

# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST

Remember: Keep copies of everything. If you're sending applications or other important documents by mail, you might want to spend a little extra money and send them return receipt requested. This will let you know when the school received the documents. Some of the items on this list might not apply to every school. For example, few public colleges require an entrance essay; many private colleges do. You should check to make sure that people writing recommendations or sending transcripts do so by the deadline. And you shouldn't wait until the deadline to send something in — send it in early just in case something goes wrong.

Item	Deadline	Sent/Taken
<input type="checkbox"/> Admissions application	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> High school transcript	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters of recommendation	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrance essay	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Admissions test		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACT	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> SAT	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fees and deposits		
<input type="checkbox"/> Application	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	_____	_____

# FINANCIAL AID CHECKLIST

Remember: Keep copies of everything. When you file your FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov), be sure to print out a hard copy for your records. If you're applying for scholarships and grants administered by the school that require a separate application, you should send the application return receipt requested. And, as always, don't wait until the last minute — things can go wrong. Computers crash, and mail occasionally gets lost. If you file early and keep track of what you've been doing, you have time to fix things.

Item	Deadline	Sent
<input type="checkbox"/> FAFSA	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> School financial aid form	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Local scholarships		
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____

# SENIOR CALENDAR

## August/September

- Ask colleges you're interested in to send you admissions information.
- If you're applying for Early Decision, start filling out the forms to meet the college's deadline.
- If you haven't taken the ACT/SAT or if you think you can do better, register. See page 7 for dates.
- Get with your counselor to find out about the financial aid sources available to you. Use KHEAA–Alabama's *Affording Higher Education*.
- Ask your parents to get their tax return information ready so you can submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1

## October/November

- Meet with college admissions representatives at college fairs or when they visit your school.
- Attend a financial aid seminar if your school offers one. Read page 21 about scams first.
- If you haven't picked a college yet, narrow your list by visiting schools and talking with students. You should probably talk with your parents too.
- If you're going Early Decision, most schools want the applications submitted about now.
- If you're going through the regular admissions process, it's time to ask teachers to write recommendations and to polish your admissions essay if you have to write one.
- Check with each school's financial aid office to see what financial aid forms they require in addition to the FAFSA.

## December/January

- Make sure your applications were received on time. See previous page for admissions and financial aid checklists.
- If you went Early Decision and were accepted, withdraw your applications from other schools.

## February/March

- Submit mid-year grades if the colleges you've applied to require them.
- Send in any deposits that are required.
- If you've been accepted by more than one college but haven't heard from your first choice, contact that school about a decision before you make any nonrefundable deposits to other schools.
- If you've decided on which school to attend, notify that college of your decision. Let any other colleges that have accepted you know about your decision.

## April/May

- Follow up on your financial aid package. See next page for information about comparing packages.
- If you're going to need student loans, compare the benefits offered by the various lenders your college uses.
- Take AP tests if you're enrolled in AP courses.
- If you're on a waiting list at a school you really want to attend, ask the director of admissions how to strengthen your application.

## June

- Let your high school counselor know which school you're going to so the school can send in final grades, class rank and proof of graduation.
- Send thank-you notes to counselors, teachers and others who helped you through the process.
- Prepare a budget for the coming school year.

**Instructions:** If you're considering more than three schools, print out several copies of this page before proceeding. Select the schools for evaluation and write their names on the slanted lines. Answer the questions for each school. (If the answer is "yes," mark a "✓" in the column. If the answer is "no," make an "X" in the column.) What are your findings?

# SCHOOL EVALUATION

		Does the school offer the educational program you want?
		If you're admitted to the school, are you also admitted into the educational program you want?
		Is the school accredited by an agency accepted by the U.S. Department of Education (e.g., Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Occupational Education, Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges, National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, Association for Biblical Higher Education)?
		Is the school licensed or approved by the appropriate state government agency (e.g., Alabama Commission on Higher Education, Department of Postsecondary Education, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Board of Cosmetology, Alabama Board of Funeral Service)?
		Is the school approved for federal and state financial aid programs?
		Does the school have the resources to provide you the education you need to be successful in the work force? Look for up-to-date training devices, developmental course work and/or tutorial assistance, general education courses (e.g., English and math), educational qualifications of the faculty, and library holdings and resources related to your field of study.
		Will completion of the educational program qualify you for a job? An exam and/or apprenticeship may also be required. If a licensing examination is required for employment in your career field (e.g., nursing, cosmetology, or law), do a high percentage of the school's graduates pass the exam?
		Does the school have a job placement program? Is it free? Are a high percentage of graduates placed in jobs? Recent graduates and potential employers can help you answer these questions. A good school will give you a list of contacts.
		Does the typical starting salary for a new graduate of the school's educational program compare favorably with that of graduates from the same educational program at other schools? Does it meet with your expectation? If the school provides such data, ask to see detailed statistics substantiating the school's claim.
		Does the enrollment contract (if required) clearly indicate the complete cost of your course of study? Are all necessities (books, room and board, transportation, tools, uniforms, etc.) included in the cost? Schools must make printed cost-of-education information readily available to prospective students upon request.
		Does the enrollment contract contain language to protect you if the school closes or discontinues your program? Call the Better Business Bureau in the area to find out if the school has had problems.
		Does the school have a printed refund policy? Good schools have a reasonable refund arrangement for students who withdraw from school.
		Does the school have a low withdrawal rate? A high rate may be a warning sign.
		Will credits earned at one school be acceptable for transfer to another? If you plan to enter one school but transfer to another school, will your credits transfer?
		Does the school have a low student loan default rate? Call the U.S. Department of Education at (800) 433-3243 to check a school's default rate. A high default rate may be a warning sign.

# FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE COMPARISON

Take the time to fill out this form for a comparison of all the schools you are considering. This will give you an idea of what your best value is. Sometimes the most expensive schools have scholarships that will bring them in line with others. So don't limit yourself, consider all your choices and compare.



School A	School B	School C	
<b>Need Calculation</b>			
			Tuition and Fees
			Books and Supplies
			Room and Board
			Transportation
			Personal Expenses
			<b>Total Cost of Attendance</b> (varies from school to school)
			Minus Estimated Family Contribution (remains the same)
			<b>Financial Need</b>
<b>Financial Aid Package</b>			
			Federal Pell Grant
			Other Grants
			Scholarships
			Work-Study
			Federal Stafford Loan
			Other Loans
			<b>Total Financial Aid Package</b>
			<b>Unmet Need</b> (Financial Need minus Total Financial Aid Package)

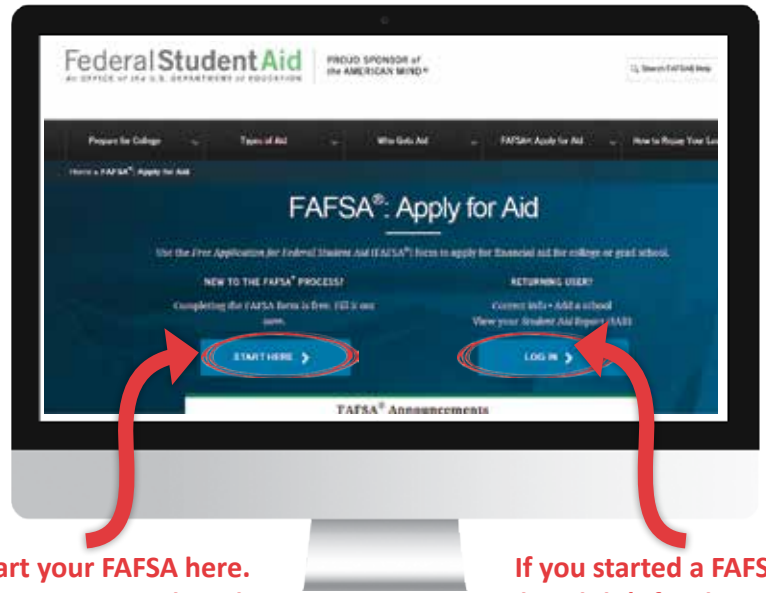
## FAFSA.gov financial aid application process

Visit [fsaid.ed.gov/](https://fsaid.ed.gov/) to create an *FSA ID*. With an *FSA ID* you can apply and sign your *FAFSA* online.

Complete the *FAFSA* and submit as soon as possible starting October 1. Apply online at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov).

If selected for verification, turn in documentation your *financial aid* office needs for completion.

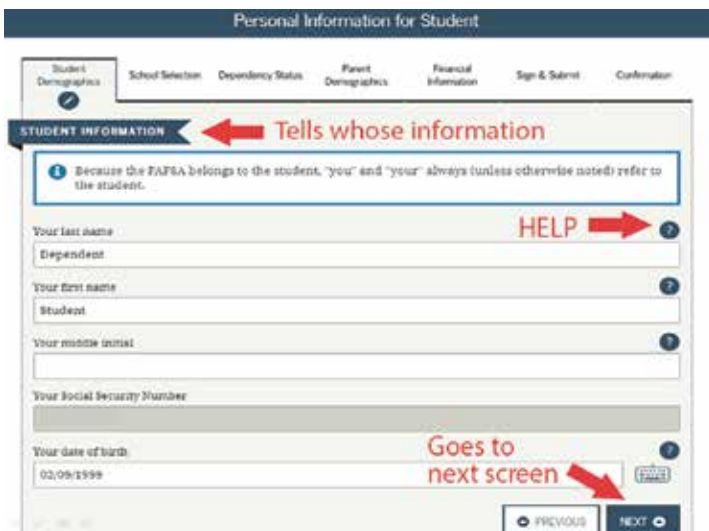
Review your *Student Aid Report (SAR)* to find out your family's *EFC*. Make corrections and resubmit if necessary.



