

## Private Alternative Loan Options

Private Alternative Loans are loans that a student can apply for in their own name. Often these loans require a credit worthy co-signer because approval is based upon the credit-worthiness of the student. Some of these loans may require interest payments be made while the student is still in school. Most Private Alternative Loans have a variable interest rate; therefore Mercy College encourages students to exhaust all other forms of financial aid before borrowing a Private Loan.

At Mercy College, we will process an alternative loan from any lending institution. However, we have compiled a list of lenders that are used most frequently by Mercy College students (past and present). FASTChoice is a private loan selection tool that helps students make a good decision regarding borrowing an alternative loan. You are able to compare lender rates, terms and benefits. We use FASTChoice because the lenders have been providing service to our students for many years, interest rates are competitive, co-signers help students qualify for better interest rates, there are no repayment penalties, extended repayment terms are available, there is a six month grace period before repayment, the online application process is fast and easy, and funds are sent via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

For the 2017-2018 academic year, use the following loan period dates:

Summer only	(05/15/17 – 07/30/17)
Summer and Fall	(05/15/17 – 12/17/17)
Fall and Spring	(08/21/17 – 05/06/18)
Fall only	(08/21/17 – 12/17/17)
Spring only	(01/08/18 – 05/06/18)

### Private Loan Tips

- The amount borrowed **cannot exceed** the annual cost of attendance minus other financial aid received.
- Remember to apply for federal funds first by completing the FAFSA ([www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)).
- Remember to accept the loan and complete the promissory note and self-certification form and return to the lender.
- Most lenders offer several different types of alternative loans so be careful to apply for the correct loan.
- Carefully review all terms and conditions of the alternative loan before accepting the loan.
- Compare fees and interest rates, and whether interest payments are due while in school.
- New loan disclosure, acceptance and self-certification processes are federally mandated. Check with your lender to determine the deadlines for each process. You will be asked to provide your cost of attendance and estimated financial aid. You can find these amounts listed on your financial aid award letter (in EMPOWER ME).