Mount Saint Mary College
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IRS Data Retrieval Tool Benefits

College-bound students and their parents typically want to make every dollar and every minute of the college experience count including money spent on tuition and time spent on the college financial aid application process. The Internal Revenue Service is helping minimize the time spent on the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form by automating access to federal tax returns with the **IRS Data Retrieval Tool.** This tool provides the opportunity for applicants to automatically transfer the required tax data onto the FAFSA form.

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is available for online FAFSA submittals and is accessible through the FAFSA website. The retrieval tool allows FAFSA applicants and parents the ability to transfer their income information from the IRS to the FAFSA.

For the 2016-2017 award year all FAFSA applicants and parents of dependent applicants who indicate they *have filed* or *will file* a 2015 federal tax return will be directed to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to report and/or update their income information on the FAFSA.

Step by Step Instructions for using the Data Retrieval Tool are available online.

Benefits of using the data retrieval tool

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is an easy and secure way to access and transfer tax return information directly onto the FAFSA form, saving time and improving accuracy. Also, the increased accuracy reduces the likelihood of being selected for verification by the school's financial aid office.

- Applicants can complete their FAFSA more easily and accurately!
- The tool will increase the accuracy in the awarding for student financial aid funds!
- Applicants selected for verification can use the tool to update their income information and avoid unnecessary processing delays!
- ALL applicants and parents who indicate they have filed a federal tax return will be directed to use the IRS Tool.
- Applicants and parents who indicate they will file a federal tax return will receive email communication(s) directing them to use the IRS Tool to update their income information once they have filed their 2014 federal income tax return.
- Applicants selected for the verification process will be required to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (or) they may choose to request a tax transcript from the IRS which can later be submitted to the Financial Aid Office.

When will data be available from the IRS?

Electronic Tax Filers: Data will be available within 2 weeks of filing
Paper Tax Filers: Data will be available within 6-8 weeks of filing

If you plan to submit your FAFSA before you and/or your parents complete and submit your 2015 Federal Tax Return, then be sure to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to update your FAFSA record once the returns have been submitted and the income data is available to be retrieved.

Eligibility Criteria

Taxpayers who wish to use the tool to complete their 2016-2017 FAFSA form must:

- have filed a 2015 tax return;
- possess a valid Social Security Number;
- have a Federal Student Aid User ID (individuals who don't have a FSA User ID, will be given the option to apply for one through the FAFSA application process);
- have not changed marital status since Dec. 31, 2015.

Exceptions If any of the following conditions apply to the student or parents, the IRS Data Retrieval Tool cannot be used for the 2016-2017 FAFSA application:

- an amended tax return was filed for 2015;
- no federal tax return for 2015 has been filed ;
- the federal tax filing status on the 2015 return is married filing separately;
- a Puerto Rican or other foreign tax return has been filed.

Alternatives: If the IRS Data Retrieval Tool cannot be used and if the college requests verification documentation, it may be necessary to obtain an official **transcript** from the IRS. To order tax return or tax account transcripts, visit www.irs.gov and select Order a Transcript or call the Transcript toll-free line at 1-800-908-9946.

SPECIAL ITEM OF NOTE:

- Applicants who choose not to use the FAFSA-IRS Data Retrieval Tool (OR) applicants who use the tool but subsequently change the income information will be informed they must explain to their institutions why information they provided is more accurate than the information available through the IRS.
- Contact the Financial Aid Office to discuss your circumstances. The Financial Aid administrator may ask you to submit copies of your W-2 form, last paycheck stub, a letter from your employer, tax transcript, or other.

In addition to helping reduce the time and effort involved in completing and submitting the FAFSA form through the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, the IRS offers money-saving information to college students and their parents. Important information regarding tax credits and deductions for qualifying tuition, materials and fees is available at the IRS Tax Benefits for Education: Information Center and in IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education both of which are available at www.IRS.gov.