2025–26

FAFSA® Specifications Guide

Volume 1 – Summary of Changes

October 2024

U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid

Table of Contents

Acronyms

Table 1-1: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
CPS	Central Processing System
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DPA	Destination Point Administrator
EDE	electronic data exchange
eSAR	electronic *Student Aid Report*
FAA	financial aid administrator
FAFSA®	*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*
FPS	FAFSA Processing System
FSA	U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid
FT Number	The FT number (also referred to as the FTI mailbox, FTI-SAIG mailbox, and Destination Point mailbox) is the number assigned to your institution when enrolling for the Federal Tax Information–Student Aid Internet Gateway (FTI-SAIG). An FT number is the identifier for the electronic mailbox that receives ISIRs with FTI data. It is a five-character alphanumeric string preceded by "FT," such as FT00001.
FTI	federal tax information
FTIM	Federal Taxpayer Information Module
FUTURE Act	Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education

Acronyms (continued)

Acronym	Definition
IASG	Federal Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant
IDR	income-driven repayment
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
ISIR	*Institutional Student Information Record*
NSLDS®	National Student Loan Data System
PDF	portable document format
SAI	Student Aid Index
SAIG	Student Aid Internet Gateway
SAR	*Student Aid Report*
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSN	Social Security number
SULA	Subsidized Usage Limit Applies
TG Number	SAIG Mailbox Number; a TG Number is the identifier for an electronic mailbox. It is a five-digit alphanumeric number, preceded by "TG."
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Change History Table

The change history table below is updated each time the "Summary of Changes" volume of the *FAFSA Specifications Guide* is updated providing you with a cumulative list of revisions made to the document.

The footer is updated to include the revision date.

Table 1-2: Change History

Date	Page(s)	Changes/Notes
10/24	All	Volume 1 is released

Overview

What's in Volume 1, Summary of Changes?

In this volume of the *FAFSA® Specifications Guide*, we describe updates and enhancements to the FPS and to student and school online products. We recommend you review the information provided in this volume, as some enhancements will require you to modify your office procedures and system operations.

The following sections are included in this volume:

- **Major Changes** – This section provides information about major FAFSA® Processing System (FPS) changes for the 2025–26 processing cycle and covers the following topics:

    - FAFSA Systems Availability
    - Online FAFSA Parent Wizard
    - FAFSA Partner Portal URL
    - Renewal FAFSA Forms
    - Batch Corrections via Electronic Data Exchange (EDE)
    - User Documentation Changes

- **Summary of Changes to the 2025–26 Online FAFSA® Form and PDF FAFSA Form** – This section describes changes and enhancements for the 2025–26 online and PDF FAFSA forms and explains where to download the PDF FAFSA form.

- **Summary of Changes to the FAFSA Partner Portal** – This section provides information about FAFSA Partner Portal enrollment requirements and system changes.

- **Summary of Changes to the 2025–26 FPS** – This section provides information about changes to the U.S. Department of Education's FPS. The following areas are described:

    - Pseudo Social Security numbers (SSNs) and FSA IDs
    - Comment codes and text
    - Mailing addresses
    - ISIR test files

Unless otherwise noted, we are implementing the changes described in this guide in October 2024, at the start of the 2025–26 processing cycle.

We will describe enhancements implemented during the processing cycle in various future communications posted in the Knowledge Center at fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center, including electronic announcements and handbooks, manuals, and guides.

Major System Changes

Description of the Major FPS Changes

In this section, we describe other major changes to the application processing system and online products for 2025–26, including updates and enhancements resulting from annual and legislative changes. You can find policy and operational guidance in the [Handbooks, Manuals, or Guides section of the Knowledge Center](#).

FAFSA Systems Availability

In the [August 7, 2024 Electronic Announcement](#), Federal Student Aid announced the FAFSA Processing timeline. On October 1, 2024, we will release the 2025–26 FAFSA form and ISIR processing for testing with a limited set of students and institutions. During this testing phase, we will launch full functionality, including submission, processing, and corrections. As testing progresses, we will make the form available to an increasing number of participants, starting with hundreds and expanding to tens of thousands of applicants. This approach allows us to test and resolve issues before making the form available to all students and contributors. The application will be available to all applicants no later than December 1, 2024.

