

Early FAFSA

Overview

Early FAFSA is a term used to describe the change from the historical FAFSA availability of January 1st to an earlier date of October 1st. With this permanent change, families will now use income and tax information from two tax years prior rather than one. **For example, the 2017-2018 FAFSA will use 2015 income and tax information rather than 2016 income and tax information.**

Enrollment Date	FAFSA to File	FAFSA Available	Income Tax Year
July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016	2015-2016	Jan. 1, 2015-June 30, 2016	2014
July 1, 2016- June 30, 2017	2016-2017	Jan. 1, 2016-June 30, 2017	2015
July 1, 2017- June 30, 2018	2017-2018	Oct. 1, 2016-June 30, 2018	2015
July 1, 2018- June 30, 2019	2018-2019	Oct. 1, 2017-June 30, 2019	2016

What are the benefits?

There are a few ways we expect our students and families to benefit from this transition.

1. By using older tax information, the stress of estimating tax information and hurrying to complete federal taxes will be virtually eliminated. Actual figures should be available by the time you complete your applications (FAFSA and the CSS Profile).
2. Since your taxes should already be completed by the time you fill out your FAFSA, you should have access to use the **IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)** to import your information directly from the IRS rather than filling out each individual box. You can view more information about the DRT on the [Federal Student Aid](#) website.
3. Earlier completion of your financial aid application materials may mean less pressure when applying to multiple schools and greater access to explore your options.

Additional Information for Returning Students

It is important to remember that though the 2017-2018 aid year will use the same tax information as the 2016-2017 aid year, the entire application process must still be completed. You will not be able to transfer 2016-2017 FAFSA or CSS Profile information to the new applications. Some information, such as assets and household size, will still be reported based on the date you complete the applications. **Financial aid awards are subject to change on an annual basis.**

We understand this transition may cause some confusion. We are available via [e-mail](#), [phone](#), or [in person](#) to answer any questions that may arise about the financial aid process.