



## 2017-18 VERIFICATION POLICY

**VERIFICATION—WHAT IS IT?** Verification is a process that compares the information you reported on your FAFSA to federal income tax and other information you provide to verify that your FAFSA information is correct.

**HOW IS A FILE SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION?** The U.S. Department of Education randomly selects a certain percentage of students to be verified every year. Every institution also has the right to select a file for Verification if they have reason to believe the information reported on the FAFSA is incorrect.

**WHAT DOCUMENTS DOES WOU REQUIRE TO COMPLETE VERIFICATION?** There are three different Verification groups, each with their own requirements for documentation. The most accurate way to know which documents we require of you specifically is to look at the "Documents" tab of your My Financial Aid portal, which is accessible through your WOU Portal. Most students who are selected for Verification must submit the following:

1. **Verification Worksheet**—*read the worksheet instructions thoroughly*
2. **2015 Federal Tax Information** in the form of either:
  - a) Use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool in the FAFSA (*recommended method*), **or**
  - b) A copy of your 2015 IRS Tax Return Transcript from [irs.gov/transcript](http://irs.gov/transcript)

***Note: YOUR FEDERAL TAX RETURN FORMS (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ) ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION***

A small number of students selected for Verification will be required to submit verification of their high school completion status and a statement of identity and educational purpose. If you have been selected as part of this group, you will be instructed to fill out additional forms.

If you filed an amended tax return (1040X) for 2015, you will need to submit your 1040X in addition to submitting your Tax Return Transcript (you are not eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool if you amended your taxes). More information on how to properly submit your 1040X:

- If you filed your 1040X via **IRS e-file**, submit a signed copy of the "IRS e-file Signature Authorization" page
- If you filed your 1040X via a tax preparer, the tax preparer's firm name and EIN # must appear on the last page of the 1040X form
- If you filed your 1040X yourself via mail, you must have an IRS date-stamped copy of the amended form to confirm that they received it.

If you filed a foreign tax return, you will need to submit a transcript of your return from the government through which the original tax return was filed. All figures should be converted to US dollars using the exchange rate in effect as of the day the FAFSA was completed.

**CAN I RECEIVE MY OFFER OF FINANCIAL AID FROM WOU BEFORE VERIFICATION IS COMPLETE?** If you are an incoming freshman or transfer student and you completed your FAFSA prior to November 30, 2016, you will receive an *ESTIMATED* offer of aid prior to completing Verification. You will not receive an actual offer of aid until after verification is complete. If you are a continuing student, you will not receive an offer of financial aid until after Verification is complete.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I TURN IN ALL MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS?** The Financial Aid Office manually compares your documentation with your FAFSA information. If there is a discrepancy between your FAFSA data and your documents, we send that corrected information to the U.S. Department of Education. You will get an email from FAFSA any time a correction is made to your FAFSA. Depending on the time of year you submit your documentation, it typically takes between 8-10 weeks to receive your offer of aid from the time you turn in all required Verification documentation. Please note, however, that if you turn in your documentation several weeks after we first request it, your file could be delayed significantly past 10 weeks. Our priority is to process aid for students who turn in their documents in a timely manner. Please check your WOU email address frequently; if we require any additional documentation from you to complete the verification process, we will let you know via your WOU email account and via your "Documents" tab on your My Financial Aid in your WOU Portal.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS CONFLICTING INFORMATION BETWEEN MY TAX INFORMATION AND WHAT I REPORT ON THE FAFSA?** We are required to resolve any and all conflicting information that we have. If, for instance, you file the FAFSA saying that your parents are divorced, but their tax information says they are married, we will request additional information from you to determine the appropriate marital status. Or if, for instance, you say you made a certain amount of money but you didn't file taxes, and it appears to us that you were legally required to file taxes based on the amount of wages you reported, we will request more information from you and you may need to file taxes before we can complete your Verification.

**IS THERE A DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS?** Yes. Federal regulations state that you must complete Verification within 120 days after your last date of enrollment for the aid year or mid-September 2018, whichever comes first, to be eligible for the Pell Grant. The actual date in mid-September 2018 has not been published as of the time of the creation of this FAQ; check with the Financial Aid Office if you need the actual date. For all other types of aid, the Verification process must be completed and aid must be offered, accepted, and originated *before* the last day of your enrollment for the aid year. If you fail to submit your Verification documents in the time period specified above, you're ineligible for all federal aid for 2017-18.

**IF MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS RESULT IN A CHANGE TO THE INFORMATION I REPORTED ON THE FAFSA, HOW WILL THOSE CORRECTIONS BE MADE?** We will send the verified information electronically to the FAFSA's Central Processing System. Any time changes are made to your FAFSA, you receive a new Student Aid Report, which is emailed to you from FAFSA on the Web.

**IF MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTATION RESULTS IN A CHANGE TO MY EFC OR MY FEDERAL AID AMOUNTS, HOW AM I NOTIFIED?** If we make corrections to your record based on your Verification documents, you will receive an email from FAFSA on the Web with an updated Student Aid Report, which has your EFC on it. If your previously-awarded aid changes based on the Verification process, the WOU Financial Aid Office will notify you of the change to your aid package via your WOU email address.

**CAN I BE SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION AFTER I FIRST FILE MY FAFSA, OR EVEN AFTER I'M OFFERED FINANCIAL AID?** Any time a change is made to your FAFSA, you could be selected for verification, even if you make the change after you have been offered financial aid or have received a disbursement of aid. If that happens, we must verify your file before you can receive any subsequent disbursements of financial aid, and any changes to your Expected Family Contribution that results in a change in your aid will be retroactive. This means that if you received grants but then are subsequently verified and found to be ineligible for those grants, you will have to pay back any grant money you received.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I REPORT FRAUDULENT INFORMATION ON MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS?** If our financial aid office suspects that a student or parent is fraudulently reporting any data, we are required to report our suspicions and provide any evidence to the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education. It is a crime to misreport information or provide altered documentation to fraudulently obtain federal funds.

This document is available in alternate formats. Please give reasonable notice to the Financial Aid Office

### **WOU Financial Aid Office**

345 Monmouth Ave N • Monmouth, OR 97361 • Tel: 503-838-8475 • Fax: 503-838-8200 • [wou.edu/finaid](http://wou.edu/finaid) • [finaid@wou.edu](mailto:finaid@wou.edu)