UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT MONROE VERIFICATION POLICY

Financial Aid Office

Policy Reason

Each year the U. S. Department of Education selects approximately one-third of all financial aid applicants at ULM for a process call “verification”. Verification is a federal process regulated by the U.S. Department of Education to confirm information provided on the FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Verification selection can be random or can be driven by incomplete, estimated or inconsistent data that is reported on the FAFSA. ULM may select others if we should find conflicting information.

The student and/or parents are encouraged to complete the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. This tool will populate the income fields on the FAFSA directly from the IRS data. If you were unable or unwilling to complete the IRS Date Retrieval and were selected for verification, you (the student) and/or parent(s) will be required to request an IRS Tax Return Transcript directly from the IRS at www.irs.gov or go to an IRS office to request one. A copy of a student and/or parent tax return is unacceptable for federal verification.

Time Frame and Consequences For Failure To Process

After completing the FAFSA, students should receive an email in about two weeks from the Department of Education that will direct you as to how you can retrieve your SAR. If you did not provide an email address on your FAFSA, your SAR will be mailed to the address provided on your FAFSA. The output document will provide information about the student and family including a calculated EFC (estimated family contribution). Written messages provide additional information for the applicant to follow. The student will be informed in a written comment on the SAR that he/she has been selected for a review process called verification. Listed below are the different verification tracking groups. ULM will notify the student by email once his/her ISIR has been received from the Department of Education. Verification documentation should be submitted within 14 days of the email notification from ULM. Review of documentation will occur within approximately 1-2 weeks. During peak processing, the review may take longer. Submitting the required documents by the due date mentioned gives the financial aid office the ability of verify all information in a timely manner to ensure that information provided is accurate so that financial aid is posted to the student’s account in a timely manner. For federal aid recipients, the deadline for submitting verification documents is 120 days from the
applicant’s last date of enrollment. This includes making any necessary corrections, submitting those corrections to the Central Processor, and submitting the new correct SAR (student aid report) to the institution. Failing to provide requested documentation will result in no Title IV aid.

VERIFICATION TRACKING GROUPS

Students who are selected for verification will be placed in one of the five following groups. The group determines which FAFSA information must be verified for the student. Listed below are the verification groups:

1. **Standard Verification group. Tracking Flag VI.** Students in this group must verify the following if they are tax filers:
   - Adjusted gross income
   - 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
   - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
   - Child support paid

   Students who are not tax files must verify the following:
   - Income earned from work
   - Household size
   - Number in college
   - SNAP benefits
   - Child support paid

2. **SNAP Verification Group. Tracking Flag V2.** Students in this group must verify the receipt of SNAP benefits.

3. **Child Support Paid Verification Group.** Tracking Flag V3. Students must verify child support paid by them or their spouse, their parents or both.
4. **Custom Verification Group. Tracking Flag V4.** Students must verify high school completion status and identity/statement of educational purpose in addition to receipt of SNAP benefits and payment of child support.

5. **Aggregate Verification Group. Tracking Flag V.** Students must verify high school completion status and identity/statement of educational purpose in addition to the items in the Standard Verification Group.

Families who file tax extensions must forward a copy of the federal request for extension form (4868) along with copies of W2’s to the financial aid office. If the financial aid office has sufficient documentation to complete the verification, it will be processed. The family must forward the completed tax returns to the financial aid office by November 1; or otherwise, all financial aid will be rescinded.

**Required Documentation**

For applicants undergoing verification, ULM will verify the items specified in the 34 CFR Part 668.56. These items include for Title IV applicants:

- U.S. income tax data
- Number enrolled in college
- Household size
- Education credits
- Income earned from work
- Statement of Educational Purpose
- Statement of Identity
- Certain untaxed income and benefits:
  1. Child support
  2. Food stamps (SNAP)
  3. IRA/Keogh deductions
  4. Tax-exempt interest
  5. Untaxed portions of pensions and IRA distributions
  6. Payments to tax-deferred pensions (found on W-2)
Results and Notification of Verification Process

After the verification process is complete, verification results may require that changes be made to the student’s ISIR. The financial aid office will make the appropriate changes electronically through the Department of Education’s Central Processing System to ensure each student has a correct valid ISIR. If changes on the student’s ISIR are made prior to the student being awarded Title IV funding, the student will be notified of any corrections from the verification by receiving a new SAR from the Department of Education which will inform the student of all changes made on the ISIR which includes perhaps a change in the EFC. If the student has already been awarded, an email is sent to the student by the financial aid office notifying what changes have been made to his/her funding.

After reviewing verification documentation submitted to the financial aid office, should the student be required to make changes on his/her ISIR, the student will be informed by email or by phone of the necessary changes. The student will need to go to www.fafsa.ed.gov and make the appropriate corrections. If the student should have any questions in regards to the changes, the student is informed per email or per phone that the financial aid office is here to assist them.

No financial aid will be disbursed to a student’s account if the verification process is not complete. If financial aid has already been disbursed and the student is subsequently selected for verification, further disbursements are stopped until which time the process is complete. Failure to submit the required documentation (or submit in a timely manner) may eliminate for federal aid.

Conflicting and Inaccurate Information

In addition to reviewing application and data match information from the CPS, ULM must resolve any other conflicting information regardless of the source and regardless of whether the student is selected for verification. If we have any reason to believe a student’s application information is incorrect, the financial aid office must resolve the discrepancies before disbursing any Title IV funds. If discrepancies are discovered after disbursement, we must still reconcile the conflicting information.

Misuse of Financial Aid and Referral Process

The University of Louisiana at Monroe Financial Aid Office will report any suspected fraud or falsified information (on the part of the student, the parent, preparer of financial aid applications or related parties) to the U. S. Department of Education and all other related
parties for immediate action. Examples of such information include false claims of independent student status, false claims of citizenship, use of false identities, forgery of signatures or certificates, and false statements of income. This information will be forwarded to authorized agencies in addition to the U.S Department of Education for investigation such as the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-MIS-USED(1-800-647-8733) or by email at oig.hotline@ed.gov;web:http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html. Anyone who suspects fraud or abuse may make a confidential report contacting the Office of Inspector General.