

One Stop

Hello new Bulldogs and Bulldog families. Welcome to the Samford family! We understand this is an exciting but also overwhelming time in the life of your student and family. You will be overloaded with information in the coming days and months. As a result, we want to give you a head start by providing you with some important financial information regarding your student's account and aid. It's a good idea to save this document for future reference. While some pieces of information may change from year to year, most will remain the same.

The following information will help you navigate the sometimes-complicated aspects of student accounts, financial aid, and all other matters related to the business of being a Samford student.

The Samford One Stop

The Samford One Stop prepares the hearts and minds of Samford students to be fiscally responsible global citizens and is here to help you navigate all the related financial applications, options, systems, processes, etc. Our advisors will assist you with issues related to the distribution of your parking permit and Samford ID, student account, payments, including 529 payments, and payment plans, financial aid, Veteran's benefits, other aid resources, refunds, tuition insurance, and more. We are located on the ground floor in Ingalls Hall, just below the Office of Admission.

Location: Ingalls Hall – Ground Floor

Hours: M-F 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Phone: (205)726-2905

Email: onestop@samford.edu

Samford Portal: connect.samford.edu

Web: samford.edu/go/onestop

Social Media: @SamfordOneStop

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FERPA Release

The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA), is a federal law that specifically protects the privacy of student education records, including financial, academic, and conduct information. We are not authorized to speak with anyone other than the student, even if another individual is paying for tuition and fees unless the student waives their FERPA rights to certain individuals as designees.

Providing this information now will allow us to meet your needs and your student's needs much faster. Completing the agreement will allow us to avoid potential frustration when you call us, and we are unable to speak with you because your student has not listed you on the FERPA release. Please know that once classes begin, we cannot speak or correspond with you about your student's account without a FERPA agreement/waiver in place.

Students should follow these easy steps to give whomever they designate access to their information at Samford.

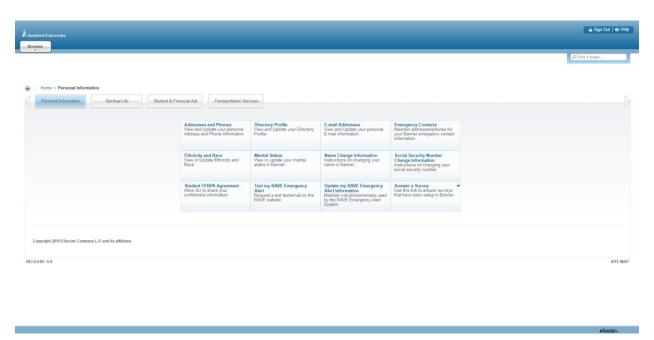
- 1. Students should log in to the Samford portal at <u>connect.samford.edu</u> using his/her Samford username and password.
- 2. Click on the "Banner" icon.



3. Select "Personal Information" (if you are asked for a pin# and password, the student will simply input his/her ID and password again). A new window should open.



4. Select the "Student FERPA Agreement" link towards the bottom.



- 5. If you receive the message "FERPA agreement webpage is only available to active students" check again after the student has registered for classes at Bulldog Days.
- 6. Input the requested information and submit.

Parking Permits and Samford IDs

All Samford students must register their vehicles to park on campus. This is completed through the Samford portal. Once a student has registered their vehicle with Transportation Services, a parking permit will be issued. Students can pick up their parking permit at the Samford One Stop approximately three business days after vehicle registration.

All Samford students must also have a Samford ID card. Students can stop by the Samford One Stop during regular business hours to have their ID made. Students will leave with their IDs in hand. Students also have the option to begin the ID creation process by uploading a personal headshot using the GET app on their smartphone. Students who have submitted a photo will receive their ID card at orientation.

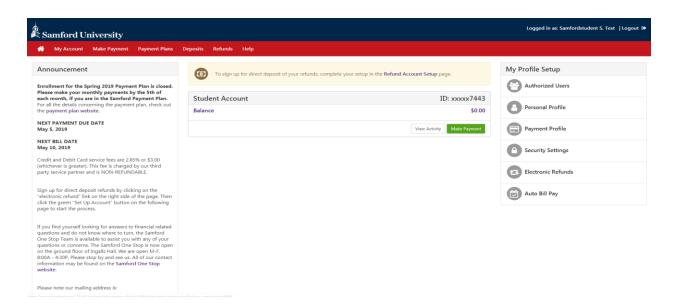
Authorized Users

Separate from the FERPA Release, students may designate an Authorized User for financial purposes. An authorized user may access a student's financial portal and review account information at any time. Authorized Users will also be emailed monthly when an account statement is posted to the financial portal. Statements are typically posted on the 10th of every month unless the 10th falls on a weekend. In those instances, the account statement is generated the following business day. This is a completely on-line process. We do not produce paper statements.

