Glossary of Financial Aid Terms

Cost of Attendance (COA): The estimated cost of attending this institution for one academic year, including both direct and indirect costs.

Direct Costs: Expenses the student/family pays to the college. For students living on campus, direct costs included in our cost of attendance budget are tuition, fees, room, and board (meal plan).

Educational Loan: A form of financial aid that must be repaid with interest. Educational loans have varying interest rates and repayment terms. Additional information is available online at financialaid.rice.edu/loans.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): A measure of how much the student and his or her family can reasonably be expected to contribute to the cost of the student's education for the year. The EFC is calculated according to Rice’s institutional formula and is based upon the information provided by the student and his or her family through the FASFA, CSS Profile, and supporting documents.

Federal Pell Grant: A grant provided by the federal government to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need and have an Expected Family Contribution below a threshold designated annually by the U.S. Department of Education, based on the amount of program funds appropriated by Congress.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG): A grant provided by the federal government to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need.

Gift Aid: Funds awarded to the student that do not have to be repaid, unless the student fails to meet certain terms, such as a service requirement, specified as a condition of the grant. Gift aid includes awards with titles such as grants, scholarships, remissions, waivers, etc.

Grant: Gift aid awarded to the student that does not need to be repaid. Grants are typically based on financial need.

Indirect Costs: Estimated expenses incurred as a result of attendance that the student/family may pay to a third party (merchant, landlord, etc.) other than the college. For students living on campus, indirect costs included in our cost of attendance budget are personal expenses, transportation, and books and supplies.

Merit Scholarship: Gift aid awarded to the student that does not need to be repaid. Merit-based scholarship recipients generally distinguish themselves scholastically and personally even within our highly competitive group of admitted students.

Net Cost: Amount of direct and indirect costs remaining after all gift aid (scholarship and grant) is subtracted.

Outside Aid: Resources from outside of Rice such as high schools, communities, scholarship foundations, employer tuition benefits, and other government, state, city, or private agencies. Outside aid is required to be reported to the Office of Financial Aid and will reduce the need-based financial aid offered. Additional information is available online at financialaid.rice.edu/outside-aid.

Self-help: Financial aid in the form of loans or student employment. Loans are used to help pay the remaining net costs after gift aid is deducted. Student employment earnings (including Work-Study awards) are generally not deducted from billed costs but can be used to help cover indirect costs and are paid in the form of wages to the student.

Work Study: A program that provides part-time employment to students attending institutions of higher education who need the earnings to help meet their costs of postsecondary education. Additional information is available online at financialaid.rice.edu/student-employment.