

2021-2022 GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING VERIFICATION

Verification is a process required by the Department of Education (DOE) in which Piedmont University verifies the accuracy of information reported by you on the FAFSA. DOE selects approximately 30% of all FAFSAs for verification. However, the college has the discretion to select any FAFSA that may show conflicting or inconsistent data. If your FAFSA has been selected for verification, an email request will be sent for documentation needed. Federal regulations state that if the institution requests documents or information from an applicant for verification purposes, the applicant must provide the specified documents or information before federal aid may be awarded.

Documentation requirements vary from student to student. Not all documents are required for all students. The email you receive will outline what documents are required for you. As documents are reviewed, additional documentation may be requested. It is important to respond in a timely fashion to inquiries by the Financial Aid Office. Once your FAFSA has completed the verification process, you will receive an official award letter detailing your grant, loan and scholarship eligibility.

It is highly advised that students submit all verification documents one month prior to the beginning of classes. In some cases, you will need to return to the FAFSA and update your original application. If you are asked to “Import your tax information using the IRS Data Retrieval tool,” please review the information provided in our IRS Data Retrieval Guide. Otherwise, to update any other portion of your FAFSA, simply return to <https://studentaid.gov>. Click the button that reads “Login” to access your completed FAFSA. Navigate through the FAFSA to the necessary area that needs to be updated. Once you have completed your update, make sure that you sign and submit the FAFSA. If you forget this final step, we will not receive your updated information and will continue to request that you complete the update.

Most common verification items requested:

- Verification Worksheet – Dependent or Independent
- 2019 Tax Data for student and Parents:
 - Transfer taxes over to FAFSA using the Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA or a signed copy of the 2019 IRS Tax Return.
- 2019 W-2 Forms

Why was I selected for verification?

You may have been selected for multiple reasons – either by the Department of Education or Piedmont University. Typically, students are selected because of:

- Random selection
- Incomplete data
- FAFSA application has conflicting information

Can I submit a copy of my tax return as documentation?

Yes. If you are unable to use the Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA to transfer tax information, you may submit a signed copy of your 2019 tax return and all schedules to the Financial Aid Office.

Who am I supposed to include as a member of my household?

It depends. If you are a dependent student, you should include yourself, your parent(s) and anyone for whom your parent(s) provide more than 50% of their support. This would typically mean any siblings and/or step-siblings you have. If you are an independent student, you should include yourself, your spouse (if applicable) and any individuals for whom you provide more than 50% of their support.

Can I fax my documents to you?

Yes. Unless the documentation indicates that the original must be returned to our office, you may FAX or mail your documents. Our fax number is (706) 778-0708. Due to the sensitive nature of the documents, we do not recommend e-mailing documents.

What will happen to my financial aid if I refuse to complete verification?

If you refuse to complete verification, then you are ineligible for all federal Title IV aid (PELL Grant and student loans).

How will I know the results of my verification?

Once we have received all the required documents, we will begin the verification process. If any changes to your application are required, we will submit those changes to the Department of Education (DOE). You will receive an email from the Department stating that changes have been made to your application. You may login and review your SAR to see the changes. Once the changes have been processed by the DOE, we will process your award and mail an award letter or send an email your award is ready to view in the Piedmont University self-service portal:

<https://selfservice.piedmont.edu/student/>.