

STUDENTS CONVICTED OF POSSESSION OR SALE OF DRUGS

(Source: Vol. 1, Ch. 1, p. 21-22, Federal Student Aid Handbook 2024-25)

The FAFSA Simplification Act amended Section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), making several important changes to student eligibility criteria. One of these is the elimination of the prohibition on receiving Title IV aid for students with most drug-related convictions.

Having a drug conviction while receiving Title IV aid no longer impacts a student's Title IV aid eligibility, and a student who has a drug conviction may be eligible to receive Title IV aid if they meet all other eligibility criteria.

The Department removed the drug convictions questions from the FAFSA form. Students with drug convictions are eligible for Title IV aid if they meet all other eligibility requirements, unless they are subject to a federal drug abuse hold on receiving certain federal benefits. The eligibility criterion related to the Anti-Drug Abuse Act is unaffected by the removal of the drug conviction question from the FAFSA form. See the drug abuse hold information below.

Drug abuse hold

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 includes provisions that authorize federal and state judges to deny certain federal benefits, including federal student aid, to persons convicted of drug trafficking or possession. The FAFSA Processing System (FPS) maintains a hold file of individuals who have received such a judgment. All applicants are checked against this file to determine if they should be denied aid. Records matching the drug abuse hold file receive a rejected application (reject 19 and comments 009 or 055 on the FAFSA Submission Summary). See the [FAFSA Specifications Guide](#) for more information.