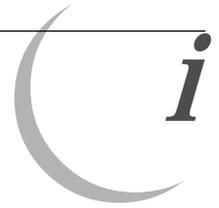# Introduction

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*This publication is intended for financial aid administrators and counselors who help students begin the student aid process—filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, verifying information, and making corrections and other changes to the information reported on the FAFSA.*

## CHANGES FOR 2003-2004

There are some changes regarding the application processing system that pertain to this guide:

- Paper FAFSAs signed before January 1, 2003 will no longer be returned.  Instead, a reject SAR will be sent to the student asking her to date and re-sign the SAR and submit it for processing.
- The verification tracking flag on the ISIR will now consist only of numbers (the A and B codes are gone), and the *higher* the number, the greater the chance that the student has made significant errors on the application.
- A field for the student's e-mail address has been added to the paper FAFSA as question 99.
- There is a new parent marital status item on the FAFSA— question 60.
- FAFSA Express is no longer available.

Pell recipients now have 120 days (instead of 90) after their last day of enrollment—but not later than September 2, 2004—in which to submit verification documents and in which the school must have received a valid output document.

Due to changes in the tax law, new guidance regarding qualified tuition programs (QTPs) has been given.  See p. 21.

We have added clarifying comments on dependency overrides for students who are veterans according to FSA standards but not according to the VA's standards.  See "Not a veteran" on p. 26.

We have added guidance on dependency overrides to include some of the contents of Dear Colleague Letter GEN-03-07.  The added text discusses documentation and the need for a school to justify an override for a student each year.  See p. 28.

We have added the Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN) as a valid identifying number for tax preparers who helped complete tax forms that are used for verification.

At the behest of schools, the "S" response has been added back to the list of verification status codes.  It is used for some of the students that the blank response covered last year.

Note that throughout the Handbook institutions of higher (postsecondary) education are referred to simply as colleges. "Parents" in this volume refers to the parents of dependent students, and "you" refers to the primary audience of the Handbook—financial aid administrators at colleges.

We appreciate any comments that you have regarding the Application/Verification Guide as well as all the volumes of the Federal Student Aid Handbook.  We do add comments and clarifications based on your suggestions, so please contact us at fsaschoolspubs@ed.gov to let us know how to improve the Handbook so that it is always clear and authoritative.