



Tip Sheet for Financial Aid Administrators Working with Refugee and Asylee Students



Refugee and asylee students face unique challenges in their quests to obtain postsecondary education. This tip sheet is designed to help financial aid administrators working with this population with some of the questions they may have processing financial aid for these students.

Question	Answer
1. What non-citizen statuses are eligible for federal financial aid?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. permanent resident, with a Permanent Resident Card• Conditional permanent resident (I-551C)• Other eligible noncitizen with an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from the Department of Homeland Security showing any one of the following designations: "Refugee," "Asylum Granted," "Indefinite Parole," "Humanitarian Parole," or "Cuban-Haitian Entrant"• A citizen of the Republic of Palau (PW), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (MH), or the Federated States of Micronesia (FM)
2. What are the differences related to financial aid I should be aware of between eligible non-citizen students and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) students?	Eligible non-citizens are potentially eligible for all the same federal student aid programs that U.S. citizens are. DACA students are undocumented and therefore unable to receive federal student aid. They can however receive state or institutional aid depending on each state or institution's rules.
3. If a refugee or asylee student has the correct I-94 status but the card is expired, can I still use the card for proof of status?	The expiration date shown on an I-94 is the Office of Management and Business (OMB) form expiration date. All government forms have OMB expiration dates, but this date is NOT the expiration of the traveler's status. For refugees students specifically, refugee status does not expire unless revoked by the DHS. Refugee status continues even after the individual applies for and is granted Lawful Permanent Residency (LPR). For asylee students specifically, Asylum status does not expire unless revoked by the DHS or until permanent resident status is granted.
4. A refugee or asylee student originally stated on the FAFSA® application that they had completed a bachelor's degree but have now changed the answer after finding out they wouldn't receive a Pell Grant. What can I do to check the validity of this statement?	A bachelor's degree is a bachelor's degree no matter where it was earned. You should first check for conflicting information within your records and for understanding of the question with the student. Explain the penalties for misrepresentation and the potential for having to repay large amounts of money if the answer is not correct. You may also request that the student get an evaluation from World Education Services (WES) of the postsecondary transcript (or an equivalent evaluation from the company of your institution's choice) to determine if the education is truly the equivalent of a bachelor's degree.

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5. A refugee or asylee student has supplied us with a high school diploma that is not in English; what can I do to verify its validity?	Institutions cannot require students to provide translated versions of the diplomas or transcripts. If your institution does not have the expertise to make the translation, you may use a foreign diploma evaluation service. AACRAO has a book containing sample transcripts from foreign countries that can also assist in the process that can be found at http://www4.aacrao.org/publications . The following publications could prove helpful: <i>The AACRAO International Guide: A Resource for International Education Professionals</i> , <i>AACRAO 2016 Academic Record and Transcript Guide</i> , <i>Counterfeit Diplomas and Transcripts</i> , or <i>Guide to Bogus Institutions and Documents</i> .
6. Where can I find additional information on how to process financial aid for refugee or asylee students?	The <i>Federal Student Aid Handbook</i> has clearly documented requirements for verifying eligibility.
7. I'm waiting on a secondary match confirmation of the student's citizenship status. Can I award aid in the meantime?	The process for the secondary match (G-845) can take up to 15 business days. It is up to the discretion of the financial aid administrator to decide whether or not to award aid while waiting for the confirmation. If you do not receive a response after 15 business days and you have no information that conflicts with the student's documents or claimed status, you must make a determination concerning the student's eligibility and disburse the awarded aid.
8. What if I receive a G-845 non-eligible response back after 15 business days and I have already disbursed aid?	If the secondary match confirmation process indicates a discrepancy, you must ask the student to correct the discrepancy with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). No further certification of loans or aid disbursements can be made until the discrepancy is corrected. If the discrepancy isn't reconciled, the student must repay all aid except wages earned through Federal Work Study. Note that beginning May 2018, USCIS/SAVE will move to an electronic process for processing G-845 data and will no longer accept paper forms nor return paper responses.