



Stages of a Student Loan

From the time you take out a student loan to the time you pay it back, the loan goes through a “life cycle,” with multiple stages that each require different action items from you. Depending on your loan type, there may be times when no payment is due, and other times when you must take specific actions to provide information to your loan servicer (e.g. Nelnet), or to make payments toward your loan.

Those who have Federal Stafford Loans typically go through three stages: in school, in grace, and in repayment.

Private loans follow a similar life cycle as a federal student loan, however, terms and conditions vary depending on the lender. Grace periods, interest rates, and payment schedules should be verified for each of your private student loans.

Borrowers of other student loan types such as Parent PLUS loans or GradPLUS loans for graduate and professional students have slightly different experiences. In any case, your school will work directly with Nelnet (and your other loan servicers, if applicable) to ensure we know which stage you are in. Your servicer will communicate with you based on your needs at that time. See below for an overview of the stages of the student loan life cycle.

Federal Stafford Loan Stages

In School



2-4 Years

While in school, your studies should be your top priority. However, while you are not required to make payments when taking classes at least half time, you have the option to pay down your student loans, which will save you money in the long run. If you have loans serviced by Nelnet you can log in to [Nelnet.com \(https://secure.nelnet.net\)](https://secure.nelnet.net) any

time to learn more about your loan balance and stay financially fit with our [webinars](#) (<http://www.nelnetloanservicing.com/portfolio/money-mondays/>) and [printable tip sheets](#). ([/get-financially-fit](#))

[Explore the In School phase of the Student Loan Life Cycle \(/in-school\)](#)

In Grace



6 Months

After leaving school, you'll have six months before you're required to begin making payments—this is called a grace period for students with Stafford loans, and a deferment for graduate or professional students with GradPLUS loans. During this time, if you have loans serviced by Nelnet you should create a [Nelnet.com](#) (<https://secure.nelnet.net>) account and explore which payment plan works best for you. While you are not required to make payments during grace and deferment, you have the option to pay down your student loans, including paying the interest on any unsubsidized loans, which will save you money in the long run.

[Explore the In Grace phase of the Student Loan Life Cycle \(/in-grace\)](#)

In Repayment



1-30 Years

You receive your payment schedule information, start paying your student loan, and if you have loans serviced by Nelnet, you create an account on [Nelnet.com](#) (<https://secure.nelnet.net>). At this point, just know that we're here for you when you need us.

[Explore the In Repayment phase of the Student Loan Life Cycle \(/in-repayment\)](#)

Federal GradPLUS Loans (graduate/professional students)

While you're in school, you have the option to pay down your student loans, including paying the interest on any unsubsidized loans, which will save you money in the long run. Of course, you're always welcome to ask questions and learn more—if you have loans serviced by Nelnet just [log in at Nelnet.com](#) (<https://secure.nelnet.net>) to see the details of your existing student loan with Nelnet or to chat with us.

Your payments for this loan are postponed until six months after you graduate or drop below half-time status as a student. For your GradPLUS loan, this postponement is called a six-month deferment. If you do wish to make payments on this or any of your student loans while you are still in school, especially if you'd like to save interest in the long run, you can.

We'll send your monthly student loan billing statement around three weeks before your payment is due. When you start making payments, your loan is considered to be in repayment.

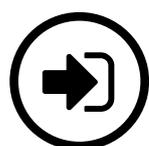
Federal PLUS Loans (parents)

Parent PLUS loans are typically split into groups of funds and sent to the school (disbursed) to cover costs throughout the academic year (for example, half during fall semester and half during spring semester). At the earliest, your first payment on this loan would be due 60 days after the school receives the last set of funds (in the example above, 60 days after the spring funds were sent to the school). If you have loans serviced by Nelnet you can always verify your payment due date and other loan details by [logging in at Nelnet.com \(https://secure.nelnet.net\)](https://secure.nelnet.net).

Although Federal PLUS Loans don't have a grace period, you can postpone payments while you or your student is in school, but the loan will continue to accrue interest. If you elect for in-school deferment, you are able to pay down the interest of the loan. If the loan is deferred, interest will accrue during the deferment. If you haven't yet pursued this option, you can request this postponement (called a Parent PLUS Borrower Deferment) directly from us by calling 888.486.4722.

We'll send your monthly student loan billing statement around three weeks before your payment is due. When you start making payments, your loan is considered to be in repayment. If you have loans serviced by Nelnet please [log in to Nelnet.com \(https://secure.nelnet.net\)](https://secure.nelnet.net) to view when payments are due for these and any other kind of federal student loans that are serviced by Nelnet.

We're Open 24/7



Access Your Account

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Contact Us



[Email \(/email-us\)](#) [Mail \(/contact\)](#)



Call Us at
888.486.4722

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[Get Financially Fit \(/get-financially-fit\)](#)

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[Alternative Formats \(/alternative-formats\)](#)

[Federal Student Loans 101 \(/federal-student-loans-101\)](#)

[Financial Aid Professionals \(http://nelnetloanservicing.com/\)](http://nelnetloanservicing.com/)

[Department of Education Accessibility Statement \(/ed-accessibility-statement\)](#)

[Guarantors \(http://guarantorsolutions.nelnet.com/guarantorsolutions/logon.aspx\)](http://guarantorsolutions.nelnet.com/guarantorsolutions/logon.aspx)

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