



# The University of Mississippi

## Office of Financial Aid

University, MS 38677

Phone: (800) 891- 4596 Fax: (662) 915-1164

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**Policy Name:** 3.4 Cost of Attendance

**Purpose:** This document contains the Office of Financial Aid's current policies and procedures for Cost of Attendance.

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

### Policy Contents:

- 3.4 Cost of Attendance Overview
- 3.4.1 Revisions to COA – Enrollment Changes, Attendance Verification, and Professional Judgment
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### Definitions and Terms:

COA – Cost of Attendance  
OFA – Office of Financial Aid  
UM – University of Mississippi

A student's COA (sometimes referred to as the "standard student budget") includes both direct costs (billed by UM) and indirect costs (realistic allowances for things like transportation and personal expenses). Components of the COA are defined for institutions of higher learning by the U.S. Department of Education.

This information is provided by the OFA to assist students and families with financial planning, but the COA values are also used as "caps" for the maximum amount of aid that an individual student may receive in their financial aid package. In addition, the COA is part of the equation for determining how much financial need a student demonstrates (see policy "Calculation of Financial Need").

The OFA prepares separate Fall/Spring budgets for the following categories of students:

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Accountancy Graduate
- Law
- Pharmacy undergraduate – which include Early Entry (the EE1-3 class levels) as well as all other Pharmacy majors not enrolled in the professional Pharmacy program
- Pharmacy undergraduate - which includes class level PY1 (senior year)
- Pharmacy professional - PY2 (the first year of the professional program)
- Pharmacy professional – PY3 (the second year of the professional program)
- Pharmacy professional – PY4 (the third year of the professional program)
- MBA – Master of Business Administration
- PMBA – the online "professional" MBA program
- Online Graduate Programs
- LLM – Space Law

For each category, budgets are crafted by enrollment level: full-time,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time, and less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time. Spring Semester and Wintersession are considered one combined term.

The components of the full-time COA include annual estimates of:

- Tuition and Fees
- Non-Resident Tuition (required only for out-of-state students)
- Program Fees (required only for students in specified online degree programs)
- Course Fees (included only if required of all students in the academic program)
- Capital Improvement Fees (required fee for all students used to fund projects involving repair, renovation, and construction of student facilities on the UM campuses)
- Books and Supplies
- Estimated Food Costs

- Housing Expenses
- Transportation Expenses
- Personal Expenses
- Loan Origination Fee Allowance (only if a Federal Direct Loan is in the package)

For students taking only iStudy (correspondence) courses, the COA is limited to required tuition and fees, with an allowance for books and supplies if needed for the classes.

- For students who are otherwise full-time, adding semester-based iStudy courses that bring them up to 19 hours would not yield additional tuition charges. They would pay the standard fixed "flat rate" for full-time students (taking 12-19 hours).
- There is an additional tuition charge for full-year iStudy courses regardless of semester enrollment. (The nonresident fee is not applied to full-year iStudy courses.)

The COA for an incarcerated student (if known) is limited to tuition and fees and required books and supplies.

For students participating in a UM Study Abroad program, the COA is provided by the Office of Study Abroad based on cost information received from the foreign institution. For UM students who temporarily enroll at other domestic institutions under a consortium agreement (which requires a signed agreement as well as approval by the academic program), the COA used for awarding purposes by UM (the home school) will be provided by the "host" (the other school).

The COA for summer attendance is individually prepared based on each student's expected enrollment as reported on the Summer Financial Aid Application. Estimates for tuition and fees, books and supplies are based on the total number of credit hours for the combined term (which includes May intersession, First Summer, Full Summer, Second Summer, and August intersession.) Allowances for living expenses are based on the number of months in the mini-sessions in which the student actually plans to be enrolled.

#### Part 3.4.1

#### Revisions to COA – Enrollment Change, Attendance Verification, and Professional Judgment

The OFA creates a student's Fall/Spring COA based on the assumption of full-time enrollment. However, when students are instructed to accept their aid online through their "Award Notification" in the MyOleMiss portal, they must confirm their anticipated enrollment. If the student indicates anything less than full-time, the OFA database system will set an "Enrollment Change" document, which would require a staff member to review and revise the student's COA based on the new self-reported status. Students may also request these adjustments via phone, email, or in-person contacts with an advisor.

A student's COA may be adjusted following the mandatory drop date for each term. Financial Aid will "lock in" enrollment based on the student's class schedule as of the end of that day, and only for those courses where attendance has been verified. These are the

credit hours that will be used to determine the enrollment for the term. Students will be reviewed and COA will be adjusted if necessary (which may mean paybacks due to overawards if COAs are reduced).

For students enrolled less than ½-time, housing and meals will typically be excluded. Upon request, the OFA may allow these costs to be included in the COA for a less than ½-time student on a case-by-case basis for up to three semesters (including the combined summer term), with no more than two of the semesters being consecutive.

Other costs (e.g. child care, disability accommodations, travel, and extraordinary education expenses) may be included in the COA upon request following approval by the Professional Judgment Committee (see policy 3.6A, “Cost of Attendance Professional Judgments”).

Students may request a COA increase for attending Wintersession. Tuition is a separate add-on fee. Since Wintersession is considered to be part of the combined Spring term, the increase is limited to tuition and book expenses. (UM does not charge an additional fee for housing during this time period.)

