

VERIFICATION Q&A

What is verification?

Verification is the procedure that reviews your FAFSA information to make sure that it is complete and correct. Your school's financial aid office is required by the Department of Education to request additional documents from you to verify the data submitted on your FAFSA.

How will I know if I am selected for verification?

If you are selected for verification, there will be an asterisk next to your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) on your Student Aid Report (SAR) and you will be told in your SAR acknowledgment letter.

Does my school let me know if I was selected for verification?

Your school will also let you know, most likely through email or your online school account, since your school is who you will be sending your information to.

Why was I selected for verification?

The Department of Education does not give you a specific reason why you were selected for verification and the information that is verified changes from year to year. Many applicants are chosen randomly, but you may be selected for verification due to inconsistent or incomplete FAFSA information.

If I am selected for verification, what do I need to do?

Your financial aid office will tell you exactly what is needed to complete the verification process. Most schools will send you a verification worksheet that specifies which additional documents and what information is needed. You will have to fill out this worksheet and send it back to your school along with appropriate documentation.

Should I send documentation even if my application has not been selected for verification?

No, do not send any documentation to your school unless they have requested you to do so.

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What type of documents will I need to submit for verification?

Your school will let you know exactly what documents you need to submit, but they may include items such as: a verification worksheet from your school, your or your parents tax return, dependent birth certificate, child support paid, divorce documents, high school transcript, marriage certificate, or alien registration card.

I was told that when I complete the FAFSA or provide income information for verification, I should use prior-prior year income. What does this mean?

It means that you are required to report income and tax information from an earlier tax year. Prior-Prior Year (PPY) refers to the year before the prior tax year. For example, on the 2018–19 FAFSA, you—and/or your parent(s)—will report your 2016 income and tax information, rather than your 2017 income and tax information.

What if my families' income has significantly changed since the PPY?

If this is the case for you, you must complete the FAFSA with the information from the required tax year. Then, after filing your FAFSA, contact the financial aid office at your school to explain your situation. The school can assess your situation and, if necessary, make adjustments to your FAFSA.

What is an IRS Tax Return Transcript? Is this the same as a copy of a tax return?

An IRS Tax Return Transcript is NOT the same as a copy of the 1040 Federal income tax return. If you cannot use the IRS Data Retrieval function within the FAFSA and must supply income and tax information for verification, you can obtain a free Federal Tax Return Transcript directly from the IRS.

What is the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)?

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows applicants who have already filed their federal income tax returns to prefill the answers to some questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by transferring data from their federal income tax returns.

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Why should I use the DRT?

It's the best way of ensuring the FAFSA has accurate income information. It may reduce the chances of being selected for the verification process. It reduces the need to submit additional tax documents to the financial aid office

When do I need to submit the verification documents?

Your school will give you a deadline for when the material needs to be returned. It is best to send everything in before your deadline, to allow for processing time.

Will being selected for verification prevent me from receiving my financial aid?

You will not receive your financial aid until verification is complete.

Will my financial aid change due to verification?

During the verification process, information is compared to the original data on the FAFSA and corrections may be made. These corrections may lower or raise the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) amount. Financial need is determined by the difference between your cost of attendance and EFC, therefore a change to the EFC could impact aid eligibility.

What should I do if I have been selected for verification but have an extension to file my tax return?

If you have been selected for verification and if you have an extension to file your tax return, you should provide your school with a copy of the IRS Form 4868 (Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Income Tax Return), IRS Verification of Non-Filing letter and all W-2 forms for the tax year. W-2 forms will be used to estimate the filer's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) figure for the purposes of verification. If W-2 forms are unavailable or are not a valid estimate of AGI for the given tax year, you may be able to provide a written statement of estimated Adjusted Gross Income.

What if I am selected for verification but will not file a Federal Income Tax Return?

Students and/or parents whose income falls below the minimum filing threshold for a given tax year should complete the required verification worksheet and submit all W-2 forms and/or other statements of income.

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How do I request a transcript from the IRS?

You can obtain a free Federal Tax Return Transcript directly from the IRS by [online request](#), by calling 1-800-908-9946, or by mailing Form 4506-T (Request for Transcript of Tax Return), and selecting the “Return Transcript” option. Further information about IRS tax return transcripts can be found at www.IRS.gov. Since it is possible that your current year’s tax return has been filed, be sure that the transcript that you are requesting is not the current return, but the return that was used to fill out your FAFSA (usually the return from the year before last).

Can I make a change to the information on my FAFSA while I am being verified?

It is important that during verification that a student (or parent, spouse) NOT make any changes to the FAFSA as this can delay the process.

Who do I contact if I have questions about verification?

You will need to contact the financial aid office at your school.