



Office of Financial Aid

Private Alternative Loans

A number of lenders, credit unions and agencies sponsor alternative loans, home equity loans and lines of credit to help families finance the cost of a college education. The following is a representative listing of such programs. Contact these lenders for the latest terms and rates. Loans are available for both undergraduate and graduate students.

- Niagara University does not automatically certify alternative loans until students have completed the FAFSA and their eligibility for Federal Stafford Loans has been determined.
- It is usually in the student's best interest to borrow from the Federal Direct Loan program first before borrowing an alternative loan. **There is no cap on the interest rate for an alternative loan.**
- If a student does not intend to complete a FAFSA and **only wants an alternative loan**, we must be notified in writing to determine your eligibility for the alternative loan.

***** CONSUMER ALERT *****

Lenders look at your credit score to determine if you are a good credit risk. Applying for more than one Alternative Loan will no longer negatively affect your credit score. It's treated as a "soft hit" on your credit report for both the borrower and the co-signer if you are applying to multiple lenders.

Be wary of any Direct to Consumer Loans that do not require a school certification. Usually the interest rates on those loans are much higher. If a school certification is not required, you will be asked for a bill or a copy of your class schedule.

The Financial Aid Office is required by Federal regulations to make certain your aid does not exceed cost of attendance if the aid includes a loan. The cost of attendance elements are set by federal regulation.

Important: Pursuant to Section 155 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, (HEA) and to satisfy the requirements of Section 128(e)(3) of the Truth in Lending Act, a lender must obtain a self-certification signed by the applicant before disbursing a private education loan. The school is required on request to provide this form or the required information only for students admitted or enrolled at the school. This form is available on our website or in the Financial Aid Office upon request.

Defaulting on your loan could prevent you from owning a car or a house one day, and it is virtually impossible to eliminate student debt by declaring bankruptcy except in extreme cases of hardship.

Questions you want to ask before borrowing an alternative loan:

- What is the interest rate?
- What is the cap on the interest rate?
- When and how often is interest capitalized (added to the principal)?
- When does repayment begin?
- What are the penalties for missing a payment?
- Can you postpone payments after graduation; under what circumstances?
- Is there in-school deferment for graduate school; and is there a maximum time for in-school deferment?

See reverse for Alternative Loan options

Private Credit Based Alternative Loans

Borrowers have the right and ability to select the education loan provider of their choice and are not required to use any of the lenders on this list. Niagara receives no incentive or benefit from any lender on this list. All of the listed lenders provide loans for Graduate and Undergraduate students to provide funds beyond what federal programs can offer. Students can borrow up to cost of attendance minus financial aid. **It is best to contact the lender concerning current rates and benefits.**

Citizens Bank Student Loan

The Citizens Bank Student Loan has zero origination fees and low interest rates with your choice of variable or fixed rate options. Multi-Year Approval offers a simple way to secure money for all years of school with just one application. Lower your interest rate by up to 0.50 percentage points with the Loyalty and Automated Repayment Discount. Ability to defer payments for six months after graduation. Cosigner release option is available after 36 consecutive on-time payments. Loan forgiveness in the event of permanent disability or death of the student. Can cover past due balances up to 365 days. Students must be enrolled at least half-time in a degree granting program. Learn more and apply online at www.citizensbank.com/studentloans or call 800-708-6684.

College Ave

The College Ave Student loan has no origination or processing fees and offers low fixed and variable rate options. Offers multi-year Peace of Mind loan option. Borrowers have repayment term choices and a choice of in-school repayment options with interest rates that reward responsible borrowing. Includes 0.25% interest rate reduction for auto debit in repayment. Potential borrowers can find out whether their credit pre-qualifies for the loan and what rates they personally can expect from us before they apply – without affecting their credit score. Students must be enrolled at least half-time in a degree granting program. Learn more at www.collegeavestudentloans.com or call 800-422-7502.

Digital Credit Union Private Education Line of Credit

No origination or disbursement fees with fixed and variable rate options. Eliminates the need for multiple loans. Apply once and you have the peace of mind of available financing in future years. Simply contact us for a draw when you need funding to pay your bill. Includes 0.25% interest rate reduction for auto debit in repayment. Customer Service Center available 24/7. Cosigner release options available after making 48 consecutive on time payments. Apply online <https://dcu.studentchoice.org/apply/> or to join DCU, call 800-324-1589. The application takes 5 minutes.

Discover Student Loan

The Discover Private Loans have zero fees at origination and repayment, competitive interest rates, a 1% cash reward for good grades, and a 0.25% auto debit reward. Multi-Year Option, where we are able to pre-qualify eligible borrowers for student loans to help cover future academic periods. You must be enrolled at least half time. There is a 6-month grace period for undergraduates and 9-month grace period for graduate students. Co-signer release option is not available. Apply online at www.discoverstudentloans.com or call 1-800-STUDENT.

Earnest Student Loans

Earnest offers variable and fixed rate options are available. Borrower benefits and features include .025% auto pay discount, extended grace period of 9 months, skip-a-payment every 12 months, no fees including no late fees ever, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) not required, and past due balance loans up to 365 days with current enrollment not required. Apply online at <https://www.earnest.com/student-loans> or by calling 888-601-2801.

Sallie Mae Student Loans

The Sallie Mae Student loan has zero fees if attending a degree granting institution. Variable and fixed rates are available. Past due balances are covered within 365 days of the loan period end date. Students can be less than half time, half time or full time. Includes 0.25% interest rate reduction for auto debit in repayment. A Cosigner release option is available after 12 consecutive on time payments are made. Income and employment verification is required. Loan forgiveness in the event of the death or permanent disability of the student is available. Apply online at www.salliemae.com/student-loans/ or call 877-279-7172.

SoFi Student Loans

SoFi offers variable and fixed rates with no origination or late fees. Apply online or on your mobile device and check your rate in 3 minutes or less without affecting your credit score. Money saving borrower benefits includes a 0.25% rate reduction for autopay, 0.25% returning borrower discount, 0.25% family rate discount, and the opportunity to earn and redeem SoFi points to pay down your SoFi student loan. Borrowers can defer payments for six months after graduation, a cosigner release option is available after 24 consecutive on-time payments, and you can apply for a loan to cover a past due balance up to 180 days. Students must be enrolled at least half-time in a degree granting program. Learn more and apply online at www.sofi.com/private-student-loans/ or call 855-456-7634.

If you would like to shop around and compare private student loans you can go to www.elmselect.com.