

## **Florida SouthWestern State College**

### **Verification Policy and Procedure**

The College will verify all of the students selected for verification by the U.S. Department of Education and those students selected for verification under the institution's verification selection criteria.

#### **VERIFICATION DEADLINE**

The priority deadline for federal aid is six weeks prior to the term. The Office of Student Financial Aid will issue a request for information if a student is chosen for verification and follow-up with additional reminders. The student's file automatically will reopen if the verification information is submitted after this date. Please note that while we have a priority deadline, all information will continue to be reviewed after this priority deadline and aid will continue to be determined.

In order to be considered for federal grant funds, students selected for verification must return all requested verification documentation within 120 days from the last date of enrollment, or by Sept. 13, 2014 for the 2013-2014 academic year, whichever comes first. Please note that the school also must have received a valid FAFSA result before the end-date of the term the student attended. If the student fails to complete the verification process, the file will remain incomplete and federal aid will not be awarded.

If a student was chosen for verification after aid has been determined, the student must complete the verification process within this time frame to remain eligible for the funds. If the student's eligibility for aid has changed due to the verification process, the aid will be recalculated. If the student fails to submit the verification information any federal grants will be returned to the U.S. Department of Education and any undelivered or undisbursed Federal Direct loans will be returned to the lender.

#### **DOCUMENTATION NEEDED TO SATISFY THE VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Once a student is chosen for verification the student will receive a request to submit additional information and/or materials. Beginning in 2013-2014 federal regulations have customized the verification process. Therefore, not all students selected for verification will be required to verify

the same data. Our office will notify the student which data must be verified and what information or materials will be required to verify that particular data. Some of the requested materials may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Verification Worksheet.
- 2) Copy of the student's and/or parent's federal tax transcript for the most recent tax year. Tax data can be provided by utilizing the IRS data retrieval option on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
  - a) If any of the persons reporting information on the FAFSA will file, but hadn't filed a tax return at the time of application, they would have used an estimated AGI (adjusted gross income) on the FAFSA. At the time of verification, the necessary tax returns should have been filed and must be used for verification. If a return hasn't been filed by then and a filing extension was granted by the IRS, the school shall accept as alternative documentation copies of the W-2 forms, and as proof that the IRS has granted a filing extension either a copy of IRS Form 4868-Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return (automatically grants the taxpayer a six-month extension beyond the April 15 deadline) or a copy of the IRS approval of an extension beyond the automatic six-month extension.
  - b) In addition to supplying the above documentation, the student must submit the tax return documents to the financial aid office once completed. When the financial aid office receives the completed tax documents, we will use them to reverify the required data.
- 3) Non-tax filers may be asked to provide copies of W-2's
- 4) Additional Financial Information Worksheet showing any information reported under the Additional Financial Information and Untaxed Income section on the FAFSA. The Office of Student Financial Aid will only ask for documentation of untaxed income, benefits or other information if there is reason to believe that there is a discrepancy or the information is different from that reported on the FAFSA.
- 5) Students and parents who are unable to obtain tax transcript due to identity theft will be allowed to submit a signed copy of the tax return along with a police report and wage transcript or W-2's.
- 6) Documentation from the agency that supplied SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.
- 7) Statement of Educational Purpose and proof of identity
- 8) Documentation of child support paid
- 9) If any part of the verification documentation is not fully completed or if any discrepancies exist, the student may be asked to supply additional information or explanation.

Note: Ensure that the Verification Worksheet is completed correctly and that the income data, household size and number in college reported on the Verification Worksheet agrees with the data reported on the FAFSA. If not, conflicts will be resolved and corrections will be submitted.

- a) Only those persons in the student's parent's household that are under the age of 24 will be counted in the household unless the parent can provide documentation other than the tax return that they are truly providing 50%

of the persons support or have legal guardianship.

- b) Independent students will have to prove that they provide 50% support to a person listed in the household who is not the student's biological or adoptive child unless the student can provide documentation other than the tax return that they are providing 50% or more of the persons support or have legal guardianship.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CRITERIA**

The College reserves the right to require students to submit additional information if the following conditions exist:

1. Students and/or parents of dependent students who report zero or very little income. (IRS Non-Filers and documentation of income needed such as: W2, received, SSA 1099, and etc.)
2. Students and/or parents who indicate they did not file a federal tax return but are required to file based on the Internal Revenue Service's tax filing requirements.
3. Married students and/or parent who have filed as head of household. (Must provide an amended tax return).
4. Married student and/or parent that states current marital status is separated but provided a joint tax return or list spouse on Verification Worksheet (must provide Marital Separation documents).
5. Changes to a student's marital status from "No" to "Yes" after they have completed FAFSA which will cause their **dependency status to change will be determined on a case by case basis.**
6. All applications that are flagged for discrepant information.
7. Documentation submitted that conflicts with data on FAFSA or reveals income that should have been reported on FAFSA.

### **RESOLVING CONFLICTING INFORMATION**

Before an award can be made to a student all conflicting information will be resolved whether the conflict is within the Office of Student Financial Aid or with other offices on campus. For example: If the Office of Student Financial Aid discovers that the student has attended another college but failed to inform the Admissions Office. The Office of Student Financial Aid will notify the Admissions Office of the conflict and place a processing hold placed on the student's

record and the student will be informed that in order to be awarded financial aid the student must submit the academic transcript to the college. As conflicts arise they will be addressed and any other offices involved will be notified.

### **NOTIFICATION TO STUDENTS**

Once the verification process is complete, students will be notified through email of their award eligibility. Please note that if federal aid was awarded before a student was chosen for verification and eligibility has changed as a result of the verification process, the student will receive an email notification to view the awards online. If the aid has been reduced the student will be billed accordingly.

### **CORRECTION PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS**

Upon completion of the verification process, if the student feels an error has been made he or she may contact our office to request the file be reviewed again. If the student provided incorrect information, the student will need to submit in writing the correction and request that the file be reviewed again.

### **OVERPAYMENT CASES**

In the event that the financial aid eligibility has changed due to a verification resulting in overpayment to the student, the necessary funds will be returned to the U.S. Department of Education or to the lender (if a student loan). The student will receive an email notification to view the awards online and will be billed by the Business Office.