2027–28

FAFSA® Specifications Guide

Volume 8 – Agency Matches

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U.S. Department of Education's
Federal Student Aid

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Acronyms

Table 8-1: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOB	date of birth
ED	U.S. Department of Education
FAA	Financial Aid Administrator
FAFSA®	*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*
FPS	FAFSA Processing System
FSA	Federal Student Aid
ISIR	*Institutional Student Information Record*
NSLDS®	*National Student Loan Data System*
SAI	Student Aid Index
SAVE	Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSN	Social Security number
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Change History Table

The change history table below is updated each time the “Agency Matches” volume of the *FAFSA Specifications Guide* is updated providing you with a cumulative list of revisions made to the document.

The footer is updated to include the revision date.

Table 8-2: Change History

Date	Page(s)	Changes/Notes
5/26	All	Volume 8 is released
7/26	1	Corrected the comment codes that set the FPS C Flag. Revised the note to indicate that comment 303 no longer sets the C Flag.

Agency Match Results

How to Use the Tables

The information in this section is provided for you to use as a quick reference. The *Federal Student Aid Handbook, Volume 1–Student Eligibility* contains detailed information about student eligibility and the action needed to resolve discrepancies found in the data matches. The handbook can be found in the Knowledge Center.

A flag of **C** is an indicator that institutional resolution is required. The FPS C Flag is printed on the FAFSA Submission Summary next to the Student Aid Index (SAI) if any of the conditions described in the tables are met.

The following comments will have the FPS C Flag set:

018 to 020, 155, 158 to 160, 162 to 165, 216, 217, 221 to 253, 255, 256, 258, 260, 261, 264, 265, 276, 277, 281, 288, 289, 325 to 327, 343, 345, 346, and 348.

New for 2027–28: Comment 303 was removed, so it no longer sets the C Flag.

Note: Some of these data match results generate rejected records. Comments associated with a match-results reject do not generate the FPS C Flag. However, an FPS C Flag could be generated by another match-result comment and is printed on a FAFSA Submission Summary rejected for other than match-results reasons.

The SAI is not provided on any rejected records except when a student indicates they have unusual circumstances, or are unaccompanied and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In either case, a Provisional SAI is calculated. The FAA must confirm the student's situation, obtain the necessary documentation, and resolve the reject if warranted. This can be done by performing a dependency override (for unusual circumstances) or updating the FAFSA Homeless question to indicate an FAA made the unaccompanied and homeless determination. This will suppress the reject and allow for calculation of an official SAI for the student. If the student's situation is not valid for a dependency override or unaccompanied and homeless determination, the student must provide parental information in order for an SAI to be calculated and the reject removed.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Primary Match

Identifying information is sent to DHS for eligible noncitizen matching when an applicant provides an A-Number on the FAFSA form.

Table 8-3: DHS Primary Match Status

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	DHS Primary Match Status
154	None	Y = Confirmed eligible noncitizen
155	FPS C Flag	N = Not confirmed eligible noncitizen
No comment	None	P = Pending
288	FPS C Flag	D = Duplicate case
289	FPS C Flag	I = Invalid A-number
No comment	None	S = Not sent
326	FPS C Flag	Blank and A-Number is non-blank

Department of Homeland Security Secondary Match

The secondary match process with the DHS is not currently available. Students who fail the primary DHS match are indicated as pending.

To mitigate this issue, the Department has collaborated with the DHS to implement a temporary change that will allow institutions to access pending DHS secondary match cases. DHS has updated SAVE permission levels for third-step users and third-step supervisors, making these cases viewable when you search for them in the SAVE system and allowing you to proceed to Third-Step Verification. Note: There is no “Submit” button, so press the Enter key on the keyboard to search.

As a result, if the DHS Primary Match Status is “N” (Not confirmed eligible noncitizen), institutions should search for the case in the SAVE system and proceed with the third-step verification process as outlined in the *Federal Student Aid Handbook*, *Volume 1*, chapter 2. Be aware that you will not receive an updated ISIR for the student.

