

Enclosure A

Summary of Changes to 2001-2002 Web Products and FAFSA Express Software

Enclosure A contains information about changes made to the 2001-2002 Web products and FAFSA Express software. It also includes information about new web products for 2001-2002.

For easy reference, the following is a list of the specific topics covered in Enclosure A:

- Key 2001-2002 Delivery System Dates and Schedule
- 2001-2002 Web Application Information
 - Enhancements to Web Products
 - FAFSA on the Web Promotional Kits
- 2001-2002 FAFSA Express Information
- PIN Enhancements
 - What Is a PIN?
 - Who Receives PINs?
 - Who Can Request a PIN?
 - What's Up with the PIN Application Web Site?
 - 2001-2002 PIN Enhancements
- New Web Products on the Horizon
- System Requirements for Web Products
- References
- Helpful SFA Web Sites

Key 2001-2002 Delivery System Dates and Schedule

Date	Event
July 2000	Action Letter #1, GEN-00-10, posted on IFAP. Describes changes to the 2001-2002 Renewal Application Process.
September 2000	Action Letter #2, GEN-00-13, posted on IFAP. Provides information about participating in the 2001-2002 Renewal Application Process.
September 2000	Dear Partner Letter, GEN-00-14, posted on IFAP. Announces 2001-2002 FAFSA ordering procedures.
November 2000	Action Letter #3, GEN-00-19, posted on IFAP. Describes changes and enhancements to the 2001-2002 EDEExpress suite of software (now called EDESuite).
November 2000	Action Letter #4, GEN-00-22, posted on IFAP. Describes changes and enhancements to the 2001-2002 Central Processing System (CPS), system edits, database matches, the Student Aid Report (SAR), and the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR).
January 1, 2001	2001-2002 FAFSA on the Web, Spanish FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA on the Web, and FAFSA Express available for applicants to use to apply for aid.
January 1, 2001	Corrections on the Web and Student Access on the Web available for applicants to use.
January 2, 2001	The 2001-2002 Central Processing System (CPS) started up.
February 2001	<i>A Guide to ISIRs</i> , posted on IFAP and mailed to schools.

2001-2002 Web Application Information

In 2001-2002, our web applications include FAFSA on the Web and Renewal FAFSA on the Web. In addition, students can use Corrections on the Web to correct their applicant data. We are very pleased to announce two new web products for 2001-2002:

- Spanish FAFSA on the Web
- Student Access on the Web

Both of these products are described in detail later in this enclosure.

For 2001-2002, we have revised and reordered the student and parent questions on our web-based financial aid application products to correspond with changes made to the paper Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Enhancements to Web Products

Student Financial Assistance (SFA) is continually looking for new and innovative ways to make applying for financial aid over the Internet easy and convenient for students and their families. To encourage financial aid applicants to use our web products, we have made the following enhancements for 2001-2002:

- **Spanish FAFSA on the Web.** We are pleased to announce our newest web application product: Spanish FAFSA on the Web. Based on suggestions from the financial aid community, beginning in 2001-2002 applicants can apply for financial aid using a Spanish language version of FAFSA on the Web where all questions, screen text, help text, and responses are in Spanish. In addition, applicants can call our FAFSA on the Web Customer Support number, 1-(800)-801-0576, and get assistance from Spanish-speaking customer service representatives.
- **Improved Form-Based Version of FAFSA on the Web.** In 2001-2002, we are offering an improved form-based version of FAFSA on the Web. As in 2000-2001, questions will be presented in the same order that they appear on the paper original FAFSA, but in addition, the 2001-2002 form-based version will include extensive skip logic, notes, worksheets, edits, and help text. We have discontinued the interview version of FAFSA on the Web in 2001-2002 because of low usage (less than 10% of our web applicants have used the interview format in 2000-2001).
- **Improved Electronic Signature Process for FAFSA on the Web.** Applicants now have the option of providing their PIN and other identifiers (Social Security Number, date of birth, and first two letters of their last name) at the beginning of their FAFSA on the Web application. We will authenticate the PIN and associated identifiers against our PIN database and, if authentication is successful, we will use the PIN as the student's electronic signature for the FAFSA on the Web application (parents of dependent students will still need to sign at the end of the

