
Process Guide for
Student Web Application Products

PIN Web Site
FAFSA on the Web Site

2007-2008

U.S. Department of Education



F E D E R A L
S T U D E N T A I D

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Overview

Preface

The *Student Web Application Products Process Guide* is designed to provide financial aid administrators (FAAs) with detailed information about changes we are making to Federal Student Aid's 2007-2008 Web application products for students: FAFSA on the Web and the PIN Web site.

Using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on the Web site at fafsa.ed.gov, students can apply for aid using FAFSA on the Web or Spanish FAFSA on the Web, or reapply for aid using Renewal FAFSA on the Web or Spanish Renewal FAFSA on the Web. In addition, students can also check the status of their financial aid applications and use their PINs to view their Student Aid Report (SAR) information, correct their application data, and electronically sign their applications. Parents can use their PINs to sign their children's financial aid applications electronically as well.

From the PIN Web site at pin.ed.gov, a user can:

- apply for a PIN,
- request that a PIN be re-sent,
- change his or her PIN,
- select his or her own personalized PIN,
- disable his or her PIN,
- update his or her mailing and e-mail address in the PIN database, and
- select his or her challenge question and provide a challenge response.

Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005

On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (the HERA), Pub. L. 109-171. The HERA resulted in numerous operational changes to Federal Student Aid processes and procedures, many of which were implemented during the 2006-2007 year. The major provisions of the HERA are described in [Dear Colleague Letter GEN-06-05](#) and in updated 2006-2007 documentation posted to the IFAP (ifap.ed.gov) and FSAdownload (fsadownload.ed.gov) Web sites.

Federal Student Aid continues to implement changes and enhancements related to the HERA for the 2007-2008 processing cycle. Some HERA enhancements implemented in 2006-2007 were specific to that processing year, while other changes were rolled over and will continue into the 2007-2008 processing year.

For general HERA information, see the "[Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 \(HERA\) Information](#)" link on the home page of the IFAP Web site at ifap.ed.gov.

What's New for 2007-2008?

Suggestions from the Financial Aid Community

Federal Student Aid is continually looking for new and innovative ways to make applying for financial aid over the Web easier and more convenient for students and their families. We are making numerous enhancements to our student Web application products for 2007-2008, as detailed in this process guide. You, your colleagues, and student aid applicants suggested many of these changes.

If you have ideas for additional enhancements, let us know by contacting the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800/4-FED-AID (800/433-3243), TDD/TTY 800/730-8913, or by sending an e-mail to fafsaweb@pearson.com.

Demonstration Site

The FAFSA on the Web demonstration site can be used as a training tool for students, parents, and your financial aid staff. The demonstration Web site is available for use at fafsademo.test.ed.gov and will be updated for 2007-2008 by the beginning of December 2006.

User Name: eddemo

Password: fafsatest

Note: The user name and password fields are case-sensitive.

The demonstration Web site offers most of the features of the production Web sites for FAFSA on the Web and FAA Access to CPS Online.

Notes:

- Never use actual personal identifying information on the demonstration site.
- The Central Processing System (CPS) does not process demonstration site test data. An estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is *not* calculated after an application is submitted on the demonstration site as it is on the production site. The EFC value is always 99999 for any test case on the demonstration site.
- The site provides preloaded test data and FAA login information.
- Saved data and submitted data are cleared from the database every evening.
- Printed signature pages include a “test sample” watermark and should not be mailed to the processor. The CPS does not accept or process sample signature pages.

