

6.0.0.0 2020-21 Verification Policy

Policy Information

Issuing Office

Financial Aid

Affected Parties

Students

Policy Language

Students selected for verification must submit all of the required documentation requests in order to be reviewed for aid eligibility.

Verification documents should be submitted as soon as possible because students who have not completed Verification prior to enrollment, and even Financial Check-In deadlines, will not be able to count all federal and most institutional aid toward their cost of education. Timely submissions will assist in timely processing and reviews. Students are encouraged to utilize the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, if made available, to decrease document review time.

Failure to submit the required documents (or to submit them in a timely manner) will delay or possibly eliminate the disbursement of federal, state, and/or institutional financial aid funds. Students are required to submit all required verification documents and complete the verification process within 120 days of their last date of enrollment or the end of the applicable processing aid year in September, whichever is earlier.

Procedural Information

Procedures

Students selected for verification must submit all required documentation requested in order to be reviewed for aid eligibility. When a student is selected for verification, the student will be notified as follows:

1. The Student Aid Report (SAR) immediately generated after completing a FAFSA will state if a student is selected for Verification by ED. Students institutionally selected for Verification will not be notified via the SAR, but through electronic communications from the University.

2. An informational email about the verification process and the first email notification outlining required documents will be sent to the student through his or her Liberty email account from the University within 24-48 hours after Liberty receives the selected FAFSA and matches it to the student's account. Continued email communications will be made until the verification process is complete.

3. Students may access a list of required documents at any time in ASIST under the ? Financial Aid? tab at www.liberty.edu/ASIST or on the Student Checklist located at <https://www.liberty.edu/checklist>.

4. Students may receive calls from the University regarding verification and form submission requirements.

Any additional form and/or statement requests will be sent to the student via his or her Liberty University email address and/or in ASIST. Please refer to ?LOSS OF AID ELIGIBILITY? section for more information regarding the consequences for not submitting required documentation for the verification process.

Liberty University's Financial Aid Office exercises its administrative capability to select a student for verification, and seek additional information in cases of conflicting information in a student's file. Conflicting information must be resolved before financial aid funds will be processed and/or disbursed. Failure to reach resolution within the enrollment period (which requires written documentation for the student's financial aid file) could eliminate aid eligibility. In some cases, resolution of conflicting information within 30 days of the end of the enrollment period may not provide sufficient time to process financial aid for that enrollment period which could result in the loss of aid.

The student will receive notification of the results of verification if, as a result of verification, the student's financial aid award amounts change due to a change in the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). If changes to a student's account are made prior to the student receiving an Award Letter Notification, the student will be notified of any corrections from the verification process by receiving a new Student Aid Report (SAR) from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). If changes are made after the student has received an Award Letter Notification and those changes affect financial aid, in addition to receiving an updated SAR, Liberty University will notify the student by emailing an updated Award Letter, no later than 30 days after verification is complete. Liberty University also uses electronic means via the student's ASIST account to ensure that the student is notified of changes to financial aid awards.

Policy Rationale

Do not submit documentation or statements that have not been specifically requested by the Financial Aid Office. A review must be conducted on any documentation voluntarily submitted to the office for potential conflicts. Students who choose to submit documentation that was not requested may prolong their verification or subsequently be selected for verification.

Liberty University submits verified corrections to ED electronically. This ensures corrections are made known to all parties and that the needs analysis will be updated accurately and according to federal standards. Additionally, the student is required to update any subsequent or related applications, such as state grant information, private scholarship forms, and other related institutional applications if applicable.

Sanctions

Verification must be completed before most financial aid will be awarded or disbursed. If financial aid has already been disbursed and the student is subsequently selected for verification, all undisbursed aid will be placed on hold until verification is complete. Failure to submit the required documentation (or submit it in a timely manner) may eliminate the eligibility for federal, state, and/or institutional financial aid funds. The student is responsible for any balance resulting from elimination of eligibility for federal, state and/or institutional financial aid funds.

