FAFSA Checklists

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GSFC | Georgia Student Finance Commission

FAFSA Checklist

Create Your StudentAid.Gov Account

- Go to **studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch** to create your account.
- 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 StudentAid.Gov Account. Once you verify your email address, you can use it instead of your username to log in to complete your FAFSA.

Submit Your FAFSA

The FAFSA will be available October 1st, for attending college in the Fall of 2026. The earlier you submit it, the more opportunity you have to receive financial aid to help pay for your education after high school.

- Your Social Security Number.
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen).
- Your (parent's/contributor's) 2024 tax returns, W-2s and other records of money earned.
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable).
- You and your parent's/contributor's StudentAid.Gov Account to sign electronically.
- You and your parents/contributors must give consent before the FAFSA is processed.

1. Go to fafsa.gov and login using your StudentAid.Gov Account.

- 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/contributor must have a StudentAid.Gov Account in order to use the DDX (Direct Data Exchange) Tool.

3. Choose up to 20 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 DDX Tool can transfer your tax data to your application automatically.

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

- Make sure you receive a confirmation page indicating your FAFSA has been submitted or instructions of what is needed to complete your FAFSA. Print this page. Visit your dashboard at studentaid.gov to print a copy of your FAFSA Submission Summary, formally known as the Student Aid Report (SAR). Check the summary to make sure there are no mistakes. Be sure you and your parent/contributor have provided consent to avoid processing delays.
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After the FAFSA Checklist

1. Review your FAFSA Submission Summary.

- After submitting your FAFSA, you can visit your Student Aid Dashboard at studentaid.gov and print a copy of your FAFSA Submission Summary, formerly the Student Aid Report (SAR). The Summary is the information you provided on your FAFSA and indicates if you are 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 Student Aid Index (SAI)

- Your SAI may be located on your FAFSA Submission Summary.
- The need formula is: Cost of Attendance (COA) minus Student Aid Index (SAI) and other financial assistance equals eligibility for need-based financial aid.
- Student Aid Index (SAI) – Applicants who do not qualify for a maximum Pell Grant may still qualify if their calculated SAI is less than the maximum Pell Grant award for the award year. The applicant's Pell Grant award for full-time enrollment will equal the maximum Pell Grant for the award year minus SAI. The Pell Grant will be adjusted if the applicant enrolls less than full-time or if the applicant's Cost of Attendance (COA) is less than the calculated Pell Grant Award.
- Minimum Pell Grant – Applicants whose SAI is greater than the maximum Pell Grant award for the award year may still qualify for a Pell Grant, based on family size, adjusted gross income, and poverty guidelines.

3. Check your GAfutures Dashboard.

- Once GSFC has received verification of your FAFSA completion, it will appear on your GAfutures Dashboard. Sign in to your account and check your dashboard a week after you have completed the FAFSA to see that this is correct. If you do not see your FAFSA on your dashboard, please contact GSFC at gsfc@gsfc.org

4. Make corrections if needed.

- Once you review your FAFSA Submission Summary, 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 StudentAid.Gov Account(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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

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/contributors (if you're a dependent) used the DDX (Direct Data Exchange) tool, the Financial Aid Office will most likely not need your tax information. However, if the DDX tool was not used, a copy of your tax return or tax transcript will be needed. If you or your parents/contributors need to obtain tax transcripts, 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/contributors 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.

Being chosen for verification doesn't mean you're in trouble or did something wrong.

Verification is simply to confirm the numbers entered on the FAFSA match up with the original documentation.

These are some helpful hints to navigate through the verification process.

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

- Changes to your SAI 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 SAI could change if verification and the original FAFSA information are vastly different. This difference could either increase or decrease your SAI 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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