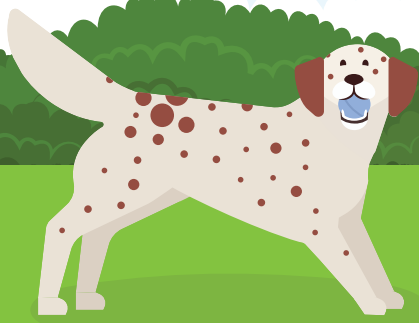


The best doggone guide to award letters

Figuring out financial aid award letters isn't always a walk in the park, so let our furry friends explain what you need to know.



Get ready to spot the differences.

Just like dogs come in all shapes and sizes, so do award letters. Look for the cost of attendance and expected family contribution in each letter.

Unleash your inner watch dog.

Your letters may list scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans together. Identify what needs to be repaid (usually, student loans) vs what's free money (like scholarships and grants).

Sit. Stay. Compare!

The trick to figuring out which college offers you the best financial aid? Plugging each college's offer into a spreadsheet, so you can see how they all stack up.



Don't go barking up the wrong tree.

Just because a package looks big doesn't mean it's the best mix of aid. It might be better to fetch a smaller package with more scholarships.



Sniff out free money.

Every beagle "nose" what's up—you should too. Pay special attention to colleges that offer you scholarships and grants. That's free money for college.



Take time to "paws."

As you review your letters, remember school academics, location, and campus culture count, too! Don't just focus on the financial aid.



Play by the rules.

Ready to pick a college? You don't need to accept everything in your letter. Choose only what works for you and be sure to respond before the deadline.



Dig up more information at [SallieMae.com/AwardLetters](https://www.SallieMae.com/AwardLetters)

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