

## **Summer Aid – Do I Have Any?**

This is always a good question to ask if you are planning on taking summer courses, unfortunately the answer to this seemingly simple question can be quite confusing.

When financial aid is awarded, the full amount of your awards is broken down between two semesters, fall and spring. Since not all students take summer courses, and since the bulk of a student's course load is taken during the fall and spring these terms are awarded with a bit more of a priority than summer typically is.

If you are asking the question above though, then obviously you are enrolled or considering enrolling for the summer semester. The easiest, most simple answer we can give you is: If you were awarded aid for the fall and/or spring semester that you did not use, then it is possible that you could have some aid available for summer.

The truth is, there is only one way to find out for sure: Call our office and speak to your financial aid officer. 1(866)257-2574

## **What is a Tax Return Transcript and Why Do I Need One?**

If you are among the hundreds of thousands of students across the country that have applied for federal financial aid, and been selected for verification, then it is likely that you have found yourself saying, "You want me to get a what?" when reading through the list of requested verification documents.

One of the most commonly verified items on a FAFSA application is income information. In a simpler time, students could provide a copy of their personal tax return and we could use it to verify that their FAFSA information was correct. BUT... that was then, and this is now. Federal regulations changed at the start of the 2012-13 academic year and financial aid offices are no longer allowed to take these copies as acceptable documentation.

What you are now required to turn in is called an IRS Tax Return Transcript. To put it simply, it is a copy of the return that the IRS keeps. It does not look like the 1040 you filed, but it has all the same information on it, and supplying this transcript to our office helps us and the Department of Education to know that you have, in fact, filed taxes for the year in question.

So this of course begs the question... "How do I get my tax transcript?" There are actually several options that you have to request a tax return transcript.

1. Request the form online: <https://sa1.www4.irs.gov/irfof-tra/start.do>
2. Request the form over the phone: 1(800)829-1040
3. Request the form in writing by completing a 4506-T (downloadable from the irs.gov website or you can get one in our office)
4. Contact your tax accountant and see if they can obtain a copy for you

5. Visit your local IRS office and request a copy in person

It is important to know that when you request this form, if you filed jointly with a spouse or if your parents filed jointly you must request the document by the primary filer's name and social security number, otherwise the request will not work. It is also important to make sure you request the correct form. It is frustrating to go through the process of requesting this form, finally get it and then realize it isn't the correct form. Be sure that you are requesting a "Tax Return Transcript", not an "Account Transcript." If you find yourself in doubt then you can always request both.

Unfortunately, we have had many students and parents struggle to get the required information from the IRS. Because the IRS will only communicate the reasons to the tax filer directly, it makes it difficult for our office to give much guidance on what the issue might be. However, we will always do our best to assist you as much as possible. So, if you have requested the tax return transcript and have been informed that it cannot be provided, or have had your request declined, please let us know!

## **How Selecting Your Courses Can Affect Your Financial Aid**

(Why your academic advisor should be your best friend)

It is that time again when course catalogues for summer and fall are out and eager students are diligently reading through them looking for courses that they need to take and finding out what topics spark their interest and enthusiasm. If that is you – that's awesome!! We want you to be excited about taking courses at Barton and we want you to take the opportunity to explore all that we offer.

However, if you are receiving federal financial aid it is extremely important that you consult with your academic advisor prior to enrolling in your classes. Doing so can save you a lot of frustration and, yes, even money!

When Barton pays financial aid such as Pell Grants and Student Loans, it is our responsibility to make sure that we are only paying you federal aid for the courses that you need to complete your degree with Barton. This means that if you have added a course simply to be full time or are taking courses solely for transfer purposes we will not be able to pay you aid for them. Additionally, if you are taking an elective course, but have already fulfilled all of your elective requirements, we again will not be able to pay financial aid for that course.

If you are wondering how to know if the courses you have selected are required or not, there's help! Our academic advisors are available to all students, even to those taking courses online!

As a degree or certificate seeking student, Barton has assigned you an academic advisor and it is their job to assist you in selecting coursework appropriate for your degree. It is also their job to help you make sure that your degree plans match what we have on record. An important reminder that should be added here is that the advising process is a two way street! It takes communicating with your advisor for them to know you and to help you map out a plan that will work best for you. This includes helping

them understand your learning style and your schedule outside of the classroom (work, sports, family). It also includes letting your academic advisor know that you are receiving federal aid.

With all this being said, it is sad to admit that one of the number one things that our financial aid officers hear is “I don’t know who my academic advisor is.” If this is you, then we want to encourage you to find out today! You can contact our advisement center via email ([advisement@bartonccc.edu](mailto:advisement@bartonccc.edu)) or phone (1-800-748-7594 x225) and they will be happy to assist you!

## **FINISHED THE FAFSA – WHAT’S NEXT?**

The 2013-14 academic year is right around the corner! Here is what to expect once your 2013-14 FAFSA is complete:

1. **You will receive your Student Aid Report from the Department of Education.** This report, also called your “SAR”, will include the FAFSA information you completed. It may be sent to you by email or mail within about a week of completing the FAFSA. Please keep the SAR for your personal records.
2. **A phone call from the Barton Financial Aid Office** will let you know the information from the FAFSA did arrive. If you have any questions at that time, feel free to ask.
3. **An email (or letter, if no email account was listed) will be sent from the Barton Financial Aid Office** after your information is reviewed. The first email will be sent to the personal account you listed on your FAFSA; *any subsequent email notifications are only sent to your **Cougar email account*** accessed through the My Barton Portal.

Following this, several reminders for information may be sent to you if there are requirements needed. These reminders will be sent by email, postcard, or letter. You can provide documents in-person at Great Bend, Fort Riley or Fort Leavenworth. You are also welcome to send documents by mail or use the electronic upload called Mapping Xpress. The following link is for Mapping Xpress - <http://bartonccc.edu/instruction/financialaid/docsubmission.html> . Documents received through Mapping Xpress before 3 p.m. will be updated within the day.

**Once all required documents are accepted, you can expect to be notified of awarding within 2-4 weeks.** The awarding notification will be sent to your Cougar email account. Award information for 2013-14 may be viewed through your PAWS account, plus an Award Letter will arrive to your home address by mail.