

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 11, 2024

Fontbonne University announced on March 11, 2024, that it plans to close after the summer 2025 term. This document attempts to answer many questions that you may have about this announcement. If you have a question not answered below, please contact questions@fontbonne.edu.

This is a very difficult time for students and employees. Fontbonne University offers confidential, professional counseling. For assistance, students should contact Counseling and Wellness to schedule an appointment: counselingappts@fontbonne.edu, or phone 314-889-1434. For employees, please email HR@fontbonne.edu for information about the Employee Assistance Program. To take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program through ComPsych, visit [GuidanceResources.com](https://www.guidanceresources.com) or call 800-344-9752.

General University Information

Will degrees be recognized after the closure? Is Fontbonne still an accredited university?

Higher education degrees always remain valid if they were conferred by a fully accredited institution at the time of closure. Fontbonne is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Our status with the Higher Learning Commission can be verified here: [Higher Learning Commission \(hlcommission.org\)](https://www.hlcommission.org). Thus, Fontbonne degrees will be recognized and remain valid.

Why is Fontbonne closing?

Over the last decade, enrollment has declined substantially, and the impact of COVID forever changed the higher education landscape. Fontbonne no longer has the resources to continue to operate beyond summer 2025, so the Board of Trustees has voted to cease operations after summer 2025.

When is Fontbonne closing?

Fontbonne plans to close at the end of summer 2025.

This news comes as a real shock. Why was the community not told earlier?

The university administration has been working to find a path forward for Fontbonne either as an independent university or as a partner with another institution for more than a year. Conversations with potential partners were occurring as recently as late last month. When it

became clear that there was no path forward, the Board of Trustees voted to close the university. The university community was informed immediately thereafter.

Current Student Information

Will Fontbonne hold a commencement this spring?

Yes, spring commencement will be held as scheduled on May 4, 2024, in the Mabee Gymnasium. We also intend to hold additional commencements in future terms prior to closure in order to celebrate student accomplishments.

Can current resident students continue to live in the residence halls?

Yes, we plan to offer residence space through the summer of 2025.

Will there be residence hall space in 2024-25 for students who are not currently living in the residence halls?

Preference will be given to students who lived in the halls in 2023-24 and who apply by the priority deadline of July 1, 2024. If space is available, other Fontbonne students will be accepted to the residence halls.

What campus events and student organizations will be offered in the 2024-25 academic year?

Fontbonne plans to hold a regular schedule of campus events and many student organizations will continue to meet, depending upon student demand and interest. Detailed information will continue to be provided through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Will Fontbonne continue to offer academic support services such as the Kinkel Center, academic accommodations, tutoring, writing support, etc.?

Yes.

Will Fontbonne continue to offer student support services such as the Fontbonne Cares suite and counseling services?

Yes. The Cares suite provides support for basic needs such as food, clothing, personal care items, school supplies, textbooks, and student emergency funding. The Cares suite can be reached at FontbonneCares@fontbonne.edu and free, confidential counseling services are available by emailing CounselingAppts@fontbonne.edu.

Will students be able to continue to access Fontbonne email, OneDrive, GriffinNet, and other systems?

Yes. Students who remain enrolled will continue to have access through summer 2025.

Will student work study continue to be available?

Yes, we will continue to have select employment opportunities on campus for students.

Academic Programs

How can students complete their academic program?

We want to help as many students as possible complete their degrees at Fontbonne. To help students accomplish this, undergraduate students will be able to take an overload (more than 18 credit hours) without additional tuition charges beyond full-time tuition in the fall and spring semesters. In addition, we plan to offer a more robust summer schedule of courses to help students complete their degree, and we plan to provide scholarships to all undergraduate students to cover the cost of tuition for these summer courses. Graduate students who normally take summer coursework as part of their degree program will continue to do so at a reduced rate of \$675/credit hour. Students who complete their degree requirements by the time of Fontbonne's closing will receive a Fontbonne degree.

However, we recognize that not all current students will be able to complete their programs of study by the time the university closes. Students may transfer to another university, or Fontbonne will assist students in meeting their educational goals with another university, called a teach-out institution. Fontbonne will provide students with detailed and organized information on these teach-out institutions as quickly as possible.

