

Mapping Your Future

Q & A from 2021-22 FAFSA Training

September 2020

Mapping Your Future offers this Q & A document for information purposes only and as a public service. Every situation is different and the statutes are complex. If you are uncertain about your rights and responsibilities, contact Mapping Your Future at feedback@mappingyourfuture.org or contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-4-FEDAID. The answers included in this document are not official guidance, but constructed to the best of the ability of the presenter and the Mapping Your Future staff.

Question	Answer
After the FAFSA	
1. How do colleges use the expected family contribution (EFC) to award institutional aid?	<p>Some colleges use the EFC to determine eligibility for institutional aid. A student's financial need is calculated using the formula Cost of Attendance – EFC. Schools may award institutional aid before awarding federal financial aid; others award institutional aid only if student having need remaining after being awarded federal aid.</p> <p>Some schools use a different formula, institutional methodology (IM) to award institutional aid. Use of IM usually requires students to submit an additional application such as the College Board Profile.</p>
Dependency Information	
2. If a returning student is an unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY), should he or she contact the financial aid office about receiving a determination of UHY status for the upcoming award year? Does a determination “roll-over” from one award year to another?	A UHY must have a determination of his or her status every year. Continuing students should contact the financial aid office at their college about the determination process.
3. If a UHY has a determination of his or her status from a school district liaison, is it legal for a financial aid administrator to question the student or select him or her for verification?	Dependency status is not a data element subject to verification for the 2021-22 award year. That being said, if a financial aid administrator has reason to believe that information reported on the FAFSA is incorrect, he or she should select the application for verification.
4. Would a student be considered a UHY if he or she had been living with a non-relative who doesn't have legal custody for more than year with no parental contact?	If the student has fixed, regular, and adequate housing he or she is not homeless. If the student hasn't had contact with his or her parents, the student should contact the financial aid office about a dependency status appeal.

Question	Answer
5. What is the benefit of a student receiving a determination of UHY status?	<p>UHY meet the definition of an independent student. Their eligibility for financial aid is determined without parental information.</p> <p>To receive a determination of UHY status, students can't be in the physical custody of a parent.</p>
6. I have a student whose parents are "missing", as in not involved. The student lives with grandparents, who are not his or her legal guardians. Parents will not provide any support and are not involved in student's life. Whose tax return is used? How is this handled?	<p>Since the student's grandparents have not legally adopted the student, they are not the student's parents for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) purposes. If the student is not in contact with his or her parents, the student should contact the financial aid office about processing a dependency status appeal.</p>
Financial Information	
7. The parents of a dependent student have multiple 529 plans for multiple children. Should the 529 plans be reported on the FAFSA?	<p>Yes; 529 plans are reported on the FAFSA as an asset of the owner since beneficiaries may change. If the owner of a 529 plan is a dependent student, the plan is reported as an asset of the parent.</p>
8. If the parents of a dependent student are divorced, how is the 529 plan is reported on the FAFSA?	<p>529 plans are the asset of the owner. If the parent of record for the FAFSA is not the owner, he or she should not report the 529 plan as an asset unless the owner is the student.</p>
9. May a family submit the FAFSA for the 2021-22 award year without having filed 2019 tax returns?	<p>Yes; applicants may indicate on the FAFSA that they have not filed yet filed a 2019 federal tax return and provide estimated information. If the applicant is selected for verification, the family may be asked to provide proof of non-filing and as well as an approved filing extension from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).</p>
10. What is the asset threshold amount for the parents of dependent students?	<p>It varies based on the age of the older parent and takes into account estimates of what the parent should have saved to cover certain expenses.</p>
11. Will there be a guide on 2019 tax information since it is different from 2018?	<p>It is likely that the Department of Education (ED) and/or the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) will publish resources on 2019 tax forms and information.</p>

Question	Answer
12. How should families indicate losses or changes in income due to the pandemic on the FAFSA?	Families must complete the 2021-22 FAFSA using 2019 tax information. If a family has experienced a change in income or other losses due to the pandemic, it should contact the financial aid office about using professional judgment to update the information used to calculate the student's eligibility for aid.
General	
13. Do applicants have to change their FSA ID password every 18 months?	No; FSA ID passwords do not expire.
14. Do you know why the FAFSA ask for driver's license information?	This information may be needed to process certain types of financial aid. However, providing the information on the FAFSA is optional.
15. A student indicates on the FAFSA that he or she will not have a first bachelor's degree before the start of the 2021-22 award year. However, the student does earn a first bachelor's degree before the start of the academic year. Should he or she update the FAFSA?	Yes; if the student does earn a first bachelor's degree before the 2021-22 award year begins he or she should update the FAFSA. ED uses this question to determine whether or not a student is eligible for a Federal Pell Grant.
16. If a student is unsure whether he or she wants to go to a two-year or four-year college, can the student have application information sent to both types of schools?	Yes, a student may have the information from his or her FAFSA sent to both two-year and four-year schools.
17. Is the Student Aid Report (SAR) emailed to both the student and the parent?	No; the SAR is only emailed to the student.
18. Is there a Spanish version of the PDF FAFSA to order or print?	Yes; applicants may download a Spanish version of the FAFSA from https://studentaid.gov/resources . Applicants may also request a copy of the Spanish version of the FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1.800.433.3243.
19. Will this webinar be recorded?	The webinar recording is available at https://mappingyourfuture.org/services/webinar/archive.cfm .
Parental Information	
20. How do undocumented parents sign the FAFSA?	Since undocumented parents don't have Social Security Numbers, they cannot create a FSA ID to sign the application electronically. They will need to print out the signature page, sign it, and mail it to the FAFSA processor.
21. The FAFSA instructs parents without Social Security Numbers to enter all zeroes for Questions 60 and 64. The	Parents without Social Security Number should enter all zeroes for Questions 60 and 64 for the 2021-22 processing cycle. It may be necessary

Question	Answer
<p>FAFSA is often rejected when parents do so. Will this change for 2021-22?</p>	<p>to enter the data twice to confirm the parents don't have Social Security Numbers.</p>
<p>22. We have a high school student who lives with his aunt and his parents are not involved. Whose tax form should he use to complete the FAFSA? Who does he contact for support?</p>	<p>The student should indicate on the FAFSA that he is unable to provide parental information. This response will add a special circumstance flag to the ISIR. The financial aid administrator will follow up with the student to determine the best course of action, which likely will be a dependency status appeal.</p> <p>If the student already knows what school he will attend, he should contact the financial aid office about submitting a dependency status appeal. If approved, the financial aid office can submit an override when the student completes the FAFSA.</p>
Student Information	
<p>23. I have a student currently taking dual-enrollment classes at a community college and is planning on graduating from high school in June of next year. How should she answer the question about college grade level for 2021-22?</p>	<p>The FAFSA instructions for this question provide the following information: Select the college grade level you will be in from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. If you're currently a senior in high school or will be a first-time college student, select "Never attended college/1st yr."</p>