This approach was informed by conversations and feedback from thousands of students, institutions, and other stakeholders, who requested greater transparency and certainty in the development process and that the ability to submit, process, and correct FAFSAs be released at the same time. Throughout the testing period, Federal Student Aid will share regular updates to provide more transparency into our progress.

Online FAFSA Parent Wizard

The Standalone Parent Wizard will serve as a tool outside the FAFSA form that will guide dependent students through a series of dynamically displayed questions to help them identify their FAFSA parent contributor(s) before completing the FAFSA form. Note that this is not dependent on FPS services.

FAFSA Partner Portal URL

The FAFSA Partner Portal will have two separate websites with unique URLs for the 2024–25 ([fafsa.partnerportal.ed.gov](#)) and 2025–26 ([fafsa.partnerportal2526.ed.gov](#)) cycles. Each site will require FAAs to provide log in credentials separately. FAAs will only be able to make corrections to transaction data for the cycle particular to the site they are currently logged into and using.

Each website will provide a link that will take users to the other cycle's site.

Renewal FAFSA Forms

For 2025–26, prior year applicants will not have access to renewal applications. Renewal applications will tentatively resume during the 2026–27 application cycle.

Batch Corrections via EDE

We will release the functionality for institutions to submit EDE batch corrections during the 2025–26 processing cycle. Until this functionality is available, institutions can use the FAFSA Partner Portal to submit individual corrections.

User Documentation Changes

As part of the 2025–26 user documentation updates, we separated the *FAFSA Specifications Guide, Volume 4 – Record Layouts and Processing Codes* into two separate volumes, *Volume 4A – Record Layouts* and *Volume 4B – Processing Codes*.

Reminder: In addition to the ISIR that is provided in Volume 4A, we will continue to provide the ISIR file in an Excel format.

Summary of Changes to the 2025–26 Online and PDF FAFSA® Forms

General FAFSA® Form Changes

The online and PDF FAFSA forms have been updated for the following changes.

- **Signatures certification statement on Page 6** – We added new authorization information regarding electronically signing.

- **Question 6, Student Other Circumstances** – The 2025–26 online FAFSA form is updated to revise the homelessness question, within the Student Personal Circumstance section, from "Student Other Circumstances" to "Student Homelessness." The question on the PDF FAFSA form also renamed from "Student Other Circumstances" to "Student Homelessness."

Online FAFSA® Form Changes and Enhancements

This section describes changes and enhancements made to the online 2025–26 FAFSA form. Beyond the more general changes detailed in the Major Changes section and the General FAFSA Form Changes section, there are several more specific enhancements to the online FAFSA form as described below.

Parent Wizard

The Standalone Parent Wizard will serve as a tool outside the online 2025–26 FAFSA form that will guide dependent students through a series of dynamically displayed questions to help them identify their FAFSA parent contributor(s) before completing the FAFSA form. This will be available to both authenticated and unauthenticated users. Note that this is not dependent on FPS services as the information provided within this resource is not saved.

Role permissions

The following roles can start an online FAFSA form:

- Student (Applicant)

- Parent (for a dependent student)

- Preparer

For an online FAFSA form to be considered complete, the student and identified contributors must complete their respective sections. Once the FAFSA form is complete, any role or contributor can submit the form.

FAFSA Onboarding

When starting a new 2025–26 online FAFSA application or correction for the first time, the user will be guided through an onboarding process that walks the user through the major features of the form and what to expect when filling it out.

