

## **Verification Policy & Procedure**

- Sec. 668.54 Selection of an applicant's FAFSA information for verification.

Verification is a process of certifying data reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or other documents submitted to the Office of Financial Assistance. Students that are selected for Verification are expected to submit documentation that supports income and any other information that is reported. The student's "To Do List" located in WaveNet/Student Portal will be updated as needed with the necessary documents required for Verification. Therefore it is extremely important for the student to review the "To Do List" often. During the Verification process the student is expected to fully cooperate with requests in a timely manner, failure to do so may result in cancellation, reduction, and/or suspension of financial aid.

Completing Verification consists of a complete review of data and may require changing information as applicable as data is received. The purpose of Verification is to make sure correct and accurate data is used to determine eligibility. Conflicting data must be resolved before student aid will process.

Most financial aid applications are randomly selected for Verification by the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Processor. However, there are other potential reasons for being selected for Verification:

- The submitted FAFSA application had incomplete data
- The data on the FAFSA application appears to have contradicting data
- The FAFSA application may have estimated information
- The Office of Financial Assistance may select students for federal Verification in connection with the review of an appeal

All schools that award and disburse federal Title IV funds are required to adhere to this Verification process.

**If you are selected for Verification, you must submit all required documents in a timely manner so that your file may continue to process.** These items will be listed in WaveNet/Student Portal in the "To Do List" for the academic year you applied for financial aid.

### **Federal Verification Deadlines**

Financial aid funds cannot be disbursed until all requested documents are received and the accuracy of the information has been reviewed, then processed. The review process may take two-three weeks to process during peak awarding, and during registration, therefore please submit requests as soon as possible.

If the student is selected for Verification, they will be notified via the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) after completing the FAFSA. In addition, the Office of Financial Assistance will post Verification requirements as "initiated" documents on the "To Do List" in

WaveNet/Student Portal and frequent email reminders are sent. Students should submit Verification documents as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the start of the semester for which the student has been awarded or within 10 days of the date the documents are posted as "initiated" requirements on the student's "To Do List". Financial aid funds will be held from disbursing to your student account until all necessary documentation has been received and reviewed, then processed.

## **Deadlines**

If you have been selected for Verification for the academic year after October 1, you must submit all Verification documents by March 1 of the following year, however, your federal aid will not process until you complete all required documents and you meet the minimum requirements to qualify for federal aid. Please note federal aid cannot disburse until all Verification items are submitted, reviewed, and processed.

If you have been selected for Verification for the academic year prior to the start of the fall semester, you must submit all Verification documents no later than **October 15**.

If you are selected for Verification after March 1, you must submit Verification documents within 10 days of the date Verification requirements are posted as "initiated" on your "To Do List".

## **Consequences if you do not submit Verification documents by the deadlines:**

Financial aid funds will not disburse to your student account until Verification documents have been received and reviewed, then processed. If you do not submit Verification documents by the above deadlines, your federal, state and need-based institutional aid will be cancelled.

Note: Students eligible for the Federal Pell Grant must submit Verification requirements by the federal deadline, which is expected to be September 20 or 120 days after the last date of enrollment to receive a Federal Pell Grant for the current academic year, however, all Verification documents must be completed prior to the end of your enrollment period.

## **What happens if there are discrepancies between the data on the FASFA and my Verification documents?**

After all required documents are submitted; the Office of Financial Assistance will compare them with the Student Aid Report. If any discrepancies are discovered during Verification, the Office of Financial Assistance may require additional information to resolve the discrepancies. However, such discrepancies may be significant enough to cause the financial aid package to be different from the initial package received from the school. The Office of Financial Assistance will make adjustments as necessary to correct discrepancies, therefore aid will be reduced and or cancelled if necessary.

If adjustments to the financial aid award are required, the Office of Financial Assistance will notify the student electronically via Pepperdine's email.

Review of documents submitted for Verification usually takes two to three weeks, but it may take longer during the peak season. Because Verification must be completed in advance of

disbursing any funds from any financial aid program, it is vital to send complete and accurate information as quickly as possible. This is a process that is required by the federal government. The Office of Financial Assistance may even determine errors in the process that may increase your eligibility for more aid.

### **Conflicting Information**

The Office of Financial Assistance must resolve all conflicting information and discrepancies before disbursing Title IV funds. If we discover discrepancies after disbursing funds, we will reconcile the conflicting information and take appropriate action under the specific program requirements.

### **Professional Judgment**

We require Verification prior to exercising professional judgment (PJ) and we are required to wait on the new ISIR reflecting processed corrections from verification before making a PJ adjustment. We may exercise PJ on corrected data only.

### **Suspected Fraud Cases**

Advisors /staff who believe they have discovered a case of suspected fraud should discuss the case including all facts with the Senior Associate Director and Director. If all are in agreement that fraud exists the case may be reported to the US Dept. of ED regional office. Cases must be reviewed by the General Counsel and the Dean of Enrollment Management prior to reporting.

Examples of this may include:

- 1). False claims of independent status
- 2). False claims of citizenship
- 3). Use of false identities
- 4). Forgery of signatures
- 5). False statements of income
- 6). Any credible information indicating that any employee, third- party servicer, or other agent of the institution that acts in a capacity that involves the administration of the Title IV, HEA program, or the receipt of funds under those programs, may have engaged in fraud, misrepresentation, conversion, or breach of fiduciary responsibility, or other illegal conduct involving the Title IV, HEA Programs.

### **Cases of fraud should be reported to the OIG by:**

Prior to reporting cases of fraud the FA Director and General Counsel should be notified.

- 1). Calling 1-800-MISUSED
- 2). Sending an email message to [oig.hotline@ed.gov](mailto:oig.hotline@ed.gov)

3). Mailing to: Inspector General's Hotline – Office of Inspector General – US Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-1510

**Questions?**

Contact the Office of Financial Assistance at [finaid2@pepperdine.edu](mailto:finaid2@pepperdine.edu) if you have any questions regarding Verification.