduate and graduate students. Borrowers are responsible for the interest that accrues during all periods. Borrowers have the option of paying the interest or having the interest capitalized. Students must enroll in school at least half-time.

  Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans have annual loan limits. The loan limits are based on the student’s grade level and dependency status. Please refer to the website of Federal Student Aid for details.
• PLUS Loans

Parents of dependent undergraduate students and students pursuing a graduate or professional degree may borrow the PLUS Loans. PLUS Loans are not awarded based on financial need. Students must enroll school at least half-time. Borrower is responsible for the interest that accrues during all periods. The PLUS Loan can be the difference between the Stafford Loans and the cost of attendance less any other financial aid received.

*Interest and Loan Fees*

Federal student loan borrowers are required to repay loans with interest. The interest rate and loan fee of different loan types can be found at [https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/interest-rates](https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/interest-rates).

*Repayment*

Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans have a six-month grace period before payments are due. Interest accrues during the grace period. Borrowers can choose to pay the interest that accrues during your grace period. PLUS loans have no grace period. There is a six-month deferment period if the borrower received a PLUS loan as a graduate or professional student or a parent borrower taking out a PLUS loan to pay for his/her child’s education. Interest will continue to accrue in the deferment period. The repayment period begins immediately after the loans are fully disbursed.

Different repayment plans including Standard Plan, Graduated Plan, Extended Plan, Revised Pay As You Earn Plan, Pay As You Earn Plan, Income-Based Plan, Income-Contingent and Income-Sensitive Plan are available for Direct Loan borrowers. More information on repayment plan is available at [Federal Student Aid](https://studentaid.gov) website.

*Application*

Please visit the website of [Office of Admissions and Financial Aid](https://studentaid.gov) for basic eligibility requirements, application procedures, borrower’s responsibilities and obligations for Direct Loan Program.

*National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)*

The enrollment and loan data of Direct Loan borrowers will be submitted via NSLDS. The data will be accessible to servicers and schools determined to be authorized users of the data system.

*Withdrawals and Return of Funds*

Undergraduate students should approach the [Registration and Examinations Section](https://studentaid.gov) to apply for withdrawal from the University. For postgraduate students, please contact the [Graduate School](https://studentaid.gov).
If students who have taken U.S. Federal Loans withdraw from the University or reduce course load to less than half-time, return calculation will be conducted according to the regulations stipulated by the US Department of Education. For students completed less than 60% of their studies of payment period at the University, all unearned funds must be returned to the lender. Borrowers should inform the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid if they apply for suspension or withdrawal within one week in writing.

**Private Education Loans**

Private Education Loans are not part of the U.S. Federal Loan program. Students should consider the Direct Loans before applying for private education loans as the terms/conditions of Direct Loans may be more favorable than private education loans. Students may choose any private loan lenders. The University does not have preferred lender arrangement.

Students have to fill out a self-certification form for private education loans. Please contact Office of Admissions and Financial Aid sfas@cuhk.edu.hk for information on how to complete the form, if necessary.

**Code of Conduct for Education Loans**

In order to prohibit a conflict of interest with the responsibilities of an agent with respect to private education loans, all agents with responsibility for US loans of the University are prohibited from:

- revenue-sharing arrangements with any lender;
- receiving gifts from a lender, a guarantor, or a loan servicer;
- contracting arrangements providing financial benefit from any lender or affiliate of a lender;
- directing borrowers to particular lenders or refusing or delaying loan certifications;
- offers of funds for private loans;
- call center or financial aid office staffing assistance; and
- advisory board compensation.

**University Fee and Cost of Attendance**

The list of the major types of University fees for undergraduate students can be found at the website of the Registration and Examination Section. Please refer to the program information for tuition fee of postgraduate programs. The details are also available at CUHK Calendar. The estimated cost of attendance is available at the website of Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.
Academic Programs and Quality Assurance

In CUHK, undergraduate and postgraduate studies leading to bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in a variety of disciplines are offered by the eight Faculties and the Graduate School.

List of undergraduate programs for international students can be found at http://admission.cuhk.edu.hk/programme-list.html. The information of postgraduate programs is available at https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/programmes.

CUHK is authorized by the Education Bureau to provide the educational program beyond the secondary school level in Hong Kong. CUHK is one of the eight higher education institutions in Hong Kong funded through the University Grants Committee (UGC). All UGC-funded institutions are self-accrediting institutions. The governing ordinances of the University empower it to confer degrees and other academic awards. The award-bearing programs are accredited and conferred by the University, and are subject to the University’s internal quality assurance mechanisms.

The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grant Committee also ensures quality education provision in the institutions. Please refer to QAC’s website at http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/qac/quality.html for more information.

Protection of Personal Data (Privacy)

CUHK undertakes to comply with the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance to ensure that personal data kept are accurate, securely kept and used only for the purpose for which they have been collected. The relevant Privacy Policy can be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/pdo/en/.

Services and Information for Students with Disabilities

The Office of Student Affairs provides various support services, such as learning support, accommodation and transportation support for students with disabilities. Please refer to the website of Office of Student Affairs for details.

Health and Safety

The University Health Service provides on-campus medical, dental and health promotion services to full-time students. It organizes regular talks, student activities, awareness campaigns and vaccination programs. For further information, please visit the website at www.cuhk.edu.hk/uhs.

For information on safety information and policy, please visit the University Safety Office’s website at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/useo/so/safety_info.html.