



## OK, I filed my FAFSA. What now?

- Your information goes to the U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid.

- The schools you listed are notified that you have filed.

- You receive your Student Aid Report, where you can check and correct the information you submitted. You'll see your Expected Family Contribution on this report.

- Each school you listed receives your information. Some schools might ask you to verify it.

- Once a school accepts you, you'll receive an Award Letter explaining the financial aid package the school is offering.

You can check the status of your FAFSA any time at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Watch a U.S. Department of Education [video](#) outlining the FAFSA process.

December 2, 2016

## Applying for College & Financial Aid

### 5 mistakes to avoid on your college applications

**FAILING TO SUBMIT** When you complete an online application, don't assume it was successfully submitted. You should receive a confirmation from the school.

**NOT PROOFREADING** Spell-check and proofread for grammatical errors. Better yet, ask someone else to proof it for you.

**FOCUSING ON QUANTITY VS. QUALITY** Schools want to see passion and commitment. This will be evident through consistent involvement in activities or volunteer opportunities consistently over a period of time—not a large number that appear only in your senior year.

**REPEATING YOURSELF** Every part of the college application is valuable to the admissions process. Avoid repeating the same thought. Make sure each section is focused and has purpose.

**BEING UNTRUTHFUL** Never lie on your application. This includes exaggerating activities, inflating your grades or class rank or plagiarizing an essay.



### Stuff a stocking with college savings

Is someone on your gift list college-bound? Look into a 529 College Savings plan! These accounts let family and friends contribute toward someone's education, starting with as little as \$25. Iowa's 529 plan is administered by [College Savings Iowa](#).





(continued)

---

## SAT or ACT?

They're the two most common college admission exams in the United States—but which should you take? Here are some basic differences:

**SUBJECT MATTER VS. APTITUDE** The ACT tests you on subject matter covered in high school. The SAT is an aptitude test to measure reasoning, critical thinking and verbal abilities.

**TEST LENGTH** The ACT has 215 questions and takes just under three hours to complete. The SAT has 170 questions and takes three hours and 45 minutes to complete.

**AREAS OF EMPHASIS** The SAT has a stronger emphasis on vocabulary than the ACT, while the ACT has a science section that the SAT does not. The ACT writing test is optional, while the SAT essay is required.

**GUESSING** The SAT penalizes you slightly for answering incorrectly on multiple-choice questions. The ACT does not.

**INCREASING DIFFICULTY** Questions get increasingly difficult as you progress through the SAT. The difficulty level of the ACT remains constant.

**SCORING** SAT subjects are scored on a scale of 200 to 800 for a combined maximum of 2,400. Subject scores on the ACT range from 1 to 36. The ACT composite is the average of the scores earned in the four test areas.