Third-Step Verification Process

For information about how to access and navigate the web-based DHS-SAVE system, see the "SAVE Instructions for U.S. Department of Education (School) Users" document at: fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/topics/dhs-save-eligible-noncitizen/dhs-save-electronic-third-step-verification. If you still have questions after reviewing the document, please send an email to ApplicationSystemsDivision@ed.gov.

If the institution determines that the student meets all other eligibility requirements for federal student aid (in addition to the outcomes of the third-step verification process outlined in the FSA Handbook), then the institution may proceed with awarding and disbursing aid to the student. After the case is decided by DHS, the FAA should enter the status into the FAFSA Partner Portal so the confirmation is recorded in the applicant's file.

For further guidance on this issue, refer to the August 8, 2024, electronic announcement and the DHS-SAVE Electronic Third Step Verification information on the Knowledge Center.

Student Social Security Administration (SSA) Citizenship Status Match

A match is conducted with the Social Security Administration to confirm the applicant's identity and SSA citizenship status, as well as any contributor’s identity information.

Table 8-4: Student SSA Citizenship Status Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	Student SSA Citizenship Flag Results
No comment	None	A = U.S. citizen N = Unable to confirm citizenship due to no match on SSN, name, or date of birth Blank = Domestic born (U.S. citizen) if SSN Match Flag equals 4 (SSN, name, and date of birth match) or Blank = No match conducted if SSN Match Flag does not equal 4
018 Comment displays if the student selected U.S. Citizen on the FAFSA and SSA Match comes back with one of these values.	FPS C Flag	B = Legal alien, eligible to work C = Legal alien, not eligible to work D = Other E = Alien, student restricted, work authorized F = Conditionally legalized alien * = Foreign

Student Social Security Administration Match

A match is conducted with the Social Security Administration to confirm the student's identity and SSA citizenship status, as well as any contributor's identity information.

Table 8-5: Student SSA Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	Student SSA Match Status
006	Reject 2	1 = Not found by SSA 6 = SSN not verified
008	Reject 4	2 = DOB mismatch
007	Reject 3	3 = Name mismatch
No comment	None	4 = Full match
009	Reject 5	5 = Deceased
No comment	None	8 = Not sent
No comment	None	9 = Not needed

Student Spouse Social Security Administration Match

A match is conducted with the Social Security Administration to confirm the student's identity and SSA citizenship status, as well as any contributor's identity information.

Table 8-6: Student Spouse SSA Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	Student Spouse SSA Match Status
115	Reject 19	1 = Not found by SSA 6 = SSN not verified
117	Reject 21	2 = DOB mismatch
116	Reject 20	3 = Name mismatch
No comment	None	4 = Full match
118	Reject 22	5 = Deceased
No comment	None	8 = Not sent
No comment	None	9 = Not needed

Parent Social Security Administration Match

A match is conducted with the Social Security Administration to confirm the student's identity and SSA citizenship status, as well as any contributor's identity information.

Table 8-7: Parent SSA Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	Parent SSA Match Status
054	Reject 28	1 = Not found by SSA 6 = SSN not verified
056	Reject 30	2 = DOB mismatch
055	Reject 29	3 = Name mismatch
No comment	None	4 = Full match
057	Reject 31	5 = Deceased
No comment	None	8 = Not sent
No comment	None	9 = Not needed

Parent Spouse or Partner Social Security Administration Match

A match is conducted with the Social Security Administration to confirm the student's identity and SSA citizenship status, as well as any contributor's identity information.

Table 8-8: Parent Spouse or Partner SSA Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	Parent Spouse or Partner SSA Match Status
084	Reject 39	1 = Not found by SSA 6 = SSN not verified
086	Reject 41	2 = DOB mismatch
085	Reject 40	3 = Name mismatch
No comment	None	4 = Full match
087	Reject 42	5 = Deceased
No comment	None	8 = Not sent
No comment	None	9 = Not needed

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Status Match

When an applicant indicates that they are a veteran, the record is sent to VA for confirmation of the applicant's veteran status.

