

WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

2011-2012 VERIFICATION POLICY

VERIFICATION—WHAT IS IT?

Verification is a process that compares the information on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to copies of your and your parents' (for dependent students) federal tax returns, W-2 forms and other financial documents.

HOW IS A FILE SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION?

Certain applications are flagged by the federal aid processor for verification due to federal edit or random sampling. These applications are identified by an asterisk (*) placed to the right of the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) on the Student Aid Report (SAR). Other applications may be selected by the Financial Aid Office to clarify information. Approximately 30 percent of all financial aid applicants are selected for verification.

CAN I RECEIVE MY WOU AWARD LETTER BEFORE VERIFICATION IS COMPLETE?

WOU financial aid award letters are sent *after* the verification process is complete. Once verification is complete, you will be mailed an award letter showing the types and amounts of aid you can expect to receive from the federal and state aid programs. You will not receive financial aid if you are selected for verification and do not complete the verification process.

WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED AT WOU?

You need to provide the materials listed below to the Western Oregon University Financial Aid Office. After the financial aid counselor reviews the application and tax information, further documentation may be requested.

A. VERIFICATION WORKSHEET

This worksheet will be provided by the Financial Aid Office and needs to be signed by you and at least one parent, if you are a dependent student for financial aid purposes.

B. 2010 FEDERAL TAX INFORMATION

WOU will accept a fax, photocopy or digital image of the original signed return or a tax form that has been completed to duplicate the filed return. All copies must be signed by at least one filer or include the stamped, typed, signed or printed name of the tax preparer (not the name of his/her company) and his/her social security number (SSN), employer identification number (EIN) or preparer tax identification number (PTIN).

- Include a signed copy of the student's and spouse's (if married) 2010 federal income tax return and copies of all W-2s (unless you are self-employed and do not have W-2s).
- Include a signed copy of parents' 2010 federal income tax return (for dependent students). Include copies of all W-2s (unless you or your parents are self-employed and do not have W-2s).
- Include Schedule C and/or Schedule F if you filed those schedules; include Form K-1 if applicable.
- If you filed an amended tax return, send a signed copy of the original 2010 federal income tax return and a copy of the signed 2010 amended federal income tax return.
- No additional documentation is needed beyond federal tax return 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ forms. Please do not send other tax materials such as Oregon tax returns, Schedule A, itemized deductions, Hope and Learning Worksheets, etc.

ALTERNATIVE 2010 FEDERAL TAX DOCUMENTATION

- **Electronic Filers.** We cannot accept an IRS form 8453, which is the form the filer signs and submits when filing electronically. We can accept electronic tax return documents that contain all of the information normally provided on the IRS tax return, provided it meets the conditions explained above (see section B).
- **Non-Filers.** If an individual is not required to file a tax form, the completed non-filing statement on the verification worksheet is adequate documentation. See section D under Special Circumstances on the reverse side for additional information.
- **Foreign Tax Return Filers.** All figures should be converted to U.S. dollars using the exchange rate in effect as of the day the FAFSA was completed. A signed copy of the 2010 foreign tax return must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office.
- **Tax Return Not Available.** If your federal tax returns are not available, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 and request a copy of your tax return or a tax transcript.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A. FILING EXTENSION

If a tax return has not been filed, aid will not be packaged until a copy of the signed 2010 U.S. income tax form is provided to the WOU Financial Aid Office.

B. JOINT TAX RETURN FOR SEPARATED, DIVORCED OR WIDOWED INDIVIDUALS

If a filer completed a joint tax return but is single because of a divorce, separation, or death of spouse, the W-2 forms for all income showing on the tax form are required. In cases where the W-2 is unavailable for the former spouse, the financial aid counselor may, per professional judgment, accept a signed note from the student (if independent), or parent (if the student is dependent) explaining the situation.

C. EXCLUSIONS FROM VERIFICATION

Legal residents of Guam, American Samoa or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia or the Republic of Palau may be exempt from verification. To qualify for this exclusion, a dependent student's parents must also be legal residents or citizens of one of these former territories.

D. NON-FILERS

If a parent or student states that they did not and will not file a tax return but it appears from the income that a tax return should have been filed, this is considered conflicting information. Documentation may be requested to confirm that the individual did not file and was not required to file. Documentation may include letter 1722 from the IRS Customer Service indicating the person was a non-filer and a memo on letterhead from an accountant documenting, in plain English, that the individual was not required to file.

THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE HAS THE OPTION TO REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL VERIFICATION MATERIALS NEEDED TO VERIFY INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THE 2011-2012 FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA).

COMPLETING THE VERIFICATION PROCESS

A. DEADLINES

If you are selected for verification, all required documentation must be completed before any federal aid is awarded or disbursed or before a Federal Direct Loan will be originated. If you do not provide the required verification materials, your financial aid file will remain in an incomplete status and will be considered an inactive file.

The verification process must be completed within 120 days after your last day of enrollment or August 31, 2012 (as of the printing deadline for this document, the actual final date was not yet published by the US Department of Education; check with the Financial Aid Office if you need the actual date), whichever is earlier, to be eligible to receive the Federal Pell Grant. For all other aid types, the verification process must be completed before the last day of enrollment. The Financial Aid Office must originate all Direct loans by the last date of enrollment. The Financial Aid Office does not originate loans until the verification process is complete.

B. CORRECTING FAFSA INFORMATION

If corrections are required based on verification changes they will be made in the following way:

The WOU Financial Aid Office will make the corrections by electronic communication to the federal aid processor. When the federal processor has made the corrections, the Financial Aid Office will receive an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). The federal processor will notify you of these corrections.

This document is available in alternative formats. Please give reasonable notice to the
Financial Aid Office at 503-838-8475 or toll free 1-877-877-1593.