Integrated into StudentAid.gov

The 2025–26 online FAFSA form has integrated with the following features on StudentAid.gov:

- Dashboard

  - Users will see all the FAFSA forms that they have started or contributed to within their My Activity card.
  - Users will see the status of their FAFSA forms. Application statuses include:

    - Draft
    - In Progress
    - In Review
    - Action Required
    - Processed
    - Closed

- Status Center

  – Users who have been invited into a FAFSA form will see the invitation on Status Center and will be able to accept or decline their invitation.
  – Users can view the status of their FAFSA form and re-enter their form via their Details page.
  – Students can view their invited contributor(s) and selected colleges from their Details page.
  – Students can view their FAFSA Submission Summary through entry points via their Details page.

- Notification Center

  – The student can receive the following FAFSA notifications:

    ▪ Student invited (Alert)
    ▪ Contributor invited (Informational)
    ▪ Contributor signature provided (Informational)
    ▪ FAFSA processed successfully (Informational)
    ▪ Action Required – Make a Correction (Alert)

  – Contributors can receive the following FAFSA notification:

    ▪ Contributor invited (Alert)

- Account Settings

  – Within the FAFSA form, users can link to Account Settings to update their personal information.

PDF FAFSA® Form Changes and Enhancements

This section describes changes and enhancements made to the PDF 2025–26 FAFSA form. The 2025–26 PDF FAFSA form will be available later this year in the Application Processing Library of the Knowledge Center.

The FAFSA form continues to be available in both English and Spanish and comes in two versions: one for regular applicants and another for incarcerated applicants. (The incarcerated applicant version is identical to the regular version except for the P.O. Box return address and the header "Incarcerated Applicant Form," which appears in the center of the header of each page.)

The PDF FAFSA forms are 22 pages long: the first six pages consist of informational text, the next 14 pages make up the form itself (questions and answer fields), and the last two pages provide help text.

FAFSA Form Colors

The FAFSA form's cycle color (used in the informational and help text sections, and in the Student and Student Spouse role sections) rotates between blue and green. For example, the 2025–26 cycle color is green, and the 2026–27 cycle color will be blue.

Each role section is color-coded for ease of identification. The Student section uses the cycle color, and the Student Spouse section is a lighter shade of that same cycle color. The Parent section is orange, and the Parent Spouse or Partner section is a lighter shade of orange. The Preparer section is gray. The Parent, Parent Spouse or Partner, and Preparer role section colors do not change across cycle years.

Signature Certification Statement

On page 6 we added new authorization information regarding electronic signing. The new statement reads, "Additionally, by signing this application electronically using your FSA ID, you authorize the Department to disclose all information you provided on this application, as required under Section 483(a)(2)(D)(i) of the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, as amended, to the institutions identified herein, state higher education agencies (in the student's state of residence and the states in which the institutions identified herein are located), and designated scholarship organizations to assist with the application, award, and administration of aid from federal, state, or institutional financial aid programs and designated scholarship programs. Notwithstanding this authorization, the name of an institution the student selected to authorize such disclosure shall not be shared with any other institution."

Question 7, Student Unusual Circumstances

We updated the statement following the bullets to read, "If the student does not have a safe, stable place to live because of such circumstances, they may be considered a homeless youth and should review the answer to question 6 about being unaccompanied and homeless."

Question 8, Apply for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan Only Question

We revised the question to read, "Are the student's parents refusing to provide their information on this FAFSA form?". Also, in the helper text of this question, we added the statement, "This response must be 'No' for the student to be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant and most other types of federal aid." This addition was implemented in the online FAFSA form during the 2024–25 cycle.

Question 22, Student Assets, and Question 40, Parent Assets

In the helper text for the question "Current net worth of businesses and investment farms," we changed "or" to "and" so that it now reads, "Enter the net worth of the student's businesses and for-profit agricultural operations. Net worth is the value of the businesses and farms minus any debts owed against them."

Questions 24, 29, 41, and 46, Consent, Approval, and Signature

We added the word "consent" so that the statements now read, "If you do not provide consent and approval by filling in the circle below and providing your signature…" and "Consent and approval to transfer federal tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)."

