I WAS SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION; WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

VERIFICATION FAQ'S

Q: What is Verification?
A: Verification is the process your school uses to confirm that the data reported on your FAFSA is accurate. Your school has the authority to contact you for documentation that supports the information you reported. If you're selected for verification, don't assume you're being accused of doing anything wrong. Some people are selected at random; and some schools verify all students' FAFSAs. All you need to do is provide the documentation your school asks for—and be sure to do so by the school's deadline or you won't be able to get financial aid.

Q: What documentation must I provide?
A: The documentation you will need for verification varies according to the items to be verified. The department encourages students and parents to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to import data from their tax return and not change it. It is the fastest, easiest, and most secure method of meeting verification requirements. If you are not eligible, not able or would prefer not to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool you may provide the college with a Tax Return Transcript. Schools are NO LONGER able to accept a copy of a federal tax return such as a 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ.

Documentation may include but is not limited to:
- Verification Worksheet
- IRS Tax Return Transcript
- W-2's
- Proof of SNAP benefits
- Proof of Child Support paid and/or received
- Schedules from Tax Return
- Marriage Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Alien Registration Card
- Other information/documentation

Q: Who can use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool?

A: The majority of tax filers will be able to use the IRS DRT with a few exceptions

- A married independent applicant and spouse who filed separate tax returns
- The parents of a dependent student who filed separate tax returns
- An applicant or applicant's parent who have had a change in marital status after the end of the most recent tax year
- Anyone who has filed an amended tax return will not be able to use the IRS Data Retrieval. Instructions are listed below to obtain a copy of your Tax Return Transcript.

Q: How do I use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool or get a copy of my Tax Return Transcript?
A: Follow the steps below:
Instructions for IRS Data Retrieval Tool
Once you have completed your taxes, wait the appropriate length of time (2-3 weeks for electronic filing and 8-11 weeks for paper return) then follow these steps:

1. Go www.fafsa.ed.gov, log into student's FAFSA record and select "Make FAFSA Corrections"
2. Go to the Financial Information Tab
   a. Update your answer to **Already Completed** for the question: Have you completed your IRS income tax return or another tax return?
   b. If applicable answer **NO** to the following questions
      i. Did you or your spouse file as Married Filing Separately?
      ii. Did you or your spouse file as Head of Household?
      iii. Did you file an amended tax return?
      iv. Did you file a Puerto Rican or foreign tax return?
      v. Did you file taxes electronically in the last 3 weeks (or by mail in the last 8 weeks)?
3. If you can answer NO to each of the questions, you should be able to complete the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. Enter your FAFSA pin and click "LINK TO IRS". You will be alerted that you are leaving the FAFSA on the Web. Click OK.
4. The IRS website will open to a page entitled "Get My Federal Income Tax Information". Enter your filing status and address information exactly as it appears on your 1040 and press "submit". (This tool is very complex and the information needs to match your 1040 precisely! For example, if on the address line of your 1040 you used the "St." abbreviation, but you typed the word "Street" into this website, the IRS Data Retrieval Tool cannot match you. Check your 1040 and try again.)
5. If your address was entered correctly, your federal income tax information will populate. Check the box labeled "Transfer My Tax Information into the FAFSA" and then click "Transfer Now"

6. Your session with the IRS will close and your information will be transferred into the FAFSA . **Though your information has been transferred successfully, the schools on the FAFSA will not receive the updates unless you continue through to Sign & Submit the FAFSA again.** Continue through the FAFSA and complete any blank fields but **be careful NOT to change any prepopulated value labeled as "Transferred from the IRS"**. If you change any value that is labeled as such, you will be required to complete the IRS Data Retrieval Tool again.

7. Proceed through to the Sign & Submit Tab of the FAFSA and choose "Submit My FAFSA Now" You will know your FAFSA has been submitted successfully when you arrive at the Confirmation Page.

Instructions for IRS Return Transcript (Online or by Mail)
If you are unable to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool you can request a Return Transcript online at http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Get-Transcript

You can get a transcript online or by mail to view your tax account transactions, line-by-line tax return information or wage and income reported to us for a specific tax year. The method you used to file your return and whether you have a refund or balance due, affects your current year transcript availability. http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Transcript-Availability

- To use **Get Transcript Online**, you must have a Social Security number (SSN) and immediate access to your email account to confirm your email address. Then you'll need to answer personal, financial and tax related questions to verify your identity. If you previously registered, just log in with your user ID and password.

- To use **Get Transcript by Mail**, you need your SSN or an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Individual-Taxpayer-Identification-Number-(ITIN) , date of birth, and address from your latest tax return.

Q: Am I required to provide the documentation my school is asking for?

A: Financial aid administrators have the right to ask for any documentation they feel is necessary to complete verification. If the family refuses to supply this documentation, the college is prohibited from disbursing federal student aid to the student except in very limited circumstances.

Q: Are there different types of verification?

A: There are currently 5 types of verification for which you might be selected. The type you are selected for determines which FAFSA information must be verified.

⚫ **Standard Verification Group**. Tracking flag V1.

Students/Parents who FILE TAXES must verify the following:	Students/Parents who DO NOT file taxes must verify following:
• Adjusted gross income • U.S. income tax paid • Untaxed portions of IRA distributions • Untaxed portions of pensions • IRA deductions and payments • Tax-exempt interest income • Education credits • Household size • Number in college • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits • Child support paid	• Income earned from work • Household size • Number in college • SNAP benefits • Child support paid

⚫ **Child Support Paid Verification Group**. Tracking flag V3.

- Students must verify child support paid by them or their spouse, their parents, or both.

⚫ **Custom Verification Group**. Tracking flag V4.
- Students must verify high school completion status and identity/statement of educational purpose in addition to receipt of SNAP benefits and payment of child support.

⚫ **Aggregate Verification Group**. Tracking flag V5.
- Students must verify high school completion status and identity/statement of educational purpose in addition to the items in the Standard Verification Group.

⚫ **Household Resources Group**. Tracking flag V6.
- Students must verify the items in the Standard Verification Group as well as certain other untaxed income on the 2014–2015 FAFSA:
  - payments to tax-deferred pension and retirement savings plans (Questions 45a and 94a)
  - child support received (Questions 45c and 94c)
  - housing, food, and other living allowances paid to members of the military, clergy, and others (Questions 45g and 94g)
  - veterans' non-education benefits (Questions 45h and 94h)
  - other untaxed income (Questions 45i and 94i)
  - money received or paid on the applicant's behalf (Question 45j)
  - resources or benefits not appearing on the FAFSA, such as in-kind support from a relative or a government agency.