Lamar University Student Verification Guide 2021-2022

UpdateOn July 13, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education announced changes to Verification for the 2021-2022 award year. Institutions are no longer required to verify the household size, number in college, or tax and income information for students selected by the Central Processing System for Verification. As a result of this waiver, Lamar University will no longer require students to submit the applicable verification documents for the 2021-2022 aid year unless needed to resolve conflicting information that has been identified by the Financial Aid Office. This waiver does not apply to the Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose and High School Completion Status under Verification Tracking Groups V4 & V5, students in these two Verification Tracking Groups are still required to submit the Identity and Statement of Educational Purpose and High School Completion Verification worksheets along with applicable documentation to receive a financial aid award.

Updates to financial aid requirements in the self-service banner system will begin immediately to address this new guidance. If selected for verification, please continue to monitor your self-service banner account for updates to your account. Visit Changes to 2021-2022 Verification Requirements | Knowledge Center for more information.

What is Verification?

Verification is a process used to validate certain information you entered on your FAFSA. Because errors are commonly made on the application, this process verifies selected information on the FAFSA is correct and makes any required corrections. Institutions that participate in Federal Title IV aid programs are required to perform verification on selected students.

Selection Process

The Central Processing System (CPS) selects which applications are to be verified. The school also has the authority to verify additional students.

Notification

If your FAFSA is selected for verification, you will be notified of your status as follows:

a) the Central Processing System (CPS) Service will notify you on the Student Aid Report (SAR). Next to the EFC will be an asterisk referring to a comment in the student section of the SAR that tells you that you will be asked by the University to provide documentation for verification; and

b) Lamar will send an email notification to you regarding outstanding requirements. These requirements are outlined in the your Self-Service Banner Account.

University email notifications sent to a student whose FAFSA information is selected for verification will include:

a) a link to the student's Self-Service Banner login screen: https://ssbprod.lamar.edu:9000/btdb/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin. This site allows the student to view all documentation needed to satisfy the verification requirements and complete any additional financial aid requirements; and

b) the student's responsibilities with respect to completing all requirements for financial aid, including the consequences of failing to complete any required action or delaying the completion of any requirements.

Deadlines to Complete Verification

Except for students selected for Verification Tracking Groups V4 and V5, verification documents must be received by the institution no later than 120 days after your last date of enrollment for the 2021-2022 award year or September 17, 2022, whichever is earlier. If selected for Verification Tracking Groups V4 and V5, institutions must submit identity and high school completion status verification results no later than 60 days following the institution's first request to the student to submit the documentation.

To allow time for accurate processing we encourage you to complete the verification process as soon as possible but no later than two weeks before your last date of enrollment for the 2021-2022 award year. If you complete verification after you are no longer enrolled, you may only be eligible to receive Federal Pell Grant funds.

Verification is complete once the school has all the requested documentation and a valid FAFSA.

Consequences for Failure to Submit Documentation

If verification is not complete by the deadline:

- Aid that was previously disbursed for the award year may be canceled
- Aid that has been offered will not disburse and may be canceled
- You may lose out on campus-based aid programs (i.e. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant).

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Updating FAFSA Information

►*Generally, a student cannot update FAFSA information that was <u>correct</u> as of the date the application was signed because the FAFSA is considered to be a "snapshot" of the family's financial situation as of that date.* For example, if a student's family sold some stock after signing the FAFSA and spent the proceeds on an automobile or home improvement, the student cannot update the FAFSA to reflect a change in assets. After the FAFSA is signed, only certain items can be updated under the conditions listed below.

(1) **Dependency Status Change:** If a student's dependency status changes at any time during the award year, the student must update FAFSA information, except when the update is due to a change in the student's marital status.

(2) **Verification of Household Size or Number in College:** An applicant whose FAFSA information is selected for verification of household size or number in college must update those items to be correct as of the date of verification, except when the update is due to a change in the student's marital status.

(3) **Marital Status Change:** The University may require a student to update FAFSA information under paragraph (1) or (2) of this section for a change in the student's marital status if the University determines that the update is necessary to address an inequity or to reflect more accurately the student's ability to pay.

Correcting Errors on FAFSA Information

►*Although a student cannot update FAFSA information that was filed correctly, except under limited conditions as listed-above, <u>errors made on the original FAFSA must be corrected</u>.*

To apply for federal aid, a student submits a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the Central Processing System (CPS). Generally, the FAFSA is submitted through the online process and the student receives from the CPS an electronic summary of his/her processed FAFSA known as the Student Aid Report (SAR).

Upon receipt of the SAR, the student should review all information listed on the SAR and submit for processing any errors reported on the original FAFSA to the CPS. In addition, customized Lamar University Verification Worksheets will be listed in the Self-Service Banner for students selected for federal verification. The student and parent(s) should complete the documentation as soon as possible and return it to the Financial Aid Office. Please note the deadlines listed above.

