

Verification Requirement Changes Effective May 18, 2022

To provide relief to millions of students and colleges facing challenges and barriers resulting from the ongoing national emergency the US Department of Education waived some of the verification requirements of your 2022-2023 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). There will be limited requirements seen on your myUCA self-service account.

What is verification?

Verification is a federal process regulated by the U.S. 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 (OSFA) verifies all student files selected for verification by the U.S. 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.

How do I know if I am selected for verification?

The OSFA will send an email or letter to you when additional documentation is required. Letters are sent to the permanent address provided in the admissions process and emails are sent to the UCA cub account. The letter and/or email will refer you to your myUCA Self-Service Financial Aid Account to identify required information. This request is sent within five (5) business days of receiving the FAFSA once we begin processing for that year. Prior to the start of the term, at least one follow-up email will be sent to you if you have not submitted all of the requested documentation. At that time, notifications will be sent to both your UCA cub account and your personal email account, if one is provided on the FAFSA.

The following types of information may be requested based on the U.S. Department of Education's assigned verification group.

- Household size and number in college
- Signed copies of Federal Tax Returns (Student and/or parent/spouse, if applicable)
- 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 your UCA ID number. Some documents may be returned and a request for additional documentation may be made.

What Happens If Information on My FAFSA Doesn't Match My Financial Documents?

After the OSFA staff receive all requested documentation they will compare the documentation with the information provided on the FAFSA. At times, OSFA staff will reach out to you by email or phone to seek additional clarification. If there are differences between the FAFSA information and the documentation submitted, the OSFA will make corrections to the FAFSA data. All corrections will be reprocessed electronically. There is typically a five (5) day turnaround time for the OSFA to submit and receive corrections back from the federal FAFSA processor. Any correction may cause changes to federal aid eligibility.

The Office of Student Financial Aid notifies students of the verification results through an email if there is a change in the student's eligibility. If you have already been offered federal aid it will be adjusted accordingly.

What Happens if I Don't Submit My Financial Documents?

Your eligibility for federal aid will not be calculated until verification is complete. The deadline date for completing the verification process is no later than 120 days after your last day of enrollment for the award year or the date established by the US Department of Education (annually), whichever is earlier.

If the verification process is completed after ceasing enrollment you may only be considered for Pell grant funds based on enrollment and credits earned for the term. As such, the published deadline for you to complete your file is no later than two weeks prior to the end of the term in which you are enrolled. However, exceptions may and are made based on guidance from the US Department of Education.

Can I be selected for verification after my eligibility has been calculated?

Yes. Making changes or updates to your FAFSA will result in a subsequent transaction being sent to UCA. If the subsequent transaction is selected for verification or the new information affects eligibility after federal aid has been calculated or disbursed, you will be notified via your UCA cub account email. You have 15 business days after the date of the 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. The number of business days are reduced as the last day of the term approaches. You are responsible for submitting documentation by the verification deadline.

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.

Who Do I Contact If I Have Questions About Verification?

If you need help, contact our office (501-450-3140) and you will be connected to our verification specialist. You may also visit us on the 2nd floor of Harrin Hall Suite 200.