Start your *FAFSA* here. Make sure you select the *FAFSA* for the correct year.

If you started a *FAFSA* but didn't finish, you will go here.

## What you will need:



Personal Information for Student

Student Demographics | School Selection | Dependency Status | Parent Demographics | Financial Information | Sign & Submit | Confirmation

**STUDENT INFORMATION** ← Tells whose information

Because the FAFSA belongs to the student, "you" and "your" always (unless otherwise noted) refer to the student.

Your last name: Dependent HELP

Your first name: Student

Your middle initial:

Your Social Security Number:

Your date of birth: 02/09/1999 Goes to next screen

PREVIOUS NEXT

- E-mail address or mobile phone number.
- FSA ID for **both** the student and the dependent student's parent/stepparent.
- Your Social Security number.
- Your alien registration number (if you are not a U.S. citizen.)
- Your 2018 federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned.
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable.)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable.)
- Parents' date of birth, Social Security number, marital status, and date parent was married, divorced, or widowed.

**Need help? Call Federal Student Aid at 800.433.3243**

## Federal Student Aid ID

Use your FSA ID to confirm your identity when you access your financial aid information and electronically sign your federal student aid documents, including the FAFSA.

1

Visit  
[fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov).

2

Create a memorable  
username and  
password.

3

Enter your name,  
date of birth,  
Social Security  
number, contact  
information,  
and challenge  
questions and  
answers.

4

Confirm your cell  
phone number using  
the secure code,  
which will be texted  
to the number you  
provided.

5

Confirm your e-mail  
address using the  
secure code, which  
will be sent to the  
e-mail address you  
entered when you  
created your FSA ID.

**Keep track of your FSA ID since you'll use it frequently throughout the federal student aid application process each year.**

### Tip for Step 4:

*Providing a mobile phone number you have access to will make it easier to log in to ED online systems, unlock your account, retrieve your forgotten username, or reset your forgotten password.*

## Are you dependent or independent?

If you answer "Yes" to any question below, you are considered an independent student.

- Were you born before January 1, 1997?
- As of today, are you married? (Answer "Yes" if you are separated but not divorced.)
- At the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctoral program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, or graduate certificate, etc.)?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
- Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Do you now have or will you have children **who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021?**
- 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, 2021?**
- At any time since you turned age 13** were both of your parents deceased, or were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you now or were you, upon reaching the age of majority, an emancipated minor (released from control by your parent or guardian)?
- As determined by a court in your legal state of residence, are you now or were you, upon reaching the age of majority, in legal guardianship (of someone other than your parent or stepparent)? Note: Custody is different from guardianship.
- At any time on or **after** July 1, 2019, did your high school or school district homeless liaison, the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center, or transitional living program **or** a college financial aid administrator determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

## Notes

# Whose information do I use?

The intent of the FAFSA is to get an idea of your household income. Use the guide on page 2 to determine if you are a dependent student. If you are dependent, use this guide to figure out which parent's information to include.

- Are your parents married to each other? If yes, then report information for both parents on the FAFSA.
- Do your parents live together? If yes, then report information for both parents on the FAFSA, even if they were never married, are divorced, or are separated.
- Did you live with one parent more than the other over the past 12 months?
  - If yes, then report information on the FAFSA for the parent you lived with more. **Also, if this parent remarried**, you will need to report information for your stepparent on the FAFSA even though he or she may not be responsible for your college costs.
  - If no, then report information on the FAFSA for the parent who provided more financial support over the past 12 months or in the last year you received support. Also, if this parent is remarried, you will need to report information for your stepparent on the FAFSA.