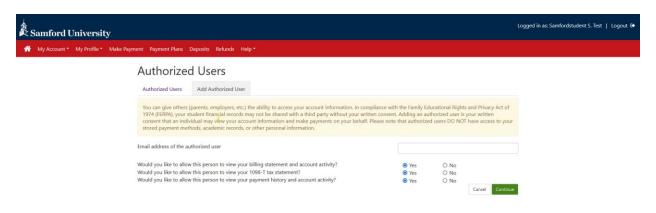
Establishing an authorized user is the best way for the student to ensure a parent or other financially responsible party stays in the loop regarding due dates, charges, amounts due, payment plan enrollment, payments and payment plans, tuition insurance, disbursed financial aid, etc. Again, remember that setting up Authorized Users is separate from submitting a FERPA agreement/waiver. Being an Authorized User allows access to view and make payment toward the student's account, and the FERPA agreement/waiver allows the Samford One Stop to discuss and disclose all financial information with the designee.

Students should follow these steps to designate who they want to be their authorized user(s) on their account:

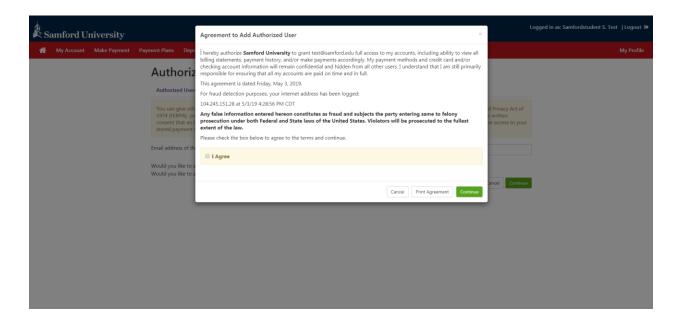
- 1. The student should access the financial portal by logging into the Samford portal and clicking "One Stop" and "Financial Portal".
- 2. In the "My Profile Setup" menu to the right, click on the "Authorized Users" link (see image below).



3. Click on the "Add Authorized User" tab, enter the person's email address, and then answer "Yes" to all give the user full access to the student's financial account (see image below). Please note that authorized users do not have access to the student's stored payment methods, academic records, or other personal information. This is only for account and payment access.



- 4. Click the green "Continue" button.
- 5. Check the "I Agree" box on the next screen followed by the green "Continue" button (see image below).



- 6. The email address you submitted should now be displayed in the "Current Authorized Users" section.
- 7. A confirmation email will also be sent to the Authorized User to enable them to setup their password.

Student Accounts, Account Statements, and Payments

Monthly account statements are paperless, and students and authorized users receive monthly notification when they are available in the financial portal (samford.edu/go/financialportal). Students can access their statement through initially accessing their Samford portal. It is important to understand that our monthly account statement is no different than your monthly credit card statement. It is merely a snapshot of the account at that point in time, and what you owe is what you see on the statement. The only difference is when we are starting a new term. Increases to the student account for tuition, fees, room (housing), and board (meal plan) are due at the start of the term regardless of whether they were on the early August/January/May account statements.

Students who are enrolled in an official payment plan are not required to have the term's full balance paid at the beginning of term – they simply must enroll online in an official payment plan and pay the corresponding down payment. This is one of many reasons to enroll in a plan. Students enrolled in a payment plan may be easily confused by the monthly statement, so we recommend following the payment schedule and current amounts for that particular plan once enrolled. The status of your payment plan may be viewed any time by logging in at samford.edu/go/financialportal. Students, specifically, can view this by initially logging in through their Samford portal.

We will start assessing charges and applying financial aid to students' accounts in July prior to the payment plan enrollment period beginning. You will be able to see those charges and credits in the financial portal: samford.edu/go/financialportal. Simply click on the "My Account" button in the red header row and "Current Activity" to see your most recent activity.

