

HOW TO APPLY FOR AID AND HOW ELIGIBILITY IS DETERMINED

Getting Your Federal Student Aid PIN

What is a Federal Student Aid PIN and what is it used for?

Your PIN is an electronic access code that serves as your personal identifier and can be used every year to electronically apply for federal student aid and to access your U.S. Department of Education records online.

Your PIN allows you to:

- "Sign" your application electronically and complete the student aid process completely online-no paper is involved.
- If you're a dependent student and one of your parents has a Federal Student Aid PIN, he or she can sign the application electronically online as well.
- Make online corrections to your FAFSA.
- Access your *Student Aid Report* (SAR).
- "Sign" a master promissory note for a federal student loan.
- Access your federal student aid records online, including your student loan history information on NSLDS.

How and when should I get a PIN?

You, and your parents if you're a dependent student, can apply for a PIN anytime at www.pin.ed.gov.

Note: Initially, your PIN can be used only to sign your FAFSA. Your personal data (Social Security Number, name, and date of birth) must successfully match with the data the Social Security Administration has for you before your PIN can be used for other federal student aid purposes, such as signing a promissory note. After your data successfully matches with the Social Security Administration's data you can use your PIN at other federal student aid Web sites. Your SAR will contain a comment that lets you know whether your data successfully matched with the Social Security Administration's data or not. If your

data does not match you will receive a notice with information to help you resolve the issue.

Completing the FAFSA

What information do I need to complete a FAFSA accurately?

- Your Social Security number and your parents' numbers, if you're a dependent student.
- 2007 W-2 forms and other records of money earned (by you and by your parents, if you're a dependent student).
- Your 2007 Federal Income Tax Return (and that of your spouse, if you're married).
- Your parents' 2007 Federal Income Tax Return (if you're a dependent student).
- Any foreign tax return or tax return from Puerto Rico.
- Your 2007 untaxed income records-examples include Social Security benefits, welfare benefits such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and veteran benefits.
- Your current bank statements, business and investment mortgage information; business and farm records; and stock, bond and other investment records.
- Your alien registration number (if you are not a U.S. citizen).

If possible, have the necessary 2007 income tax returns finished so you can complete the FAFSA more easily and accurately. If you apply before your tax return has been completed, you'll have a two-step application process.

- Step 1-Apply and estimate your tax information on your application.
- Step 2-Make corrections later if your estimated income or tax information was not accurate. You cannot receive federal student aid unless all your information is complete and accurate. Read the FAFSA instructions very carefully. Pay close attention to questions on income because most errors occur in that area.

Process for new applicants:

Apply between Jan. 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009. To determine your eligibility for federal student financial assistance, you need to complete the FAFSA. Although you might have to complete an additional application in order to be considered for financial aid from your state or the school you're interested in attending, most states and schools use FAFSA information to award nonfederal student aid.

Can I apply online?

Yes. You can complete the FAFSA online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. Applying online is faster and easier than the paper FAFSA, although you may still complete and submit the FAFSA in paper form. A *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs for you to print and write down your information prior to completing the online submission of the FAFSA. You can also obtain printed copies of the worksheet by calling **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)** or through your financial aid office.

Aid for most of our programs is awarded based on financial need (except for **unsubsidized Stafford Loans** and **PLUS Loans**). The EFC is a measure of your family's financial strength and indicates how much of your and your family's financial resources (for dependent students) should be available to help pay for your education. The EFC is calculated from the information you report on the FAFSA.

Your EFC is calculated according to a formula established by law. Your family's income (taxable and untaxed), assets and benefits (for example, unemployment or Social Security) are considered in determining your EFC. Your family size and the number of family members who will be attending a college or career school are also considered. Your EFC will appear on the *Student Aid Report (SAR)* you receive after you file your FAFSA.

To determine your financial need for federal student aid programs (except for an unsubsidized Stafford Loan), your school subtracts the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from your cost of attendance.

Determining Your Financial Need

We use your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to determine your financial need:

Cost of Attendance

- Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

= Financial Need

Southeastern uses federal grants and other financial aid to try to meet your financial need. You can use *FAFSA4caster* at **www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov** to get an estimate of your financial aid award. The information you submit with *FAFSA4caster* *can be used to populate your FAFSA on the Web* when you're ready to apply for aid. But remember, to find out exactly what you will be eligible to receive, you must apply for financial aid. If you want to see how the EFC formula works, you can get detailed worksheets from our Web site at **www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs** . **Click on the year under "The EFC Formula" or you can** call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**.

After you receive your SAR, you may receive an award letter from Southeastern after your file is complete. Contact the financial aid office if you have questions about your student financial aid award.

I think I have some special circumstances in my family. Are these considered in determining my financial needs?

The EFC formula is basically the same for all applicants, but there is some flexibility. The Director of Financial Aid can adjust the cost of attendance or the information used to calculate your EFC to take into account your special circumstances. These circumstances could include your family's unusual medical expenses, tuition expenses or unemployment.

The financial aid administrator* must have compelling reasons to use professional judgment to make adjustments because of special circumstances. You will have to provide adequate documentation decision as to whether you have special circumstances is final and can't be appealed to us.