Question 37, Parent Tax Filing Status, and Question 44, Parent Spouse or Partner Tax Filing Status

Under the "If the answer is 'No'" question, we updated the last option to read, "The parent did not and will not file any tax return because they did not earn any income or they were not required to file under the Internal Revenue Code."

Notes for 2023 Tax Return Information – Questions 20, 28, 38, and 45

At the end of the notes, we added the following statement to help applicants with these questions: "Most students leave this question blank because most scholarships and grants are not taxable."

PDF FAFSA® Form Availability

While most applicants file the FAFSA form online, a paper application (PDF) option is still available. The PDF FAFSA form contains 22 pages (14 application pages and eight instructional pages). The PDF form is a screen-fillable PDF document that can be printed, signed, and submitted to Federal Student Aid by postal mail for processing.

Important Notes about Mailing a FAFSA Form:

- If your school is mailing a hard-copy FAFSA form to Federal Student Aid for processing, please be sure to include all pages, even if the fields on a page are all blank. We must receive all pages of the application.

- Mailing the 2025–26 FAFSA form will require extra postage.

When the English and Spanish versions of the 2025–26 FAFSA form are available online for download, we will publish an electronic announcement with a link to these documents on the "Resources" page at StudentAid.gov/resources. You can also find the latest FAFSA form news and documents on the Financial Aid Tool Kit for Counselors.

Applicants and parents can request up to three copies of the printed PDF FAFSA form from the Federal Student Aid Information Center if they are unable to download the online PDF version and print it.

We Value Your Comments and Suggestions!

Federal Student Aid continually seeks new and innovative ways to make applying for federal student aid easier and more convenient for applicants and their parents. Some of the changes we made to the online and PDF FAFSA forms in the past, were the result of feedback and comments we received from you. As always, we appreciate your contributions to improving our systems and processes and encourage you to continue to share your suggestions with us. We are particularly interested in ways to continue simplifying the online and PDF FAFSA forms by eliminating unnecessary data collection.

We encourage you to watch the Knowledge Center in 2025, when we will post an announcement regarding the 2026–27 FAFSA forms.

Summary of Changes to the FAFSA Partner Portal

Enrollment Requirements

FAFSA Partner Portal

To ensure your school can take full advantage of 2025–26 enhancements at the beginning of the processing cycle, the Primary Destination Point Administrator (DPA) associated with the TG Number used to send and receive FAFSA form and ISIR correction data should verify your FAFSA Online Services enrollment status on the SAIG Enrollment website.

Note: If your school enrolled for 2024–25, your enrollment carries over to 2025–26.

Annually, your school's Primary DPA is required to actively confirm the FAFSA Online Services for the users associated with your school's TG Number. If you do not perform this confirmation when requested by Federal Student Aid, your staff's rights for the FAFSA Online Services could be revoked, resulting in a "Primary DPA Validation Needed" error message when staff members attempt to access the site. We encourage you to monitor the Knowledge Center regularly for electronic announcements regarding active confirmation requirements.

If your school is not enrolled for FAFSA Online Services, your school's Primary DPA can complete the enrollment for the FAFSA Online Services and selecting the 2025–26 FAFSA Partner Portal services for your school through the SAIG Enrollment website, located at fsawebenroll.ed.gov.

The Primary DPA must print a Federal Student Aid User of Electronic Services Statement to be signed by new users of the FAFSA Online Services. While you are not required to mail this statement to Federal Student Aid's Participation Management system, you must keep signed copies at your school in accordance with *Title IV* retention requirements.

Note: The FAFSA Partner Portal will have two separate websites with unique URLs for the 2024–25 (fafsa.partnerportal.ed.gov) and 2025–26 (fafsa.partnerportal2526.ed.gov) cycles. Each site will require FAAs to provide log in credentials separately. FAAs will only be able to make corrections to transaction data for the cycle particular to the site they are currently logged into and using. Each website will provide a link that will take users to the other cycle's site.