Table 8-9: VA Veteran Status Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	VA Match Flag
No comment	None	1 = Confirmed
159	FPS C Flag	2 = Not qualifying veteran
No comment	None	2 = Not qualifying veteran Note: Student considered independent for other reasons
158	FPS C Flag	3 = Not found by VA
No comment	None	3 = Not found by VA Note: Student considered independent for other reasons
160	FPS C Flag	4 = Active duty
No comment	None	4 = Active duty Note: Student considered independent for other reasons
No comment	None	8 = Not sent

National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS®) Match

An applicant's information is sent to the NSLDS to determine if they are eligible for *Title IV* aid. If they have previously received aid, their information will be included in the ISIR file.

Table 8-10: NSLDS Match

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	NSLDS Database Results Flag	NSLDS Match Status
No comment	None	1 = Record matched; data sent	1 = Eligible for *Title IV* Aid
No comment	None	3 = SSN not found in NSLDS	1 = Eligible for *Title IV* Aid
No comment	None	4 = Full match; no relevant data to send	1 = Eligible for *Title IV* Aid
162	FPS C Flag	2 = SSN match, no name or date of birth match, no data sent	7 = Match and no data provided
163 Comment 327 will be printed in conjunction with comment 163 and will include up to three names and phone numbers of Guaranty Agencies, Federal Loan Servicers, or ED Regions that are holding the student's defaulted loan(s) will be listed.	FPS C Flag	1 = Record matched; data sent	2 = Default
Comment 164 will be provided with one of the following comments: 221 to 250, 264, and 265.	FPS C Flag	1 = Record matched; data sent	3 = Overpayment
Comment 165 will be provided with one of the following comments: 166 to 179, 181, 183 to 209 or 221 to 250, 264, and 265.	FPS C Flag	1 = Record matched; data sent	4 = Default and overpayment
251, 252	FPS C Flag	1 = Record matched; data sent	1 = Eligible for *Title IV* Aid
No comment	None	None	8 = Not sent
253, 255, 256, 258, 260, 261, 264, or 265	FPS C Flag	None	None

NSLDS® Unusual Enrollment History Flag

This flag identifies an applicant whose record contains unusual enrollment information.

Table 8-11: NSLDS Unusual Enrollment History Flag

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	NSLDS Unusual Enrollment History Flag
276	C Flag	2 = Possible enrollment pattern problem, school may need to resolve
277	C Flag	3 = Questionable enrollment pattern, school must resolve
No comment	None	N = Enrollment pattern not unusual, no school action required
No comment	None	Blank = Record not sent for match

NSLDS® Fraud Loan Flag

This flag identifies an applicant who may have obtained loans fraudulently.

Table 8-12: NSLDS Fraud Flag

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	NSLDS Fraud Loan Flag
050	Reject 15	Y = Yes
No comment	None	N = No
No comment	None	Blank = Record not sent for match

Drug Abuse Hold

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 includes provisions, specifically Section 5301, that authorize federal and state judges to deny federal benefits—including federal student aid (FAFSA)—to individuals convicted of drug trafficking or possession. This hold flag identifies if the applicant has or had a hold on their file.

Table 8-13: Drug Abuse Hold

Comment Number	FPS C Flag/ Reject	Drug Abuse Hold Indicator
047	Reject 13	J = Record placed on hold by the Department of Justice
280	None	S = Record released from hold
No comment	None	Blank = Not on hold

Verification Selection Edits

If the applicant's record is selected for verification, variable text is printed on the first page of the FAFSA Submission Summary. If the school requests it, the student must complete the verification process and submit all necessary documentation within the necessary timeframe. More information can be found in *The Application and Verification Guide*, which is part of the *Federal Student Aid Handbook* and is available in the Knowledge Center.

The verification tracking categories will remain constant for 2027–28 and are found in the Verification Tracking Flag field in the ISIR:

- V1 = Standard Verification Group
- V2 = For Federal Student Aid use only
- V3 = For Federal Student Aid use only
- V4 = Custom Verification Group
- V5 = Aggregate Verification Group
- V6 = For Federal Student Aid Use only