PIN Web Site Changes and Enhancements

For the 2007-2008 processing cycle, we made several enhancements to the PIN Web site, as described below:

- **Enhanced “Look and Feel” for Federal Student Aid Web Sites** – We updated the “common look and feel” of the PIN Web site to enhance user navigation and to more clearly indicate to users that they are viewing an official Federal Student Aid site. These changes, which include modifications to the color scheme, toolbar options, and labels of various Web pages, will eventually be applied to all Federal Student Aid Web sites.
- **PIN Name Change** – The U.S. Department of Education PIN is now renamed the Federal Student Aid PIN. The name change was made because the PIN is used specifically for Federal Student Aid and not in all areas of the U.S. Department of Education.
- **New Return E-mail Address** – Because some users do not associate the current return e-mail address with Federal Student Aid, we have changed the PIN e-mail address from cpsnotify@cpsemail.ed.gov to FederalStudentAidPIN@cpsemail.ed.gov.
- **Double Entry of the Social Security Number** – To help ensure the information we send to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for matching purposes is accurate, we now require the user to enter his or her Social Security Number (SSN) twice on new PIN applications. This should reduce the number of instances where the SSN is entered incorrectly, which results in a non-match with the SSA.
- **PINs Disabled After 18 Months of Inactivity** – PINs are now permanently disabled after 18 months of inactivity. We began disabling PINs in July 2006. When a user attempts to use an expired PIN, the following text displays:

“Our records show that your PIN has been inactive for 18 consecutive months. Your PIN was deactivated to protect you from unauthorized use of your PIN. To reestablish your PIN, you will need to reapply for a PIN. To reapply for a PIN, go to the PIN home page and select Apply for a PIN. To exit, select PIN HOME.”

FAFSA on the Web Changes and Enhancements

For the 2007-2008 processing cycle, we made several enhancements to the FAFSA on the Web site, as described below.

FAFSA on the Web General Enhancements

We made the following enhancement to the FAFSA on the Web site:

- **Enhanced “Look and Feel” for Federal Student Aid Web Sites** – As with the PIN Web site, we updated the “common look and feel” of the FAFSA on the Web site to enhance user navigation and to more clearly indicate to users that they are viewing an official Federal Student Aid site. These changes, which include modifications to the color scheme, toolbar options, and labels of various Web pages, will eventually be applied to all Federal Student Aid Web sites.

Filling Out a FAFSA

We made the following enhancements to the Filling Out a FAFSA section:

- **Double Entry of the Social Security Number** – To help ensure the information we send to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for matching purposes is correct, we now require each user to enter his or her Social Security Number (SSN) twice on FAFSA on the Web applications. This should reduce the number of instances where the SSN is entered incorrectly, which results in a non-match with the SSA.
- **Moved the Enrollment Status Question** – We received comments indicating that the enrollment status question was either being overlooked or did not seem to be in the right location. To resolve these issues, we moved the enrollment status question, “At the start of the 2007-2008 school year, what is the student’s expected enrollment status (question 25)?,” to follow the grade level question.
- **Reordered FAFSA on the Web Questions** – To reduce confusion for students and parents filling out the FAFSA on the Web application, we have rearranged the order of the questions. Previously, the parent questions and student financial questions (for dependent students) were split up due to skip logic. (Skip logic enables the user to bypass questions that are not applicable to the student.) We now ask all the parent questions in one section, followed by the student financial questions. The new order groups the parent and student financial questions together while still allowing for skip logic for students who are eligible for the automatic zero EFC calculation. Listed are the new FAFSA on the Web sections:

- General student questions (demographic data)
 - Student status questions (dependency questions)
 - Parent questions (if applicable)
 - Student financial questions
 - School and housing codes
- **Modified the Question Numbering for the School and Housing Codes** – The Web application still accommodates six school and six housing codes on a single transaction even though the paper application only has space for four school and housing codes. To accommodate the different number of choices on the paper application and on the Web, the field number format for the school and housing codes was revised. This year all school and housing codes are question 97 and are differentiated by “a,” “b,” “c,” etc. Fields 97i through 97l only appear on the Web.
 - **Combined the Interested in Student Loans and Work-Study Questions** – To make space on the paper FAFSA, the Interested in Student Loans and the Interested in Work-Study questions were combined into one question that reads “Is the student interested in Work-Study or Student Loans (question 26)?” Applicants can select one of five options:
 - Work-study
 - Student Loans
 - Both
 - None
 - Don’t Know

Because the two questions are now combined into one, the answer to this question is not pre-filled on the 2007-2008 renewal application.

