

If You Are Selected For FAFSA Verification

Now that you have completed your FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) confirming your application has been processed. Your SAR may include a notice that you have been selected for FAFSA verification. What does that mean, and why were you selected?

Verification is a process by which the federal government requires schools to validate information provided by some applicants on their FAFSAs. Being selected for verification does not mean you are being suspected of providing false or inaccurate information. In fact, most FAFSA applicants are chosen randomly for the process.

Every school has federal verification rules that must be followed, and the information that must be verified is set by the U.S. Department of Education for each student. However, the process and forms that a school sets up to collect the required information vary. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE SCHOOL REQUIRES AND SUBMIT ALL INFORMATION PROMPTLY TO AVOID DELAYS IN RECEIVING YOUR FINANCIAL AID FUNDS.**

If you filed your FAFSA based on estimated information, be sure to update it with actual data after your family receives tax documents and files federal taxes if required to do so. Verification of income data reported on the FAFSA is **THE** most important verification item, and you are not permitted to submit copies of income tax returns or W-2s. You must verify income data by:

- Using the IRS Data Retrieval option when you update your FAFSA so that income data transfers automatically from the IRS; OR
- Ordering a tax return transcript directly from the IRS online at: <https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Get-Transcript> or by calling 1.800.908.9946

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Please note that either of the options on the front are available only after the IRS processes a federal tax return (2 to 3 weeks for electronically filed forms; 6 to 8 weeks for hard copy returns).

Other items or documents you may be required to submit include:

- List of household members (names, ages, relationship to student)
- Documentation of any untaxed income reported on FAFSA (i.e. income earned from work when taxes need not be filed)
- Verification of other household resources not required to be reported on FAFSA (Social Security Benefits, other government assistance, etc.)

A student is frequently asked to verify the items above by completing a verification worksheet provided by the school.

After you turn in all required documents, the school will review and compare them with your SAR. If errors are found, corrections will be initiated by the Financial Aid Office. If the correction of any information that was mistakenly reported changes your financial aid award amounts, you will receive notice of the increased or decreased awards.

If you need any assistance with the verification process, call College Depot to schedule an appointment at 602.261.8847.