application, as they currently do). By providing the PIN up front, the signature process for students is simpler. In addition, collecting the PIN at the beginning of the application enables applicants to send their electronic signature record along with their web application data, all in one easy step (in 2000-2001, the electronic signature process involves an additional step at the end of the application). Additionally, if the applicant supplies a PIN prior to entering application data, we will match those identifiers against our Renewal Application database. Students on the Renewal Application file will be given the option to reapply for aid using Renewal FAFSA on the Web.

- **FAFSA on the Web Early Analysis Question Moved.** We moved the early analysis question on FAFSA on the Web so that it appears right before the enrollment status questions. Applicants who select “Yes” to the early analysis question will automatically bypass the enrollment status questions (#17-#21), the grade level question (#30), and the master’s or doctorate program question (#53) on the application. As they do currently, applicants who answer “yes” to the Early Analysis question will:
 - go through all of the CPS database matches,
 - have an EFC calculated (provided their application isn’t rejected for some reason), and
 - receive a PIN if they successfully matched with the Social Security Administration’s Social Security Number database, provided a complete mailing address, and signed their FAFSA.

In 2001-2002, students can continue to use Corrections on the Web to change their response to this question or they can work with their schools to change their response using the EDExpress software.

- **New Look and Functionality for Web Applications.** FAFSA on the Web and Renewal FAFSA on the Web have a completely new look in 2001-2002, as well as additional functionality.
 - **Re-engineered Software:** We have re-engineered our web applications using Java Servlets, which enables us to serve up one application page at a time to applicants. This change simplifies navigation and reduces the amount of scrolling applicants must do when moving around the site. In addition, using Java Servlets reduces the amount of server overhead.
 - **Redesigned Screen Format:** We have completely redesigned the application screens so they have a simpler and more intuitive look and feel. In addition to using more graphical icons throughout the site, we have added the following helpful features to our web applications:
 - **Tabular Organization:** A new tabular organization has been added to our FAFSA on the Web home page and other screens on the site, allowing

students to move quickly to other areas of the site simply by clicking on clearly labeled tabs.

- **Interactive Progress Bar:** We added an interactive progress bar to the application screens to:
 - X make it clearer to applicants what steps are required to complete the web application successfully,
 - X help applicants keep track of where they are in the application,
 - X clearly indicate which sections of the form the applicant has already completed and which sections remain to be completed, and
 - X allow applicants to navigate quickly forward or backward to already-completed sections of the form.
- **Command Buttons:** We have placed all command buttons in consistent locations at the bottom of each application screen. Command buttons include the “Next,” “Previous,” “Save,” and “Help” buttons.
- **Save Function:** Based on comments received from students and financial aid administrators, we have simplified the way application data is saved before being transmitted. We have made the following changes to the save process for 2001-2002:
 - Students will be asked to provide their Social Security Number (SSN), date of birth, first two letters of their last name, and a self-selected password at the beginning of their application. Doing this sets the applicant up for a very simple save process, where data is saved automatically when the student clicks on the “Save” command button at the bottom of the application entry screens.
 - Applicant data will be saved to a secure temporary server database, instead of to diskette. We will store the data on the database for 45 days from the last date the application was accessed.
 - Students can access their saved application data by clicking on the tab labeled “Open a Saved Application” on the FAFSA on the Web home page. By providing their SSN, date of birth, first two letters of their last name, and self-selected password, we will search the database for an application saved under those identifiers.
 - When applicants electronically transmit their FAFSA on the Web data to the CPS, we will delete the saved application data from the temporary server database.
- **Application Summary Feature:** We added an Application Summary option on the data entry pages of our web applications. At any point during application entry, by simply clicking on the command button labeled “App Summary” at the bottom of the screen, applicants can see a summary of the questions they have

been asked so far and their answers to those questions. From the Application Summary screen, students can quickly and easily navigate back to a specific question already answered by clicking on the hyperlink for that question. Or, they can go directly back to the application and continue entering application data.

