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Frequently Asked FAFSA Questions

Question 10

What if I have more than 10 colleges I want to list on the FAFSA?

- Once you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR), you can make the information available to more than ten colleges through one of the following options.
- Log into the FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov Make a correction to your FAFSA by removing some of the colleges listed, add the additional school codes, and submit for processing.
- Give the additional colleges your Social Security Number, name, and the Data Release Number (DRN) from your SAR so that they can add their school code to your FAFSA.
- Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center and have them add the colleges for you. You must provide the DRN from your SAR.
- If you have a paper SAR, you can replace the colleges listed with other colleges, and mail the SAR back to Federal Student Aid. Note that the paper SAR only allows you to change up to four colleges.



Question 9

What is considered a “special circumstance”?

- A loss or reduction of family income.
- A death or illness.
- Unusual medical or dental expenses.
 - Not covered by insurance.
- Other unusual circumstances.



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Question 8

Are there deadlines for FAFSA?

Because of the variation in state and college deadlines, it is highly recommended that you fill out the FAFSA **as soon as you can after October 1** to ensure that you do not miss out on some types of available aid, but **STILL FILE** even if the priority deadline is not met!

December 1

State of Montana's Priority Deadline

If looking at an out of state school please visit:
<https://fafsa.ed.gov/deadlines.htm>

Question 7

How do I know if my school(s) have received my FAFSA?

It typically takes 3-5 days to process a FAFSA submitted online. Once your FAFSA is processed you will receive an email with a link to your Student Aid Report (SAR).

Colleges have access to your information one day after it is processed. But each college has its own process and timeframe for accessing FAFSA information and sending out financial aid packages.



Question 6

What is “Verification”?



- Verification is the confirmation through documentation that the information provided on a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is correct.
- **Verification Worksheet**
- **2019 Parent(s) IRS Tax Transcript or Signed Tax Return or use of the Internal Revenue Service Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT)**
- **2019 Student IRS Tax Transcript Signed Tax Return or use of the Internal Revenue Service Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT)**

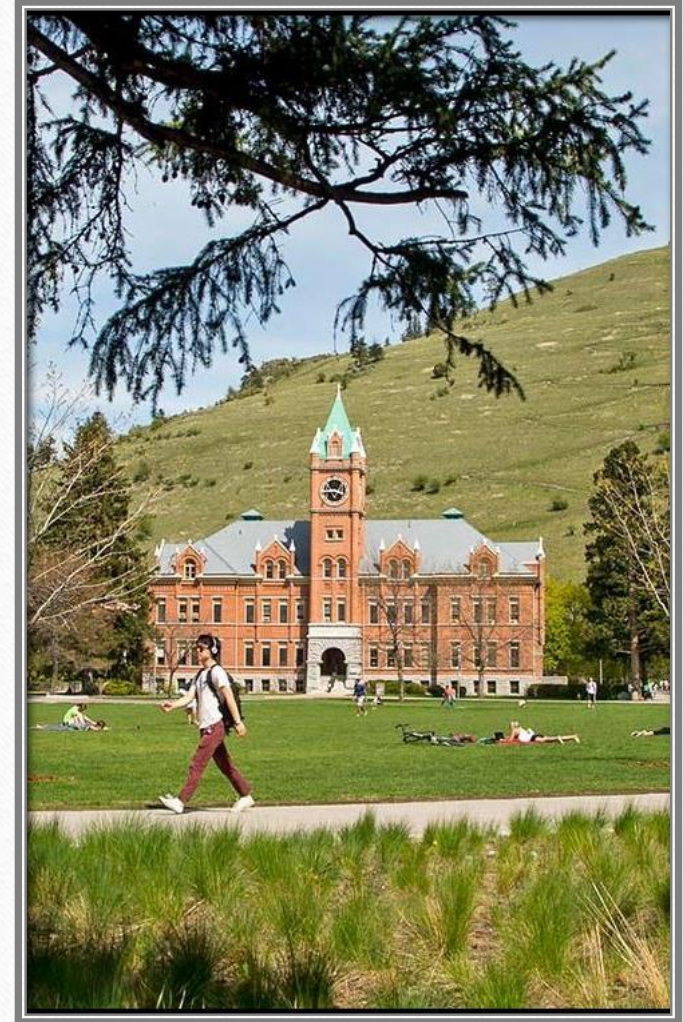
Question 5

My parents are divorced, who's information do I use on the FAFSA?

Whose information goes on the FAFSA?

1. Who did student live with most in last 12 months?
2. If #1 is not clear, who provided the most financial support in the last 12 months?
3. If neither #1 or #2 clarifies it, choose the parent from whom the student most recently received the most support.

Stepparent's information is ALWAYS included!



Question 4

Why do I have to be dependent- my parents do not support me?

Criteria to be independent

- Born before January 1, 1997
- Married
- Working on a graduate degree
- Currently serving on active duty in the US Armed Forces for purposes other than training
- Veteran of the US Armed Forces
- Have children you support more than 50%
- Have dependents other than a spouse that you support more than 50%
- Orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the student was 13 years of age or older
- Is or was determined to be emancipated minor prior to age 18 by a court in the student's state of legal residence
- Is or was in a legal guardianship as determined by the court when 13 years of age or older
- Unaccompanied youth who is homeless or who is at risk of homelessness and is self-supporting (must be documented)

Question 3

What is an “EFC”?

- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is a measure of your family’s financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law. Your family’s taxed and untaxed income, assets, and benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security) are all considered in the formula. Also considered are your family size and the number of family members who will attend college during the year.
- **Note:** Your EFC is **not** the amount of money your family will have to pay for college. It is also **not** the amount of federal student aid you will receive. It is a number used by your school to calculate the amount and type of federal student aid you are eligible to receive.



Question 2

Why is my aid different at each college?

Because your financial aid package is created for you and is based on the cost of attending a particular school, your aid amounts can vary from school to school. While Pell grants should be the same at each school, other aid can vary based on need and other institutional factors.

Cost of Attendance (COA)

-Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

“Need”



Need varies based on cost



Cost of Attendance
(Variable)

- Expected Family
Contribution
(Constant)

= Need (Variable)



Question 1

Should I fill out the FAFSA even if I do not think I qualify?

- The FAFSA helps determine whether students are eligible for federal loans, grants or work-study programs. Many colleges also require it to be on file for their own need-based aid packages.
- Everyone is eligible for some form of financial aid, no matter their circumstances.
- File a FAFSA even if you miss the priority deadline.
- Get an estimate of your financial aid by utilizing the net price calculator on college websites.



Questions?

