

What is Verification?

Verification is a federal process regulated by the US Department of Education to confirm the information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is accurate. UCA's Office of Student Financial Aid verifies all student files selected for verification by the US Department of Education's Central Processing System. The FAFSA results will indicate the student has been selected.

The US Department of Education allows Schools the authority to select students for verification. UCA will select other students for verification if the FAFSA or documentation submitted:

- Has conflicting information that may indicate an error on the part of the student or parent applicant.
- Has data that appears inconsistent and requires additional validation and/or the student/parent submits all or part of the verification documents.
- Has a sibling or spouse at UCA who submitted a FAFSA who was not selected for verification.

Request for Documentation

UCA Office of Student Financial Aid sends emails to the student's UCA cub account requesting specific information and documentation needed to satisfy the verification requirements. The email is sent within 5 business days of receiving the FAFSA. Individual staff send subsequent emails as follow up and also participate in call campaigns throughout the year. Requirements also appear on the student's myUCA portal.

Documentation Needed to Satisfy Verification Requirements

The following types of information may be requested to satisfy the verification requirements. We will specify which documents are required based on the Department of Education's assigned verification group, specific FAFSA responses and other documentation already received.

- Household size and number in college
- Signed copies of Federal Tax Returns (Parent and Student)
- W2 Forms
- Statement of IRS Non-Tax Filer Status (Parent and/or Student)
- Child Support Paid
- Child Support Received
- IRS Data Retrieval to FAFSA (Parent and/or Student)

- Proof of marital status (Parent and/or Student)
- Certain types of court documents (guardianship, ward of court, divorce, etc.)
- Other documentation required to resolve conflicting information

Documentation submitted to the Office of Student Financial Aid must be legible, appropriate and identifiable. It must contain the student's UCA ID number. Some documents may be returned and a request for additional documentation may be made.

Verification Deadline

The deadline date for completing the verification process is no later than 120 days after the student's last day of enrollment for the award year or the date established by the US Department of Education (annually), whichever is earlier. Students completing verification after ceasing enrollment may only be considered for Pell grant funds based on enrollment and term credits earned. As such, the published deadline for students to complete their file is no later than two weeks prior to the end of the term in which they are enrolled. However, exceptions may and are made based on guidance from the US Department of Education: "Notwithstanding this, if the student provides the documentation after your school's deadline, you may, at your discretion, still provide aid." FSA Handbook AVG.

Student's Responsibilities

All Federal Aid applicants are required to provide the requested documentation. The UCA Office of Student Financial Aid will not award or disburse Federal Student Aid (FSA) until verification is complete. Failure to complete the verification process by the deadline may result in the student not being eligible for FSA, in which case the student will need other resources to pay their bill.

Corrections, Notification of Verification Results

After the Office of Student Financial Aid Verification staff receive all of the adequate requested documentation from the student and/or parents they will compare the documentation with the information provided on the FAFSA. If any errors are found they will make the corrections and transmit them electronically back to the Department of Education's Central Processing System. They will send us an updated FAFSA transaction within 5 days.

The Office of Student Financial Aid notifies students of the verification results by sending an email award notification. The financial aid award is also visual on the student's myUCA portal.

Subsequent FAFSA Transactions

Making changes or updates to the FAFSA will result in a subsequent transaction being sent to UCA. If the subsequent transaction is selected for verification after federal aid has been awarded or disbursed, the student will be notified via their UCA cub account email. The student will have 15 business days after the date of email notification to submit all requested documentation. Failure to submit the requested documentation within the 15 business day timeframe will result in the cancellation of all need-based federal aid.

Suspected Fraud or Abuse

Per federal regulation, UCA will refer any credible information indicating that a student may have engaged in fraud or other criminal misconduct in connection with FAFSA applications to the US Department of Education's Office of Inspector General (OIG). In conjunction with UCA legal counsel, the Director will determine if a referral is warranted. Common misconduct includes false claims of independent status, false claims of citizenship, use of false identities, forgery of signatures of certifications and false statements of income. Note that fraud is the intent to deceive as opposed to a mistake on an application.