All FAFSA Partner Portal users must have an FSA ID and password. Any FAFSA Partner Portal user at your school who does not have an FSA ID can acquire one by completing the following steps:

1. Go to the SAIG Enrollment site and click the "FSA User ID Registration" link on the left side of the home page.

2. Enter the identifying information requested and click "Submit."

3. Follow the remaining steps, which include establishing a password and setting up challenge questions.

During the FSA User ID registration process, the user must verify the email address on the SAIG Enrollment website. We will use this email address to send the FSA ID.

FAFSA Partner Portal

In this section, we describe the 2025–26 FAFSA Partner Portal. These features are available at system startup unless noted otherwise.

- FAFSA Partner Portal hyperlinks
- FAFSA Partner Portal features
- Signature certification statement
- FPS Help Desk

FAFSA Partner Portal hyperlinks

As previously mentioned, the FAFSA Partner Portal will have two separate websites with unique URLs for the 2024–25 (fafsa.partnerportal.ed.gov) and 2025–26 (fafsa.partnerportal2526.ed.gov) cycles. Each site will require FAAs to provide log in credentials separately. FAAs will only be able to make corrections to transaction data for the cycle particular to the site they are currently logged into and using. Each website will provide a link that will take users to the other cycle's site.

FAFSA Partner Portal features

Table 1-3 lists and describes the features currently available to FAAs in the FAFSA Partner Portal, as well as those that will be available in future cycles.

Table 1-3: FAFSA Partner Portal Features

Feature	Description	Availability
Applicant View	The FAFSA Partner Portal Applicant View displays after the FAA executes a search for an applicant with completed transaction results. Applicant View provides the FAA with a full list of the student's transactions, allowing the FAA to select and review any transaction.	2024–25 Forward
Transaction Selector	The Transaction Selector is a section of the Applicant View page. It displays the full list of transactions (up to 31) for the selected applicant. The FAA can select a transaction to review its details.	2024–25 Forward
Transaction Review	Transaction Review displays the details of a transaction beneath the Transaction Selector when a single transaction has been selected to view.	2024–25 Forward
Transaction Corrections	Transaction Correction is displayed beneath the Transaction Selector when a transaction has been selected to correct from the Transaction Selector or from the Make Corrections button. It allows the FAA to correct any information in a given transaction, provided that information is visible to the FAA. See the subsection below this table for more details on applicant information unavailable to FAAs in the FAFSA Partner Portal.	2024–25 Forward
ISIR Request	ISIR Request will allow FAA users to request ISIR records from the Award Eligibility Determination system datamart. The functionality will be similar to the same feature that was used in the now discontinued *FAA Access to CPS Online*, but it will be more user-friendly.	Future Release

Feature	Description	Availability
Print FAFSA Submission Summary	FAAs will have the ability to print the FAFSA Submission Summary associated with the transaction they've selected to view in Transaction Review. See the subsection below this table for details on applicant information unavailable to FAAs on the printed FAFSA Submission Summary.	Future Release
Transaction Compare	FAAs will be able to select up to four student transactions from the Transaction Selector and compare them.	Future Release
Verification of Identity	The FAFSA Partner Portal will provide FAAs with a list of the students who listed the FAAs' respective schools on their FAFSA applications and who were selected for either V4 (Custom Verification) or V5 (Aggregate Verification) identity verification. In the Verification of Identity function, FAAs will be able to filter the list by Name or SSN. FAAs will also be able to sort the records alphabetically, in ascending or descending order. In addition, they will be able to filter the list to display all, display only applicants for whom results **have not** been provided, or display only applicants for whom results **have** been provided.	Future Release
Help	The FAFSA Partner Portal will feature a help text interface that will provide an easy and intuitive way for FAAs to access help topics.	Future Release

Applicant information unavailable to FAAs in the FAFSA Partner Portal

Reminder: FAAs do not have access to Federal Tax Information (FTI) submitted by applicants with their FAFSA form. In addition, FAAs cannot view a student's FAFSA form answers regarding race, ethnicity, sex, or gender. This applies to information viewed in the FAFSA Partner Portal and on the printed FAFSA Submission Summary (available in a future release).