Students will have the option to continue their studies at one of these institutions and complete their degree requirements on schedule. Students may also opt to transfer to another institution. The differences between teach-out plans and transfers are outlined in the "teach-out vs transfer" section below.

Fontbonne is hosting a transfer and teach-out fair on April 15, 2024, from noon – 4 p.m., at which students can meet with representatives from many of these institutions. We will host an additional transfer and teach-out fair in spring 2025.

Fontbonne students should meet with their academic advisors to review their options prior to deciding which strategy is best for them and their individual situations.

What is a teach-out agreement?

A teach-out agreement is a formal agreement between universities allowing students to complete their programs or courses at a different institution when their current one is no longer able to provide the necessary resources or support. Fontbonne is signing these agreements to help students finish their degrees without major disruptions. These agreements remove many of the barriers that a student who transfers might otherwise face. These agreements typically include waived application fees, residency requirements, and deadlines. They also typically include acceptance of all successfully completed Fontbonne credits.

Not all teach-out institutions are suitable for all majors. A table of degrees and teach-out institutions will be provided as soon as they are available. We recommend that students meet with an academic advisor to discuss the best path forward.

What is the difference between enrolling at a teach-out institution and transferring?

Teach-out agreements entered into by Fontbonne University typically include protections that exceed what non-agreement institutions typically provide. These benefits may include the following:

- Automatic admission of current Fontbonne students in good academic standing.
- Acceptance of successfully completed credits at Fontbonne as defined by the receiving institution. Fontbonne students should be able to complete their degree in the same amount of time. Students should expect to complete the same number of semesters at the teach-out institutions as they would have at Fontbonne to finish their degrees.
- Out of pocket costs should be comparable to Fontbonne. While the scholarships may be packaged differently and with different names, the net cost should be comparable. Fontbonne students will not need to negotiate that process or be concerned about the teach-out institution's published "sticker" price.

Many institutions accept applications for transfer students, but the process may not be as seamless or have the same guarantees as with transitioning to the partnering teach-out institution. Therefore, it is often in the best interest of the student to transition to a designated teach-out institution.

With what schools does Fontbonne have a teach-out agreement?

A table of degrees and teach-out institutions will be made available on our website as soon as agreements are finalized. Additional institutions are expected to be added in the coming weeks. All teach-out agreements are tentative pending approval by the Higher Learning Commission.

How do students enroll in a teach-out institution?

An email will be sent to students with information about their academic advisor and about next steps. To enroll in a teach-out institution, students should set up an appointment with their advisor. At this meeting students will discuss their major, the differences between teach-out and transfer, and which teach-out receiving institutions have their major/degree/program of study.

In this meeting, students should be sure to cover what is required to:

- Move to the teach-out institution
- Have their records moved to the teach-out institution
- What forms need to be signed
- Who the contact person is at the teach-out institution they wish to attend

Students should submit the [Authorization for Release of Information to Third Party](#) form so Fontbonne can share student information with the teach-out institution(s).

Can students change their major?

Yes, students may change their major. However, after the change students must make a new appointment with their advisor to discuss teach-out options.

Can a student who is on academic probation still transfer to another school or move to a teach-out institution?

This depends entirely on the transfer or teach-out institution; students should check with their intended school for information specific to their situation. Students may benefit by remaining at Fontbonne until the end of summer 2025, improving their GPA, and returning to good standing prior to switching to a new institution.

If students attend a teach-out institution, will their degree still be from Fontbonne?

No, the degree will be awarded by the teach-out institution.

Financial Aid & Student Billing

For all questions related to financial aid and student billing, students can contact FinancialServices@fontbonne.edu to discuss their specific situation.

Will my financial aid change if I remain at Fontbonne?

All institutional aid will be unaffected provided that students maintain the required GPA, and students should complete the FAFSA at studentaid.gov to determine federal financial aid eligibility.

Will my financial aid change if I move to a different college or university?

For students going to a teach-out institution, financial aid will generally not change. Students who transfer may have a change in financial aid.

