The Verification Process

Hampshire College
Financial Aid Office

Your Student Aid Report (SAR) indicates that your FAFSA has been selected by the U.S. Department of Education for the process known as verification. Hampshire College may also select your FAFSA for verification. The U.S. Department of Education may select a student based on certain information provided on the FAFSA, or it could be a random selection. Hampshire College may select a student because of inconsistent or conflicting information. <u>Please read this information sheet to learn more about the process and the required documents and data you and your parents need to provide to the financial aid office.</u>

We strongly encourage **new students** to complete verification well before they arrive to campus. **New students** with tentative awards may have their aid adjusted based on the outcome of the verification. **Continuing students** must complete verification before we determine their aid. We do not process one's federal aid (loans and grants) until verification is complete.

Follow these steps to help you complete the process:

1. Check your online financial aid account on TheHUB (https://thehub.hampshire.edu) to see what required items you need to provide to the financial aid office by the deadline listed below. Click on the "My Financial Aid" link; then select the My Documents tab.
2. Check your online financial aid account on TheHUB from time to time to see if any additional required items were added.
3. Contact us with any questions—see our contact information on the next page.
4. After we receive all required forms and data and after we complete the verification of your FAFSA data you will receive an email from us indicating that the verification process is complete.

Required documentation: The verification process requires the student to complete and return a specific verification worksheet to the financial aid office. There are three different worksheets: *Standard*, *Custom*, and *Aggregate*. Students must be sure to complete their specific worksheet. You may view which of the three is required for your verification by clicking on the "My Financial Aid" link on TheHUB; then select the My Documents tab. Once you have confirmed which worksheet is required you may print a copy of the Worksheet at our web page, https://financialaid.hampshire.edu; click on the Financial Aid Forms link at the top of the page.

Carefully read the instructions on your specific worksheet to make sure you provide all of the required documents and data. Some of the requirements ***may*** include an IRS Tax Return Transcript, copies of W-2 forms, or proof of high school completion. These requirements will be listed on TheHUB; provide only what is required.

The *Standard* and *Aggregate* worksheets require the financial aid office to verify the student's and the custodial parents' income. This would require an IRS Tax Return Transcript or the use of the Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA (not available after mid-March 2017). Visit our web page at https://financialaid.hampshire.edu for instructions how to request the Tax Return Transcript, if needed; scroll down to the Verification Section for the appropriate links. The *Standard* worksheet may be mailed, faxed, or scanned and emailed to the financial aid office.

The *Custom* and *Aggregate* worksheets require proof of a high school diploma or an equivalent. If the College does not already have the proof attach the appropriate document (see list on worksheet) to the worksheet. The *Custom* and *Aggregate* worksheets cannot be faxed or scanned and emailed; these require a "wet signature" and must be mailed or hand delivered to the office. The student may complete the *Identity and Statement of Education Purpose* section of the worksheet in person at the financial aid office or in front of a Notary Public.

Additional required documentation: Depending on your individual situation, we ***may*** request additional information, such as a 1099-R or the 1040X form. These additional forms will appear on TheHUB if required for your aid application.

Resolving conflicting information: If data on your FAFSA differs from the data reported on your Profile we will need to resolve this conflicting information. Data that may be affected include, but is not limited to, child support received or paid, tax deferred pension payments, and in the case of two parents listed on the FAFSA, the earnings from work of each parent. These amounts need to be the same on each form. You may be asked to provide documentation to the financial aid office to resolve these issues.

Correcting FAFSA data: Students may make a correction to their FAFSA report to update financial information. Hampshire College will also make corrections to the student's FAFSA based on information reported on various documents including the verification worksheet, IRS Tax Return Transcript, W-2 forms, 1099-R forms, and other sources.

Verification Deadlines: September 1 for Fall term, and January 15 for those returning or entering for Spring term. These are our institutional deadlines to submit the documentation to complete the verification process. These dates apply to campus-based aid programs including Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Perkins Loans, and Direct Subsidized Loans. A Pell Grant applicant selected for verification must complete the verification process by the deadline published in the *Federal Register* or no later than 120 days after the student's last day of attendance, whichever is earlier.

More information on back

Tentative awards pending verification: Students who had received a tentative award pending verification may have an adjustment made to their federal aid as a result of the verification. For example, a student may no longer be eligible for a Pell Grant or may now be eligible for a subsidized federal loan. Any changes to one's aid awards as a result of the verification process will be communicated to the student via a revised award notice.

