

Simple Steps to Repayment for Dental School Graduates

These simple steps should help you determine an effective repayment strategy as you graduate from dental school and move into your career in dentistry, including any advanced dental education work.

Step 1: Know what you borrowed, who services your loans and when they come due.

1. See [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) for a listing of all federal loans, including direct subsidized, direct unsubsidized, and direct PLUS (Grad PLUS), regardless of their status and regardless of when you took them out, plus information on your loan servicer is listed under loan details.
2. Check your records, with your financial aid office or your credit report for loans not listed at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).
3. Most loans come due six months after graduation; check disclosure statements for other loans.

Step 2: Determine your repayment objectives and constantly review them.

1. **Aggressive repayment** to minimize interest accrual and reduce total repayment costs.
 - a. Consider a repayment plan that provides manageable payments, including income-driven repayment plans (IDRs), but work with your loan servicer to target *additional* payments against your most expensive loan or against lower balance loans to pay them off first.
 - b. Consider time-driven plans first (standard 10-year, extended 25-year) before looking at income plans.
2. **Cautious repayment** with an interest in minimizing payments to maximize cash flow, typical of many new graduates, especially those doing hospital-based residency programs.
 - a. Consider an income-driven repayment plan for manageable payments, if needed.
3. **Maximize eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).**
 - a. Use an income plan and while PSLF is part of your repayment strategy, consider no aggressive payments, but review this strategy each year when you renew eligibility for these plans or whenever you have changes in income, family size, or career plans; you might consider PSLF if you are interested in a career in academic dentistry.

Step 3: Select a repayment plan to meet your repayment objectives.

1. Use the AAMC/ADEA Dental Loan Organizer and Calculator at adea.org/DLOC to run repayment and forgiveness estimates under all repayment plans. DLOC is free for seven years.
2. Work with your loan servicer for actual repayment amounts when you select a repayment plan.
3. Use the Loan Simulator at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) to estimate payments under income plans and to estimate impact of changes in salary, marital status, and family size on payments under income plans.

Important Reminders:

- There is no penalty for early repayment under any federal repayment plan.
- Your principal balance will not come down until you cover all outstanding interest.
- In general, you can switch repayment plans, but work closely with your loan servicer.
- Documentation is important, especially when calling your loan servicer.

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