- **School Code Search Function:** We redesigned the Federal School Code Search function to make it easier and more intuitive for applicants. If an applicant already knows the school code, he or she can simply enter it on the School Code screen. The system will validate the code and display the name of the school associated with that code. Once the applicant has entered both the school code and housing plans for a school, he or she will be taken to a summary screen that lists the selection. From this summary screen, students can easily add additional schools, or revise or delete the selection. We have also added “City” to the Federal School Code search criteria.
- **Question #35, Drug Conviction Eligibility:** In 2001-2002, applicants who answer “No” to question 35 will bypass the Question 35 Worksheet and be taken automatically to the next question on the application. Students who answer “Yes” to question 35 will be taken directly to an interactive Question 35 Worksheet, which is now embedded in the web application forms. Students who answer “yes” to this question will be required to use the worksheet to determine the correct response to question 35.
- **Embedded Worksheets A, B, and C.** In 2001-2002, Worksheets A, B, and C are embedded into our web applications. Rather than going to a separate worksheet for help in completing the responses to the Worksheet questions (as students do in 2000-2001), applicants will automatically be prompted to answer each of the Worksheet questions as part of the web application itself. Worksheet questions will be presented in the same order that they appear on the paper FAFSA worksheets. The web application will automatically total the responses for each individual worksheet question, effectively eliminating arithmetic errors. Totals for each of the Worksheets (A, B, and C) will appear on the applicant’s SAR and ISIR.
- **New Household Size Worksheet:** We have added a new household size worksheet to help students accurately report the number of family members in their household.
- **Student Option to Provide E-mail Address:** Students now have the option to provide their e-mail address (up to 50 characters) when completing one of our electronic applications, including Corrections on the Web and FAFSA Express. We will use the e-mail address to notify students when their application has been received and when it has been processed. In addition, we will print the student’s e-mail address on their SAR or SAR Information Acknowledgement and will include it on the ISIR. Applicants can correct or update their e-mail address by using Corrections on the Web or by calling the Federal Student Aid Information

Center (FSAIC) at 800-433-3243. Students cannot use their paper SARs or SAR Information Acknowledgement to correct or update e-mail addresses.

- **Edits:** We will continue to include all CPS edits in our web products, including updated and new assumption and verification edits. These built-in edits have been successful in helping applicants detect and correct errors before transmitting data, and have significantly reduced the number of applications rejected by the CPS.

In addition, we have added three new warning messages to our web products which appear when applicants:

- do not provide a complete street address,
- indicate that they are orphans or wards of the court, but also provide parental data on their applications, or
- change their marital status and dates. (Because students may correct, but not update, their response to marital status questions, we added this warning message to Corrections on the Web.)

- **End of Entry Edits:** We have also improved the “end of entry” process in our web applications, including Corrections on the Web. When applicants are ready to transmit their data to the CPS, our web products automatically apply “end of entry edits” to their responses. If FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA on the Web, or Corrections on the Web detects answers that appear to be incorrect or inconsistent with other answers, applicants will be taken to an interactive web screen where they can either:

- confirm that the answer(s) they provided are correct, or
- change their answer(s).

This improvement eliminates the need for students to go back to the application entry screen where the question or questions appeared and change the answer(s) from there.

- **Improved Corrections on the Web Functionality.** Like last year, applicants with PINs can use Corrections on the Web to change their financial aid application data (except SSN and date of birth) via the Internet. This is true for both paper and electronic filers.

In 2001-2002, Corrections on the Web offers a new “shopping cart” approach to correcting data, where applicants are presented with a checklist of FAFSA questions and responses. By simply clicking on the box next to the items that need to be corrected, applicants will be taken to the web application pages that contain those questions. This new feature eliminates the need for students to move through the entire application in order to correct data. When applicants have corrected all selected items, the software applies end of entry edits to ensure that the corrected responses are consistent with other answers on the application.

