Process Guide for

Student Web Application Products

FAFSA on the Web
PIN Web Site

2004-2005

U.S. Department of Education

FEDERAL
STUDENT AID

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Overview

Preface

We designed the *Student Web Application Products Process Guide* to meet the reference needs of financial aid administrators.

This summary contains information about changes we are making to Federal Student Aid's (FSA) 2004-2005 Web application products for students. From the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on the Web site at **fafsa.ed.gov**, students can apply for aid using FAFSA on the Web or Spanish FAFSA on the Web, reapply for aid using Renewal FAFSA on the Web, and check the status of their financial aid application. In addition, with their PINs students can view their Student Aid Report (SAR) information, correct their application data, and electronically sign their applications. Parents can use their PINs to sign their son's or daughter's financial aid application electronically as well.

From the PIN Web site at **pin.ed.gov**, students and parents can apply for a PIN, request that a PIN be resent, change their PIN, select their own PIN, disable their PIN, and update their mailing address and e-mail address in the PIN database.

Organization of this Guide

We have organized this document into three content areas.

- Overview—discusses the FSA Web application products designed specifically for students and describes the structure of this guide.

- What's New for 2004-2005—describes the changes we are making for 2004-2005.

  - Suggestions from the Financial Aid Community

  - PIN Web Site Changes and Enhancements

  - FAFSA on the Web Changes and Enhancements

- Getting Help—lists whom to call for help.

  - How to Get Help?

What's New for 2004-2005?

Suggestions from the Financial Aid Community

FSA is continually looking for new and innovative ways to make applying for financial aid over the Web easier and more convenient for students and their families. To increase the already tremendous number of students using the Web to apply for aid, we are making the following enhancements to our student Web application products for 2004-2005. You, your colleagues, and student aid applicants suggested many of these changes.

If you ideas for other enhancements, please contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center by calling 800/4-FED-AID (800/433-3243) or send an e-mail to **fafsaweb@ncs.com**.

PIN Web Site Changes and Enhancements

New Printer-Friendly Confirmation Page

A View Printable Page button is now available on the PIN Application Confirmation and PIN Duplicate Request Confirmation pages. When you select this button, a printer-friendly version of the page displays on the screen. The printer-friendly versions contain fewer graphics, enabling the pages to print faster and use less ink or toner.

Improved Navigation Bar for Disabling/Re-establishing PIN

The label 'Change Internet Access' on the PIN Home page navigation bar has been changed to 'Disable Or Re-Establish My PIN'. When you select this option, the labels on the page change from 'Delete Access' to 'Disable My PIN' and from 'Re-establish Access' to 'Re-establish My PIN.'

Requesting Duplicate PINs

Since many students and parents request duplicate PINs, we are clarifying the text that describes how to request a duplicate copy. We are making the following changes:

- We are replacing the text 'Request a PIN to Be Sent' with 'Request a Duplicate PIN' everywhere it displays on the PIN and FAFSA on the Web sites.

- A new 'Request a Duplicate PIN' hyperlink graphic at the bottom of the PIN Home page links directly to the 'PIN Duplicate Request' page.

PIN E-mail Notification

The text on the 'PIN Application Confirmation' page and the 'PIN Duplicate Request Confirmation' page now explains that the student's PIN Notification e-mail could be routed to their e-mail system's bulk folder if their Internet Service Provider (ISP) treats mail from the Department of Education as spam or bulk mail.

Tear-out Card in the Paper PIN Mailer

For convenience, the PIN mailer will include a tear-out card with the student's PIN.

FAFSA on the Web Changes and Enhancements

Combined Authentication and Login Pages

We combined the PIN authentication and login pages so that students can provide their Social Security Number (SSN), last name, date of birth (DOB), PIN, and password all on one page. Currently, students enter their SSN, first two letters of their last name, DOB and PIN on the PIN authentication page and then enter their password on a separate login page.

Also, beginning with the 2004-2005 application processing cycle, students do not need to reenter their last name within the application after providing it on the PIN Authentication login page.

FAFSA on the Web Questions

We are revising the questions on our Web-based financial aid application products to correspond with the changes made to the paper 2004-2005 FAFSA. We will post details about changes to the paper FAFSA in the Summary of 2004-2005 Application Processing System Changes, which we will post on the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Assistance Download (FSAdownload) Web site located at **FSAdownload.ed.gov** and the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site located at **ifap.ed.gov** in December 2003.

New Parent E-mail Address Field and E-mails

Students applying for financial aid using FAFSA on the Web will have the option to provide their parent's e-mail address on their online application. When a valid parent e-mail address is present, we will send e-mails to parents notifying them that their child's FAFSA was processed. The e-mails will include the date the student's transaction (application or correction) was processed and whether additional signatures are required.

SSN, Last Name, First Initial, and DOB Edits for Parents

Like the paper application, FAFSA on the Web requires dependent students to provide at least one complete set of parent SSN, last name, first initial, and DOB.

If the student reports on the online FAFSA that his or her parent is single, divorced/separated, or widowed, FAFSA on the Web will ask the student which parent's information is being provided, either the father's or the mother's, and will allow the student to provide the SSN, last name, first initial, and DOB for that parent only. This question will become very important if and when we can begin sending parent and student identifiers, and FAFSA income information, to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to confirm data accuracy.

Enhanced Skip Logic for Independent Students Who Qualify for an Automatic Zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

In 2004-05, independent students who qualify for an Automatic Zero EFC will have the option to provide parental information on the FAFSA *and* skip certain income and asset questions, provided they are legal residents of a state that permit these questions to be skipped.

