

Dickinson State University

Verification Policy

Verification is a requirement under the federal financial aid program regulations (34 CFR, Part 668). In this process, Dickinson State University (DSU) will confirm, through documentation, that the information provided on a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is correct. The verification process ensures that eligible students receive all the financial aid to which they are entitled and prevents ineligible students from receiving financial aid to which they are not entitled. Financial aid funds cannot be disbursed until verification has been completed.

Students may be selected for verification either by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or by the Financial Aid Office (FAO). Students specifically excluded in 668.54 (b), including applicants who are only eligible for unsubsidized student aid, are not required to complete verification. Procedures published in the current Department of Education Federal Student Aid Handbook – Application and Verification Guide are used to review, evaluate and correct errors.

The Verification Process:

1. When a student is selected for verification, FAO will send an email and/or letter outlining forms and documents they must submit, along with deadlines they must meet and consequences of failing to meet them. If a student fails to comply with the verification requirements, a reminder email will be sent every 30 days for up to 6 months after the FAFSA is received. Verification is completed for the student and parent if the student is dependent, or the student and spouse (if married) for an independent student.

DSU follows guidance in the annual Verification Federal Register to determine the acceptable documentation for verification.

2. Verification must typically be completed prior to the end of the academic year. The deadline to complete verification is the last day of classes of the last semester of which the student was enrolled in for the academic year. To complete verification by this deadline, students must submit all required documents two weeks prior to the last day of classes to allow sufficient time for processing. Incomplete or illegible paperwork will be returned to the student, thereby delaying the processing of the student's financial aid. Students who fail to comply with verification requirements, including submitting documentation within required timelines, will not have Federal Title IV funds disbursed and the funds may be cancelled.
3. After all required verification documents are provided, FAO staff will compare the documents to the applicant's FAFSA and will make corrections if needed to the FAFSA by submitting corrections electronically to DOE. Verification results that require changes to applicant

information and subsequent changes to the applicant's financial aid package will be made prior to final disbursement of federal funds. A revised award notice will be sent to the student by email or mail if any awards change because of verification and the awards will be updated in Campus Connection.

DSU must ensure the consistency of the information related to a student's application for federal student aid, regardless of the source of that information. All information received must be reconciled. Additional information may be required if FAO finds other discrepancies on the student's FAFSA. Discrepancies found in a student's file must be resolved whether the student is selected for verification or not.

The requirement to resolve conflicting data is separate and distinct from the verification requirements and procedures and supersedes any verification policies. Further, if a discrepancy is discovered after federal aid has been disbursed, it must be reconciled and the student will be required to repay any amount of aid received in excess of his or her eligibility.

Students requesting a professional judgement must complete verification prior to starting any professional judgement process that adjusts values that are used to calculate the Student Aid Index.

In accordance with 34 CFR 668.16(g), if FAO suspects that a student, or other individual, has intentionally misreported information or altered documentation to fraudulently obtain federal financial aid funds, the office can report its suspicions, and will provide the evidence, to the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education, for review.

DSU will not require the same documentation from each student. Instead, the FAO will require only documentation that is relevant to the individualized verification. Applicants will be notified by email or mail of the individual forms they will need to complete. Applicants can also view a list of required verification documents in Campus Connection under their "To Do" list. DSU Forms are posted on the FAO website: <http://www.dickinsonstate.edu/faforms>.

All verification items must be submitted to:

Dickinson State University
Financial Aid Office
291 Campus Drive
Dickinson, ND 58601