The student's PIN serves as his or her electronic signature. Therefore, if the student is independent, no additional signatures are required in order for the CPS to process changes made through Corrections on the Web. If the student is dependent, additional parent signatures are required only if changes were made to parent data. If a dependent student makes changes only to student data, no additional signatures are required.

- **Improved Signature Instructions.** We have improved the signature instructions for our web applications. In addition to listing "Signatures" as a distinct step on the new progress bar, we have added additional clarification and instructions at the end of the web applications to make the signature process and options easier to understand. We also remind students in several places about the importance of printing their signature page before transmitting their application data (once application data has been transmitted, students no longer have the option to print a signature page from that application). Students and their parents can also select different options for signing the application. For instance, a student might want to sign their application electronically and the parent may want to sign a signature page. Our web applications provide this kind of flexibility.
- **New "Student Access on the Web" Functionality.** In addition to using the web to check the receipt and processing dates of their paper or electronic applications, in 2001-2002, students with PINs can view their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and all other applicant data that appears on their SAR (except FAA Information). This new feature is called "Student Access on the Web."

To get to Student Access on the Web, students click on the tab labeled "Check my Submitted FAFSA" from the FAFSA on the Web home page. The first page of Student Access on the Web shows a list of each transaction on file for the applicant, as well as the EFC and application source for the transaction. Students with multiple transactions can select the transaction data they would like to view. Once a selection has been made, students can see processing information, application data, SAR comments, and NSLDS history information associated with that transaction. From Student Access on the Web, students can also link directly to Corrections on the Web or request a duplicate SAR.

FAFSA on the Web Promotional Kit

In 2001-2002, we are continuing our efforts to actively promote FAFSA on the Web to organizations that have frequent contact with high school seniors and college students. In December 2000, we distributed FAFSA on the Web Promotional Kits to high schools, postsecondary schools, state agencies, TRIO Centers, libraries, and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).

The Promotional Kits include FAFSA on the Web brochures, posters, bookmarks, post-it note pads, a one-page flyer with tips on using the web to apply for financial aid, and other

materials. We encourage you to order additional copies of the brochure, poster, Tips sheet, and bookmarks by calling 1-800-433-3243 or our TDD/TTY number, 1-800-730-8913.

2001-2002 FAFSA Express Information

Beginning on January 1, 2001, applicants can download FAFSA Express from the FAFSA on the Web site (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>) or from our SFADownload web site (<http://www.sfadownload.ed.gov/fafsa/fexpress.html>). Applicants who have questions about downloading the software can contact FAFSA on the Web/FAFSA Express Customer Service at 1-800-801-0576/TTY 1-800-511-5806.

In 2001-2002, we will provide FAFSA Express software on diskette only to students who live on military bases outside of the United States.

We changed FAFSA Express to correspond with changes made to the paper FAFSA and our web application products. In addition, FAFSA Express offers signature options similar to those offered to web filers, and includes all new and revised CPS edits, warning messages, and assumption and verifications edits described earlier in this letter.

2001-2002 Is Last Year for FAFSA Express

Due the continuing decrease in the number of applicants using FAFSA Express to apply for financial aid, 2001-2002 will be the last year we will offer FAFSA Express.

Other FAFSA Express News

- **School Code Database.** An updated and downloadable School Code file is available to FAFSA Express filers online through the FAFSA Express and SFADownload web sites. While the School Code file is updated on a quarterly basis, the software is not. Therefore, to ensure that students are using the most up-to-date School Code listing it is important to draw down an updated School Code file periodically.
- **Save.** For 2001-2002, users who want to exit the form have the option to save the application when canceling the entry. FAFSA Express does not allow users to exit the application without first asking the applicant if they want to save their application data to a floppy disk.
- **Transmission.** The transmission software first checks for a dial tone before trying to transmit application data. If it encounters a busy signal, the software tries indefinitely to transmit again until there is no longer a busy signal or the user decides to cancel out of the transmission process.

