

# **Washington & Jefferson College – Office of Financial Aid Verification Policy**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Any student who files a FAFSA may be chosen for a verification review. This process is required by federal regulation and the College is mandated by this regulation to adhere to the procedures explained below.

The verification process entails the review of tax documents and household information to ensure the accuracy of the FAFSA application. The selection of an application for verification does not mean that the College believes that a student's information is incorrect. Some applications are selected for review on a random sample basis. Some are selected upon a set of common edits developed by the U.S. Department of Education which check data for consistency and logic. Others are checked against prior year applications that students have submitted.

For incoming freshmen and transfer students, financial aid awards are processed, though the financial aid remains estimated until the verification process is complete. No federal or college financial aid will credit to students' accounts until this process is complete. This can result in late fees and loss of permission to register for upcoming semesters for students whose accounts are not paid by the deadlines specified by the Business Office.

For returning students selected for verification, financial aid will not be awarded until the review process is complete. Lack of payment to the Business Office by their required deadlines can result in late fees and loss of permission to register for upcoming semesters.

## NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

Students selected for verification review will be notified via mail at their home address beginning in March for the upcoming academic year. A student may be selected during the academic year as well. Letters sent will indicate the documents required and students are given three weeks to submit the information. Three reminder letters will be sent via mail four weeks apart. After the fourth and final notification letter, the Office of Financial Aid will not communicate with students again about this process.

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDED TO COMPLETE VERIFICATION

1. Federal tax return transcript for the dependent student applicant and his/her parent(s) or for the independent student and his/her spouse. Transcripts can be obtained by calling the IRS at 1-800-908-9946 or requesting online at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Instead of a tax transcript, families can also submit a correction to the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. This will confirm/update the income information originally submitted on the FAFSA and is acceptable documentation for verification **ONLY IF THE INFORMATION RETRIEVED IS NOT CHANGED BY THE FAMILY.**

2. Copies of all W2s. This is required regardless of whether or not the IRS Data Retrieval Tool is used.
3. Full completion of either a Dependent or Independent Supplement Form, which can be found in the Forms section of the Office of Financial Aid's website. A worksheet will also be sent via mail with the notification letter. Be sure to follow all instructions on the form and make sure all signatures are present. This form is required regardless of whether or not the IRS Data Retrieval Tool is used.
4. Additional documentation may be requested at the discretion of the Financial Aid Director. For example, families who own a business will have to complete a Parent Business Value Verification Form and families who receive Social Security Income will need to submit a 1099.

### NON-COMPLIANCE

If the required documentation is not submitted, the following may occur:

1. No financial aid will be processed for the semester or academic year.
2. The financial aid application material may be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education for their review.

### TIME PERIOD

Following is the length of time you have to provide the requested documentation to the Office of Financial Aid:

#### Federal Pell Grant:

A valid FAFSA must be submitted by the students' last date of enrollment for the academic year. Students selected for verification have 120 days beyond the last day of their enrollment to complete the verification process.

#### Federal Direct Loan:

Verification must be complete before the Office of Financial Aid will originate a federal Direct loan and the origination must be processed prior to student's last date of enrollment.

#### Federal Work Study:

Students who are eligible to work on campus through the work study program will not be allowed to work until the verification process is complete and eligibility for this program is confirmed.

SEOG and W&J College grants:

Verification documentation must be received and processed by the Office of Financial Aid resulting in a financial aid award no later than the last date of enrollment for the academic year.

### CORRECTION INFORMATION

When possible, the Financial Aid Office will make electronic corrections to students' FAFSA applications. These corrections will generate an updated Student Aid Report sent via paper or electronic means. The estimated family contribution may change based on the corrections made.

### COMPLETION OF THE VERIFICATION PROCESS

When the verification process is complete, students will immediately receive:

1. A letter confirming that the verification review is finished.
2. An award letter indicating any change to the financial aid package for freshmen and transfer students. For upperclassmen, an initial financial aid award letter will be processed and mailed.

### REFERRALS

If it is determined that a student has received funds which they were not eligible to receive, the student must repay the amount. If a repayment is not made, the overpayment must be referred to the U.S. Department of Education. No further applications for financial aid will be processed by the U.S. Department of Education or W&J's Office of Financial Aid.