

BEFORE YOU BORROW

Professional School Funding Checklist

Seven decisions to work through before accepting loans.

7

MOVES

Use this with your school's cost-of-attendance page, your aid offer, and a realistic monthly budget. Pencil is encouraged.

1

Write down the full cost

Include tuition, required fees, insurance, equipment, exams, travel, and living costs. Do not build the plan from tuition alone.

My estimated total cost: \$ _____

2

Separate gift aid from loans

Highlight grants and scholarships that do not need to be repaid. List loans separately, even when they appear inside the same award.

Gift aid confirmed: \$ _____

3

Search beyond the school

Check professional associations, local foundations, employers, community groups, and awards tied to your specialty, identity, location, or service plans.

Outside funding found: \$ _____

4

Compare service commitments carefully

Military, public-health, rural, and employer programs can be valuable. Compare the dollars with the location, specialty, and years-of-service requirements.

Programs to investigate: _____

5

Agree on family support

Parents and students should decide what support is available, what it covers, whether it is a gift or loan, and what happens if costs rise.

Family support available: \$ _____

6

Calculate the actual gap

Subtract gift aid, savings, service support, and realistic family contributions from the full cost. This is the amount that still needs a strategy.

My remaining funding gap: \$ _____

7

Borrow in an intentional order

Review federal student loans and their protections before private loans. Compare fees, interest, repayment terms, co-signer rules, and what happens during residency or low-income years.

Maximum I plan to borrow: \$ _____

BEFORE ACCEPTING LOANS, I CAN ANSWER:

- What will one year cost, and what could the full program cost?
- Which funds do not need to be repaid?
- What amount is still unfunded?
- What will my likely early-career income be?
- Which repayment protections matter for my career path?
- Who is responsible if a family or private loan becomes difficult to repay?

ONE LAST CHECK

If the plan only works when every assumption goes perfectly, it needs another pass.

Confirm current program rules, rates, and eligibility with the official provider before making a financial decision.