Account statements for Fall 2024 will be produced on August 12, 2024. The due date for those not enrolled in a payment plan is September 3, 2024. Accounts not paid in full or not in a payment plan, will be reviewed for a final time shortly after the due date and have classes dropped immediately. However, fee assessment will begin in mid-July with the opening of the payment plan enrollment process. The student account will be adjusted from early July until classes begin based on adjustments in enrollment or changes in housing, etc....

<u>Please understand the importance of the payment due date.</u> The last thing you want is for your student to have completed his or her first week of college, enjoy their weekend, and return to class on September 5th to have their classes dropped because their account was not paid in full by the due date. The deadline to enroll in the last payment plan is September 3rd, and the payment due date for those not in a plan is September 3rd. Please plan ahead and make arrangements. In doing so, you will avoid the stress of trying to get this done at the last minute. Payment plan enrollment will close by the end of the day on September 3, 2024.

Be certain to have any outside payments, like 529 payments, requested and sent to the Samford One Stop ahead of the deadline. You will want to reach out to your 529 vendor well ahead of the deadline once you receive the initial statement to ensure there is ample time for processing and delivery to Samford ahead of the payment deadline. If there are any delays, please reach out to your student's One Stop Advisor to make them aware. 529 payments can be mailed to:

Samford University Attn: Samford One Stop 800 Lakeshore Drive Birmingham, AL 35229

If your student has a balance due and has not enrolled in a payment plan, he/she and only he/she (regardless of having an authorized user or FERPA release) will begin receiving email notices the first week of class. These emails are sent to their Samford email to remind them of the due date and requirement to pay in full by that date, or risk having their class schedule cancelled. These emails are not intended to scare, intimidate, or cause panic. Instead, we want students to be aware of the upcoming deadline and act quickly to ensure there is no disruption in their education at Samford. Discuss this with your student, so he/she will know to forward you any important notifications.

Payment Plans

Much of the information you need concerning payment plans may be found at samford.edu/go/onestop. Taking advantage of the payment plan allows your family to spread the net cost of the fall term across five installments or four installments. Likewise, it allows spring net costs to be spread across four installments. Summer plans are also available. Approximately 1,300 Samford students utilize one or more plans each year to avoid paying all net costs at the start of the term.

The plans are designed to include any charge on your student's account. As a result, once you have enrolled in a plan, it could adjust throughout the term due to new charges and/or new credits being applied to the student account for that term. When installment amounts increase, the one who enrolled in the plan will receive an email notice alerting you to the change. This is an important piece of information. If your student enrolls in the payment plan, he or she will receive notifications about the plan, not anyone else. However, if you as an authorized user enroll in the plan, you will receive all notifications about changes to the plan, upcoming due dates, and other communications. We recommend deliberately deciding who ought to receive notices and announcements about the plan and using those login credentials to sign up.

Enrollment for both fall payment plans opens on July 15, 2024. Enrollment for the five-installment plan will remain open until August 5, 2024. Enrollment for the four-installment plan will remain open until September 3, 2024. There are no additional plans available, and **enrollment closing dates are firm**. Please note, we are unable to use payments from a 529 plan for the down payment. When a family has a 529 payment to use, we recommend making the 529 payment first, thus reducing the net cost, and then enroll in the plan of your choice by making a down payment and paying the enrollment fee.

Plans are interest free, but there is a \$100 enrollment fee <u>each term</u> in which a plan is used. If you are enrolled in a fall payment plan, enrollment in subsequent terms is <u>not</u> automatic. Plan enrollment is per term, and you must enroll online in an official plan, <u>each term</u>, by following the instructions below. A Payment Plan Tutorial may also be found online on the <u>Samford One Stop Payment Plan webpage</u>.

Students or Authorized Users should follow these steps to enroll in a payment plan:

- Log in to the financial portal. Authorized Users should log in at <u>samford.edu/go/financialportal</u>. Students should log in at <u>connect.samford.edu</u> and click "One Stop" and "Financial Portal".
- 2. Click on the "Payment Plans" link in the red banner at the top of the page.
- 3. Under the "Manage Plans" tab click the "Enroll Now" button.
- 4. Select the appropriate term.
- 5. Select plan option 4 or 5 Installments, depending on what is available during the selected term.

