

2020-21 VERIFICATION POLICY

VERIFICATION—WHAT IS IT? Verification is a process that compares the information you reported on your FAFSA to federal income tax and other information you provide to verify that your FAFSA information is correct.

HOW IS A FILE SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION? The U.S. Department of Education randomly selects a certain percentage of students to be verified every year. Every institution also has the right to select a file for Verification if they have reason to believe the information reported on the FAFSA is incorrect. WOU also selects certain FAFSAs based on dependency status questions.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DOES WOU REQUIRE TO COMPLETE VERIFICATION? The most accurate way to know which documents we require of you specifically is to go to your WOU Portal, click on the “MyFinAid” icon, click on “Menu”, click on “Documents & Messages”; if we are requiring any document, the status will indicate “Not Received”.

CAN I RECEIVE MY OFFER OF FINANCIAL AID FROM WOU BEFORE VERIFICATION IS COMPLETE? Yes, starting with 2019-20 we will initially create an award offer when the FAFSA is received on or before February 1. After you submit all documents, we will complete the verification process, and if corrections to your FAFSA application are required, a revision to your award offer may be made and an updated offer sent to you.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I TURN IN ALL MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS? The Financial Aid Office manually compares your documentation with your FAFSA information. If there is a discrepancy between them, we will send a correction to the U.S. Department of Education using the information you provided us on the documents. You will get an email from FAFSA any time a correction is made with an updated Student Aid Report, which has your new EFC on it. If your previously-awarded aid changes based on the Verification process, the WOU Financial Aid Office will notify you of the change to your aid package via your WOU email.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T COMPLETE VERIFICATION? You may receive an award offer without completing verification but we will be unable to disburse any federal aid until you have submitted all required documents and we have processed your file.

HOW LONG CAN THE VERIFICATION TAKE? Depending on the time of year you turn in all completed required documentation; it typically takes between 6-8 weeks. Please check your WOU email address frequently for any additional required documentation that that may be needed to complete the verification process.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS CONFLICTING INFORMATION BETWEEN MY TAX INFORMATION AND WHAT I REPORT ON THE FAFSA? We are required to resolve any and all conflicting information that we have. If, for instance, you say you made a certain amount of money but you didn't file taxes, and it appears to us that you were legally required to file taxes based on the amount of wages you reported, we will request more information from you and you may need to file taxes before we can complete your Verification.

IS THERE A DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING MY VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS? Yes. Federal regulations state that you must complete Verification within 120 days after your last date of enrollment for the aid year or mid-September 2021, whichever comes first, to be eligible for the Pell Grant. **For all other types of aid, the Verification process must be completed and aid must be offered, accepted, and originated *before* the last day of your enrollment for the aid year.** If you fail to complete the process in the time period specified above, you're ineligible for all federal aid for 2020-21.

CAN I BE SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION AFTER I'M OFFERED FINANCIAL AID? Yes, any time a change is made to your FAFSA, you could be selected for verification. If that happens, we must verify your file before you can receive any subsequent disbursements of financial aid. Any changes to your Expected Family Contribution that results in a change in your aid will be retroactive. This means that if you received grants but then are subsequently verified and found to be ineligible for those grants, you will have to pay back any grant money you received.

This document is available in alternative formats. Please give reasonable notice to the Financial Aid Office.

WOU Financial Aid Office