Teach-out agreements entered into by Fontbonne University for its students generally include protections that exceed what non-agreement institutions provide. These benefits may include limiting certain out of pocket costs to comparable costs at Fontbonne. While the scholarships may be packaged differently and with different names, the net cost should be comparable. Fontbonne students will not need to negotiate that process or be concerned about the teach-out institution's published "sticker" price.

Many institutions accept applications for transfer students, but the process may not be as seamless or have the same guarantees as with transitioning to the partnering teach-out Institution. Therefore, a student's financial aid may be different at a transfer institution.

Do students who owe a balance to Fontbonne still have to pay their bill?

Yes, students with outstanding balances still have a legal obligation to pay those balances. Students can establish a payment plan to address these balances.

Do students who are transferring or moving to a teach-out institution need to complete a new FAFSA form?

Students must have a FAFSA on file with the institution that they plan to attend in fall 2024. If students have already filed a FAFSA for the 2024-25 award year identifying Fontbonne and need to change the institution, students should visit www.studentaid.gov.

What happens to student loans, and when will students have to start paying them back?

Students will still be responsible for the loans borrowed while at Fontbonne. If students choose to enroll at a transfer or teach-out institution, the new institution will automatically report students' enrollment, but it is the student's responsibility to follow up with the loan servicer. Taking more than a six-month break could cause student loans to go into repayment. Please refer to www.studentaid.gov or the loan servicer for additional information regarding student loans.

Will students still get a 1098-T?

Yes. Please ensure that Fontbonne has a current address and other personal contact information. **All students** should visit these links to update their address:

- [Change of Address \(US\)](#)
- [Change of Address \(International\)](#)

Can students discharge student loans since Fontbonne is no longer enrolling students?

Loan discharge is the removal of a student's obligation to repay student loans under certain circumstances. There are certain eligibility requirements to qualify for a closed school loan discharge, and students must apply. Additional information can be found at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)

Closed School Loan Discharge Applications must be sent to the loan servicer(s), not Fontbonne University. To find out the appropriate loan servicer, log into My Federal Student Aid or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243; TTY for the hearing impaired 1-800-730-8913). Be sure to continue to make payments while the discharge application is being processed. If a student does not meet the criteria for a loan discharge, they will be informed by the loan servicer(s) and must continue making payments on their loans based on the terms of their promissory note.

US Department of Education Resources:

- Student Loan Repayment Questions: <https://studentaid.gov/h/manage-loans>
- Federal Loan Forgiveness: <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation>
- Closed Information: Available for Direct Loans, FFEL Program loans, and Perkins Loans. Learn about the eligibility requirements for closed school discharge and how to apply- <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/closed-school>

Important Contacts:

Federal Student Aid Information Center

1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243; TTY for the hearing impaired 1-800-730-8913)

Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

573-751-3940

<https://dhewd.mo.gov>

Minnesota Office of Higher Education

1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350

St. Paul, MN 55108-5227

651.642.0567 or 800.657.3866

<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/ohecontact.cfm>

How will these changes impact my veteran (VA) benefits, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

If students receive VA benefits at Fontbonne, benefits are likely to continue at another institution, but students should review their benefits with the Director of Financial Services by contacting FinancialServices@fontbonne.edu.

Academic Records

What will happen to all of the student records?

Saint Louis University has agreed to assume all Fontbonne student records necessary to produce complete academic transcripts for all past Fontbonne students. After summer 2025, please contact Saint Louis University Office of the Registrar at <https://www.slu.edu/registrar/index.php> for questions about student records.

How do students or alumni obtain a transcript from Fontbonne?

Prior to summer 2025, transcripts are ordered directly from Fontbonne. Instructions for ordering your transcript are available here: <https://www.fontbonne.edu/academics/registrar/request-transcript/>. After summer 2025, please contact Saint Louis University Office of the Registrar at <https://www.slu.edu/registrar/index.php> for questions about student records.

How can a potential employer or other entity verify a degree or dates of attendance?

Fontbonne has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to perform degree and attendance verification, available at: <https://nscverifications.org/welcome-to-verification-services/>.

Where are student records for former Cardinal Newman College students?

