



# The University of Mississippi

## Office of Financial Aid

University, MS 38677

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**Policy Name:** 15.0 Book and/or Meal Voucher Requests

**Purpose:** This document contains the Office of Financial Aid's current policies and procedures for students requesting a voucher for books and/or meals based on having financial aid that is still pending.

**Disclaimer:** This policy is subject to change, without notice, in order to comply with administrative and regulatory requirements.

**Policy Contents:**

- 15.0 Voucher Overview
- 15.1 Special Provisions for Federal Pell Grant Recipients
- 15.2 Reasons Why Book and Meal Voucher Requests May be Denied
- 15.3 Voucher Request Process

**Definitions:**

- OFA – Office of Financial Aid
- UM- University of Mississippi

### 15.0

### Voucher Overview

Students may request an express voucher to help cover educational expenses if disbursement of financial aid is pending for the term. The pending aid must be in excess of all University charges.

#### **Vouchers are available through one of the three options below:**

1. **Ole Miss Express** - Funds are added to a student's Ole Miss I.D. card. The funds are available to purchase books, supplies, laundry machine time in residence halls, copier and printer services in library and Weir Hall, vending, and meals at both on campus and participating City of Oxford locations. It is recommended that students request a voucher only up to the amount necessary to cover expenses at places where Ole Miss Express is honored. Please refer to the Ole Miss ID Center's refund policy when making decisions regarding the amount to be deposited into your Ole Miss Express account. **The maximum request cannot exceed \$600 for all undergraduate and graduate students.**
2. **FLEX** - Money is deposited onto a student's I.D. card that may be used ONLY for food on campus. The benefit of FLEX is that students are not charged tax for their food purchases.

The locations include on-campus dining locations, residence hall convenience stores, and vending machine locations.

3. **Meal Plan** - Money is deposited onto a student's I.D. card that may be used ONLY for meals on campus. There are various meal plan options that allow students to eat a specified number of times per week at the Rebel Market, the Marketplace at the RC, or the Grill dining facilities. The plans also provide a specified amount of FLEX dollars for those times when students might prefer to eat at the Union or purchase a snack at a vending location. Visit <https://olemiss.campusdish.com/MealPlans> for details.

## 15.1

### Special Provisions for Title IV Aid Recipients

Per federal regulations, schools must provide a way Title IV aid (Pell Grant, Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant, SEOG, TEACH, Work-Study, Direct Loans, and PLUS Loan) recipients who have not yet received their disbursement for a given term, to obtain or buy required books and supplies by the seventh day of the term. Students will qualify to have funds advanced to them for this purpose under the following conditions:

- Disbursement of those funds would have created a credit balance, AND
- Ten days before the beginning of the payment period, the school could have disbursed FSA funds to the student (in other words, the student did not have any holds on their Title IV aid funds such as a loan default, incomplete verification, etc.).

The OFA will notify these students through their Ole Miss email account of their eligibility to receive an Ole Miss Express voucher, which will provide the means for purchase. Students will be directed to their MyOleMiss portal to request the voucher. Students may decline to participate in this process.

The amount of the voucher will be the lesser of the student's expected credit balance after all aid disburses OR the amount of the books/supplies allowance including in the student's cost of attendance for that period.

Since Ole Miss Express can be used at not only UM's book store partner, Barnes & Noble, but also several unaffiliated community bookstores, students do have a real and reasonable opportunity to purchase their course materials elsewhere.

**15.2****Reasons Why Book and Meal Voucher Requests May be Denied**

In general, vouchers may be denied for the following reasons:

- Financial Aid Suspension status
- Not enough pending aid to cover request plus charges owed to the Bursar
- Funds are already set to disburse the next business day
- The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid has not confirmed state awards (such as MTAG and MESG)
- The pending aid is “outside” (private) scholarship funding
- Continuing students that have been selected for verification and have not submitted verification documents by August 15th for Fall Semester
- Incoming freshman and new transfers that have been selected for verification and have not submitted verification documentation will not be eligible
- No FAFSA on file
- Documentation not submitted for professional judgments, etc.

**15.3****Ole Miss Express Voucher Request Process**

All vouchers should be processed electronically via the MyOleMiss student portal (select “Book and/or Meal Voucher Request from the Financial Aid app list) and cannot be handled in person at the OFA.

Vouchers submitted before 3pm will be reviewed by noon the following business day.

Once a decision is made about the voucher request, the student will receive an email notifying them if the request was approved or denied.