

What is Verification?

Approximately 30% of all FAFSAs are selected by the Department of Education for verification. The verification process is a federal requirement of confirming accuracy of data supplied by you and/or your parents on your FAFSA. If your FAFSA is selected for verification, a notification will be emailed to the email address on your FAFSA requesting the documents required for the verification process. This may include either linking taxes to your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool or having to furnish an official IRS Tax Return Transcript. Please submit documents within 14 days of request.

Why is the IRS Data Retrieval Tool recommended for FAFSA completion and verification purposes?

If you used the Internal Revenue Service Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) when filling out your FAFSA, and you have not changed any of the information retrieved, you will not have to verify that information. If you did not use the IRS DRT and you are selected for verification, log back in at www.fafsa.gov to see whether you can use IRS DRT to fill in the relevant fields on your FAFSA. If not, your school may require you to submit a tax transcript as part of the verification process. You can find your tax transcript through the IRS's Get Transcript service at www.irs.gov/transcript. Once you receive the transcript, please forward it to Piedmont College.

How long will the verification process take?

Verification may take 10 to 20 working days depending on the situation. During busy periods, the verification process may take longer due to the increased volume of students being verified. Incomplete or missing documents will delay processing. Once verification is complete, your financial aid will be awarded.

FAFSA Helpful Hints:

- **Leaving a field Blank:** The most frequent mistake made on the printed form is leaving a field blank. If the answer is zero or the question does not apply to you, write in a zero. If you leave a question blank, the processor will assume that you forgot to answer.
- **Income:** Use the 1040 federal tax return for income reporting and reporting taxes paid. If you use your W-2 and 1099 forms, compare them with the previous year's income tax return to make sure you did not overlook any source of income, such as interest and dividends. Using the IRS Data Retrieval tool is the easiest method to transfer tax information from the IRS to your FAFSA.
- **Untaxed Income:** Don't forget to report all the required sources of untaxed income. These include Social Security, child support, and workers compensation/disability income.
- **Marital Status:** If you plan to file as a married student, you must be married on or before the date that you sign your FAFSA.

- **Step-Parent Income:** If your parents are divorced and the custodial parent remarries, your step-parent's financial information must be reported in addition to the financial information for your custodial parent.
- **IRS Tax Filing Status:** Acceptable IRS tax filing status for married individuals is either "Married Filing Jointly" or "Married Filing Separately". However, there are exceptions. Verification selection is likely, if you or your parents are married and file as "Head of the Household".
- **Household Size:** Include those in your household that you/spouse or your parents provide more than 50% of their support. Also, include yourself. Even if you didn't live there during the previous year, you should always include yourself as part of your parent's household.
- **Read Instructions:** As with all forms and applications, make sure you read the instructions and questions carefully. If you're unclear about a question or are having trouble filling out the FAFSA, check the [FAQ section on the FAFSA website](#), or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).