

[Financial Aid Resources & Questions](#) | [Frequently Asked FAFSA® Questions](#)

# Frequently Asked FAFSA® Questions

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

B  
e  
f  
W  
hi  
le  
A  
ft  
e  
r  
F  
ill  
n  
g  
F  
A  
F  
S  
A  
®

---

## Most Frequently Asked FAFSA® Questions

[How do I file FAFSA® Free?](#)

[What am I applying for through filing a FAFSA®?](#)

[What do I need to fill out my FAFSA®](#)

[When does FAFSA® open/close?](#)

[What is a Pell Grant?](#)

[How do I apply for a Pell Grant?](#)

[How do I get an FSA ID?](#)

[How do I reset my FSA ID?](#)

[What type of tax return does FAFSA® require?](#)

[What if I can't find my tax returns?](#)

[What do I do after I file FAFSA®?](#)

[What if I am unable to provide parental information?](#)

---

## Before You File FAFSA®

### Can I file as a Grad Student?

Yes, graduate students can file a FAFSA® to receive federal aid, although the aid available to them does differ slightly from the aid offered to undergraduates.

More: [Can I file FAFSA® as a Grad Student?](#)

### How do I know if My College is Affiliated with FAFSA®?

Nearly all schools offering degree or certificate programs are eligible to participate in the Federal Student Aid (FSA) program, including many online colleges and vocational schools.

More: [Is my college affiliated with FAFSA®?](#)

### Is Filing FAFSA® Free?

Yes, it is free to file a FAFSA® with FRANK. FAFSA® itself is an acronym for the “Free Application for Federal Student Aid”.

More: [Is FAFSA® Free?](#)

# What am I applying for through filing a FAFSA®?

When filing a FAFSA® – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – a student is applying for all available federal loans, grants, and scholarships to pay for college. The student also has the option of applying for the federal work-study program.

In addition to federal financial assistance, many colleges will use the FAFSA® to assess a student's candidacy for financial aid programs and scholarships that are offered by the school and the state.

More: [What types of financial aid are available?](#)

## What if I'm a Junior in High School?

Students must have a completed high school diploma, GED or homeschool equivalent, or be in the final year of such a program in order to file a FAFSA®. Most students will file their first FAFSA® during their senior year of high school.

More: [When can I file FAFSA®?](#)

## What if I have a criminal record?

Students with criminal records aren't automatically disqualified from receiving federal aid, although there may be restrictions.

More: [What if I have a criminal record?](#)

## Can I qualify for financial aid if I have an intellectual disability?

Students with disabilities are not disqualified from receiving federal financial aid for college. Additionally, schools and other organizations have made financial awards available for students with general, physical, intellectual, and learning disabilities as well as chronic health issues, mental illness, and hearing or visual impairments, but they often come with strict requirements.

More: [Can I qualify for aid if I have a disability?](#)

## How can I apply for financial aid?

The first step towards receiving financial aid to pay for college is to file a FAFSA®. By filing a FAFSA®, students are applying for federal grants, loans, and work-study. Additionally, many states and many schools use the FAFSA® to determine a student's eligibility for state and institutional aid.

More: [How do I fill out FAFSA®?](#)

## How do I get aid if I am an international student that doesn't qualify for federal aid?

Financial aid through the Federal Student Aid program is reserved for US citizens and eligible non-citizens. Despite not being eligible for federal aid, international students can file a FAFSA® to be considered by their school for school and state-provided financial aid.

More: [FAFSA® for International Students](#)

## What type of tax return does FAFSA® require?

The tax returns must be from two years prior to the academic year for which the student is applying. For the 2022-2023 FAFSA®, the student or parent will be using their 2020 tax returns.

More: [Tax returns used for FAFSA®](#)

## What is a Pell Grant?

The Pell Grant is a need-based federal grant awarded to undergraduates working towards their first Bachelor's degree. To apply, the student needs to file a FAFSA® every year.

More: [What is a Pell Grant used for?](#)

## How do I apply for a Pell Grant?

The first step in the application is the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). You're automatically considered for the Pell Grant when you submit the FAFSA®.

More: [What are the eligibility requirements for Pell Grant?](#)

## What is a scholarship?

Scholarships are a form of merit-based financial aid. They are often awarded to students who excel in a particular area, such as academics, athletics, or the arts.

More: [What scholarships and grants are available?](#)

## What is financial aid?

Financial aid helps students and their families pay for college.

More: [What is Financial Aid?](#)

## What is FSA?

The FSA ID is a username and password combination that students and parents use to confirm their identity on the Federal Student Aid website.

More: [What is a FSA ID?](#)

## What is the SAR?

A Student Aid Report – or SAR – is a summary of the information provided on a student's FAFSA®. The SAR provides a snapshot of the student's eligibility for financial aid.

More: [What is a Student Aid Report?](#)

## What is work-study?

The federal work-study program provides part-time jobs to eligible students to help them pay for college-related expenses. The jobs are coordinated by the student's school and are typically located on-campus.

More: [Resources for work study jobs](#)

## What are the different types of financial aid?

Financial aid is typically broken down into three categories: gift aid, loans, and work-study. Gift aid, which are grants and scholarships, do not need to be paid back, while loans require repayment after school. Financial aid can be provided by the federal government, state government, colleges themselves, and private entities.

