Federal Student Aid
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Summary of Enhancements to fafsa.gov for
2018-2019

This document describes changes specific to fafsa.gov. It has been updated to incorporate more detail about planned changes previously described, as well as those changes resulting from public comments. Changes that impact <u>both</u> the PDF FAFSA and fafsa.gov are described in the *Summary of Enhancements to the 2018-2019 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)*

Most applicants fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) online. Because we are unable to create an online experience that allows the public to view the 2018-2019 changes to fafsa.gov during the public comment period, reviewers are encouraged to utilize the 2017-2018 FAFSA Demonstration Site to view the current online application experience. When viewing the FAFSA online, please keep the following in mind:

o Experiences will vary based on how each FAFSA question is answered due to the dynamic display of text and extensive built-in skip logic. For example, some questions are worded differently based on marital status, tax filing status, etc. Also, certain questions are hidden depending on the selected state of legal residence and whether the answers to relevant questions make an applicant eligible for an automatic zero EFC.

o Changes to fafsa.gov for 2018-2019 start-up will not be available for viewing until the 2018-2019 Demonstration Site becomes available on September 24, 2017. You can access the 2017-2018 version of the FAFSA Demonstration Site at https://fafsademo.test.ed.gov using the following user name and password:

User Name: eddemo
Password: fafsatest

The changes described in this document do not impact the PDF FAFSA.

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Planned Changes for 2018-2019 Start-up

In partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), we will make changes to the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) to enhance the privacy of applicant and parent IRS tax return information. In addition, we will expand the population of applicants and parents who are eligible to use the IRS DRT, as described below, to include those who filed an amended tax return.

Enhanced Privacy for IRS DRT users: In an electronic announcement posted May 3, 2017, we informed the community that in order to address both privacy and security concerns related to the IRS DRT, the IRS and FSA agreed to implement a solution that will reinstate the use of the IRS DRT beginning with the 2018–19 FAFSA cycle. The solution, however, will limit the information that displays to the applicant in order to enhance the security and privacy of sensitive personal data transferred to the FAFSA from the IRS. Students' and taxpayers' information will be encrypted and hidden from the applicant's view on both the IRS DRT web page and on fafsa.gov. Messaging will be presented to applicants using the IRS DRT on both the IRS DRT web page and on fafsa.gov informing them that they will be unable to view their tax information on either web site.

More details regarding the encryption solution will be posted to IFAP as they become available.

Amended Tax Return Filers: Applicants and parents who have amended their tax return will be able to use the IRS DRT to transfer their IRS tax return information into the FAFSA. While the information transferred will be from the *original* tax return, the IRS will provide an indicator that communicates whether or not the taxpayer amended his/her tax return. This information will be included on the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) as an IRS Request Flag of 07, as appropriate for student or parent, or both.

As a result of this change, we will remove the filtering question "Did you file a Form 1040X amended tax return?" from the Student and Parent Financial Information pages. We have also added messaging informing applicants that the IRS indicated that an amended return is on file with the IRS and directing the applicant to contact the financial aid administrator if changes are needed to any of the data transferred from the IRS.

Changes resulting from public comments

As a result of a public comment regarding applicants that wish to list more than 10 colleges on any particular transaction, we have revised help text to better inform applicants that every school listed on any transaction will receive an ISIR.
The revised help text will read as follows:

If I want to apply to more than ten colleges, what should I do?

You can list up to 10 colleges on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Once you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR), you can make the information available to more than 10 colleges through one of the options listed below. Each option will allow the college to receive an electronic copy of your SAR, and you will also receive an updated SAR.

Option 1: Click **Login** on the home page and log in to your FAFSA account. You will be given the option to **Make FAFSA Corrections**. Remove some of the colleges listed on your FAFSA, add the additional school codes, and submit the corrections for processing.

Option 2: Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center and have them add the colleges for you. When you call, you must provide the DRN from your SAR or confirmation page. Refer to the <link>Help</link> page for contact information.

Option 3: If you have a paper SAR, you can replace the colleges listed on the SAR with other colleges, and mail the SAR back to Federal Student Aid. Note that the paper SAR allows you to change up to four colleges – not all 10.

Note: If there are 10 colleges on your FAFSA, any new school codes that you add will replace one or more of the school codes already listed. When this change is made, any college removed from the list will not have automatic access to any **new** information you provide after you've removed that college. However, the college will still have the data you submitted when you listed that college on your FAFSA form. You are not deleting your FAFSA information from the college's system.

Planned Mid-Cycle Changes

The following changes to fafsa.gov will not be available on October 1, 2017, but are expected to be implemented sometime during calendar year 2018. An Electronic Announcement will be posted to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals Web site prior to implementation to provide the community with more detailed information about the planned changes.

Responsive Web Application: The online user experience will be improved for all FAFSA filers due to responsive web design. By having a flexible Web portal that automatically adjusts view settings to meet the requirements of the accessing device, users can more efficiently access specific areas of the redesigned web pages. This enhancement allows those who choose to complete the FAFSA using a mobile device or tablet to have a better experience; it also benefits those who complete the FAFSA on a computer due to the improved overall look and feel.

Responsive web design is being applied via a multi-phased approach, so not all functions in fafsa.gov are impacted for 2018-2019.

Integration with College Scorecard: When a new applicant logs in to fafsa.gov, he/she will be given the opportunity to link to the College Scorecard Web site to research colleges, and then transfer up to ten college selections into the FAFSA. If fewer than ten colleges are transferred, additional schools can still be selected while in the FAFSA by utilizing the current School Code Search functionality.