- **Added an Active Duty Dependency Question** – We added a new dependency question to identify applicants serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training. This change went into affect during the 2006-2007 award year, but the new question was not added to the 2006-2007 FAFSA. Financial aid offices were instructed to perform a dependency override on the student’s record in 2006-2007 if the student met the new criteria to be considered independent. For 2007-2008, you should not use a dependency override; instead, the student should answer this question appropriately.

- **Added Five New Means-Tested Federal Benefit Program Questions for Both the Student and Parents** – Five new means-tested federal benefit program questions were added for both students and parents. FAFSA on the Web now asks the parent or student if they or anybody else in the household, as defined on the FAFSA, received benefits from any of five means-tested federal benefit programs in 2006. A parent/student who receives such a benefit and has an income at a certain level may qualify for a simplified EFC calculation or an automatic zero EFC calculation. The five means-tested benefit programs are listed below:
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Food Stamps
 - Free or Reduced Price Lunch
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- **Label Change** – Some users believed they were submitting their applications when they clicked the Run Final Check button. To minimize confusion, we renamed the Run Final Check button to Check for Errors throughout the FAFSA on the Web site pages.
- **New or Enhanced Warning Edits for 2007-2008** – Listed below are the changes to the Web warning edits for the 2007-2008 cycle. Warning edits on the Web are classified as either verifiable edits or “soft” edits. A verifiable edit can be bypassed if the information is verified by the student, and the resulting transaction will not display the corresponding comment code or highlight flag(s). A “soft” edit allows the student to bypass the edit if the information is verified as correct, but the resulting transaction will display the comment code and highlight flag(s).
 - **Verifiable Warning Edits** – We added new verifiable warning edits to the FAFSA on the Web forms when the record meets the following conditions:
 - **Parents’ AGI Equal to the Student’s AGI** – The student’s Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is equal to the parents’ AGI. This warning edit already existed at the CPS for 2006-2007, and transactions that met these conditions displayed a comment directing the student to double check these fields. However, this edit is now verifiable online, so Web filers can suppress the comment code by verifying that the data entered is correct.
 - **Dependent Student’s Value for Worksheet A is Equal to the Parents’ Value for Worksheet A** – The dependent student’s total from Worksheet A is equal to the total from the parents’ Worksheet A.
 - **Dependent Student’s AGI is Equal to the Value for Worksheet A** – The dependent student’s AGI is equal to the total from Worksheet A and the values are both positive.

- **Soft Warning Edits** – When a record meets the following conditions, a soft warning edit is flagged and the applicant is returned to the questions to verify the data entered:

- The number of family members for an independent student is equal to two, the student’s marital status is married, and the student answered Yes to one of the following questions:
 - Do you have children who receive more than half of their support from you?
 - Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2007?

This warning edit already existed at the CPS for 2006-2007, however this edit is now a soft warning edit on the Web. In 2006-2007, a comment code was added to the student’s SAR directing the student to double check these fields.

- The number of family members for an independent student is greater than two, the student’s marital status is married, and the student answered No to both of the following questions:
 - Do you have children who receive more than half of their support from you?
 - Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2007?

This warning edit already existed at the CPS for 2006-2007, however this edit is now a soft warning edit on the Web. In 2006-2007, a comment code was added to the student’s SAR directing the student to double check these fields.

- The student’s response to the federal SSI benefits question equals Yes, the total from Worksheet A is zero or blank, and the automatic zero EFC conditions are not met. The edit also occurs if the parents’ response to the federal SSI benefits question equals Yes, the total from the parents’ Worksheet A is zero or blank, and the automatic zero EFC conditions are not met.
- The student’s response to the federal TANF benefits question equals Yes, the total from Worksheet A is zero or blank, and the automatic zero EFC conditions are not met. The edit also occurs if the parents’ response to the federal TANF benefits question equals Yes, the total from the parents’ Worksheet A is zero or blank, and the automatic zero EFC conditions are not met.
- The student’s tax return status is will not file, and the income and spouse’s income (depending on the marital status) is over the minimum amount required for filing a tax return. The minimum amount required for filing a tax return is different depending on the student’s marital status and the number of family members in the student’s household.

