

Audience

Ashford University students, Student Services Department, Financial Services Department, Enrollment Services Department, Student Accounts Department

Purpose

To provide students with responses to frequently asked questions. They may ask about the transition from TMS to Nelnet as the University's stipend vendor. Please direct additional concerns to the Financial Services Department.

1. What is Nelnet, and why are they emailing me?

Nelnet (formerly known as TMS) is a third-party group that partnered with Ashford University to manage stipend disbursements for students with eligible excess Financial Aid funds. On Ashford's behalf, Nelnet prints and mails paper checks or processes Direct Deposits. New students (Conditional Admission Period) at Ashford University receive a notification to register with Nelnet near the end of their first course.

2. Why does Ashford partner with Nelnet for stipend disbursements?

Partnering with Nelnet allows Ashford University to offer efficient stipend processing to eligible students while remaining compliant with Title IV regulations and Payment Card Industry Security Standards.

3. Must I pay for the partnership with Nelnet?

No. The partnership between Ashford University and Nelnet does not cost you anything. However, some financial institutions charge fees for using Direct Deposit. Contact your institution to verify.

4. Must I register with Nelnet if I previously registered with Tuition Management System (TMS) to receive my stipend?

Maybe. TMS accounts that had stipends issued via Direct Deposit transferred to Nelnet during the acquisition, but TMS accounts with stipends delivered by check did not.

- a. Students who received stipends via Direct Deposit do not need to create an account unless they want to review or update previously provided information (e.g., addresses, Direct Deposit information, etc.).
- b. Students who received stipends by check do not need to create an account unless they want to review or update previously provided information (e.g., addresses, Direct Deposit information, etc.). During stipend preparation, Nelnet notifies students receiving checks that they have 24 hours to create an account and change their preferences.
- c. Students access their Nelnet accounts via the Student Portal: click on My Finances -> Stipend Registration.

5. Am I eligible to receive a stipend?

Maybe. If there are excess funds on student accounts after Financial Aid disburses and pays tuition and applicable fees, you are eligible for a stipend. You can review your Student Ledger Card Summary via the Student Portal to monitor account activity.

6. Once my Financial Aid disbursement posts to my student account at the university, when will I receive my stipend?

Per federal regulations, Ashford University issues stipends within 14 days of funds posting to student accounts, when eligible. You may monitor your stipend on your Student Ledger Card Summary via the Student Portal.

- a. Nelnet releases scheduled stipends to students.
- b. Students receive Direct Deposit stipends within 1-3 business days, dependent upon the student's financial institution.
- c. Stipends in the form of a check ship via USPS and may take 14 days to receive.

7. Why should I sign up for Direct Deposit?

Direct Deposit is a much faster process for stipend delivery, which can accelerate your stipend delivery.

- 8. When can I sign up for Direct Deposit?**

New students receive an invitation from Nelnet to create an account and sign up for Direct Deposit within (1) business day of posting attendance. Students in the Conditional Admissions Period receive an invitation towards the end of the first course. Follow the invitation link that takes you to the Nelnet site via the Student Portal. Students may get to the Nelnet site at any time on the Student Portal under the “My Finances” tab -> “Stipend Registration” to register or may changes.
- 9. Can my parents register for Direct Deposit?**

No. This option is only available to students. Parents receive stipends for excess Federal Parent PLUS loan funds via paper check.
- 10. Can I have my stipend Direct Deposited into an international bank account?**

Maybe. If your bank account or financial institution is international but has a US-affiliated (9) digit routing number and a valid bank account number, then the Direct Deposit will work. Please note that Nelnet is unable to mail paper checks to a foreign address.
- 11. Who do I contact if I have a problem creating my account?**

If you have received an invitation to set up your account, you should contact Nelnet directly.
- 12. What is the customer service number and check verification phone number for Nelnet?**

Service Number: 1-800-609-8056.
Hours: Monday - Friday 7:00am-9:00pm CST & Saturday 8:00am-2:00pm CST or (M-F: 5:00 AM – 7:00 PM PT, Sat: 6:00 AM – 12:00 PM PT)
- 13. How long does Nelnet have to mail checks?**

Within (3) business days after the stipend appears on your student ledger in the Student Portal, excluding holidays, Ashford University sends any eligible stipend information to Nelnet for delivery. Once received, the processing time for Nelnet to mail paper checks can vary between 7-10 days.
- 14. How do I know when Nelnet mailed my check?**

If you have registered to receive a paper check on the Nelnet site, you can view pertinent information regarding your stipend, including check number, mailed date, and current status. Additionally, you will receive an email communication indicating the status of your stipend.
- 15. Can I change my preference from a check to Direct Deposit?**

Yes. You can change your preference by logging into the Nelnet site via the Student Portal or calling the Nelnet customer service number at 1-800-609-8056.
- 16. Who can I contact if I have a question about my stipend amount?**

The fastest way is checking the Student Portal for Financial Aid disbursement and stipend transactions. If you have further questions, contact the Financial Services Department.
- 17. Can I request to have Ashford hold my excess funds?**

No. Ashford University has 14 days from the date your Financial Aid disbursements post to your student account to schedule the release of any eligible excess funds. If you do not want your stipend, you may complete a Funds Cancellation to return the funds to the lender by contacting Financial Services for assistance.
- 18. Do I need to notify Nelnet if my contact information changes?**

No. Once you update your new information on the Student Portal, it will appear on the Nelnet site within 24 business hours.
- 19. What if I don't want to provide my account information to Nelnet?**

The fastest and most secure stipend delivery method is Direct Deposit. Your stipend ships in the form of a check, via USPS, if you choose not to provide your banking information to Nelnet.

20. **Is my account information safe?**

Yes. All the systems at Nelnet undergo a standard Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance test to receive PCI compliance certification. For online identity validation, all systems that store personal information require a username and password before granting access.

21. **Can I receive my check at a different address, rather than my address on file?**

Yes. You can receive your paper check at a different address rather than your address on file. To receive your stipend at a different address, please enter a **Billing/Stipend address** via the Student Portal reflecting the alternate address.

22. **Can I receive my check by overnight mail if I pay for the shipping costs?**

Unfortunately, we cannot offer overnight mail. If expedited delivery is necessary, signing up for Direct Deposit is your best option.

23. **Why does my ledger show a future stipend date?**

The transaction date on the ledger reflects the date Ashford University notified Nelnet of your stipend. Please allow at least 24 hours for processing.