- 6. Review the plan details. Please note the \$100 nonrefundable enrollment fee is required with the down payment. Also note the Payment Schedule, and then select <u>Yes</u> or <u>No</u> for setting up automatic payments. Payments are always due on the 5th of each month regardless of holidays or weekends. Click on "Continue".
- 7. Select your payment method. Please note that the service provider does not accept savings accounts and the credit card processing servicer charges a 2.85% fee for credit card payments. Click "Continue".
- 8. Before confirming enrollment, please review all the details listed in the agreement. A copy is stored in the financial portal and can be accessed at any time. Check the "I Agree" box and click the green "Continue" to advance once you are satisfied. This will confirm your enrollment in the plan you selected and debit your payment method.
- 9. You will receive confirmation when your payment is accepted or denied.
- 10. You will see your Payment Plan listed when you return to the home screen.
- 11. If you did not schedule automatic payments, payments should be made through the Payment Plan link each month before or on the due date.

A special note for those of you who may have more than one person paying on the account:

First, the individual payers must be authorized users to pay online (see previous instructions for authorized users). One of the payers will have to pay the \$100 enrollment fee and the down payment/first installment at the time of enrollment. There is no way for us to separate the down payment in the system. However, going forward, the payers can each pay separately by the installment due date. If one of the payers does not pay on time, the account will be assessed a late fee. To pay separately, follow these instructions.

- 1. Each authorized user must login at samford.edu/go/financialportal.
- 2. Select "Make a Payment" in the red menu bar at the top of the screen.
- 3. Be sure to set the payment date to the date you want the payment to be processed.
- 4. Change the amount in the blank to the amount you want your payment to be. **This is very important!** If you do not change the amount, it will autofill to the full balance on the student's account.
- 5. Select "Continue" and then "Ok" when you see the pop-up question.
- 6. Select the Payment Method by clicking the drop-down arrow, and then select "Continue".
- 7. Follow the on-screen instructions from there. You will receive a payment confirmation if the payment is successful.

Financial Aid

The financial aid priority processing deadline is July 10, 2024. This allows plenty of time to get everything in order ahead of the start of the fall term. We will still process aid after July 10th. However, the longer you wait to wrap things up, the greater the chance will be that the aid will not be here in time for your payment plan to be calculated with the lowest net price possible,

or that the aid will not be here in time to meet the September 3rd due date. We encourage you to avoid the risk and move forward in the financial aid process right away.

Hopefully, you have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by now. If not, go to <u>studentaid.gov</u> and complete it today. Be sure to add Samford as a recipient of the results by using our federal code, 001036, at the end of the application.

First-time students who complete the FAFSA will automatically qualify for the Federal Direct Loan. If your student is planning to utilize their Federal Direct Loan, they will need to start the process by logging onto the Samford portal and accepting their loan(s) in the financial aid section of the portal. Follow these easy steps to accept the Federal Direct Loan.

- 1. Have your student log in to the Samford portal at <u>connect.samford.edu</u>. They should have their username and password at this point.
- 2. Click on the "One Stop" tab.
- 3. Select "Financial Aid".
- 4. Select the "Award Offer" tab.

Once your student has accepted their loan(s), they will receive an email from the Samford One Stop prompting them to visit studentaid.gov to complete Entrance Counseling and a Master Promissory Note (MPN). If your student accepted loan(s) prior to July, the email will be sent in July. Otherwise, there is a one business day turnaround. Please note that your student does not have to wait for that email from Samford to sign the MPN and complete entrance counseling. Just know that if they visit studentaid.gov and complete the necessary steps before they receive the email from Samford, they will still receive our email. Please remember that the Federal Direct Loan is in the name of the student, and it is their responsibility to repay the loan based on the terms agreed upon in the MPN. Entrance counseling and MPN will help them better understand their rights and responsibilities as a borrower.

A student can always see their financial aid status in the Samford portal. Follow these easy steps to view a student's financial aid status.

- 1. Have your student log in to the Samford portal connect.samford.edu.
- 2. Click on the "One Stop" tab.
- 3. Select "Financial Aid".
- 4. Select the "Home" tab.
- 5. Review all information presented there.

Title IV Aid Authorization

If a student receives federal aid, also known as Title IV funds, and they wish to utilize those funds to cover any current term expenses other than tuition, room, board (meal plan), and mandatory fees (for example, parking decals, Greek Life fee, etc.), they need to complete a Title

IV Authorization. A Title IV Authorization would also allow federal funds to be applied to the previous academic year educational charges, up to the maximum amount allowed per federal regulations (currently \$200).

The authorization is good for the student's entire time at Samford and does not have to be renewed on an annual basis. Students may rescind this authorization at any time.

