

FINANCIAL AID VERIFICATION POLICY

What is Verification?

Verification is a process used by the U.S. Department of Education and the College for Creative Studies (CCS) to evaluate the accuracy of information provided on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you are selected for verification, documentation you provide the CCS Financial Aid Office will be checked against the information on your FAFSA, and corrections made where necessary by the CCS Financial Aid Office.

Yearly Deadlines

A student who is selected for verification must provide any requested documentation by the following deadlines. As described in more detail below, failure to submit requested documentation by the deadline may result in consequences including late fees or the loss or cancellation of federal and state financial aid funds.

March 1 – Priority deadline to complete FAFSA. If possible, all students should complete their FAFSA by March 1st each year to maximize opportunity to qualify for all available financial aid programs

July 15 – Recommended deadline for students enrolled in fall semester to submit verification documents to ensure all aid can be processed/applied in time for fall payment and avoid late payment fees

November 1 – Final deadline to submit completed verification documents for students not returning for winter semester (e.g., students who, because of an outstanding balance on their account that prevents them from registering for winter semester, are unable to return for winter semester)

November 15 – Recommended deadline for students enrolled in winter semester only to submit verification documents to ensure all aid can be processed/applied in time for winter payment and avoid late payment fees

April 1 – Final deadline to submit completed verification documents for students enrolled in winter semester

Why are students selected?

- a. Approximately 30% of applications are randomly selected by the U.S. Department of Education.
- b. The submitted FAFSA has either incomplete data and/or contains contradictory information.
- c. CCS reserves the right to institutionally select a student file for verification to review and resolve conflicting information.

How will I be notified if I am selected?

Many students will be notified via their FAFSA's Student Aid Report (SAR), which may provide a comment stating they have been selected for verification and that their school's financial aid office will be in contact with them.

Students are also notified through a series of communications sent from the CCS Financial Aid Office via regular mail (to the preferred mailing address you provided) and email (to the email provided on your FAFSA and your CCS student email).

What will I need to provide?

The Verification Request Notification sent to you by the CCS Financial Aid Office will provide a detailed list of the specific documents required for you and where to submit them. Some commonly requested documents are:

- Federal IRS Tax Return Transcript for student and/or parent
- Verification Worksheet

How long will the verification process take?

Once all requested documentation is received verification it takes approximately 2 weeks for the CCS Financial Aid Office to review the documentation and make required corrections to the FAFSA. Additional time may be required during high volume periods like late spring and early summer.

Since you will not receive an official calculation of your available financial aid funding until all documentation is received and processed, it's strongly recommended that requested documentation be submitted as soon as possible to enable you to have a clear idea of what will be owed out of pocket before the school year begins and allow you to make decisions and plan effectively.

What happens next?

We are required to resolve any conflicting information, so in some cases we may need to ask follow up questions and/or request additional documentation to clarify discrepancies.

Once all required verification is completed and any necessary corrections to your FAFSA are submitted electronically by the CCS Financial Aid Office, you will receive a notice from the U.S. Department of Education via email that a new Student Aid Report (SAR) is available for you to review. The SAR will provide detail of the items that were updated and, if applicable, any update to your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

CCS will use your updated EFC to calculate the federal, state and institutional aid for which you qualify. New/incoming students will receive an Official Financial Aid Notification via regular mail. Returning students will receive an email notice that their aid has been calculated and can be viewed on WebAdvisor.

What happens if I do not provide the requested documentation?

No federal or state aid can be applied to your account until all requested documentation is received and verification is complete. Failing to provide the requested documentation in a timely manner can have minor consequences, such as late fees charged to your student account. It also leaves you with an unclear picture of how much you are eligible for in financial aid and what your out-of-pocket expenses will be, making it difficult to make clear financial decisions. In the most severe circumstances not completing verification can result in the loss or cancellation of federal and state financial aid funds.

What happens if the school suspects fraud?

Most errors identified in the verification process are understood to be mistakes or misunderstandings and are simply corrected on the FAFSA or with a verification document submitted to resolve the error. However, per federal regulation, individuals who are suspected of engaging in fraud (that is, purposefully providing false or misleading information) or other criminal misconduct in connection with an application for federal financial aid will be reported by appropriate means, such as via a written letter, to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of

Inspector General for review. Examples of types of information that may result in such a report include: false claims of independent student status; false claims of U.S. citizenship; use of false identities; forgery of signatures or certifications; or false statements of income.

What do I do if I need help?

Please get in contact! We're happy to assist.

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