An electronic summary of a student's original FAFSA and any corrected FAFSA information will be sent from the CPS to the University. Once received, all FAFSA data, Lamar University Verification Worksheets, and any supplemental verification documents will then be reviewed by the Financial Aid Office to verify the accuracy of the student's FAFSA information and to calculate his/her eligibility for need-based financial aid.

►*If a student's FAFSA information changes as a result of the University's verification process,*

the Office of Student Financial Assistance will:

a) *submit for processing changes to the FAFSA information determined to be in error*;*
b) *recalculate the student's Federal Pell Grant on the basis of the recalculated EFC;*
c) *adjust the student's financial aid package on the basis of the recalculated EFC; and*
d) *notify the student via email and Self-Service Banner of any change to his/her financial aid package.*

*Note: Although the University will be able to submit most changes to FAFSA information, on occasion it may be necessary for the student to submit changes directly to the CPS. These events include a correction to the student's biographical information, marital status, or dependency status or a correction to a parent's biographical information or marital status. In such cases, the University will notify the student by phone, mail, or email as to which data items must be corrected by the student and submitted for processing to the CPS. Additionally, some corrections, such as incorrect tax return filing statuses, will need to be addressed by the student and/or parent before we will are able to continue processing the student's application.

Any corrections or updates must be submitted by midnight Central Time, September 10, 2022.

Applicant Verification with No Corrections Necessary

In many situations, applicants who have been selected for verification do not have any errors on their application and therefore no information reported on their FAFSA needs updating. Applicants and their parents are encouraged to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool because of its accuracy and ease of use.

Selection After Disbursement

A student's application may be selected for verification after corrections are submitted and the student has been paid based on the previous unselected CPS transaction. The student is required to complete verification before receiving any further disbursements. If verification does not justify aid already disbursed, the student is responsible for repaying all aid for which he is not eligible, though he may keep any Direct Loan money he received and FWS wages he earned. See the section titled "Consequences for Failure to Submit Documentation" above for what happens if verification is not complete.

Professional Judgments

Professional judgment is the discretionary action available to a financial aid administrator to address unusual circumstances that affect a student's ability to pay education expenses. Financial aid administrators may make adjustments on a case-by-case basis, and documentation must be collected. Students may email financialaid@lamar.edu to inquire.

Referral of Fraud Cases

The Lamar University Office of Student Financial Assistance will report any suspected fraud or falsified information (on the part of the student, the parent, and preparer of financial aid applications or related parties) to the U. S. Department of Education and all other related parties for immediate action. Examples of such information include false claims of independent student status, false claims of citizenship, use of false identities, forgery of signatures or certificates, and false statements of income. This information will be forwarded to authorized agencies in addition to the U.S Department of Education for investigation such as the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733) or by email at oig.hotline@ed.gov; web: http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html. Anyone who suspects fraud or abuse may make a confidential report contacting the Office of Inspector General. Noncompliance issues follow the University administrative chain of command. Should an issue remain unresolved, complainants can call the State Hotline at 1-800-TXAUDIT. Complainants can also report suspected instances of noncompliance to the Department of Education, Office of the Ombudsmen, or report the complaint to www.ethicspoint.com

Definitions of Common Terms

►*Central Processing System (CPS):* The primary business function of the CPS is student application processing and eligibility determination for federal student financial assistance for postsecondary education.

►*Federal Expected Family Contribution (FM EFC):* A measure of how much the student and his/her family can be expected to contribute to the cost of the student's education for the award year based on the federal need analysis formula. Note: The University determines a student's eligibility for need-based federal aid based on a student's FM EFC.

►*Institutional Expected Family Contribution (IM EFC):* A measure of how much the student and his/her family can be expected to contribute to the cost of the student's education for the award year based on the institutional need analysis formula. Note: The University determines a student's eligibility for need-based institutional aid based on a student's IM EFC.

►*Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR):* One of two output documents created by the CPS after processing a student's FAFSA. The ISIR is made available electronically to the institutions listed on the student's FAFSA and his/her state agency.

►*Federal subsidized student financial assistance programs:* Title IV, HEA programs for which eligibility is determined on the basis of an applicant's FAFSA EFC. These programs include the Federal

Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study (FWS), Federal Perkins Loan, and Direct Subsidized Loan programs.

►*Federal unsubsidized student financial assistance programs:* Title IV, HEA programs for which eligibility is not based on an applicant's FAFSA EFC. For students attending Lamar University, these programs include the Direct Unsubsidized Loan and Direct PLUS Loan programs.

►*Student Aid Report (SAR):* One of two output documents created by the CPS after processing a student's FAFSA. The SAR is made available electronically to the student.