

FAFSA Changes to Impact SWOSU Students and Others

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Significant changes were announced in 2015 and go into effect October 1 for the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) process that will impact students of Southwestern Oklahoma State University and millions of other students nationwide.

Students will be able to:

- **Submit a FAFSA Earlier:** Students will be able to file a 2017-2018 FAFSA as early as October 1 rather than beginning on January 1, 2017. This earlier submission date will be a permanent change, enabling students to complete and submit a FAFSA as early as October 1 every year.
- **Use Earlier Income Information:** Beginning with the 2017-2018 FAFSA, students will report income information from an earlier tax year. For example, on the 2017-2018 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) will report their 2015 income information, rather than their 2016 income information.

Jerome Wichert, director of the SWOSU Financial Aid Office on the Weatherford campus, said recent research and the Department of Education's own data suggest that implementing an earlier start date and using earlier income information will benefit students. Those benefits include:

- Alignment – The financial aid application process may be more aligned with the college admission process.
- Certainty – Applicants will not need to estimate income or taxes paid.
- Less Pressure – More time for students and parents to explore and understand financial aid options and apply for aid before state deadlines.

The FAFSA is the application that college students must complete to apply for federal student aid. For more information about FAFSA, click the following link - <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/announcements/fafsa-changes>

For more information about financial aid at SWOSU, contact the SWOSU Financial Aid Office at 580.774.3786, or click the following link - <http://www.swosu.edu/administration/sfs/>