

Alternative Student Loans

Private educational loans (alternative loans) are credit based loans provided by nationally recognized lending or banking institutions to eligible students. The maximum amount a student may borrow per academic term is the total cost of attendance minus the total of other financial aid received. Loans will typically be scheduled to disburse at the start of each term. To ensure your funds are available to you when your classes begin, be sure to start the application process with your lender at least 2 months prior to the start of the term.

To assist you in finding a lender, the following page provides an alphabetical historical listing of all lenders that students at American University have borrowed from in the past three years. Lenders that are no longer providing loans have been removed from the list. You may select any lender of your choosing, and you will not be penalized for choosing a lender not listed below. American University does not endorse, recommend, or promote any of the listed lenders.

Students interested in applying for an alternative loan must follow the instructions from the lender carefully. These instructions will guide the applicant step by step through the process. One of the requirements is the Private Education Loan Applicant Self-Certification Form which is completed by the student and submitted to the lender. The lender will make this form available. You can also find this on AU's website at <https://www.american.edu/financialaid/alternative-loans.cfm>

Other Options

Before applying for an alternative student loan, check out your other options as well.

Federal student aid programs	https://studentaid.gov .
State aid programs	https://thecollegeinvestor.com/student-loan-financial-aid-by-state/
Outside scholarships	www.fastweb.com or https://www.finaid.org/scholarships/

Tips for Comparing Lenders

We have established the lender list as a starting point to help make sense of the loan information that is available. However, you are responsible for comparing these terms and selecting the loan that will best meet your needs. The following are some tips for you to consider when evaluating your options.

- What is the interest rate on the loan? Is it a fixed rate or a variable rate?
- Are there any fees for the loan? – Some common names are origination fee, disbursement fee, or default fee. Some lenders may have a sliding scale based on the strength of your credit.
- Are there any front end or back end benefits? – Front end benefits are discounts offered up front when the loan is disbursed. This can be a reduction of fees or a rebate. Back end benefits are discounts offered when the student goes into repayment. These might include an interest reduction for auto-debit payments. It is best to focus on discounts which you can't lose or on discounts that are immediate. Be aware of fine print that requires you to repay a fee rebate if you consolidate with another lender.
- How long will it take to process the loan? – Find out from your lender how long it typically takes to process a loan application and whether it is a paper process or an electronic process. A paper application process can take 6-8 weeks if an original document needs to be mailed back and forth.
- What kind of customer service will be provided? – Lenders can let you know their average response time and satisfaction ratings. Many lenders will also now provide self-service options via telephone or the internet allowing you to get information on your loans even faster.
- Will my loan be sold to a different lender in the future? – Some lenders will hold the loan for the life of the loan, guaranteeing you their service until you finish repayment. Other lenders may sell your loan to a new servicer.

NEW! You can compare participating lenders from the list below in one place side by side at
<https://www.elmselect.com/v4/school/1154/program-select>

Lender Name	Website
AAA Advantage Student Loan	https://www.aaa.psl.sparrowfi.com
Abe Student Loan	https://www.abestudentloans.com
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education	https://acpsecure.alaska.gov/
Apple Federal Credit Union	https://www.applefcu.org/loans/studentloans
Ascent Funding	https://www.ascentfunding.com/
Baxter Credit Union	https:// www.bcu.org/Loans-and-Mortgages/Student
Beginnings Credit Union	https://beginnings.studentchoice.org/
Brazos Education Lending	https://studentloans.com/
Citadel Federal Credit Union	https://www.citadelbanking.com/borrow/student-loans
Citizens Bank	https://www.citizensbank.com/collegestudent
College Ave Student Loans	https://www.collegeavestudentloans.com/
College Foundation, Inc.	https://www.cfnc.org/pay-for-college/student-loans/
Congressional Federal Credit Union	https://www.congressionalfcu.org/loans/personal-loans/student-loans
Connecticut Higher Educ. Student Loan (CHESLA)	https:// www.chesla.org
Custom Choice Loan	https://www.customchoice.com/
Digital Federal Credit Union	https://www.dcu.org/borrow/student-loans.html
Discover Student Loans	https://www.discover.com/student-loans
Earnest	https://www.earnest.com/student-loans
Educational Systems Federal Credit Union	https://www.esfcu.org/Solutions/Loans/Student-Loans
Finance Authority of Maine	https://www.theloanforme.com/
Government of Canada	https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education.html
Granite Edvance	https://graniteedvance.org/cover-the-cost/apply-for-a-loan/
Hudson Valley Credit Union	https://www.hvcu.org/personal/borrow/student-loans/
Hughes Federal credit Union	https://www.hughesfcu.org/go/college
InvestEd	https://www.investedindiana.org/loans/student-loan/
Kemba Financial Credit Union	https://www.kemba.org/education
Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority	https://www.kheslc.com/kheslcservicing/pages/home.faces
Lancaster Dollars for Higher Education	https://lancdollars.org/
Lendkey	https://www.lendkey.com/private-student-loans
M&T Bank	https://www3.mtb.com/personal/mortgages-and-loans/student-loans
Massachusetts Educ. Finance Authority (MEFA)	https://www.mefa.org/pay/loanproducts/
MPower Financing	https://www.mpowerfinancing.com/
NASA Federal Credit Union	https://nasafcu.studentchoice.org/
Navy Federal Credit Union	https://www.navyfederal.org/loans-cards/student-loans.html
Nelnet Bank	https://www.nelnetbank.com/
New Jersey Class Loan	https://www.hesaa.org/Pages/NJclasshome.aspx
NIH Federal Credit Union	https://www.nihfcu.org/student-loan-options
PA Higher Educ. Assistance Agency (PHEAA)	https://www.pheaa.org/student-loans/pa-forward/
Prodigy Finance	https://prodigyfinance.com/student-loans/
Rhode Island Student Loan Authority (RISLA)	https://www.risla.com/college-loans
Sallie Mae, Inc.	https://www.salliemae.com/
San Francisco Fire Credit Union	https://sffirecu.org/loans/student-loans/
SOFI	https://www.sofi.com/private-student-loans/
South Carolina Student Loan	https://scstudentloan.org/
Synod of the Northeast	https://www.synodne.org/wurffel-sills
Umass Five College Federal Credit Union	https://www.umassfive.coop/personal/loans/student/student-loans
Vermont Student Assistance Corp. (VSAC)	https://www.vsac.org/