

Early FAFSA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How will the early FAFSA changes benefit me?

The 2017-18 FAFSA is easier than ever before and available earlier to facilitate financial aid awarding. The 2017-18 FAFSA will be available on October 1, 2016, three months earlier than the traditional January 1 FAFSA release date. You will not need to update your 2017-18 FAFSA with 2016 tax information when file; you just file once with your 2015 income. You might find that the FAFSA process is easier than you expected.

- From now on, the FAFSA will ask for older income and tax information that you will already have. This change means you won't have to use estimates anymore, or log in later to update your FAFSA after you file taxes.
- Because you'll already have done your 2015 taxes by the time you fill out your 2017-18 FAFSA, you may be able to use the [IRS Data Retrieval Tool \(IRS DRT\)](#) to automatically import your tax information into your FAFSA.

2 Will the University of Maryland (UMD) FAFSA financial aid priority deadline be earlier since the application is launching earlier?

Yes. For the 2017-18 academic year, the UMD FAFSA financial aid priority deadline is **January 1, 2017**. Therefore, we encourage students to file the 2017-18 FAFSA beginning October 1, 2016 to January 1, 2017 for best consideration.

3. Can I fill out the FAFSA before I apply to UMD?

Yes, you can fill out the FAFSA even before you've submitted your college application to UMD. Our FAFSA federal school code is 002103-00. In addition, add every school you're considering to your FAFSA, even if you haven't applied or been accepted yet. It will hold your place in line for financial aid in case you end up applying for admission at that school. You can always remove schools later if you decide not to apply.

4. Can I receive a financial aid award *before* being admitted to UMD?

Financial aid awards are provided *after* students are admitted to UMD. Prospective students can check out our Net Price Calculator on our website at www.financialaid.umd.edu for an estimated range of financial aid and an estimate of what you will pay after financial aid. Keep in mind that the Net Price Calculator is only an estimate.

5. Can I receive my financial aid award earlier if I apply earlier?

Undergraduate and Graduate Applicants for Fall 2017 - If your 2017-18 FAFSA is complete by January 1, 2017, we will make every effort to provide you with a complete financial aid award by March 1, 2017.

Returning Students - Financial aid awards for returning students will be available in May/early June 2017. Financial aid awards for continuing students are prepared after we verify Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) at the end of the school year. We encourage current students to submit the 2017-18 FAFSA in October 2016 to provide ample time for any necessary review and follow up.

Some federal and state financial aid may be estimated as awards may be issued before federal and state budgets are finalized.

6. Since the 2017–18 FAFSA asks for the same tax and income information as the 2016–17 FAFSA, will my 2016–17 FAFSA information be carried over into the 2017–18 renewal FAFSA?

No; too much could have changed since you've filed the 2016–17 FAFSA, and there's no way to predict what might be different, so you will need to enter the information again. However, keep in mind that you may be eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to automatically import your tax information into the FAFSA, making the process of reporting tax information quick and easy. More information about the IRS DRT is located on our website at www.financialaid.umd.edu.

7. Since I'm required to report my 2015 tax information, do I also answer all the other questions on the FAFSA using information from 2015?

No. Here's a [guide](#) provided by the National Association for Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) for which year's information you should use to answer the different types of questions on the FAFSA.

8. Can I choose to report 2016 information if my family's financial situation has changed since 2015 taxes were filed?

You must report the information the FAFSA asks for. If the family's income has changed substantially since the 2015 tax year, please contact the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) to speak with a financial aid counselor about your family's situation.

9. I've submitted the FAFSA, what happens next?

When your FAFSA is processed by the Department of Education, you will receive your Student Aid Report by e-mail. Your Student Aid Report will also be sent to any schools listed on your FAFSA. Take a moment to review your Student Aid Report for accuracy.

Some FAFSA applications are selected for a follow up process called verification. If your FAFSA is selected for verification, we may need additional information or documentation from you. For more information about the verification process, please review the Verification Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website at www.financialaid.umd.edu.

10. What materials and resources are available to help me learn about the early FAFSA?

The StudentAid.gov is a great site for students and parents. It provides detailed information about the FAFSA, the FSAID, the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, student dependency status, reporting parent information, and what happens after the FAFSA is submitted. Please visit StudentAid.gov/fafsa for more early FAFSA information.