More: [What are the types of aid available?](#)

## What is the difference between private and public aid?

Private aid is through a university or organization and public aid is through the state or federal government.

More: [What is the difference between private and public aid?](#)

## Why do I have to file the FAFSA® annually?

Financial aid is awarded on a per-academic year basis. The FSA requires students to demonstrate their need and eligibility prior to the start of each academic year.

More: [Do I have to file FAFSA® annually?](#)

## Can I receive money to get my GED?

Sadly, there's limited student aid or resources for those who want to take the GED test. Generally, the GED test cost less than \$100 and there is currently no federal aid to help students take the test. If you can't afford the cost, consider getting financial aid assistance from a local vocational agency or the department of social services in your state.

More: [Financial aid for students without high school diploma](#)

## What do I need to fill out my FAFSA®

Students need the following information to fill out their FAFSA®: their social security number, their school list, and their financial information, including

their federal 1040 and W2 forms for the requested year. Parents of dependent students will need to provide similar information.

More: [What information is required on the FAFSA®](#)

## When does FAFSA® open/close?

There are three key dates students should circle in their calendars every year: October 1st, June 30th, and September 15th. If you have any questions about school-specific deadlines, you should talk to your aid administrator.

October 1st – FAFSA® opens for the next academic year

June 30th – FAFSA® closes for the current academic year

September 15th – Deadline to make FAFSA® corrections for the previous academic year

More: [FAFSA® Deadline 2021 – 2022](#)

---

## While You File FAFSA®

### Do I Input Parent or Student Information?

For dependent students, the FAFSA® is broken up into two sections: one for the student's information, and one for the parent or parents' information.

Independent students aren't required to fill out the parents' section, although some law and medical schools will request that information.

More: [Do I input parent or student information?](#)

### What if I am homeless or at risk of being homeless?

Yes, you can still apply for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) if you are homeless or self-supporting and at risk of becoming homeless.

More: [Can I get financial aid if I'm homeless?](#)

## If my parents do not have social security numbers, what should I do?

If your parents do not have social security numbers, you can enter all zeros in those fields.

More: [How to file FAFSA® for non-citizens](#)

## What if I am unable to provide parental information?

If you're classified as an independent student, you're not required to provide your parents' information on the FAFSA®.

More: [Do I qualify as an independent student?](#)

## What is the difference between independent and dependent?

There are a total of 13 questions that the FAFSA® form asks to determine your dependency. Answering "no" to all of the dependency questions on the FAFSA® form means that you are considered a dependent student. If you answer "yes" to even one of the questions, you will be considered an independent student.

More: [How to determine your dependency status](#)

## Who is considered a parent?

FAFSA® defines parent status as "the person that the state has determined to be your legal, biological or adoptive parent."

More: [Who qualifies as my parent?](#)

## What if I can't find my tax returns?

You can request a tax transcript from the [IRS here](#).



## After You File FAFSA®

### What do I do after I file FAFSA®?

After filing your FAFSA®, the FSA will send you a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR is primarily a summary of the information the student provided on the FAFSA®.

More: [What to do after I file for FAFSA®?](#)

### Do my selected schools receive my FAFSA® information?

Yes, your FAFSA® information is directly sent to the colleges and/or vocational schools you list on the application.

More: [Do my schools receive my FAFSA® application?](#)

### After I submit my FAFSA®, how long does it take to receive my aid award?

Students attending traditional four-year schools can expect to receive their financial aid offers in early spring, while two-year colleges and trade schools may send out their financial aid offers on a rolling basis.

More: [How long does FAFSA® take?](#)

### Can I make corrections to my FAFSA®?

Making FAFSA® corrections is as easy as logging into your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and updating the information by clicking on “Make FAFSA® Corrections.” You can correct errors, update your mailing or email address, add schools, or submit additional information as needed.

More: [Changing FAFSA® after submitting](#)

# Is it possible for a student to lose their financial aid?

Students can lose their aid eligibility for failing to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP), exhausting their financial aid limits, or by being convicted of possessing or selling illegal drugs while receiving federal aid.

More: [Can I lose financial aid?](#)

# What can financial aid be used towards?

Financial aid can be used towards a variety of college-related expenses. Some examples include room and board, tuition, books, and other supplies. Each financial award will specify what the aid can be used towards.

More: [What can financial aid be used for?](#)

# How do I get an FSA ID?

You can create an FSA ID on the Federal Student Aid [website](#). Beginning in 2022, all new users must set up one more more two-step verification methods (text, email, or authenticator app) during the “Create an Account” process. Once one or more two-step verification methods are set up, users will receive a secure code each time they log in to StudentAid.gov.

More: [How do I get an FSA ID?](#)

# How do I reset my FSA ID?

You can reset your FSA ID on the Federal Student Aid [website](#). If further assistance is required, you will need to contact the FSA at 800-433-3243.

More: [How do I reset my FSA ID?](#)

*For informational/Educational Purposes Only: The views expressed in this article may differ from other employees and departments of JPMorgan Chase & Co. Views and strategies described may not be appropriate for everyone and are not intended as specific advice/recommendation for any individual. Chase is not responsible for, and does not provide or endorse third-party products, services, or other content. You should carefully consider your needs and objectives before making any decisions and consult the*