



Navigating FAFSA and RDS to Prepare for College

Both FAFSA and RDS are required and need similar information for completion. Below is a breakdown of what these two items are and the information needed to complete them.

FAFSA - Complete the **FAFSA** (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) to determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid.

RDS - Use **RDS** (*Residency Determination Service*) to receive an **RCN** (*Residency Certification Number*) to determine your eligibility for in-state tuition and state grant awards.

	 FAFSA <small>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FEDERAL STUDENT AID</small>	 RDS <small>Residency Determination Service</small>
What?	Possible eligibility for federal and state financial aid for college	Possible eligibility for in-state tuition and state grants
Where?	fafsa.gov	ncresidency.org
First Step?	Get FSA ID (<i>Federal Student Aid Identification</i>) – student and parent/legal guardian	Complete RDS online
When?	FSA ID before Oct. 1; FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1	Ideally before student applies to NC colleges and universities
	INFORMATION REQUIRED	INFORMATION REQUIRED
Student's Personal Identifying Information (SSN, ARN, USCIS or TIN)*	YES	YES
Parent's Personal Identifying Information (SSN, ARN, USCIS or TIN)*	YES	YES
Student-filed Federal Taxes	YES	YES
Parent/Legal Guardian-filed Federal Taxes	YES	YES
Student-filed State Taxes	NO	YES
Parent/Legal Guardian-filed State Taxes	NO	YES
Address of Permanent Residence	YES, for state grant eligibility	YES, for in-state tuition and state grant eligibility
Driver's License or Vehicle Information (if available)	YES	YES
Military Information (if applicable)	YES	YES
US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Documentation (if applicable)	NO	YES
What to Save After Completing Form?	FSA ID- Keep it safe.	RCN - (<i>Residency Certification Number</i>) Keep it safe.
Apply Again?	YES. Use FSA ID to complete the FAFSA each year in college.	NO. RCN never changes, but you may need to reapply if you transfer to a different institution.

*SSN = Social Security Number; ARN = Alien Registration Number; USCIS=US Citizenship and Immigration Services; ITIN = Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

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Both FAFSA and RDS are required to be eligible for financial aid and need similar information for completion. Below is a breakdown of these two items and the information needed to complete them.



FAFSA - Complete the **FAFSA** (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) to determine your eligibility for federal, state, and institutional financial aid.



RDS - Use **RDS** (*Residency Determination Service*) to receive an **RCN** (*Residency Certification Number*) and to determine your eligibility for in-state tuition and state grant awards.

		
Why?	Possible eligibility for federal, state, and institutional financial aid for college	Possible eligibility for in-state tuition and state grants
Where?	fafsa.gov	ncresidency.org (powered by CFNC.org)
First Step?	Get FSA ID (<i>Federal Student Aid Identification</i>) – student and parent/legal guardian	If you have a CFNC.org account, use your CFNC username and password to sign in to RDS.
When?	FSA ID before Oct. 1; FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1	Ideally before student applies to NC colleges and universities

College Entrance Requirements

School Type	Entrance Requirement	Testing Scores and GPA	High School Courses
NC Community Colleges	“Open Door” admissions policy: Anyone 18 or older or who has attained a high school diploma or its equivalent. (High school equivalent tests include GED, HI SET or TASC)	Placement Test OR Standardized Test Scores: <u>English</u> ACT Reading 20 OR English 18 SAT Writing 500 OR Critical Reading 500 <u>Math</u> ACT Math 22 OR SAT Math 500	You may be exempt from placement testing and remedial courses if your high school grade point average is 2.6 or above, and you’ve taken appropriate high school courses.
NC Independent Colleges and Universities	Entrance requirements vary among institutions.	Check the website or call the admissions office for more details.	Detailed information available using College Search tool on CFNC.org.
University of North Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum requirements for admission established by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina Individual campuses may have additional requirements beyond the minimums Meeting these requirements does not guarantee admission 	<p><u>For most students under 21:</u></p> <p>High School GPA: 2.5 cumulative weighted</p> <p>Test Scores: SAT: 800 old / 880 new, ACT: 17</p> <p>Detailed information is available in UNC Minimum Admission Requirements publication</p>	<p><u>For most students under 21:</u></p> <p>High School Courses: 6 units of language (English and other language) 4 units of math 3 units of science 2 units of social studies</p>

Note: These requirements are subject to change at any time.