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# Introduction



*This volume of the Federal Student Aid (FSA) Handbook discusses the eligibility requirements for students and parent borrowers and your responsibilities to ensure that recipients qualify for their aid awards.*

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## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are many factors you must consider when reviewing an application for aid from the FSA programs, such as whether the student is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, whether he is making satisfactory academic progress, and whether he has a defaulted FSA loan. To answer these questions you receive information about the student from different sources, including the Department of Education's Central Processing System (CPS) for financial aid applications and the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).

Throughout the year, the Department provides updates to schools in the form of dear colleague letters (DCLs). These and other releases, such as *Federal Register* notices and announcements containing system updates and technical guidance, are available on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) website ([www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov)).

The FSA Handbook doesn't cover the operation of software. For schools using software from the Department, there are technical references on the FSA Download website (see the margin) that explain how the software operates. Schools using third-party software should consult the vendor's reference materials for technical guidance.

## RECENT CHANGES HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some of the significant changes to Volume 1 for the 2014-15 award year:

### Chapter 1

- Clarified and expanded guidance on checking domestic and foreign high school diplomas, added Dear Colleague Letter citation for recognized equivalent of a high school diploma sidebar.
- Clarified and expanded guidance on monitoring SAP, especially in the area of required review schedules for Title IV purposes (see the end of the grades and pace of completion subsection on SAP).

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## Program and systems information online

### [www.fsadownload.ed.gov](http://www.fsadownload.ed.gov)

Software:

- Direct Loan Tools
- EDconnect
- EExpress for Windows
- SSCR for Windows

Technical References and User Guides for:

- CPS (ISIR, Summary of Changes, etc.)
- COD
- Electronic Data Exchange
- EExpress Packaging

### [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov)

- Federal Registers
- Electronic Announcements
- Dear Partner/Colleague Letters
- FSA Assessment modules: Student Eligibility—

[www.ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/studentelig.html](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/studentelig.html)

Satisfactory Academic Progress—

[www.ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/sap.html](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/sap.html)

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### Questions about FSA policies

E-Announcement Nov. 15, 2013

For questions about Federal Student Aid policies and programs, call the new “Reach FSA,” phone line at 1-855-FSA-4-FAA (1-855-372-4322). *Reach FSA* will help you determine the appropriate call center for your question, and then transfer you to that call center.

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### FSA Coach

ANN-13-21

FSA Coach, a self-paced, comprehensive online guide to the Title IV programs, has been updated for domestic schools. For more information, see:

<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/fsacoach.jsp>

COACH for foreign schools will be updated in the future; monitor IFAP for forthcoming training announcements.

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### Questions or comments?

If you have any comments regarding the FSA Handbook, please contact Research and Publications via e-mail at [fsaschoolspubs@ed.gov](mailto:fsaschoolspubs@ed.gov).

- Sidebar added on Question 23, Student Aid Eligibility Worksheet. URL for worksheet (completing question 23 on the FAFSA) listed.
- DOMA decision sidebar added, w/reference to GEN-13-25.

### Chapter 2

- Updated telephone number and address for contacting the U.S. State Department re: Reports of Birth Abroad.
- I-94 website sidebar and URL added.
- CBP Guide to Selected U.S. Travel and Identity Documents sidebar added; National Distribution Center’s address and URL provided.
- The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status described; such students are not citizens and are not Title IV eligible.
- Students with a “withholding of removal” order status described; these students are not Title IV eligible.
- “U-VISA” holders status described and sidebar w/USCIS website added. U-VISA holders are not initially Title IV eligible, but may eventually convert into LPR’s, which are potentially eligible.
- Added a sidebar on amending a student’s data when they submit new documentation when you have already completed a G-845.
- Clarified guidance for Pacific Islanders & SSNs, sidebar and cross-reference to full discussion in chapter 4 added.

### Chapter 4

- Updated and expanded guidance on pseudo-SSNs for Pacific Islanders. Added sidebar w/citation—E-Announcement Nov 20, 2013.

### Chapter 5

- Added note that transgendered males who were assigned the sex of female at birth are exempted from the Selective Service registration requirement.
- Expanded guidance on gender and registration in sidebar of same name.

### Chapter 6

- Added statutory citation in the Eligible postbaccalaureate program and the FAFSA sidebar.
- 150% subsidized loan limit sidebar guidance expanded, Electronic announcement citation and IFAP links to 150% pages added.