Important advice for students

Student loan & financial planning checklist

You're probably leaving school with a combination of federal and private student loans—and each type has different features. This checklist and spreadsheet can help you keep track of what you need to know about each of your loans.

- [ ] **Get your FSA ID** for access to the Federal Student Aid's online systems. Don't have it? Go to **StudentAid.gov**.
- [ ] **Collect your federal and private student loan documents:** promissory notes, lender/servicer communications, exit interview information, disclosures, statements, bills, emails, and letters. For federal loans, visit **StudentAid.gov**; for private loans, contact your lender/servicer.
- [x] **Know what you owe:** Make a list of your loans, figure out whether they're federal or private, and write down your loan servicers and their contact info. The attached spreadsheet can help.

  Need help? Locate your federal loans at **StudentAid.gov**; for private loans, request a copy of your credit report at **AnnualCreditReport.com**.
- [ ] **Keep in touch:** Update your contact info so you get important messages from your lender/servicer.
- [ ] **Save time:** Sign up to manage your account online so your lender/servicer can contact you by email.
- [ ] **Save money:** You may be able to lower your interest rate by signing up for auto debit. Plus, see if there are any other borrower benefits.
- [ ] **Get the facts:** Check with your lender/servicer to find out when your loans will enter repayment, what your monthly payments will be, and when they're due.
- [ ] **Make a repayment plan:**
  - For federal student loans, check out repayment options at **StudentAid.gov**.
  - For private student loans, contact your lender/servicer.
- [ ] **Understand your options:** If you're having trouble making payments, see if there are options like deferment, forbearance, and other forms of payment relief. For federal loans, visit **StudentAid.gov**; for private loans, contact your lender/servicer.
- [ ] **Explore loan forgiveness for federal loans:** Check with **StudentAid.gov** or your servicer to research loan discharge and forgiveness opportunities and conditions.
- [ ] **Take advantage of student loan interest deductions:** Consult your tax advisor or find more info at **IRS.gov**.

Track your loans

Use this spreadsheet to record the information you'll need for paying back your federal and private loans.

Type of loan *(federal/private)*	Servicer	Servicer contact info	Loan amount	Interest rate	Grace period *(if yes, how long)*	Action date*

*Action date is the date you want to begin taking action on your loans. For instance, if you have a grace period, a possible action could be contacting your servicer 35–40 days prior to its expiration date. Or, if you don't have a grace period you may want to contact your servicer 35–40 days before your graduation date.

This information is not meant to provide tax advice. Consult with a tax advisor for education tax credit and deduction eligibility. For more information, see IRS Publication 970.

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