A student must complete the authorization for student loans, and a parent must complete it for parent loans. If you do not complete an authorization, then any amount of federal aid above direct educational costs will automatically be issued as a refund. Please understand that in this situation, a student may receive a refund while still owing Samford a balance. A Title IV Authorization may be completed online by following these easy steps.

- 1. Login to the Samford portal at connect.samford.edu.
- 2. Click on the "Banner" icon.
- 3. Click "Student & Financial Aid".
- 4. Click "One Stop: Sign Title IV Authorization".
- 5. Click "Authorize".

Refunds

Students and parents often borrow more than the required tuition, fees, room, and board (meal plan) to cover textbooks, miscellaneous educational and living expenses, etc. Credit balances resulting from an excess of federal financial aid will be automatically refunded to students via paper check or direct deposit. Credit balances due to parent loans will be issued in the form of a paper check made payable and mailed to the parent who applied for the loan.

Keep in mind parent loans typically only generate refunds if the total amount of the loan exceeds the full student account balance, prior to any other aid that has or may pay.

Credit balances resulting from overpayment of non-federal aid must be requested using the Refund Request link found in the student portal at connect.samford.edu. Most students prefer direct deposit, as it places the funds directly in their account and in less time than a paper check can be issued. Students are the only users allowed to set up direct deposit, but they can use the account of their choice.

To set up direct deposit, students must follow these steps:

- 1. Log in to the student portal at https://connect.samford.edu.
- 2. Click the "One Stop" tab and the "Financial Aid" link.
- 3. Select "Electronic Refunds" in the "My Profile Setup" menu on the right.
- 4. Select "Security Settings" to enroll in Two-Step Verification.
- 5. Follow the on-screen instructions for setting up Two-Step Verification.
- 6. Click on the house icon at the top left of the red menu bar.

- 7. Select "Electronic Refunds" again in the "My Profile Setup" menu on the right.
- 8. Click the green "Set Up Account" button.
- 9. Follow the on-screen instructions from there.

Outside Scholarships

While our scholarship awarding process at Samford is closed for this year, it does not mean you need to stop looking for scholarships from other sources. There are many free and low-cost scholarship searches and resources on the web.

Here are some of our favorites:

myscholly.com

bigfuture.com

scholarships.com

cappex.com

niche.com

unigo.com

tuitionfundingsources.com

fastweb.com

If you have already received a scholarship from an outside source, please be sure to complete an <u>Outside Resource Form</u>. This form provides us with the necessary details of the scholarship so that we can process the payment accordingly.

Student Account to Aid Comparison and Bridging the Gap

Once a student receives a statement, it is important to compare the total balance for the term to the related semester's accepted aid, which is typically half of the annual (fall/spring) award, less Federal Work Study (FWS). If the amount of aid is not enough to cover the total balance, it is important to make considerations and take action to cover any outstanding portion of the bill before the payment deadline. This is called bridging the gap and can be done using one of the following options.

Other Options

If you are finding the gap between what the net cost will be and what you can afford is too great, you may want to consider these three options:

- 1. Samford's no interest Payment Plans
- 2. Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan
- 3. Private Education Loan

The payment plan information has already been provided in detail above. You can always obtain more information from the web at samford.edu/go/onestop or contact your One Stop advisor.

The Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan is available to qualified parent borrowers who are biological or have been listed on the student's FAFSA. We do not include this in your student's financial aid package up front because unlike Federal Direct Loans, the PLUS Loan is not guaranteed. That means the borrower (biological parent or stepparent listed on the FAFSA) must be credit-worthy and approved by the US Department of Education. This loan is also in the parent's name, not the student's name. It is the responsibility of the parent to repay the funds borrowed.

Parents may apply for a PLUS Loan by going to studentaid.gov and clicking on the "Parent" button in the middle of the page. Contact your One Stop advisor before applying. Your advisor can help you determine the exact amount needed. This will help you avoid borrowing too little or too much. The lead time on this process should be at least a week. We highly recommend taking care of this before the priority processing deadline of July 10, 2024. In fact, if you have any worries about being approved for a PLUS loan, we recommend completing the process as soon as possible. If a borrower is denied, he or she may appeal that decision with a coborrower/endorser being added to the application and/or reducing the amount needed on the studentaid.gov site.