Some courses have individual course fees. A complete listing of those courses can be found by term at <http://catalog.olemiss.edu/courses/fees>. The OFA may add COA increases for actual course fees upon review.

If known, the housing allowance in the COA should be zeroed for individuals identified as:

- Independent students who receive, or who spouses receive, a military housing allowance (Basic Allowance for Housing, or “BAH”) or who live on a military base.
- Dependent students who are living with parents who are receive BAH or who live on a military base.

**Part 3.4.2****Tuition and Fees**

To the extent possible, actual rates are used for all academic programs. They are based on the fee assessment categories and the individual student's enrollment level as shown below. (Rates are confirmed by the Bursar's Office.) Non-resident fees are charged for all academic programs except those offered exclusively online (PMBA, Online Graduate Programs, and LLM.)

<i>CREDIT HOURS USED FOR DETERMINATION</i>				
<b>PROGRAM TYPE</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>3 /4-time</b>	<b>1 /2-time</b>	<b>Less than 1 /2-time</b>
Undergraduate	12	9	6	3
Graduate	9	7	6	3
Accountancy Graduate	9	7	6	3
Law	10	8	6	3
Pharmacy (EE1-3/Pre-Pharm)	12	9	6	3
Pharmacy (PY1)	12	9	6	3
Pharmacy (PY2)	12	9	6	3
Pharmacy (PY3)	12	9	6	3
Pharmacy (PY4)	12	9	6	3
MBA	9	7	6	3
PMBA	9	7	6	3
Online Grad Programs	9	7	6	3
LLM-Space Law	10	8	6	3

At the time that COAs are prepared each year, charges may be estimates of the per-hour rate (and the rounding rules that will be used for the final figures). Differences will be slight; any change in amount that is not considered minor will be re-budgeted by the OFA once known. All students are charged a Capital Improvements Fee which is assessed at a per credit hour rate. The Online Program Fee is also charged per credit hour for all academic programs offered completely online. Course Fees and Rotation Fees are included for full-time Pharmacy only, since these students are in lock-step cohorts. (Rates confirmed by the School of Pharmacy.)

**Part 3.4.3****Undergraduate Housing**

The rate used in the COA is based on the cost of a double occupancy, on-campus room in one of the contemporary residence halls, which include the residential colleges. (Rates confirmed by the Division of Administration & Finance.) A traditional residence hall cost is less, but this particular option is limited to first-time freshmen only.

To determine off-campus costs, a Cost of Attendance Survey is distributed annually (typically in March). Undergraduates who live off-campus continue to report an average cost for nine months of housing/utilities that is comparable to the rate being used for on-campus students. As a result, the housing allowance has been established at the contemporary residential rate in order to provide a reasonable estimate for all undergraduates.

**Part 3.4.4****Graduate, Law, Pharmacy PY2-4 Housing,  
MBA and Online Graduate Programs**

Very few grad/professional students can be accommodated in on-campus housing options. Therefore, the housing allowance for these students is based primarily on information received about off-campus living options through the annual Cost of Attendance Survey.

**Part 3.4.5****Estimated Food Cost**

In order to determine a food allowance for all meals for the entire academic year, the “all inclusive” Residential College Meal Plan rate is used. Also included is the Flex Membership charge required of all Oxford campus undergraduate students.

**Part 3.4.6****Books and Supplies**

This figure is based primarily on the results of the annual student survey.

**Part 3.4.7****Personal Expenses**

To finalize this figure, the OFA utilized information from the student survey. In addition, the OFA also benchmarked similar costs at 8 peer schools (Southeastern Conference and/or other MS public college competitors) to ensure that UM’s allowance was not inappropriate based on prevailing standards.

Pharmacy students (PY1-4 only) have additional personal expenses built into their COAs totaling \$310 annually for drug screenings, liability insurance, and vaccinations (TB, Influenza and Hepatitis). Information was confirmed by the School of Pharmacy.

**Part 3.4.8****Transportation**

This standard figure is based on two travel components:

- An assumption that the average student takes 8 one-way trips home or to visit family members during an academic year (arrival in August, departure/arrival at Thanksgiving, departure/arrival at Christmas, departure/arrival at spring break, and departure in May). Using the current UM mileage reimbursement rate and distance chart for Oxford to Biloxi (the furthest city from Oxford within the state of Mississippi at 314 miles), an average expense is determined.

$$\begin{aligned} 314 \times 8 \text{ one way trips} &= 2,512 \text{ total miles} \\ 2,512 \text{ total miles} \times \text{mileage rate} &= \text{estimated travel cost per academic year} \end{aligned}$$

- Based on the Cost of Attendance Survey, a determination is made of how many miles the average student drives around Oxford each week, which is then multiplied by the current UM mileage rate.

The final figure is added together for an estimate of transportation.

#### **Part 3.4.9**

#### **Loan Origination Fee Allowance**

Allowances for both Federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans and Federal Direct Parent/Grad PLUS loan origination fees are automatically added to the COA if a student's financial aid package includes these loans. The origination fee for Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans is based on the average volume from the prior year. Likewise, Direct PLUS loans are based on the average PLUS loan volume from the prior year. The origination fee allowances are automatically zeroed if the loans are cancelled.

#### **Part 3.4.10**

#### **COA Breakdowns by Program**

Current COA information for all categories of students, both full-time and part-time, are available at <http://finaid.olemiss.edu/cost-of-attendance/>.