

# What are some common mistakes students make on the FAFSA?



- **Registering the FSA ID (Federal Student Aid ID)/password wrong. For example:**
  - ❖ Using a nickname to register (name doesn't match what is on the Social Security card).
  - ❖ Parents using their information (email, SSN, birthdate) to register an FSA ID/password for the student.
  - ❖ Student using parent information (email, SSN, birthdate) to register an FSA ID/password for the student.
  - ❖ Not registering the FSA ID with a mobile number or email they can access.
- The student must use their own personal information to register and use an FSA ID/password.
- Parents must use their own personal information to register and use an FSA ID/password.
- To retrieve a forgotten FSA ID and/or password, using your registered mobile number or email is the easiest way to do this.
- Using challenge questions to retrieve a forgotten FSA ID and/or password will take **30 minutes**.
- **Filling out the FAFSA with a nickname or name that doesn't match what is on the Social Security card.**
  - The name provided on the FAFSA must match what is on the Social Security card.
- **If the student doesn't meet any of the following criteria, they must add parents to the FAFSA:**
  - The student is 24 years of age or older.
  - The student is married.
  - The student has a child or children who they provide more than half of their financial support.
  - The student is an Orphan, Ward of the Court, or in foster care since age 13 (with official court documentation to prove it).
  - The student is in Legal Guardianship to someone other than parents (with official court documentation to prove it).
  - The student is homeless or in danger of homelessness (with official documentation to prove it).
  - The student is a Veteran of the US Armed Forces or on Active Duty with the Military (with official documentation to prove it).
  - The student is working on a Master's Degree or a PhD (Doctoral degree).
- **Filling out the FAFSA as single when the individual (student or parent) is married.**
  - The FAFSA is a snapshot in time of right now so if the individual is married at the time of filling out the FAFSA, the spouse must be included (personal and tax info).
- **Filling out the FAFSA as single when the individual (student or parent) is divorced but now remarried.**
  - The FAFSA is a snapshot in time of right now so if the individual has remarried since the divorce, their marital status should be married/remarried, not single. Then the spouse should be included on the FAFSA (personal and tax info).
- **Filling out the FAFSA with both biological parents who are divorced.**
  - If the parents are divorced, the student should **not** put them both on the FAFSA.
  - The student should choose the parent they live with (and stepparent if applicable).
  - If the student does not live with either parent, they should choose the parent (and stepparent if applicable) who would provide the most benefit to the student (the parent with the lowest income).
- **Choosing the wrong grade-level status**
  - If the student is working on an Associate degree, they should choose either Freshman or Sophomore as their grade-level status.
  - If the student is working on a Bachelor's degree, they should choose either Junior or Senior as their grade-level status.
  - Student should **not** choose Graduate as grade-level status unless they're working on a Master's Degree or a PhD (Doctoral degree).
- **Saying "yes" to the question, "Do you have Legal Dependents."**
  - This does not mean children. This means you have legal custody of someone (not your children) with court documents to prove it that you provide more than half of their support.
  - Only say yes to this question if you have legal dependents (not children) with official court documentation to prove it.
- **Not adding the school code of the college student wants to receive the FAFSA.**
  - Either add the school code (if you know it) or look up the college by name that you want to receive the FAFSA. Then within 3-5 business days of completing the FAFSA, follow up with the college to ensure they have received it.
- **Student (and/or parents) have filed Head of Household when they are married and living with a spouse.**
  - Legally, Head of Household status can't be filed if you're married and living together on the last day of the tax year (December 31).
- **Not signing the FAFSA with FSA ID/password (student and parent if applicable)**
  - Students must create an FSA ID/password to electronically sign and submit the FAFSA. If they do not sign it, the FAFSA will be rejected for no student signature.
  - If the student has to include parent on the FAFSA, the parent also has to create an FSA ID/password to electronically sign and submit the FAFSA. If they do not, the FAFSA will be rejected for no parent signature.
- **Students who **are** US Citizens but whose parents are **not** US Citizens can be eligible to apply for Federal or State financial aid.**
  - If the student is required (based on the above information) to provide parents information on the FAFSA, the parents personal and tax information (if applicable) should be provided. Parents Social Security number should be entered as all zeroes.
- **Students who are **not** US Citizens are **not** eligible to apply for Federal or State financial aid.**
  - **Non-U.S.Citizens may be eligible for aid-check this site:**  
<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/non-us-citizens>