New File Sent with ISIRs (Message Class HOLD02OP)

In 2001-2002, we will send schools a new daily file along with their ISIRs. The file will include all applicants who listed the school on their electronic application and who are sitting in the Signature Hold File pending receipt of a required signature. The file will be sent in a separate message class so that it can be easily identified; and, it will include identifying information for the applicant, as well as the type of application completed, what signatures we have received, and what signatures are still outstanding.

PIN Enhancements

What is the PIN?

The PIN provides Internet access to personal information in various SFA systems. For some applications, the PIN also serves as an electronic signature. PINs can be used to:

- Access, complete, and/or electronically sign FAFSA on the Web, Spanish FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA on the Web, and Corrections on the Web. PINs can also be used to electronically sign a FAFSA Express application.
- Access and view the status and results of processed FAFSAs and corrections, including EFC, application source, SAR comments, and certain NSLDS history information (Student Access on the Web).
- View federal student aid history information in the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).
- Access expanded Direct Loan account functionality, including interactive exit counseling and repayment plan selection. Individuals with PINs can also change payment due dates, access interactive repayment calculators and deferment and forbearance functionality, change their address, view expanded account history, and apply for electronic debit accounts.
- Change a mailing address in the PIN database.

Who Receives PINs?

PIN mailers will be sent to all 2001-2002 financial aid applicants who:

- successfully passed the SSN database match with SSA (in other words, those applicants with an SSA Match Flag = 4, meaning first and last name, SSN, and date of birth all match SSA's records),
- provided a complete mailing address,
- signed their FAFSA, and
- did not just receive a PIN as part of the 2001-2002 Renewal Application Process.

2001-2002 applicants who do not meet these conditions will not receive a PIN mailer.

Who Can Request a PIN from the PIN Web Site?

Until the new PIN application function is implemented, only those individuals who already have records in the PIN database are eligible to request one from the PIN web site (www.pin.ed.gov). The PIN database contains records for:

- 2001-2002 financial aid applicants who meet the conditions described above,
- students who were eligible to file a Renewal FAFSA for the 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-2001, or 2001-2002 school year,
- students and parents who participated in the Access America for Students pilot,
- borrowers identified by the Direct Loan Servicing system to receive a PIN.

When the PIN application function is implemented, individuals not currently in the PIN database will also be able to request and receive PINs.

What's Up with the New PIN Application System?

We had planned to implement a PIN application function in the spring of 2000, where anyone (parents, high school students, former postsecondary school students, etc.) could apply for and receive a PIN if they passed the SSN match with the Social Security Administration. However, we have had to postpone implementation until we have a signed matching agreement between SFA and the Social Security Administration. As soon as an agreement is signed, we will implement the PIN application function on the web. The PIN application process will be located on the PIN Web site (www.pin.ed.gov). [See 2000-2001 Action Letter #6, GEN-99-40, for details on how the PIN application function (referred to as "PIN Registration") will work once it has implemented.]

2001-2002 PIN Enhancements

In 2001-2002, we have made several enhancements to our PIN web site and our PIN mailers. These enhancements are:

- In addition to requesting a duplicate PIN, or new system-generated PIN (which students in our PIN database can currently do) in 2001-2002 students can also:
 - **Create Their Own PIN:** By going to the PIN web site, students can select their own PIN by providing their SSN, date of birth, current PIN, and the new 4-digit PIN they want to use. The new self-selected PIN is activated as soon as the student transmits the request. Because these applicants have selected their own PIN, we will not send them a PIN mailer.
 - **Change Address in the PIN database:** By providing their PIN, in 2001-2002 students can change their address in the PIN database. Students who have lost or forgotten their PINs can also change their address in the PIN database, but they

will need to print, sign, and send us a signature page before the address change request will be processed. (Note that this process does not change the address on file in any other SFA system, including the CPS).

