Verification Process

March 31st is the financial aid priority date. Students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA early (begins October 1st).

Verification is a process where the Financial Aid Office checks the accuracy of information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the information provided on the verification worksheet and the previous year's federal income tax transcript for the parent(s) and/or student/spouse. Only a portion of the student population is selected for verification.

Selection of Applications to be Verified

A student may be selected for verification if there is a discrepancy, conflicting information or an unusual condition. In accordance with federal guidelines, effective for the 2014-2015 award year SUBR will verify all students that have been selected for verification by the Central Processing System. The following exceptions are made, in accordance with federal guidelines:

> **Verification Exceptions**
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> - Student**:**
>   1. Death of the student
>   2. Student is not a financial aid recipient
>   3. Student was selected for verification after ceasing to be enrolled
>   4. Student is only eligible to receive unsubsidized financial aid
> - Spouse (Independent students):
>   1. Spouse has died
>   2. Mentally incapacitated
>   3. Residing in another country and cannot be contacted
>   4. Cannot be located (the student does not have and cannot get his contact information)
> - Parent(s):
>   1. Both parent(s) are mentally incapacitated
>   2. Residing in another country and cannot be contacted
>   3. Cannot be located (the student does not have and cannot get his contact information)

Notification of Verification to Applicants

- The Student Aid Report (SAR) notifies students when they are selected for verification. The SAR is generated from the FAFSA and sent to the student.
- A letter and/or email is forwarded from the university indicating to the student that he/she has been selected for verification, additional documents may be needed and the timeframe for submission of the additional documents, if applicable.

Verification / Processing Time Frame

Student selected for verification are sent requests for the appropriate verification documents. Upon receipt of all requested documentation the verification process is completed within 5-10 working days (exceptions may occur during peak processing and registration periods). Documentation should be submitted as early as possible. Until *all* requested documentation is submitted to the Office of Financial Aid, further processing of their file is not possible. If a student submits documentation which appears to be fraudulent, the OSFA Counselor must notify the Director of Financial Aid.

Documentation

All documentation submitted to the OSFA must be legible, appropriate, and have the student's social security number or campus ID. Documents that are which is not legible (i.e., a copy of a tax transcript in which the income numbers are not identifiable), not appropriate (example: a tax transcript is requested and the student submits a W-2), or not identifiable (example: student submits a copy of the step-parents tax transcript and the last name does not match the student's and there is no student social security number or student's campus ID number) a request for additional documentation will be requested.

Document Collection Procedures

When all required documents are received, the student's file is considered "pending" and passed on to be reviewed/verified by a member of the OSFA staff. Once the verification process is complete and any necessary correction is returned from the Central Processor, the file is considered "complete".

Required Verification Items

SUBR manually verifies the items required by the federal government (AGI, Taxes Paid, Household Size, Number in College, Certain Untaxed Income and Benefits), as well as the other items that SUBR may have selected to verify. However, if further investigation is needed to resolve a discrepancy or conflicting information is present/provided, additional information may be requested.

- **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)**
  Adjusted Gross Income is verified using the student/spouse, and/or parent's federal income tax transcript or an acceptable signed IRS form (in accordance with the established FSA and IRS "Exceptions to Submitting a Tax Transcript").

- **U.S. Income Tax Paid**
  U.S. Income Tax paid is verified using the student/spouse and/or parent's federal income tax transcript or an acceptable signed IRS form to the information on the SAR/ISIR.

- **Household Size**
  The household size is verified using the family information (section B) on the Verification Worksheet.

- **Number in Postsecondary Institutions**
  The number of family members enrolled at least half-time (6 credit hours per term) in postsecondary institutions is verified using the family information (section B) on the Verification Worksheet.

- **Certain untaxed income and benefits**

The term "untaxed income" means any income excluded from federal income taxation under the IRS code. For an application selected for verification, specific types of untaxed income benefits:
1. Child support
2. IRA/Keogh deductions
3. Interest on tax-free bonds.

Institutional Discretionary Items

A student may be selected for verification if there is a discrepancy or a condition which is unusual and warrants investigation. If a student submits verification documentation (i.e., federal tax transcript), verification of the information on the document against the information in the student's file is required.

Correction Procedures

The Financial Aid Office (OSFA) utilizes FAA Access or Banner to input correction data for submission and processing. Corrections are made electronically if needed on a daily basis and submitted to CPS online. The corrected data are processed by the CPS and an ISIR will be returned to the University within 24-72 hours. The new ISIR contains a new official expected family contribution (EFC) number and confirmation of eligibility through computer matches with other agencies. The student file is then ready to be awarded.

Conflicting Information

All conflicting information must be resolved before awarding and disbursing federal student aid. If any discrepancies are discovered after disbursing federal student aid, the conflicting information must be reconciled and the student is required to repay aid received in excess of his/her eligibility. Resolution of Conflicting Information is required, as applicable, regardless to whether the student has been selected for Verification by CPS (Central Processing System).

Subsequent ISIRS

All subsequent transactions are reviewed for a student, even if the earlier transaction was already verified. Any time changes or data have been modified, conflicts must be resolved.

Failure to Comply

Students who fail to submit the required verification documents will not be awarded Title IV funds.

Submission After Deadline

The deadline for students to submit documentation is September 24th or 120 days after the last day of the student's enrollment, whichever is earlier. If the student does not complete verification by the deadline, he or she forfeits the Pell Grant (if eligible) for the award year.

Notification to Award

Students who complete the verification process are mailed /emailed an award notification. If there are changes to the ISIR/SAR, the student will receive a revised award notification by mail /email. Campus based aid (Federal Work-Study) will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis except for FSEOG.

Overpayments

The OSFA policies and procedures for verification are designed to eliminate the possibility of an overpayment from any fund. If however, an overpayment does occur, the aid is adjusted and the student is billed for the amount of the overpayment by the Comptroller's Office. A letter is sent to the student from OSFA informing them of the overpayment. A "Hold" will be placed on the student's account that may affect his/her ability to register for subsequent terms and receive academic transcripts. The "hold" will remain on the account until the account has been cleared.

Updating Requirements and Procedures

When students notify the OSFA of an allowable update, the counselor may submit corrections for a new EFC and the new EFC may be used to award financial aid.

Interim Disbursements

The OSFA does not allow interim disbursements. Students must complete the verification process before aid is awarded or disbursed.