

# The 2017–18 FAFSA<sup>®</sup>: Get Your Dates Straight

## *Understanding the Variety of Dates Associated With the FAFSA<sup>®</sup>*

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### What’s different about the 2017–18 FAFSA<sup>®</sup>?

Starting with the 2017–18 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>®</sup>), the following changes have been put in place:

- **Students are now able to submit a FAFSA<sup>®</sup> earlier.** Students have been able to file a 2017–18 FAFSA since Oct. 1, 2016, rather than beginning on Jan. 1, 2017. This gives students more time to complete the FAFSA, and potentially more time to compare aid offers from colleges.
- **Students now report earlier income information.** Beginning with the 2017–18 FAFSA, students are required to report income information from an earlier tax year. For example, on the 2017–18 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) must report their 2015 income information, rather than their 2016 income information.

The following table provides a summary of key dates for the early FAFSA submission timeframe and reporting of earlier tax information.

<b>When You’re Attending College (School Year)</b>	<b>When You Can Submit a FAFSA<sup>®</sup> for Your School Year</b>	<b>Which Year’s Income and Tax Information to Report</b>
July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017	Jan. 1, 2016–June 30, 2017	2015
<b>July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018</b>	<b>Oct. 1, 2016–June 30, 2018</b>	<b>2015</b>
July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019	Oct. 1, 2017–June 30, 2019	2016
July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020	Oct. 1, 2018–June 30, 2020	2017

### How do I know what year or date a FAFSA<sup>®</sup> question is asking about?

Luckily, the FAFSA questions do include specifics such as “adjusted gross income for 2015” or “the total current balance of your parents’ cash, savings, and checking accounts” (hint: “current” means “right now”). But we understand that you might want to see everything in one place, for quick reference. We hope the table on the next page will help.

Need more info about the FAFSA<sup>®</sup>? Visit [StudentAid.gov/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa).

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## Which FAFSA® questions refer to which time frames?

Info Supplied on FAFSA®	2015 Tax Year	As of Today ("today" = the day you sign the FAFSA®)	Other
Basic personal info (name, address, citizenship, state of residence, etc)		X	
Marital status		X	
Dependency status (you may be asked several questions to determine whether you need to report parent info on your FAFSA)			Time frame indicated in each question
Tax return completion status	X (refers to 2015 return; status is as of "today")	X (refers to 2015 return; status is as of "today")	
Which IRS tax return filed	X		
Tax filing status (single, married filing jointly, etc)	X		
Adjusted gross income	X		
Income tax	X		
Tax exemptions	X		
How much earned from working	X		
Balance of cash, savings, and checking		X	
Net worth of investments and businesses		X	
Additional financial information (education credits, child support paid, etc)	X		
Untaxed income and other money received, or paid on your (student's) behalf	X		
Number of people in household		X (but read instructions carefully for exceptions!)	Mostly "as of today," but read instructions for exceptions
Number of household members in college			2017–18 school year
Means-tested benefits (Medicaid, SSI, SNAP, TANF, WIC, etc)			2015 or 2016 calendar year
Dislocated worker		X	

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