Verification at Ohio University

**Verification Selection Criteria**

Students submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the Central Processing System (CPS), which processes and transmits the application information to Ohio University. As a result of FAFSA processing, CPS selects some students to complete verification at their institution.

By participating in the Quality Assurance Program (QAP) Ohio University has the authority to determine institutional verification parameters based on research collected using QAP assessments, such as the ISIR Analysis Tool. This allows us to focus our attention on students with specific problems or who reported typically problematic values. QAP also allows us to determine what aspects of the FAFSA we choose to verify and, to some extent, what materials to request in completing verification.

Ohio University verification parameters will vary from year to year based on the research collected and information received using QAP tools and by reviewing the prior year’s verification population.

If discrepant information is found or detected during regular processing or review of the student’s FAFSA, the student is manually selected for verification. This can occur if a FAFSA item appears inaccurate or a student provides information that shows discrepant data.

**Required Verification Documents**

The verification items that Ohio University chooses to verify vary based on the selection criteria. For example, if a student is selected due to parental total income of less than $5,000, we would verify adjusted gross income and untaxed income for the student’s parent. As a result, we would request the parent’s tax transcript, W-2 forms, and a completed Untaxed Income Form. In another verification group, a student might be selected because the student is dependent and has an income of over $20,000. In this case, the student’s tax transcript would be the only document requested. The results of the QAP tools, institutional research, and review of prior year verification results determine these selection criteria and the items being requested.

When reviewing the student’s FAFSA information in relation to verification materials, if other items appear to be inaccurate, other documentation is manually requested by manually posting additional checklist items to the View Financial Aid Status screen.

**Acceptable Documentation**

For each data element that is verified, specific documentation is requested. The forms that can be used for documentation are specified in the Application and Verification Guide provided by Department of Education.

**Adjusted Gross Income and Income Tax Liability**

A student or parent’s Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and Income Tax Liability are verified with a tax return transcript. Any student not selected for verification, but shows questionable or conflicting data, will be manually selected for verification.
Untaxed Income and Exclusions

Untaxed income is any income that is excluded from federal income taxation under the IRS code. Exclusions are types of income that may be used to reduce an AGI based on Title IV regulations. While some types of untaxed income or exclusions are listed on the tax transcript or W-2 forms; others are not. Students selected to complete verification and who are required to verify these types of income must complete the Untaxed Income and Exclusions Form. This form requires the student and parent to provide any income received from the categories listed on the FAFSA. It must be signed by the student and parent (if applicable). Any student required to verify untaxed income and exclusions is also required to verify AGI and taxes paid. Therefore, these students are required to provide a tax transcript and all W-2 forms, which ensures that any untaxed income and exclusions provided on these forms will be accounted for regardless of whether it is listed on the Untaxed Income and Exclusions Form. Ohio University does not require the student to provide further documentation for each item on the form, but rather uses the signed form to complete verification.

If questionable of conflicting data is present, Ohio University may choose to require additional documentation of a certain type of untaxed income or exclusion. This would be done on a case by case basis.

Household Size and Number in College

To verify the household size of a student and the number of people in the household that are in college, a Family/College Verification Form is used. When a student is unable to provide a completed Family/College Verification Form, Ohio University will accept a statement regarding the household size and number in college signed and dated by the student and parent (if applicable).

Ohio University does require that, for an unborn child to be included in a student or parent household, the mother must be in her second trimester of the pregnancy and that the child is expected to be born within the award year. Medical documentation is required.

Ohio University does not currently verify household size or number in college within regular verification selection. However, scenarios do occur when an applicant’s household size may need to be documented. When this occurs or if questionable or conflicting data is found, a Family/College Verification Form is requested manually on the View Financial Aid Status screen.

Freshmen students may be awarded financial aid prior to completing verification, but must have a valid, non-rejected ISIR on file. Continuing students are not awarded financial aid until verification is completed. All students are required to complete the verification process prior to disbursement of any financial aid funds. Students not awarded before the end of the award year will not be eligible for student loans. Students may still receive the Federal Pell grant if awarded after the end of the award year as long as a valid ISIR was received prior to the end of the award year.

Generally, if a student has been selected for verification, they are not awarded any financial aid. If they were selected for verification after the fact, no further disbursements can be made until verification is completed. An exception is made for the initial awarding of freshman students. Freshman students who have not completed verification prior to packaging will receive a tentative award letter. A message is printed on the award letter indicating the awards are tentative until verification has been completed. Once verification has been completed, changes in the Expected Family Contribution will result in
changes in the financial aid. After the first priority awards have been made, freshmen who have not completed verification will not be awarded until verification is complete. Upperclass and graduate students are not packaged and aid is not disbursed if the verification process is not complete.

Students receiving Federal Pell Grant funds must complete verification no later than 120 days after the last day of enrollment or August 30. Students receiving Campus-based aid must complete verification within two weeks of the last day of enrollment. Students with Direct Loan eligibility must complete verification within two weeks of the last day of enrollment. If an applicant does not complete verification by the established deadline, they forfeit their financial aid. Students are notified in writing that their application has been selected for verification and of the information required to complete verification monthly.

Ohio University does not make interim disbursements on a regular basis. Interim disbursements may be made on a case-by-case basis.