Reminder to Update Personal Information with the Social Security Administration (SSA)

- Students who provide a Student's Marital Status Date that is within the last two years will receive a message reminding them that they need to update their records at the Social Security Administration (SSA) if they have changed, or plan to change, their last name as a result of their recent marital status change.

- Similarly, if the Parent's Marital Status Date is within the last two years, a message will display reminding parent(s) to update their records at the SSA with any name changes due to a change in marital status.

Reminder to Verify Existing Answers

- When students access Corrections on the Web they will be prompted to review their application data to ensure that it was correct as of the day they filed their application.

- When students access their Renewal FAFSA on the Web application they will be prompted to review the pre-populated information from their previous year's application to make sure the data is still correct as of the day they file their Renewal application.

Students and Parents Can Electonically Sign Within FAFSA on the Web Applications and Corrections

Currently, students can electronically sign their online FAFSA prior to completing the application or after submitting it. Parents can electronically sign after the online FAFSA has been transmitted.

Beginning in 2004-2005, parents and students will have the option to sign electronically within the FAFSA on the Web application itself. This change will enable students and parents to transmit their electronic signatures along with the application, which will make the signature process easier and reduce processing time.

Updates and Corrections to Date of Birth (DOB)

Beginning in 2004-2005, students will be able to update their DOB in FAFSA on the Web, and they will be able to correct their DOB in Renewal FAFSA on the Web and Corrections on the Web after authenticating with their PIN. If DOB is corrected in Renewal FAFSA on the Web or Corrections on the Web, the student's identifying information (name, DOB, and SSN) will be resent to the SSA for matching. If the new information receives a full match (SSN Match Flag = 4) from the SSA, the CPS will automatically generate and send the student a new PIN.

If a student has two PINs because he or she changed his or her DOB, the student must use original stable data with the corresponding PIN to access transactions *prior* to the DOB change. The student will use his or her new stable data and corresponding PIN to access the transactions *after* the DOB change.

Links to Student Access

We are enhancing the confirmation page on real-time corrections to include a link that the applicant can click on to immediately see all of their processing results/SAR information on the Web. This eliminates the need to send out a separate e-mail.

Application Status Check

Students can view the status of their application and corrections at any time after submission using the Application Status Check feature on FAFSA on the Web. To enhance the usability of Application Status Check, the Application Status Check page will display a table that contains information about the Application Type, Date Received, Current Status, Date Processed, and Signature Status. Additional text displays below the table that explains how to the application or correction may be signed, if necessary. The text encourages the use of electronic signatures.

Stand-alone Electronic Signature Pages

- The order of the stand-alone electronic signature pages on FAFSA on the Web has changed. We now ask who is signing the application prior to asking for the PIN authentication information. We are changing the text on the stand-alone Electronic Signature Confirmation page to indicate whose signature (student or parent) was applied. This should reduce the confusion related to whose PIN authentication information to provide.

- A new edit ensures that the parent's SSN used to sign the FAFSA electronically matches the parent's SSN reported on the FAFSA.

Spanish Worksheets

- To further assist Spanish-speaking applicants, we now have a Spanish version of the *FAFSA on the Web Pre-application Worksheet*. Like the English version, the Spanish worksheet presents the application questions in the same order they will appear on FAFSA on the Web. For convenience, the worksheet references the paper FAFSA question numbers and provides instructions to help applicants answer questions accurately.

- We now have Spanish versions of the other stand-alone worksheets, including student and parent *Worksheets A*, *B*, and *C*, *Income Estimation Worksheet*, and *Drug Conviction Eligibility Worksheet*. Students can complete these worksheets prior to beginning their application.

- All Spanish-language worksheets are available by selecting the **Worksheets/Hojas de Trabajo** button in Section 1 of the FAFSA on the Web home page.

Browser Requirements

We now have browser detection functionality to block any versions of Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator browsers lower than version 5.0 from accessing the site. This change enables us to display the pages using the latest browser standards.

The Supported Browsers page now displays prior to the FAFSA, Renewal FAFSA, and Correction login pages, informing applicants of the browsers we support. The text on the Supported Browsers page explains that using a non-supported browser can cause the application pages to display incorrectly.

Printer-friendly Pages

A View Printable Page button now appears on all pages that are frequently printed. When you select this button, a printer-friendly version of the page displays on the screen. The printer-friendly versions contain fewer graphics, enabling the pages to print faster and use less ink or toner.

Electronic Signature Instructions

We clarified the instructions in FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA on the Web, and Corrections on the Web to make the signature process and options easier for applicants to understand. The instructions emphasize the advantages of signing electronically.

Federal School Code Search

To help students locate the correct federal school code to enter on their application, we now display the school's street address and city in addition to the school's code and name. We are increasing the school name field from 35 to 40 characters. In addition, based on feedback from applicants, we redesigned the search results pages so the applicant can more easily execute a new search if their search does not return the desired result.

Fewer Pages Displayed

To decrease the time needed to complete a FAFSA on Web application, we are removing introduction pages containing information about screen reader usage. We are also reducing the number of pages between the point when a student completes their FAFSA questions and submits their FAFSA to the CPS.

SAR E-mails

In 2004-05, the CPS will no longer send paper SARs to students with signature rejects if they provided an e-mail address with correct syntax. Instead, these students receive a SAR e-mail notification, which directs them back to FAFSA on the Web and Student Access to view and sign their SAR online. From there they can resolve the signature issue by providing an electronic signature or by printing, signing, and mailing a paper signature page. To request a paper SAR, you or your student can call the Federal Student Aid Information Center.

Getting Help

How to Get Help?

If you have any questions regarding this guide or the 2004-2005 FAFSA on the Web and PIN Web site in general, please contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center for assistance by calling 800/4-FED-AID (800/433-3243) or send an e-mail to **fafsaweb@ncs.com**.