Signature certification statement

We added new language to the authorization information a student must agree to when signing a new signature page to consent to and certify corrections to their FAFSA information. The new statement reads, "Additionally, by signing this application, you authorize the Department to disclose all information you provided on this application, as required under Section 483(a)(2)(D)(i) of the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, as amended, to the institutions identified herein, state higher education agencies (in the student's state of residence and the states in which the institutions identified herein are located), and designated scholarship organizations to assist with the application, award, and administration of aid from federal, state, or institutional financial aid programs and designated scholarship programs. Notwithstanding this authorization, the name of an institution the student selected to authorize such disclosure shall not be shared with any other institution."

FPS Help Desk

The FPS Help Desk email is support@fps.ed.gov and the phone number is 1-800-330-5947.

Summary of Changes to the 2025–26 FPS

Overview

This section describes changes to the FPS. There were no significant changes to the agency matches, FPS edits, outputs sent to the students or the comment codes and text. There were changes to the following components of the FPS:

- Pseudo-SSNs and FSA IDs
- Comment Codes and text
- Mailing Addresses
- ISIR Test Files

Pseudo-SSNs and FSA IDs

Pseudo-SSNs are for applicants who do not have an SSN and whose state of legal residence is one of the freely associated states. Pseudo-SSNs are assigned to students only. If an applicant has previously been issued a 666 or 000 pseudo-SSN, they should continue to use it. The pseudo-SSN will be added to their FSA ID, so that pseudo-SSN value will remain the same for upcoming cycles. When the FPS assigns an applicant a pseudo-SSN in 2025–26, it will begin with "000-26."

Reminders:

- A student's spouse or their parent will not need a pseudo-SSN and will not be issued a pseudo-SSN; on the online FAFSA form, the SSN field for the student spouse or parent will be disabled, and in the PDF they will continue to enter all zeros for their SSN. However, if a student with a pseudo-SSN is a contributor on a different FAFSA form, their pseudo-SSN will be populated into their corresponding contributor SSN field.

- Each contributor for an online FAFSA form must have an FSA ID to provide information. Applicants and contributors who do not have an SSN can now request an FSA ID. Their information will be sent through a new matching process.

Comment Codes and Text

Comments appear on the hard-copy FAFSA Submission Summary that we mail to applicants and on the electronic FAFSA Submission Summary that applicants view online. For a full listing of the 2025–26 comment numbers, comment text, and comment resolutions, see the *FAFSA Specifications Guide, Volume 7 – Comment Codes*. Changes to the comment text and actions can be identified in the "Notes" column of the 2025–26 Comment Text table.

Mailing Addresses

All regular FAFSA forms and FAFSA Submission Summaries for 2025–26 will be sent to one mailbox number, regardless of the language of the form. Likewise, all incarcerated FAFSA forms and FAFSA Submission Summaries, regardless of language, will be sent to one mailbox.

Table 1-4: FAFSA Form Mailing Addresses

Type of Form	Address
Regular Applicants FAFSA Applications (Paper) and FAFSA Submission Summary English and Spanish	Federal Student Aid Programs P.O. Box 70208 London, KY 40742-0208
Incarcerated Applicants FAFSA Applications (Paper) and FAFSA Submission Summary English and Spanish	Federal Student Aid Programs P.O. Box 70209 London, KY 40742-0209
COPPA Applicants FAFSA Applications (Paper) and FAFSA Submission Summary English and Spanish	Federal Student Aid Programs Attn: COPPA Process 25 Air Park Drive London, KY 40744-8236

ISIR Test Files

The 2025–26 Test system includes simulated ISIR data that you can download for testing with your student aid system. Testing is optional; the Department of Education does not require it. The test ISIR data is a tool for you to use to help ensure that your processing system is prepared for the ISIR data produced by the FPS. Federal Student aid posted the [September 17, 2024 electronic announcement](#) stating the ISIR test file was available. For additional testing information, see the *FAFSA Specifications Guide, Volume 9 – Testing and Web Demo System*.