- **Improved PIN Mailer.** Based on suggestions from the financial aid community, beginning in November 2000 we have made a couple of improvements to our PIN mailers:
 - **New Tear-Out Card:** PIN mailers now include a new “tear-out” card with the student’s name and PIN on it.
 - **Customized Text:** PIN mailers now contain customized text that tells the recipient why they are receiving the mailer and how they can use their PIN.

Watch for New Web Products on the Horizon

In the Spring of 2000, watch for two new helpful web products, one for students and one for schools:

- **Real-Time Help Online.** Students using our web application products will be able to get real-time help online from multiple points on the FAFSA on the Web site, including from the application entry screens. This new feature will enable applicants to get online, real-time responses to their questions from FAFSA on the Web Customer Service Representatives while they are completing their application.
- **FAA Access on the Web.** Financial aid administrators will soon be able to view ISIR data via the Internet. Using FAA Access on the Web, financial aid administrators will be able to see the same type of applicant data students can see using Student Access on the Web, but in addition, they will be able to see FAA Information, to request printed Renewal FAFSAs for individual students, to make year-to-date (YTD) ISIR requests, and view ISIR batch statuses.

More information about these new products is coming to IFAP soon. Watch for details.

System Requirements for Web Products

SFA evaluates new browser versions quarterly and certifies them for use with our web application products. We have certified the following browsers for use with our web products. Browsers other than the ones listed below can also be used; however, if applicants encounter problems with a “non-certified” browser, FAFSA on the Web Customer Service may not be able to resolve the problem.

Netscape browsers

Netscape Navigator 4.0 – 4.04 (Windows 95/98, and Windows NT)

Netscape Navigator 4.05 – 4.07 (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, and Macintosh)

Netscape Navigator 4.08 – 4.7 (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, and Macintosh)
Netscape Navigator 4.76 (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, Windows 2000, and Macintosh)

Microsoft browsers

Internet Explorer 4.0 and 4.01 with Service Pack 1 or 2 (Windows 95/98, and Windows NT)

Internet Explorer 5.0 (Windows 95/98, and Windows NT)

Internet Explorer 5.01 and 5.01 with Service Pack 1 (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, and Windows 2000)

Internet Explorer 5.5 and 5.5 with Service Pack 1 (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, and Windows 2000)

AOL default browsers

AOL 4.0 (Windows 95/98)

AOL 5.0 (Windows 95/98)

AOL 6.0 (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, and Windows 2000)

When using one of our web products, applicants will continue to be able to use higher-version browsers than those we have certified in our testing. However, applicants using higher-version browsers will receive a warning message that the browser they are using has not yet been tested and certified by ED.

We no longer support Win 3.1X; however, we will not prevent applicants from using browsers for this operating system when applying for financial aid over the Internet.

References

Customer Service:

FAFSA on the Web and FAFSA Express Customer Support

1-800-801-0576; TDD/TTY 1-800-511-5806

Representatives are available Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (CT).

E-mail: fafsaweb@ncs.com.

CPS Customer Support

1-800-330-5947; TDD/TTY 1-800-511-5806

Representatives are available Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (CT).

E-mail: cps@ncs.com.

Federal Student Aid Information Center

1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243); TDD/TTY 1-800-730-8913

Representatives are available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (CT).

SFATECH listserv

Maintained by ED to address technical questions and issues about ED's Student Financial Aid systems and software. For more information, see

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/sfatech/listserv.html>.

SFA Customer Service Call Center (CSCC)

Formerly Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Customer Support Inquiry Center

For Title IV program questions, application processing questions, and for assistance contacting other ED staff

1-800-433-7327

Representatives are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (ET).

E-mail: SFA_Customer_Support@ed.gov

Helpful SFA Web sites:

For more information, look on-line:

- FAFSA on the Web Site, <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
- PIN Web Site, <http://www.pin.ed.gov>
- IFAP Web site, <http://www.ifap.ed.gov>
- SFA Technical Support Web site, <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/sfatech>
- SFATECH e-mail listserv, <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/sfatech/listserv.html>
- SFA Download Web site, <http://www.SFAdownload.ed.gov>