Cardinal Newman College was a Catholic institution in north St. Louis that closed in 1985, and Fontbonne had been the official holder of their records. Saint Louis University now holds the Cardinal Newman College student records. Contact the Saint Louis University Office of the Registrar at <https://www.slu.edu/registrar/index.php> for questions about Cardinal Newman College student records.

Are parents of students able to get information about the teach-out or transfer process?

Fontbonne staff and faculty will be happy to speak generally to any parent about this process. So that we can share specific information about a student's situation, parents should ensure their student completes a FERPA waiver. The form can be obtained at:

<https://www.fontbonne.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FERPA-NEW-LOGO.pdf> and can be returned via email to RegistrarOffice@fontbonne.edu .

Athletics

Will Fontbonne Athletics continue competing for the rest of the spring 2024 seasons?

Yes, all Fontbonne sports currently in season will continue as scheduled for the remainder of 2024 seasons, conference, and potential NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) tournament bids.

Will Fontbonne continue to offer athletics programs during the 2024-25 academic year?

Yes, we plan to offer athletics during the 2024-25 academic year. The university is committed to working with the athletics department and coaching staff to communicate transparently with student-athletes in determining the feasibility of offering each particular sport. Student-athletes with questions should contact questions@fontbonne.edu.

Can student-athletes with remaining athletic eligibility play somewhere else?

To be eligible to compete immediately at the transferring institution, a student-athlete must be in good academic standing at Fontbonne University.

Students currently on academic probation, suspension, or academically ineligible to compete based on Fontbonne athletic eligibility policies must adhere to the policies of the NCAA/NAIA/NJCAA institute to which they wish to transfer. Student-athletes should discuss their eligibility options with the compliance director at the institution to which they wish to transfer, as many conferences also have their own eligibility requirements.

Questions on eligibility for student-athletes should be directed to the Fontbonne athletic compliance director at questions@fontbonne.edu.

How do student-athletes obtain a release from Fontbonne University to play athletics elsewhere?

There will be a blanket release statement sent from the Director of Athletics for all NCAA and non-NCAA athletes effective for the 2024-25 academic year.

Are student-athletes guaranteed a roster spot at a teach-out institution?

Student-athletes who wish to inquire about competing at one of the teach-out institutions should contact the head coach at that institution. Each teach-out institution will decide whether Fontbonne student-athletes will be invited to be part of their program. We recommend students work with their Fontbonne coach(es) to help navigate this process.

Will athletic scholarships for sprint football, cheer and dance be honored for the 2024-25 academic school year?

All current athletic scholarships will be honored for the 2024-25 academic year regardless of athletic participation.

International students

International students should contact InternationalAffairs@fontbonne.edu to discuss their specific circumstances.

Employees

When will an employee's last day of employment be?

This is individualized for most employees. During the week of March 11, staff will meet with a member of the Executive Leadership Team to learn their individualized last day of employment. Staff should check their email for an appointment time and location. Faculty contracts will also be issued during the week of March 11.

What resources are available to help employees find a new position?

We plan to offer employment assistance in the form of resume writing workshops, interview training sessions, and resume review. The details for these will be provided during individual meetings.

What will happen to employee benefit coverages?

This is specific to each employee and will be addressed with the ELT representative during the individual meetings.

How can employees access their HSA (Health Savings Account) balance?

HSA information is contained on the HSA Bank website. Employees can access their account on that site. Employees are considered a "member"; if you need the Member Website Guide please contact HR@fontbonne.edu. Employees who have not accessed the site before may

need to create a password to go with the Username (which is the first initial, last name, last 4 of SSN, e.g. JSmith1234).

One of the first things to verify on the site (or when calling) is the employee's address and contact information.

HSA Bank can be reached at:

- HSA Bank Participant Help Line: 800-357-6246
- www.HSABank.com

How can employees find out about their retirement (TIAA) balances?

Because this is a defined contribution plan, employee funds are not at risk with the closing of the university. Employees are encouraged to contact the TIAA Participant Help Line at 800-842-2252. The TIAA representatives can provide all the information to help employees make the best decision for their funds.

TIAA has also provided a dedicated representative for the Fontbonne plan.