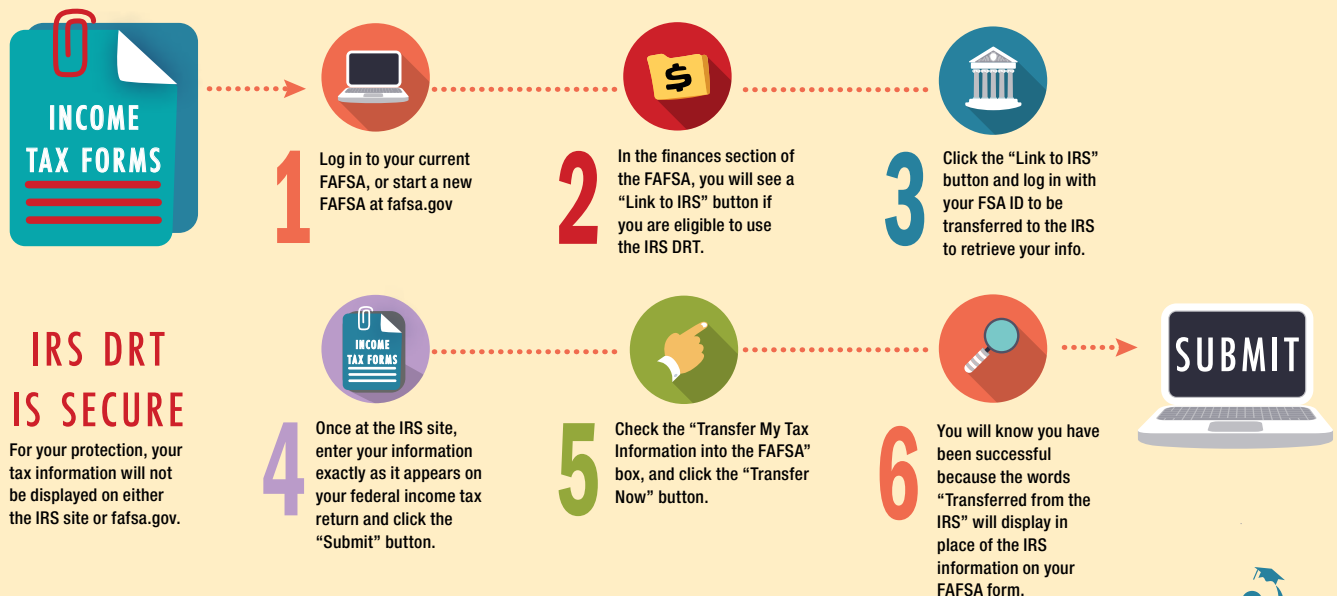
The following people are **NOT** your parents **UNLESS** they have legally adopted you:

- Widowed stepparents
- Grandparents
- Foster parents
- Legal guardians
- Older brothers or sisters
- Aunts or uncles

## SIMPLE STEPS TO TRANSFER TAX INFORMATION INTO YOUR FAFSA®

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) Electronically Transfers Your Federal Tax Return Information into your FAFSA®

### For Students and Parents



To learn more about the IRS DRT, visit [StudentAid.gov/irs-drt](https://StudentAid.gov/irs-drt)

Graphic adapted from U.S. Department of Education



## Helpful Hints

### Assets

- Asset net worth means current value of the assets minus what is owed on those assets.
- Assets include: money in cash, savings, and checking accounts; businesses (over 100 employees); investment farms; other investments, such as real estate (other than the home in which you live); UGMA and UTMA accounts for which you are the owner; stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, etc.
- Assets do not include: the home and farm where you live; UGMA and UTMA accounts for which you are the custodian but not the owner; value of life insurance; retirement plans (401[k] plans, pension funds, annuities, non-education IRAs, Keogh plans, etc.)

### Communication

- Use a personal e-mail (not school) that you check often for the FSA ID and the FAFSA. You will receive IMPORTANT information and directions via email.

### Data security

- Each email address or mobile phone number can be used with only one FSA ID. If you share an email address with someone else, then only one of you will be able to use that email address to create an FSA ID. This applies to your mobile phone number too.
- Keep track of all usernames and passwords in a safe, secure place. You will need your FSA ID every year you complete a FAFSA, as well as to log in to all Department of Education websites.


### First year college students

- The grade level for high school seniors and first-year students will be “Never attended college and 1st year undergraduate” even if you have taken AP or dual credit courses.
- The question “What degree or certificate will you be working on when you begin the 2020–2021 school year?” is referring to the category or type of program and NOT college major. Refrain from choosing “Other/undecided.” **First-year college students will not be in a graduate program.**

### Important information

- Name and Social Security number need to match what is on your Social Security card and tax forms, if applicable.
- Tax filers **should** use the **IRS Data Retrieval Tool** to transfer income information from the IRS to the FAFSA if possible (both student and parent).
- Review confirmation page and check your email as an indicator the FAFSA was submitted correctly.

### Website navigation

- To get clarification and guidance for each data field, click on the question mark  next to each data box to show HELP text.
- The top of the screen will indicate whose information is needed on that page, either STUDENT or PARENT. When the FAFSA says “you,” it is referring to the student (not the parent).
- Make sure that you select the correct form. High school seniors graduating in 2020 will need to complete the 2020–2021 FAFSA.
- Your FAFSA will reset after 45 days if it isn’t submitted.

## Verification Process

Colleges are required to verify the information provided on some FAFSAs. Most people selected for verification are picked at random.

If you’re selected for verification, you’ll be contacted by the college. The college or, in some cases, an agency with which the college has contracted will let you know what forms and information you need to supply.



**If you are chosen for verification,**

**DON'T PANIC. YOU HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG!**

**Don't delay. It's important to complete verification as soon as you're notified so there are no delays with your financial aid.**