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Publication Date: March 2005

DCL ID: GEN-05-04

Subject: Notifications to 2005-06 Applicants Reminding Them to Update Estimated Income Information

SUMMARY: On or about April 30, 2005, FSA will begin sending correction reminder notifications to 2005-06 FAFSA filers who indicated, or whose parent(s) indicated, that they completed the FAFSA using estimated income information.

Posted on 03-14-2005

Dear Colleague:

As you are aware, many applicants provide estimated income information on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In 2004-05, we implemented a notification initiative where we reminded selected applicants to use information from their completed 2003 income tax returns to update estimated income and tax information reported on their FAFSA. Our goal was to get students and their families to correct FAFSA data after they completed their tax returns so that schools had accurate information when awarding aid. We plan to continue this initiative for 2005-06 FAFSA applications, with some modifications.

On or about April 30, 2005, we will send notifications to selected 2005-06 FAFSA filers who indicated, or whose parent(s) indicated, that they completed the FAFSA using estimated income information. We will ask applicants and their parents to compare the income portion of their Student Aid Report (SAR) with information from their recently completed 2004 tax returns, and to make corrections as necessary.

Notification Schedule

A file of all applicants who meet the selection criteria described below will be created after April 15, 2005, which is the IRS tax filing deadline for most taxpayers. We will send the notifications to applicants and parents beginning on or about April 30, 2005. We will not send follow-up notifications nor will we send notifications to students who file a FAFSA after the date the file was created.

Selection Criteria

Notifications will be sent to all 2005-06 FAFSA filers whose highest Central Processing System (CPS) transaction indicates that the student applicant's or parent's income data is based upon estimated income information and who meet **all** of the following criteria:

- The student's transaction has **not** been selected for verification;
- The student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is **6000 or less**;
- The student is **not** a graduate student; and
- A school did **not** perform an FAA Adjustment (professional judgment) on the last transaction.

For dependent students and their parent(s), notifications will be sent to both the student and the parent if either the student or parent indicated they completed the FAFSA using estimated income information.

In order for FSA to measure the effectiveness of this notification process, a small sample of applicants who meet these conditions will **not** receive notifications. This will allow us to study the variances in correction activity between those applicants who receive notifications and those who do not.

In addition, notifications will be sent to a small sample of applicants who indicated, and whose parent(s) indicated, that they completed the FAFSA using a *completed* tax return. We will use this second sample to see if there are any variances in correction activity between those who used estimated income information and those who stated that they used completed returns to fill out their FAFSA.

Notification Format

If the student provided an e-mail address on a paper or electronic FAFSA, we will e-mail the notification to that address. The e-mail will contain a link to [Corrections on the Web](#) so that students can easily correct their application information online. If the student is dependent, and we have an e-mail address for the student's parent, we will send an e-mail notification to the parent as well.

If the student did not provide an e-mail address, a letter will be mailed. Students who filed a paper FAFSA will receive a full paper SAR and cover letter. Students who filed electronically will not receive a paper SAR, but will receive a letter describing how to make corrections on the Web.

Parents of dependent students will receive e-mail notifications only. If the parent did not provide an e-mail address, they will not receive a notification.

The following chart summarizes the types of notifications students will receive, based on whether they provided an e-mail address and the type of application they filed:

Student E-Mail Address?	Type of Application	Type of Notification	Receive Paper SAR?
Yes	Web Application or Paper FAFSA	E-mail	No
No	Web Application	Letter	No
No	Paper FAFSA	Letter	Yes

The notification will ask applicants who need to make corrections to FAFSA income information to also correct the response from "will file" to "completed" (FAFSA question #32 for the student, question #70 for the parent). In addition, the notification will tell applicants who have been asked by their school to submit copies of their 2004 federal tax returns not to submit corrections, unless instructed to do so by their school.

There will be three versions of the e-mail notification: one for independent students, one for dependent students, and one for the parents of dependent students. There will also be three versions of the paper cover letter (sent to applicants who did not provide an e-mail address): one for dependent and independent students who filed a paper FAFSA and who will receive a SAR with the letter, one for independent students who filed on the Web and who will only receive the letter, and one for dependent students who filed on the Web and who will only receive the letter. As stated earlier, parents of dependent students will only receive an e-mail notification. Please refer to the attachments below, which provide the specific text for the e-mail notifications students and parents will receive. The text for the various cover letters is not provided, but will be similar to the e-mail text.

