

Art Center College of Design
Office of Student Financial Aid
Policies and Procedures
VERIFICATION

Once students complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the Central Processing System (CPS), there is a possibility that the application will be selected for a process called "Verification". This is an audit/review process in which the student's school of choice will be required to conduct a file review in order to determine the student's aid eligibility. Generally, CPS will select the application for verification based on conflicting data, a change from the prior year or due to a random selection process. If the application is selected, an asterisk will appear on the ISIR and Student Aid Report (SAR), next to the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). However, the school's Financial Aid Office also is authorized to "Institutionally" select applications for this review process in cases with conflicting information.

Art Center College of Design (ACCD) will not disburse any aid until the Verification process has been completed. ACCD verifies those applicants who are selected by the federal processor for Verification and may institutionally select those who have conflicting information or as the financial aid counselor deems appropriate.

Students who are selected for verification must submit required documentation and complete verification forms, along with the supporting documentation requested such as the IRS Tax Return Transcripts, W-2 forms, etc.

Students are notified, in a timely manner, via email and by ACCD portal (continuing students), of all required documents to be submitted. The verification process cannot begin or be completed until all required documents have submitted. The list below includes the verification items that may be used when reviewing a student's file:

Verification Items:

- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
- U.S. Income Tax Paid
- Education Credits
- Untaxed IRA distributions
- Untaxed Pensions
- IRA Deductions and Payments
- Tax-Exempt Interest
- Income Earned from Work
- Household Size
- Number in College
- Child Support Paid
- High School Completion Status
- Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose information.

Verification Tracking Groups: V1,V4, V5

V1: Standard Verification Group ~ Tracking Flag V1:

Students in this group must verify the following if they are tax filers: AGI, U.S. Income Tax Paid, Untaxed portions of IRA distributions, untaxed portions of pensions, IRA deductions and payments, tax-exempt interest income, education credits, household size, number in college, SNAP, child support paid.

Students who are non-tax filers must verify the following: Income earned from work, household size, number in college, SNAP benefits, child support paid.

V4: Custom Verification Group ~ Tracking Flag V4:

Students must verify high school completion status and identify/statement of educational purpose in addition to receipt of SNAP benefits and payment of child support.

- Identify Verification – Students are asked to appear in person to present their valid governmental issued photo ID (ex. Driver’s License, State ID or Passport).
- If student was determined to be a **victim of Identity Theft** by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), then he/she will need to submit a copy of their Police Report (if applicable), a signed copy of their Tax Return or IRS Form 14039, and a statement acknowledging his/her situation.
- In the event the student is unable to appear in person, then he/she must appear before a notary with all required IDs and documents to have his/her identity or educational purpose confirmed.

V5: Aggregate Verification Group ~ Tracking Flag V5:

Students must verify high school completion status and identity/statement of educational purpose, SNAP, and/or child support if indicated on the FAFSA in addition to the items in the Standard Verification Group.

Time period to submit verification documents:

Students are notified, in a timely manner, via email and web portal (continuing students) of all required documents to submit to the school. The verification process cannot begin or be completed until all required documents are submitted.

Generally, from the time we send the student the initial notice – Missing Information Letter (MIL), students are requested to submit required documents within **thirty days** (30 calendar days), but will continue to receive subsequent notices until the file is complete.

Note: In order to process a Financial Aid Award, all required documents must be submitted, all information must be accurate and a valid SAR must be on file prior to the student ceasing enrollment (*i.e., resigning, dropping below half-time and/or prior to the end of the semester, in which the student does not return for the next semester within the same academic year*).

Consequences for Failing to Submit Documents

Documents not submitted in a timely manner, could result in:

- 1) The student's file cannot be processed for a Financial Aid award.
- 2) The student being responsible for paying his/her fees out of pocket.
- 3) The student may incur late fees.
- 4) Funding availability may be limited.
- 5) The semester and/or academic year ending with the student owing a balance with ACCD. This could result in late fees and the student's account being turned over to a collection agency.
- 6) The student's outstanding balance will prohibit him/her from registering for a future semester.
- 7) Students who do not respond to any request for documentation from the financial aid office several weeks after enrolling may reflect a "Closed File" status. Please Note: Prior to this occurring a FINAL Notice will be e-mailed to the student's ACCD email address. Normally this does not occur until after the term begins and several attempts have been made to contact the student. Students may reopen their file during the award period upon submission of required documents.

Making corrections to the FAFSA data

Once the student receives their SAR, they should review it for accuracy. If changes are needed, the student (and/or parents) should submit changes/corrections to the FAFSA online by using their PIN.

Once all verification documents are received by the Office of Financial Aid, the file will be reviewed for accuracy and completeness. Often times, corrections are required if the information indicated on the submitted documents does not match the FAFSA data. The Office of Financial Aid will submit corrections on the student's behalf. The corrections will be sent to the Federal Processor, CPS, via the Department of Education System. Generally, the corrected data is processed and received back in our office within 72 hours after corrected data is submitted.

If no additional corrections are needed (pending the student has not also submitted corrections), and the student meets all necessary eligibility requirements, then an award will be processed. An email notification will be sent to the student's ACCD email address informing him to review their award.

If the student's EFC and Title IV aid amounts change:

In the event the EFC changes from an initial SAR or ISIR, prior to the student being awarded, the award will be based on the last valid SAR/ISIR transaction.

If the EFC changes after the student had been awarded, the file will be reviewed to determine if additional documentation is necessary or if the changes were made in error.

If the EFC changes occurred which caused a change to the Financial Aid award, the student will receive a revised Award Notification via their e-mail address.

If the EFC change reduces the student's aid eligibility, he/she will be responsible for the outstanding balance owed to Art Center. A revised Award Notification will be sent to their e-mail address.

If the EFC change causes an increase in the aid eligibility, the student will be awarded accordingly (i.e., an increase in Pell – the excess will be credited to their student account). A revised Award Notification will be sent to their e-mail address.

Office of Inspector General (OIG):

Students and parents who willfully submit fraudulent information will be investigated to the fullest extent possible. All cases of fraud and abuse will be reported to the proper authorities (Central Processing Servicer (CPS), Judicial Services, IRS (if applicable), including the Office of Inspector General <https://oig.hhs.gov>. 1(800)MIS-USED 641-8733

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