

Verification is the process used to confirm that the data reported on your financial aid application is accurate. If you are filed the FAFSA and selected for verification, you will be notified on your Student Aid Report (SAR).

As families file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – making sure to get it in before state deadline in March – they shouldn't forget about one important, final step.

About one-third of FAFSAs are selected for verification. The process requires submitting additional documents to the financial aid office in order to support information entered on the form.

Colleges may ask families to send tax return transcripts, siblings' college registration forms, and proof of income or other supporting documentation.

Neglect to complete the verification, and students will find themselves without federal financial aid.

"We cannot disburse any aid to you unless you complete verification"

To ensure that the information provided by students and parents on the FAFSA is accurate, the U.S. Department of Education requires colleges and universities to **verify** financial and other demographic information. Verification of FAFSA data helps colleges and universities accurately and fairly determine the types and amounts of federal, state, and institutional aid students receive.

About **one-third** of FAFSAs are selected for verification each year.

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How FAFSAs are Selected for Verification

The U.S. Department of Education uses a risk model to determine which FAFSAs will be selected for verification and which data elements will be verified.

Here are the data elements that may be selected for verification:

- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
- U.S. Income Tax Paid
- Untaxed Portions of IRA Distributions
- Untaxed Portions of Pensions
- IRA Deductions and Payments
- Tax Exempt Interest Income
- Education Tax Credits
- Income Earned from Work
- Number of Household Members
- Number in College Students in the Household

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as food stamps
- Child Support Paid
- High School Completion Status
- Applicant Identity and Statement of Education Purpose

If you see an asterisk next to the expected family contribution (EFC) on your Student Aid Report (SAR), your FAFSA has been selected for verification.

Colleges are allowed to select additional FAFSAs for verification and to verify additional data elements. Some colleges voluntarily verify 100 percent of the applications filed by their students.

The Verification Process

The college’s financial aid office will ask you (and your family, if you’re a dependent student) to provide documentation to support specific fields on the FAFSA. They may also ask you to complete one or more verification forms.

College financial aid administrators have the legal authority to request additional information and documentation when verifying your FAFSA. If you refuse to supply this information and documentation, the college is prohibited from disbursing federal student aid funds to you.

How to Reduce the Odds Your FAFSA will be Selected for Verification

Any data element that was imported into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool will not be selected for verification — as long as you don’t modify the data.

Return to FAFSA | Log Out | Help

Español

Get My Federal Income Tax Information

See our [Privacy Notice](#) regarding our request for your personal information.

Enter the following information from your 2015 Federal Income Tax Return. ? Required fields *

First Name *	M
Last Name *	FSA
Social Security Number *	*** - ** - 1415
Date of Birth *	11 / 10 / 1980
Filing Status * ?	Married-Filed Joint Return <input type="button" value="v"/>
Address - Must match your 2015 Federal Income Tax Return. ?	
Street Address *	<input type="text"/>
P.O. Box (Required if entered on your tax return) ?	<input type="text"/>
Apt. Number (Required if entered on your tax return)	<input type="text"/>
Country *	United States <input type="button" value="v"/>
City, Town or Post Office *	<input type="text"/>
State/U.S. Territory *	Select One <input type="button" value="v"/>
ZIP Code *	<input type="text"/>

Select the button below to exit the IRS system and return to your FAFSA.

By submitting this information, you certify that you are the person identified. Use of this system to access another person's information may result in civil and criminal penalties.

The U.S. Department of Education does not share the model used to select FAFSAs for verification. But, here are some red flags that are likely to lead to verification:

- FAFSA includes incomplete data or data that appears to contradict itself
- Taxes paid are inconsistent with an estimate based on the adjusted gross income and the number of exemptions claimed on the federal income tax return
- FAFSA indicates that no tax return was filed, but income exceeds the IRS filing thresholds
- Marital status as reported on the FAFSA is different from marital status reported on the federal income tax return, especially if the marital status on the FAFSA indicates that the parents have separated recently
- FAFSA reports zero income or income that's too low to support the student (below the income protection allowance thresholds)
- FAFSA reports income that's too high for the receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, or other means-tested federal benefit programs
- Household size on the FAFSA differs significantly from the number of exemptions claimed on the federal income tax return

Recommendations

1. Tell the truth on your FAFSA. People who try to game the system usually get caught.
2. Use the IRS Data Retrieval tool to download income tax data into your FAFSA.
3. Correct errors on your FAFSA as soon as you find them.
4. If your FAFSA is selected for verification, provide the requested documentation as quickly as possible. You don't want to delay your financial aid.