The School's Responsibility

We understand that the notification process will generate corrections and new CPS transactions, resulting in additional Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs) being sent to schools. In some cases, this will mean additional workload for financial aid administrators (FAAs). However, we hope you agree that in order to maintain the integrity and public trust of our student aid programs, it is critical that we take all reasonable steps to ensure that Federal student aid is awarded based on the most accurate information available. FAAs should note that the failure of an applicant to update their data after receiving a notification does not result in "conflicting information" nor does it, by itself, trigger the need to verify applicant data. FAAs are not responsible for ensuring that updates or corrections are submitted, except under regular verification requirements or when issues of conflicting information arise. Also, the failure of an applicant (or parent) to update the "type of tax return filed" question does not create a conflicting information status even if the FAA determines that the income and tax information is from a completed tax return.

We thank you for your support of this initiative. Together we can ensure that the right

students get the right aid, and that the integrity of the federal aid programs is preserved.

Sincerely,

Kay Jacks
General Manager
FSA Application, School Eligibility and Delivery Services

Attachments/Enclosures:

[GEN-05-04: Notifications to 2005-06 Applicants Reminding Them to Update Estimated Income Information in PDF Format, 4.69MB, 3 pages](#)

[Attachment A: E-MAIL MESSAGE FOR INDEPENDENT STUDENTS WHERE THE STUDENT INDICATED "ESTIMATED" TAX RETURN in MS Word Format, 27KB, 1 page](#)

[Attachment B: E-MAIL MESSAGE FOR PARENT\(S\) OF DEPENDENT STUDENTS WHERE EITHER THE STUDENT OR THE PARENT INDICATED "ESTIMATED" TAX RETURN in MS Word Format, 26KB, 1 page](#)

[Attachment C: E-MAIL MESSAGE FOR DEPENDENT STUDENTS WHERE EITHER THE STUDENT OR THE PARENT INDICATED "ESTIMATED" TAX RETURN in MS Word Format, 26KB, 1 page](#)

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**ATTACHMENT A – E-MAIL MESSAGE FOR INDEPENDENT STUDENTS WHERE
THE STUDENT INDICATED “ESTIMATED” TAX RETURN**

Subject: Important: U.S. Department of Education—It’s Time To Update Your FAFSA

Dear [Applicant]:

When you completed your 2005-06 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) you provided estimated 2004 calendar year tax information. Now that April 15 has passed, you have probably filed your 2004 federal income tax return with the IRS.

It is important that your eligibility for student aid be based upon accurate information. To confirm the accuracy of your FAFSA income information, please take a moment to compare it to your completed 2004 tax return. If, after reviewing the data, you determine that you reported incorrect information on the FAFSA, you **must** correct the error(s).

You can view and correct your FAFSA information on the Web by clicking on the link below and providing your U.S. Department of Education PIN.

To access your FAFSA information on the Web please click here:

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWebApp/complete014.jsp>

Or if you are an AOL user, click here:

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWebApp/complete014.jsp>>Make Corrections

If you previously received a PIN and you are not sure what it is, you may request a duplicate copy of your PIN by going to <http://www.pin.ed.gov> and selecting the option “Request a Duplicate PIN.”

If you received a paper Student Aid Report (SAR), you can use the paper SAR to compare the information you reported with your completed tax return. If corrections are necessary, you can make your corrections on the Web or you can submit them using the paper SAR.

If you need to make corrections to any data items as a result of reviewing your tax return, you should also update FAFSA question #32 to choice ‘1’ on the paper SAR, or to “already completed” on the Web, to indicate that your information is now based upon a completed return.

If you have not yet completed your 2004 federal tax return, please be sure to update your FAFSA information once your return is completed.

Please note: If you have been asked to submit a copy of your completed 2004 federal tax return to your school, you do **not** need to make these corrections unless instructed to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to attend to this important matter.