- The parents' tax return status is will not file, and the father's income and/or mother's income (depending on the marital status) is over the minimum amount required for filing a tax return. The minimum amount required for filing a tax return is different depending on whether the parents are married, single, divorced, or widowed.
- **HERA Updates to FAFSA on the Web** – We removed the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) standalone and ACG-only correction functionality from the FAFSA on the Web site. These features were introduced during the 2006-2007 school year to accommodate the mid-cycle implementation of the HERA. They will not be necessary for 2007-2008 since users will answer the questions when they complete the original application or a correction. After the student completes the FAFSA on the Web, the system will determine if he or she is eligible to fill out the ACG information. The option to answer the ACG questions will be presented to the student if he or she is:
 - a U.S Citizen
 - eligible for a Federal Pell Grant
 - a first or second year undergraduate student
 - 21 years of age or younger.

The last two criteria (first or second year undergraduate student and 21 years of age or younger) are new for 2007-2008. These additional criteria were added to improve the ACG self-identification process for students by narrowing the criteria for allowing a student to respond to the ACG questions. This will increase the likelihood that we will provide ACG data to schools for students who meet the basic ACG eligibility requirements.

Students can continue to view their answers to the ACG questions on FAFSA on the Web, in the Student Access section.

For a complete overview of the ACG self-identification process for 2007-2008, refer to the *2007-2008 Summary of Changes for the Application Processing System*, posted to the IFAP (ifap.ed.gov) and FSAdownload (fsadownload.ed.gov) Web sites.

FAFSA Follow-up

We made the following enhancements to the FAFSA Follow-up section:

- **New Return E-mail Address** – Because some users do not associate the current return e-mail addresses used by Federal Student Aid with FAFSA e-mail notifications, we have changed the address from cpsnotify@cpsemail.ed.gov to FederalStudentAidFAFSA@cpsemail.ed.gov.
- **New Add or Delete a School Code Feature** – We added a new correction function to the FAFSA on the Web site for students who only need to add or modify a school code. The “Add or Delete a School Code” functionality is accessible from the third column of the FAFSA on the Web home page under the FAFSA Follow-up section, below “Make Corrections to a Processed FAFSA.” This option allows students to add or modify a school code without having to go through the correction process.
- **Preparer’s Social Security Number (SSN) Masked on Student Access and the eSAR** – When the Preparer’s SSN is present on an application, Student Access and the eSAR display “REPORTED” for the value. The print document masks the first five digits of a preparer’s SSN, similar to how the parent’s SSN currently displays.
- **Expanded Text for Required Fields Left Blank** – “(BLANK) DATA IS REQUIRED” displays in Student Access and on the eSAR, when an applicant left a required field blank. If the field is not required, the field remains blank and does not contain any text.
- **Block Addition of School Codes on Transactions Resulting from FAA Adjustments (Professional Judgments)** – If an applicant selects a transaction that contains an FAA Adjustment flag and attempts to add another school, the system informs the applicant that an FAA Adjustment was performed on the transaction and no more schools can be added to the transaction. However, the student can make other corrections to the transaction. This change prevents schools from viewing or receiving transactions that contain a professional judgment by another school.
- **Additional Text Added to Corrections on the Web End of Entry Edits**– Additional end of entry edit text was added to the Corrections on the Web site. This text displays when an end of entry edit condition is met. The text is large, bold, and red and explains that the user must return to the shopping cart and select the Next button to submit the correction.

Getting Help

How Do I Get Help?

If you have any questions regarding this guide or the 2007-2008 FAFSA on the Web site and the PIN Web site in general, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center for assistance by calling 800/4-FED-AID (800/433-3243), TDD/TTY 800/730-8913, or by sending an e-mail to fafsaweb@pearson.com.