Dedicated TIAA Representative:

Dave Arndt
Virtual Financial Consultant | Client Relationships
TIAA

1670 Broadway Street | Suite 3300
Denver, CO 80202
Office: 303.626.5162
David.Arndt@tiaa.org

Will terminated employees be able to continue their health insurance coverage through COBRA?

Yes, we plan to offer COBRA until the time Fontbonne closes after summer 2025. If you have specific questions, please email HR@fontbonne.edu.

Can employees apply for unemployment benefits?

Employees who are terminated by Fontbonne may be eligible for unemployment. However, it is the State of Missouri—not Fontbonne—that makes such a determination. Please email HR@fontbonne.edu for personalized details regarding your employment. Unemployment information is available here: <https://labor.mo.gov/unemployed-workers>

Will employees still get a W2?

Yes. Employees should ensure their contact information is up-to-date in Paycor.

What happens to employees' unused vacation time?

Unused vacation time will be paid out to employees upon voluntary resignation or termination as described in the policy manuals.

Alumni and Donor

Will there be a reunion event or other opportunity for Fontbonne alumni to visit campus before the university closes?

Fontbonne's Fall 2024 Homecoming will be held on October 5, 2024, and would be an ideal time for alumni to visit their alma mater.

Will there be opportunities for alumni to gather in the future? What is happening to the Alumni Association?

We encourage alumni to meet with their classmates and stay connected through alumni social media accounts.

Are you still accepting gifts to help students?

The University will continue to accept gifts from alumni and donors until it ceases operations in order to help current students finish their degrees. We are planning a number of steps to help students, including offering scholarships to cover the cost of tuition for undergraduate students during the summer 2024 and summer 2025 sessions and reduced graduate tuition, and donor funds are needed to offer this to students.

What will happen to Fontbonne's endowment and scholarship funds?

The University plans to take the necessary steps to permit use of a substantial portion of its endowment funds to be awarded to continuing students as scholarship support. These funds will assist students to complete their education prior to Fontbonne's closing. Fontbonne is working with legal counsel to ensure the appropriate distribution of endowed funds.

There are a lot of memories from the last 101 years. What will happen to the university archives?

The university is working to identify a partner to safely hold archive materials. We will update the university community as more information is available.

Prospective students and applicants

Will prospective students who have already been accepted to Fontbonne and have paid a deposit get their deposit back?

Yes, prospective students will get their deposit back. Fall 2024 deposits are being processed for refunds and should be received by April 15. We firmly believe in the value of transformative education, so we encourage prospective students to make plans to attend another college or university. Prospective students who have not received their refund by April 15 should contact questions@fontbonne.edu.

Can Fontbonne send an application to another university on my behalf?

No, every institution has its own application process. Applicants need to send their own application materials (e.g., test scores, letters of recommendation, essays, etc.) directly to the institutions to which they want to apply in accordance with each institution's application requirements.

Do prospective students who have already submitted a FAFSA and had it sent to Fontbonne need to complete a new FAFSA?

Students do not need to do a new FAFSA! Visit www.studentaid.gov to add additional schools to the FAFSA.

Community members

What will happen to the land, buildings, and equipment?

Washington University has entered into a purchase agreement with Fontbonne University to acquire the 16-acre Clayton campus in the coming months. This arrangement will enable as many current students as possible to complete their degrees and graduate while also providing employment for many staff and faculty. Washington University has indicated that they do not have any plans for the campus at this time, but that future decisions will be made in consultation with the City of Clayton and Washington University's other community partners.

Members of the community regularly use the library, speech-hearing clinic, and other campus services. What alternatives are available?

Fontbonne has become part of the fabric of the community and provides services for some community members that are life-changing, and we are saddened by the impact that our closing has on the community. After allowing for university staff and faculty to comprehend this news, we encourage community members to reach out to program directors to seek advice on alternative services. For those unsure whom to ask, please email questions@fontbonne.edu.

Unfortunately, many colleges and universities have ceased operations in the last few years. We are grateful to our colleagues at Iowa Wesleyan, Cardinal Stritch, Lincoln College, and Cabrini for their carefully prepared FAQ pages. This page uses some language from questions and answers that they provided.