SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

2021-2022 Verification Policy

Verification is the process mandated by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to ensure accuracy of the data submitted by applicants for federal financial aid. The ED selects approximately one in three students for verification of the information provided on the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In limited situations, Southwestern University (SU) may also select students for verification of FAFSA information. The Financial Aid Office (FAO) is charged with the responsibility of requesting various documents needed to verify the applicant's financial information as reported on the FAFSA.

If selected for the verification process, incoming first-year and transfer students will be notified upon deposit, via SU email. If a parent email address is provided, a copy of the request will be sent to the parent as well. Continuing students will be notified by email upon receipt of the FAFSA, via their SU email account. Students can monitor Self-Service to be informed of needed documentation related to the processing of their financial aid. Automated emails will be sent until all documents are received and logged into the system. Students must promptly complete and return the completed forms with the required documentation. Incomplete verification forms will be returned to the student for completion.

The priority deadline to submit verification documentation is June 15, 2021 for the Fall 2021 semester. Financial aid funds will not be disbursed until verification is completed. Merit scholarships will be disbursed regardless of verification completion.

If the student is selected after aid has been disbursed, no further aid will be disbursed. The student will have 4 weeks or by the end of the semester, whichever is later, from the first notification to submit documentation. If documentation is not received on time the FAO will return any disbursed Pell Grant and SEOG funds.

DOCUMENTATION

The ED has moved to a customized verification system. Students may be selected into any of three (3) different groups. They are:

> **V1**-Standard
>
> **V4**-Custom
>
> **V5**-Aggregate

The required documents for each group are included in the following chart.

Group	Dependent	Independent
V1	● V1D Verification Worksheet (signed by parent and student) **Tax Filers:** ● Signed copy of 2019 IRS Tax Return and applicable schedules filed for each tax filer OR Use of IRS DRT on FAFSA	● V1I Verification Worksheet (signed by student and spouse, if applicable) **Tax Filers:** ● Signed copy of 2019 IRS Tax Return and applicable schedules filed for each tax filer OR Use of IRS DRT on

	w/no change OR a 2018 Tax Return Transcript for each tax filer
	
	<u>Non-Filers:</u>
	● **Student**:
	  ● All 2019 W2(s)
	  ● Non-Filing Statement
	● **Parents**:
	  ● All 2019 W2(s)
	  ● "Verification of Non-filing Letter" from the IRS dated on or after October 1, 2020, attesting that the parent did not file a 2019 IRS income tax return.
		FAFSA w/no change OR a 2018 Tax Return Transcript for each tax filer
		
		<u>Non-Filers:</u>
		● All 2019 W2(s)
		● "Verification of Non-filing Letter" from the IRS dated on or after October 1, 2020, attesting that you did not file a 2019 IRS income tax return.

V4	● V4D Verification Worksheet (signed by parent and student)	● V4I Verification Worksheet (signed by student and spouse, if applicable)

V5	● V5D Verification Worksheet (signed by parent and student)
	
	<u>Tax Filers:</u>
	● Signed copy of 2019 IRS Tax Return and applicable schedules filed for each tax filer OR Use of IRS DRT on FAFSA w/no change OR a 2019 Tax Return Transcript for each tax filer
	
	<u>Non-Filers:</u>
	● **Student**:
	  ● All 2019 W2(s)
	  ● Non-Filing Statement
	● **Parents**:
	  ● All 2019 W2(s)
	  ● "Verification of Non-filing Letter" from the IRS dated on or after October 1, 2020, attesting that the parent did not file a 2019 IRS income tax return.
		● V5I Verification Worksheet (signed by student and spouse, if applicable)
		
		<u>Tax Filers:</u>
		● Signed copy of 2019 IRS Tax Return and applicable schedules filed for each tax filer OR Use of IRS DRT on FAFSA w/no change OR a 2019 Tax Return Transcript for each tax filer
		
		<u>Non-Filers:</u>
		● All 2019 W2(s)
		● "Verification of Non-filing Letter" from the IRS dated on or after October 1, 2020, attesting that you did not file a 2019 IRS income tax return.

Tax transcripts are available from the IRS by visiting www.irs.gov or by submitting IRS FORM 4506-T, checking box 6a and sending it to the IRS via mail or fax. Additionally, if the completed return is not available due to filing a Form 4868 (request for Extension), a copy of Form 4868, as well as all W-2 forms, should be submitted with the verification worksheet. With the change to prior-prior year tax data, even those who received a tax filing extension will be able to use information from a completed tax return by the time verification is required. Therefore, only students and parents granted an extension beyond the automatic six-month extension may submit the documentation.

PROCESSING

Once the verification documentation has been received, it will be compared to data elements on the student's FAFSA. If the information on the FAFSA matches the documentation provided, then no changes to the FAFSA are required, and SU will award financial aid based on the original FAFSA results.

If the verification process results in corrections to any data elements on the FAFSA, the FAO will submit those changes electronically. Both the student and SU will be notified of the reprocessed

FAFSA results by the FAFSA processing center. In this situation, SU will award financial aid based on the reprocessed FAFSA results.

First-year and transfer students will have their verification documents reviewed after they have submitted their enrollment deposit. Continuing students will have their verification documents reviewed prior to receiving a financial aid award notification. The FAO must resolve any conflicting data. To avoid this type of delay, students and parents should read and follow all instructions carefully when submitting the verification documentation. To prevent processing delays, all forms must be signed. Verifications completed after federal student aid has already been awarded or disbursed may result in adjustments to the already awarded or disbursed aid. SU's FAO will notify the student of the adjustment with a revised notification via Self-Service and SU email.

It is important to note that a student cannot receive any federal or state aid or institutional need-based aid until the verification process has been completed. Delays in submitting complete verification documents may result in a loss of gift funds.

REFERRAL OF FRAUD CASES

If you suspect that a student, employee, or other individual has misreported information or altered documentation to fraudulently obtain federal funds, you should report your suspicions and provide any evidence to the Office of Inspector General. To submit a complaint online at any time, go to U.S. Department of Education and click on the appropriate link. Inspector General's Hotline Office of Inspector General U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-1500 1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733) Hours: M, W 9:00–11:00 a.m. T, Th 1:00–3:00 p.m.

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