

FAFSA Verification

What is Verification?

To ensure the accuracy of the information provided by students and parents on the FAFSA, the US Department of Education sometimes requires colleges to verify a family's financial and other demographic information. Verification of the FAFSA data helps colleges accurately and fairly determine the types and amounts of federal, state, and institutional aid that a student receives.

How do I know if I was selected?

You may be selected for verification by the Department of Education or by the school's financial aid office. If you are selected by the Dept. of Ed., there will be an asterisk next to your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) on your Student Aid Report (SAR). If you are selected for verification by the college's financial aid office, you will be notified on your financial aid award letter. This isn't always highlighted information, so be sure to read your letter carefully!

Why was I selected for verification?

Often, families are selected for verification randomly- around 1/3 of FAFSAs submitted are selected. Other reasons for needing verification include:

- the FAFSA you submitted was incomplete
- your FAFSA contains estimated information
- the data you provided on the FAFSA is inconsistent
- you are likely to be selected if you choose not to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool

I've been selected, what do I do next?

The college's financial aid office will ask you (and your family, if you're a dependent student) to provide documentation to support specific fields on the FAFSA. This often includes one or all of the following:

- Tax transcript
- W2s
- Copies of tax returns

They may also ask you to complete one or more verification forms. Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines and don't wait to send these documents. ***Unless you successfully complete the verification process, you will not be given aid.***