Federal Student Aid
U.S. Department of Education

**ATTACHMENT B – E-MAIL MESSAGE FOR PARENT(S) OF DEPENDENT
STUDENTS WHERE EITHER THE STUDENT OR THE PARENT INDICATED
“ESTIMATED” TAX RETURN**

Subject: Important: U.S. Department of Education—It’s Time To Update Your FAFSA

Dear Parent of [Financial Aid Applicant]:

When your family completed the 2005-06 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you or your son or daughter indicated that you were providing estimated 2004 calendar year tax information. Now that April 15 has passed, you have probably filed your 2004 federal income tax returns with the IRS. It is important that your son’s or daughter’s eligibility for student aid be based upon accurate information. To confirm the accuracy of the information you reported on the FAFSA, please take a moment to compare it to your completed 2004 tax returns. If, after reviewing the data, you determine that you reported incorrect information on the FAFSA, you **must** correct the error(s).

Please work with your son or daughter to correct your FAFSA information. If your son or daughter has a U.S. Department of Education PIN, FAFSA information may be viewed and corrected on the Web by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWebApp/complete014.jsp>

AOL users should click on the following link:

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWebApp/complete014.jsp>>Make Corrections

If you have a U.S. Department of Education PIN, you can provide your parental signature electronically. If you previously received a PIN, but you’re not sure what it is, you may request a duplicate copy of your PIN by going to <http://www.pin.ed.gov> and selecting the option “Request a Duplicate PIN.”

PINs are distinct to the individual, so your PIN will be different from your son’s or daughter’s.

If your son or daughter received a paper Student Aid Report (SAR), you can use the paper SAR to compare the information you reported with your completed tax return. If corrections are necessary, you can make your corrections on the Web or you can submit them using the SAR.

If you need to make corrections to any data items as a result of reviewing your tax return, you should also update FAFSA questions #32 and #70 to choice ‘1’ on the paper SAR, or to “already completed” on the Web, to indicate that your information is now based upon a completed return.

If you have not yet completed your 2004 federal tax return, please be sure to update your FAFSA information once you have completed your return.

Please note: If you and your son or daughter have been asked to submit copies of your completed 2004 federal tax returns to the school, you do **not** need to make these corrections unless instructed to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to attend to this important matter.

Federal Student Aid
U.S. Department of Education

**ATTACHMENT C- E-MAIL MESSAGE FOR DEPENDENT STUDENTS WHERE
EITHER THE STUDENT OR THE PARENT INDICATED “ESTIMATED” TAX
RETURN**

Subject: Important: U.S. Department of Education—It’s Time To Update Your FAFSA

Dear [Applicant]:

When your family completed the 2005-06 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you or your parent indicated that you were providing estimated 2004 calendar year tax information. Now that April 15 has passed, you have probably filed your 2004 federal income tax returns with the IRS. It is important that your eligibility for student aid be based upon accurate information. To confirm the accuracy of the information you and your parent reported on your FAFSA, please take a moment to compare it to your and your parent’s completed 2004 tax returns. If, after reviewing the data, you determine that you reported incorrect information on the FAFSA, you **must** correct the error(s).

Please work with your parent to correct your FAFSA information. If you have a U.S. Department of Education PIN, you can view and correct your FAFSA information on the Web by clicking on the link below.

To access your FAFSA information on the Web please click here:

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWebApp/complete014.jsp>

Or if you are an AOL user, click here:

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWebApp/complete014.jsp>”>Make Corrections

If your parent previously received a PIN, your parent can electronically sign your corrections. If you or your parent have lost or forgotten your PIN, you may request a duplicate by going to <http://www.pin.ed.gov> and selecting the option “Request a Duplicate PIN.”

PINs are distinct to the individual, so your PIN will be different from your parent’s PIN.

If you received a paper Student Aid Report (SAR), you and your parent can use the paper SAR to compare the information you reported with your completed tax returns. If corrections are necessary, you can make your corrections on the Web or you can submit them using the SAR.

If you need to make corrections to any data items as a result of reviewing your tax return, you should update FAFSA questions #32 and #70 to choice ‘1’ on the SAR, or “already completed” on the Web, to indicate that your information is now based on a completed return.

If you have not yet completed your 2004 federal tax return, please be sure to update your FAFSA information once you have completed your return.

Please note: If you and your parent have been asked to submit copies of your completed 2004 federal tax returns to your school, you do **not** need to make these corrections unless instructed to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to attend to this important matter.

Federal Student Aid
U.S. Department of Education