FAFSA Checklists

2021 - 2022

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FAFSA Checklist

Create Your FSA ID

- Go to **studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch** to create your FSA ID.
- Create a username and password, then enter your email address and cell phone number. (Note: Use an email address you check regularly and will have access to over the next few years.)
- Enter your name, date of birth, Social Security number, contact information, and challenge questions and answers.
- Review your information and read and accept the terms and conditions.
- Confirm your email address using the secure code, which will be sent to the email address you entered when you created your FSA ID. Once you verify your email address, you can use it instead of your username to log in to complete your FAFSA.

Submit Your FAFSA

Remember, the FAFSA is available October 1 for the following academic year. The earlier you submit it, the more opportunity you have to receive financial aid to help pay for your education after high school. Before completing your FAFSA, you'll need:

- Your Social Security Number.
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen).
- Your (parent's) 2020 tax returns, W-2s and other records of money earned.
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable).
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable).
- You and your parent's FSA ID to sign electronically.

1. Go to fafsa.gov and login using your FSA ID.

- Applying online is quicker, easier and ensures your information will be saved for next year. Don't forget, you will need to fill out a FAFSA every school year to be eligible for federal funds.

2. Enter personal information.

- Make sure everything you enter is exactly how it appears on official government documents. Student and/or parent must have FSA ID in order to use IRS Data Retrieval Tool.

3. Choose up to 10 schools.

- Be sure to include schools you are seriously considering, whether you've applied or have been accepted yet. You will get an estimate of your financial aid eligibility.

4. Enter your financial information.

- The IRS Data Retrieval Tool can transfer your tax data to your application automatically.

5. Think you're finished? Double-check.

- You can check the status immediately after submitting your FAFSA online. Make sure you receive a confirmation page indicating your FAFSA has been submitted. If you provided an email address on your FAFSA form, you'll receive an email with a link to an online copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR) from noreply@fafsa.gov within three weeks. The email will be sent to the email address provided on the FAFSA. If an email address was not provided, you will receive your SAR via mail. Check your SAR to make sure there are no mistakes.

After the FAFSA Checklist

1. Review your Student Aid Report (SAR).

- After you submit your FAFSA, you should receive a SAR within three days if you submitted your FAFSA online or three weeks if you mailed a signature page. Your SAR is a summary of the information you provided on your FAFSA.
- Your SAR also indicates if you have been selected for verification. If you have, the first thing to do is relax. Then, learn more about the next steps on the back of this checklist.

2. Locate your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC).

- Your EFC can be found in the box at the top of the first page of your SAR.
- Your EFC is a measure of your family's financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law. This formula considers the following about you (and your parents, if you're a dependent): taxed and untaxed income, assets, benefits (such as unemployment and Social Security), family size and number of family members who will attend college during the year are also considered. View this information and more about EFC on **studentaid.gov/help/efc**.
- The EFC determines your eligibility for federal aid. Schools use the EFC to determine your federal financial aid eligibility and create your financial aid award letter/award package.

3. Make corrections if needed.

- Once you review your SAR, you may find there is missing data or an error. It is important to contact your college's financial aid office with any questions before making corrections. Corrections can be made by logging on to FAFSA.gov. Note: Any changes to the FAFSA must be signed with the appropriate FSA ID(s) and submitted.
- Your SAR information will be sent to each school listed on your FAFSA. Based on that information, the school may request additional information to correct your FAFSA.

4. Take next steps.

- The school(s) you applied to, have been accepted to and listed on the FAFSA, will calculate your aid and send you an electronic or paper award letter/award package with how much aid you're eligible for at that school. The timing of when you receive your award letter/award package varies from school to school and depends on when you apply, if any verification requirements have been completed, and how the school chooses to schedule awarding of aid.
- Contact the financial aid office at the school(s) you applied to for more information or if you have any questions about your financial aid.

5. Check your emails often.

- Financial aid offices will primarily communicate through your college email. Make sure to check yours often. Requests for additional, often time-sensitive information, as well as your award letter/award package will be sent via email.

Visit GAfutures.org for more information.

Do not pay anyone to complete the FAFSA for you!

Free means **FREE!**

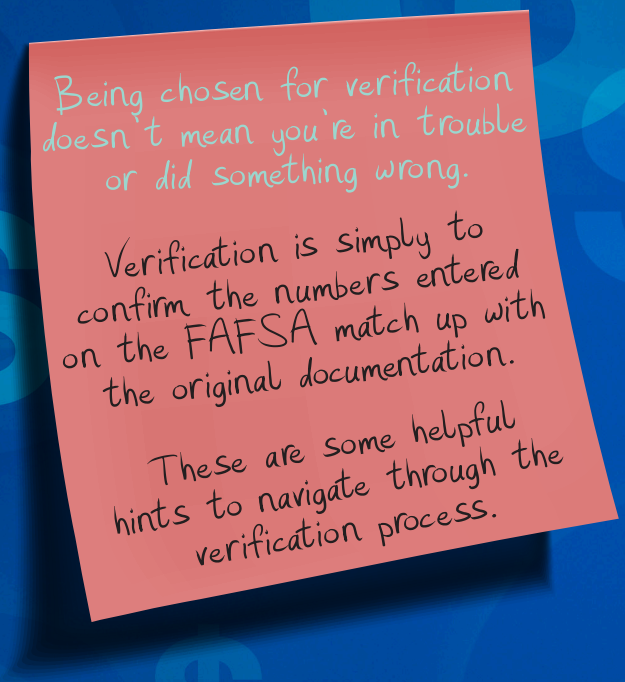
Selected for Verification?

1. Contact your Financial Aid Office(s).

- If you submitted your FAFSA information to multiple schools, contact each one to determine the documents you will need to provide for verification. Remember, verification is time sensitive and you do not want to miss any deadlines.

2. Gather and/or complete requested documents.

- **Tax information** - If you and your parents (if you're a dependent) used the IRS Data Retrieval tool, the Financial Aid Office will most likely not need your tax information. However, if the IRS Data Retrieval tool was not used, a copy of your tax return or tax transcript will be needed. If you or your parents need to obtain copies of tax returns, they can be accessed online at irs.gov. For security purposes, you will need your Social Security number, date of birth, filing status and mailing address to access and request your records.
- **W-2s and/or other financial documents** - If you or your parents did not file a return, W-2s or other financial documents (e.g., proof of child support) may be requested.
- **Verification worksheets** - The Financial Aid Office will provide verification worksheets to accompany any requested documents. In some instances, completing and submitting this information will satisfy verification.



3. Make sure to send in your verification documents before your school's deadline.

- Changes to your EFC are rare after you submit your documents for verification, and only occur if your verification materials show a discrepancy from your original FAFSA.
- Need-based institutional aid, such as campus-based scholarships and grants, are time sensitive and are often first-come, first-served. So, submit your verification documents as soon as possible.

4. Follow up on changes to your financial aid package/award letter.

- Keep in mind there is a chance your EFC could change if verification and the original FAFSA information are vastly different. This difference could either increase or decrease your EFC and change your financial aid package/award letter.
- If there are changes to your financial aid package/award letter, contact your Financial Aid Office to determine how you should move forward.

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