

Frequently Asked Questions: Bar Loans

What is a Bar Loan?

A Bar Loan provides funding to cover both the fees associated with the preparation and taking of the Bar, as well as support for your living costs during your post graduate Bar study period.

Who offers Bar Loans?

Bar Loans are only offered by private lenders (i.e. there are no federal loans available). Contact information for those active Bar Loan lenders are included below.

How much money can I borrow?

Each lender sets different loan limits, ranging from \$12,000 - \$15,000.

What is the approval process?

As a private loan, the Bar Loan approval is credit-based and at discretion of each lender's criteria. Before applying for a Bar Loan, you may wish to check your credit at www.annualcreditreport.com which provides free access to your report from the three credit bureaus: Equifax, Transunion, and Experian. By reviewing your credit in advance of the Bar Loan application, you may have time to rectify any discrepancies on the credit report or correct any credit issues incurred.

What is the interest rate?

Because these are private loans, lenders set their own interest rates. Some may be fixed rates (i.e. that rate remains the same over the life of the loan) and some may be variable. Contact the Financial Aid Office if you need assistance determining what interest rate option is most beneficial to you.

What other factors should I review in evaluating Bar Loan options?

- *Fees*: are there origination or disbursement fees associated with the loan? If so, be conscious of the percentage that will be deducted from your loan reimbursement.
- *Interest Rate Reductions*: does the lender offer any interest rate reduction for either automatic debit or prior account or loan history with the lender?
- *Repayment terms*: how long will you have to pay the loan back? Is there any type of post enrollment grace period offered? Are there other deferment or forbearance options?

When should I apply for a Bar Loan?

You should apply for the Bar Loan anytime during your final Spring semester. Because the loan payment comes directly to you, you will be able to set the beginning and end date of the loan, as well as the disbursement dates?

How do I begin the Bar Loan application process?

The best way to begin the process is to compare the various Bar Loan Product from the different lenders. Visit the websites listed below and use the phone contact information to talk with representatives. In essence, you are "shopping" at this point to determine which loan product will benefit your financial situation. Be careful not to submit application to multiple lenders given that each submission may impact your credit score. Some key points to compare are:

determination of approval (i.e. credit standard), maximum loan amount, loan period and disbursement dates, interest rates: fixed vs. variable, fees, available interest rate reductions and repayment terms (including grace period, deferment and forbearance availability). Some lenders set limits on eligibility based on the amount of the student's existing loan debt. If you anticipate this being a problem, be sure to inquire about the limits set by the different lenders.

Will I need a co-signer?

In some cases (if your credit is at question or if you have not established enough of a credit history) you will be asked to add a co-signer to your application to gain approval. The lender may also suggest the addition of a credit worth co-signer to lower your interest rate as well. In addition, international students may be required to apply with a U.S. citizen co-signer in order to receive approval.

Do I have any alternative to the Bar Loan?

One of the things you may wish to consider is if you have any federal loan eligibility for the Spring term that you have not accessed (whether you did not accept your full unit loan offer or did not borrow for the sake of the parent contribution). Federal loans may offer lower interest rates and more flexible repayment plans options than private loans. If you wish to discuss any Spring term loan eligibility, please contact the Financial Aid Office.

Private Lenders Currently Providing Bar Loans

Lender	Sallie Mae	Discover	PNC	Wells Fargo
Product Name	Bar Study Loan	Bar Exam Loan	PNC Solution Loan	Wells Fargo Bar Exam Loan
Website	https://www.salliemae.com/student-loans/bar-study-loan/	https://www.pnc.com/en/personal-banking/borrowing/education-loan-center/pnc-solution-loan-for-bar-study.html	https://www.pnc.com/en/personal-banking/borrowing/education-loan-center/pnc-solution-loan-for-bar-study.html	https://www.wellsfargo.com/student/graduate-loans/bar-exam/
Phone Number	1(800)984-0190	1(877)728-3030	1(800)762-1001	1(800)378-5526

Additional Resources

The websites listed below contain additional information about bar study loans.

- <http://www.finaid.org/loans/privatestudentloans.phtml>
- <http://hls.harvard.edu/dept/sfs/bar-exam-loan-information/?redir=1>
- https://www.law.yale.edu/system/files/area/departments/finaid/document/BAR_LOAN_FAQ_.pdf
- <http://www.law.umich.edu/financialaid/Documents/bar.pdf>