

List of 2024-25 FAFSA Terminology

The FAFSA Simplification and FUTURE Acts made changes to the 2024-25 FAFSA that resulted in changes to older, well-known terms, which are listed below. These terms and definitions have been provided by Federal Student Aid, an Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

- **Account Username and Password (FSA ID):** username and password used to log in to all Federal Student Aid products and tools on StudentAid.gov.
- **Contributor:** any individual required to provide consent and approval for federal tax information (FTI) along with their signature on the FAFSA® form, including the student; the student's spouse; a biological or adoptive parent; or the parent's spouse (stepparent).
- **FAFSA FTI Approval:** formal approval granted by an applicant and any applicable contributors for a given FAFSA cycle (e.g., December 2023 to September 2025 for the 2024-25 FAFSA form) to retrieve and use FTI to determine an applicant's federal financial aid eligibility as well as permit the redisclosure of FTI by the Department to an eligible institution; state higher education agency; or a designated scholarship organization for the application, award, and administration of student aid programs. An applicant and contributor (if applicable) must provide approval once each year. If FAFSA FTI approval is not provided, the student will not be eligible for any Title IV aid until the approval is provided by each contributor.
- **FAFSA Privacy Act Consent:** formal consent provided by an applicant and any applicable contributor(s) for a given FAFSA cycle (e.g., December 2023 to September 2025 for the 2024-25 FAFSA form) that meets the statutory requirements of collecting and using an individual's personally-identifiable information (PII) under the Privacy Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. § 552a). PII provided on the FAFSA (e.g., name, date of birth, social security number) with consent of the individual, will be provided to the IRS to conduct a match in order for the Department to receive FTI for purposes of determining an applicant's federal financial aid eligibility and permit further redisclosure of FTI by the Department. For more information, see FAFSA FTI Approval above.
- **FAFSA Submission Summary:** replaces the Student Aid Report (SAR) as the student's output document providing a summary of data input on the FAFSA form.
- **Family Size:** replaces the term "household size" on the FAFSA form. It captures the appropriate number of family members and dependents in the applicant's household, within the meaning of section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or an eligible individual for purposes of the credit under section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
- **Federal Tax Information (FTI):** is the data and information related to federal tax paying. It includes a return or return information received directly from the IRS or obtained through an authorized secondary source such as the U.S. Department of Education pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 6103(l)(13). FTI also includes any information created by the recipient that is derived from a federal return or return information received from the IRS or obtained through an authorized secondary source. Other return information considered FTI includes the taxpayer's name; mailing address; identification numbers including Social Security number or employer identification number; any information extracted from a return, including names of dependents or the location of a business; information on whether a return was, is being, or will be examined or subject to other investigation or processing; information contained on transcripts of accounts; the fact that a return was filed or examined; investigation or collection history; or tax balance due information.
- **Primary or Custodial Parent:** for a dependent student whose parents are divorced or separated, the primary or custodial parent is the parent who provides the greater portion of the student's financial support and is required to provide their information (and if applicable their spouse's information) on the FAFSA form.
- **Provisionally Independent Student:** if a student indicates they have unusual circumstances or indicates for the first time they are unaccompanied and homeless, or at risk of being homeless (without a designation from a specified entity), the FAFSA Processing System (FPS) will consider the student to be provisionally independent and will allow them to fill out the FAFSA form as an independent student. The SAI will remain provisional and not official until the student's college or career school makes a final determination.
- **Student Aid Index (SAI):** replaces the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as a formal evaluation of a student's approximate financial resources to contribute toward their postsecondary education for a specific award year.