Consequences of failing to complete the verification process: A student cannot avoid verification by accepting only unsubsidized (non-need-based) federal aid. A student who does not complete verification by the listed deadline will not be eligible for need-based federal aid (Pell, SEOG, Federal Work-Study, Perkins, and Direct Subsidized Loans), need-based state aid (State Grant), and need-based institutional aid (all versions of the Hampshire Grant). Hampshire College Merit scholarships would not be affected if the verification process is not completed by the deadline.

Referral of Fraud Cases: If we suspect that a student, employee, or other individual has misreported information or altered documentation fraudulently to obtain federal funds, we report our suspicions and provide any evidence to the U.S. Office of Inspector General.

Special Verification Cases

There are several tax and financial situations that require additional forms to complete the verification process. Please review the cases listed below to see if any of these may apply to you. Please contact the financial aid office if you have any questions about any of these cases. If you are sending any forms to the financial aid office, please be sure to write the student's name or College ID number on the document so we may match it to the appropriate file.

Filers of amended tax returns. Students or parents who filed an amended tax return cannot use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT). Please provide the following forms to the financial aid office to complete verification:

1. a signed copy of the IRS Form 1040X that was filed, and
2. a copy of the IRS Tax Return Transcript, and
3. a signed copy of the revised IRS Form 1040, which is the worksheet for the 1040X form data.

Victims of tax-related identify theft. These tax filers are not able to use the DRT or request an IRS Tax Return Transcript. Tax filers who are victims of tax-related identity theft must call the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit (IPSU) toll-free at 800.908.4490. After the IPSU authenticates the tax filer's identity, the filer requests a Tax Return DataBase View (TRDBV) transcript that will look different than a tax return transcript, but it is official and can be used for verification. The tax filer will then send a copy of the TRDBV to the financial aid office along with a statement signed and dated by the tax filer indicating that the filer was a victim of IRS tax-related identity theft and that the IRS is aware of the tax-related identity theft.

Filers of joint returns who are no longer married. When a dependent student's parents filed a joint return and have since separated, divorced, married someone else, or been widowed, the financial aid office needs a copy of each W-2 form from each parent and a copy of their IRS Tax Return Transcript. Similarly, an independent student must submit a copy of each of his W-2 forms and a copy of the IRS Tax Return Transcript if he filed a joint return and is now separated, divorced, or a widow. We also require proof of separation when parents or students filed joint returns. Examples of proof include copies of recent utility bills for each person indicating their residences, or a copy of the separation or divorce agreement indicating where each will be living.

For filers of non-U.S. tax returns an IRS tax return transcript is not available. In these cases we may accept a copy of the tax return, which must be signed by the filer or one of the filers of a joint return. We will use the income and tax information that most closely corresponds to the information on the IRS tax return, and convert monetary amounts into U.S. dollars as appropriate.

For non-tax filers we must receive an IRS W-2 form for each source of employment income. List the sources and amounts of income earned from work on the Non-tax Filing Statement, including every employer even if the employer did not issue an IRS W-2 form, and certifying that the person has not filed and is not required to file a tax return. Persons from a foreign country who are not required to file a tax return can provide the signed statement certifying their income and taxes paid.

Rollovers of qualified IRA, pensions, and annuities. The IRS Tax Return Transcript is not able to identify rollovers of IRA, pension, and annuity distributions. Generally, amounts of any distributions that were excluded from taxable income under the IRS rules--the difference between line 15a and line 15b or between 16a and 16b (on 1040 form)--are considered untaxed income for the purpose of calculating an applicant's expected family contribution (EFC). In the case of a rollover, the tax filer must provide the financial aid office with a signed, written statement indicating the amount of the distribution that is an authorized IRS rollover. Include a copy of the 1099-R form, which identifies the amount of any rollover (box 7). The financial aid office will adjust the amount of untaxed IRA and pension distributions on the FAFSA using the 1099-R form.

Questions?

Call us at 413.559.5484; send us an email at financialaid@hampshire.edu; or visit us, we are located on the second floor of the Kern Center, we are open Monday through Friday from 8:30AM to 4:30PM (our summer hours are 8:30AM to 4:00PM). Our fax number is 413.559.5585. Our web address is https://financialaid.hampshire.edu.