Overpayments of federal and state aid are resolved when Liberty University makes subsequent adjustments to the student's account. In the event that an adjustment cannot be made by Liberty University to the student's account, Liberty University will refer the overpayment to the proper federal and/or state agency

Liberty University's Financial Aid Office will report any potential fraud or falsified information (on the part of the student, the parent, preparer of financial aid applications, or related parties) to ED and all other related parties for immediate action. Anyone who suspects fraud or abuse may submit a confidential report by contacting the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733) or by completing the online complaint form at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html>.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) selects Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submissions for verification, a process in which the school's Financial Aid Office must verify the information submitted on the FAFSA. In addition to the accounts selected by ED, Liberty University's Financial Aid Office reserves the administrative capability to select an account for verification at its discretion. This discretionary selection may be generated due to conflicting information, or due to concerns that data may not be accurate or complete. The following policies for verifying information are implemented in accordance with federal regulations.

Definition of Glossary Terms

Verification: The process of confirming the accuracy of information reported on the FAFSA with the U.S. Department of Education. Students should use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool if available when completing the FAFSA. For more information, visit this link: <https://youtu.be/zp7Wcd-jgrM>

Dependent Student: A student that is financially dependent upon a parent or a student who does not meet certain criteria from the U.S. Department of Education for being classified as independent.

Independent Student: A student who meets one of the following criteria: the student is 24 years or older, a graduate or professional student, married, an emancipated minor, in legal guardianship, orphaned, in foster care or a ward of the court, a veteran of the armed services, an active duty member of the armed services, has children or legal dependents or has documents describing circumstances of independence.

IRS Data Retrieval Tool: A tool within the FAFSA that allows you to electronically transfer your tax information directly from the IRS, which fills in many financial questions on the FAFSA. Certain financial elements transferred with the IRS Data Retrieval Tool will be masked when added to the FAFSA. Students and parents who would like to review this masked information should refer to his or her IRS Tax Return forms, because the information is pulled directly from what was submitted to the IRS.

Exceptions

Generally, students only borrowing Federal Graduate PLUS and/or Direct Unsubsidized student loans are not required to complete verification. However, if a student has conflicting information or cannot clear a potential fraud review, completion of verification is required. If a graduate student is receiving need-based aid (i.e. Federal Work Study) or some form of Liberty institutional aid and is selected for verification, the student will also be required to complete verification before aid is awarded or disbursed. Documents voluntarily submitted which present conflicting information will require verification.

Students cleared of the FS hold, can be unselected for verification if they were institutionally selected due to the potential fraud review and no documents with conflicting information have been submitted.

There are times when a school is not required to verify a student's application. Except in the case of the student's death or cessation of enrollment, however, none of the exemptions excuse the Financial Aid Office from the requirement to resolve conflicting information. Liberty is required to document the basis for an exclusion. Other information not excluded must still be verified according to all other requirements.

Liberty is not required to verify the FAFSA information of a student in the following situations:

Student Aid Report (SAR): A report sent to the student from the U.S. Department of Education that contains the following: an EFC calculation, a summary of the information the student submitted on the FAFSA, results of matches with other federal agency databases, and the student's financial aid history. It also defines any issues that the U.S. Department of Education requires the student to resolve before financial aid can be processed.

Title IV: The portion of the Higher Education Act (see HEA) that includes most of the federal financial aid programs

- Death of the student. The school is not required to continue verification if an interim disbursement was made and the student died before verification was completed. No additional disbursements can be made, except for FWS funds already earned, to any of the student's beneficiaries. The Financial Aid Office cannot originate or disburse a Direct Subsidized Loan or consider any interim disbursement made of Pell, or FSEOG funds or provisional FWS employment to be an overpayment.
- Not an aid recipient. The student won't receive Title IV aid for reasons other than a failure to complete verification. This includes being ineligible for that aid and withdrawing without receiving it.
- The applicant is eligible to receive only unsubsidized student financial assistance.
- Post enrollment. The student was selected for verification after ceasing to be enrolled at Liberty University and no further disbursements will be made.

Unless the Financial Aid Office has reason to believe it is inaccurate, it is not a requirement to verify the reported FAFSA information of the parents of a dependent student if any of the following apply:

- Both of the parents are mentally incapacitated.
- Both parents or the custodial parent has died.
- They are residing in a country other than the United States and can't be contacted by normal means.
- They can't be located because the student does not have and cannot get their contact information.

Unless the Financial Aid Office has reason to believe it is inaccurate, it is not a requirement to verify the reported FAFSA information of the spouse of an independent student if any of the following apply:

- The spouse has died.
- He or she is mentally incapacitated.
- He or she is residing in a country other than the United States and can't be contacted by normal means.

He or she can?t be located because the student does not have and cannot get his contact? information.

Date Approved

October 1, 2019

Date for Review

October 1, 2020