



BGU 2023-24

Tips for Completing the FAFSA

BGU'S School Code is 042278

Getting Started

File Your 2021 Tax Returns FAFSA requires tax return information from 2 years prior to the year for which you are applying; **not** the most recent year. So, the 2023-24 FAFSA requires 2021 tax return information. For 2024-25 you will need to submit 2022 tax return information and so forth.

FAFSA Website <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

Make Sure Your Parent(s) Are Available To Provide Their Info (it will take about an hour to complete) Unless you meet the criteria for being "independent" (further explained on the next page), you AND your parent(s) will need to be involved in the FAFSA process. Refer to the links below for more info:

- FAFSA Help page: <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/>
- FAFSA and FSA ID Tips for Parents Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjSFOBSfvWY>
- Who's My Parent When I Fill Out My FAFSA: <https://studentaid.gov/sa/sites/default/files/who-is-my-parent.png>

Set up Your FSA ID Each person with access to your FAFSA, must have their own unique username, email address, and Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID). Different individuals cannot share one FSA ID, and no confidential user information is to be passed on to others.

- Each unique user FSA ID is considered a legally binding signature.
- The "Save Key" is a shorter password, which can be shared by multiple users to access the same FAFSA, but it is not used as a signature. Only the FSA ID can be used in this way.
- While setting up your accounts WRITE ALL INFORMATION DOWN for every account! Do this, even if you auto save your log in information. You will be completing the FAFSA every year, so you will need this log in information year after year.
- If someone has forgotten their FSA ID or any other log in information, it can be retrieved by clicking on the Forgot Username/Password links. There are additional helpful links for recovering information on the HELP link at the top of the FAFSA website.

Enter Accurate Information

Award Year Be sure to select the correct award year: 2023-24



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Tip: Reduce the possibility of being selected for verification by the Department of Education by making sure all information you enter is accurate and that the information you have entered on the FAFSA matches the information you entered on your 2021 tax documents.

Your Personal Information You would be amazed at how many students do not enter their birthdate, spelling of their name or their social security number correctly. Even a one-digit error will trigger a flag in your processing, requiring you to submit multiple pieces of information verifying your information and comparing it to past information you have submitted. Make sure that both you and your parents enter completely accurate information!

Tax/Financial Information Likewise, be aware of errors on things like your W2 forms and other tax documents, which will conflict with the information you fill out on your FAFSA and trigger a notification for the financial aid office and delay your processing. Get these corrected before attempting to complete the FAFSA, if you are aware of them already.

Tip: As soon as you realize you have made a mistake on your FAFSA, correct it. Doing so can reduce the possibility of being selected for verification.

Determine if you are a Dependent or Independent

Undergraduate students who are under age 24 as of December 31 of the award year are dependent for federal student aid purposes unless they are married, have dependents other than a spouse, are an orphan, are a veteran or active-duty member of the US Armed Forces, or satisfy other very limited criteria. If you are under age 24 but think you may qualify to be independent, you can go through the FAFSA Dependency Worksheet to find out:

<https://studentaid.gov/sa/sites/default/files/dependency-status.png> Take note of whether you are considered “dependent” or “independent” according to your FAFSA. This will help you to know the amount of loans you qualify for.

Provide Your Financial and Tax Information

You must select the answer that describes your tax filing status for 2021: “Already completed”; “Will File”; or “Not going to file”.

- If you select “Already Completed” you will manually input your tax info from your 2021 tax returns.
- If you select that you “Will file” a 2021 tax return you can still complete your FAFSA now; however, you will need to correct it later once you file your 2021 taxes. You will need to make the following corrections once your taxes are submitted:



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- Change your filing status from “Will file” to “Already completed”
- Change your estimated answers to the final amounts on your 2021 tax return.

If you are dependent, financial information from your parent(s), as well as yourself, is needed for the FAFSA. Further info about situations where parent info is not available can be viewed here:

<https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/parent-info#special-circumstances> If you are independent, financial information for you (and your spouse, if married) is collected in the FAFSA.

IRS Data Retrieval Tool

Data Retrieval Tool The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is an option on the FAFSA, which automatically transfers tax return information from the IRS to the FAFSA. We recommend that you use this to save time and effort!

Signing the FAFSA (last page) Do NOT miss this step! You and your parent(s) will be entering electronic signatures on the last page of your FAFSA. Do this by simply entering your FSA IDs as your legal signatures. Remember to use the correct FSA ID for the correct signature (student FSA ID for the student; parent FSA ID for the parent).

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) In the course of completing your FAFSA, an EFC will be automatically calculated based on the information you have provided. The EFC is used by BGU to help determine how the tuition paid model will be applied to your financial situation. There is additional information on EFC below. Note: A high EFC will NOT disqualify you from the tuition paid model.

After Submitting Your FAFSA

Student Aid Report (SAR) The U.S. Department of Education will process your FAFSA within 3-5 days. Once your application is processed, you will receive an email containing a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR), which summarizes the information you provided on your FAFSA. Review your SAR and make sure all of the information is complete and accurate. If there is any missing or incorrect information, log back into your FAFSA and complete or correct it as soon as possible. Your SAR will include your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC determines your eligibility for a Federal Pell Grant, and BGU uses the EFC to assess your eligibility for other federal and nonfederal student aid.



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Tip: If you see an asterisk () next to the EFC on your SAR, your FAFSA has been selected for verification. You will receive email instructions for completing verification from BGU. Your attention to all financial aid communication is essential for prompt processing, especially if you are selected for verification.*

Step Two The financial aid office will contact you with information about how to apply for institutional aid, what financial aid you are eligible to receive, and how to accept the aid that you would like to utilize.

Tip: You will be completing a FAFSA for each school year that you attend BGU. Next year's FAFSA will open on October 1, 2023.