If a Federal Direct Loan and/or PLUS Loan is something you wish to forego, then a Private Education Loan may be an option for your student. Much like the Federal Direct Loan, a private loan is in the name of the student. However, it is a credit-based loan and usually the student will need a co-signer to assist in obtaining such a loan. Rates and terms vary from one lender to the next. To see a list of lenders who have made loans to Samford students in the recent past, go to http://www.elmselect.com/#/ and type Samford University in the "school search" box. Then select "Undergraduate" in the "Select Program" box. From there, you can review some of the many available options in the private education loan market. You are welcome to use any of these listed or others not listed. An online search for private education loans will provide numerous options from which to choose, and some may even be better than federal loans. Thorough research may take weeks. Starting this process after July 10th is not recommended if you want to prevent your student from having their classes dropped for non-payment.

Interest Rates for 2024-2025

Federal Direct Loan – **TBD**%
Federal Direct PLUS Loan – **TBD**%
Private Loan – varies by lender and borrower

Work Study

FWS recipients and others interested in working may begin viewing open positions at samford.edu/admission/student-employment. On and off-campus work study positions are available. For off-campus positions, students participate in our Community Work Service Program and can work at various non-profit organizations throughout Birmingham. These students also earn a higher rate of pay compared to on campus student employees. Review the information at the link and learn how to navigate this process.

Your student will need to accept their FWS in a similar manner to the way they accept their Federal Direct Loan in the Banner portal. **Please note:** Any student may work on campus, not just FWS recipients. Review the information on the webpage linked above to find out more. Your One Stop advisor can provide details as well.

[Note that it doesn't pay toward the student's bill but can contribute toward payments through the payment plan.]

Tuition Insurance

Samford provides a method by which our students and families may protect their investment in their student's education from an unexpected interruption by offering tuition insurance through GradGuard. GradGuard provides insurance coverage for tuition, fees, room, and board (meal plan) at a rate of \$110 per \$10,000 of coverage.

Beginning in August, students and authorized users will be presented with an opportunity to purchase tuition insurance upon logging into the financial portal - samford.edu/go/financialportal. Students can access this by initially logging in their Samford portal. For additional information, please visit the GradGuard website - gradguard.com/tuition/samford.

Enrollment Changes, Withdrawals, and Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Changes in enrollment or withdrawals from Samford can impact a student's eligibility for current and future aid. It is important to contact your Samford One Stop Advisor before making enrollment changes (dropping/adding courses) or considering withdrawal to understand the financial impacts and outcomes that may arise. Not only could these actions potentially leave

you owing for services rendered that financial aid can no longer cover, but they could also negatively impact your SAP status. Each student's cumulative overall GPA and overall completion rate must be meeting the minimum standard in order to maintain eligibility to receive financial aid from year to year. You can learn more about Samford's SAP policy, here: https://www.samford.edu/departments/financial-services/, under "Aid Policies".

Important Dates for Fall 2024

July 10 – Priority Processing Deadline for financial aid materials

July 15 – Payment Plan enrollment opens for Fall 2024 plans

August 5 – The enrollment window for the five-installment payment plan closes

August 12 – Initial Fall 2024 account statements posted to the financial portal

August 23 – Move-in Day

August 26 – First day of class

August 30 – Last day to add or drop a class without financial penalty

September 3 – Payment in full due for those **not** enrolled in a payment plan

September 3 – Payment Plan enrollment closes for the four-installment payment plan

September 5 – Registration canceled, and classes dropped for incomplete or nonpayment

September 5 – First installment due for five-installment payment plan only

September 10 – Monthly account statement emailed to students and authorized users

October 1 (or after, depending on the government's release date) – 2025-2026 FAFSA potentially available for the sophomore year - studentaid.gov

October 5 – Installments due for the four & the five installment payment plans

October 10 – Monthly account statement emailed to students and authorized users

November 5 – Installments due for the four & the five installment payment plans

November 11 – Monthly account statement emailed to students and authorized users

December 5 – Installments due for the four & the five installment payment plans

December 10 – Monthly account statement emailed to students and authorized users

We will have informational brochures with all the details in this email and more at Bulldog Days and in the Samford One Stop on the ground floor of Ingalls Hall. Please come see us at the Community Fair and pick up hard copies of the information to take back home. Please know that those of us in the Samford One Stop are here to help in any way we can. Our best advice is to ask us any question(s) you might have as early as possible. Our staff is seasoned and ready to assist you. Give us a call or send us an email when you are just not sure what to do. We are here to serve you and your student.

The Samford One Stop

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Hours: M-F 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

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