



# Verification Policy 2023-24

## Overview: 7.1

After completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), students may notice on their Student Aid Report (SAR) that they have been selected for FAFSA verification. In the top right-hand corner of the SAR students will see their Expected Family Contribution (EFC). If there is an asterisk beside the EFC it will refer to a comment in the student section of the SAR telling selected applicants they were selected for verification and that their school will ask for documentation.

Verification is the process the U.S. Department of Education and universities use to ensure federal student financial aid funding is based on accurate information. Each year roughly one-third of FAFSA applicants are selected by the U.S. Department of Education for verification. Hardin-Simmons University has the authority to contact students and families for documentation that supports the information reported on their FAFSA. HSU will notify students via their self-service portal if they were selected for verification. Once students have submitted all requested worksheets and documents, HSU will make any necessary corrections online on behalf of the student.

## HSU Policy 7.1

The HSU Verification policy outlines the process to verify the accuracy of information submitted on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Additionally, Hardin-Simmons University will select students for the verification process under certain circumstances where conflicting information has presented itself.

Students who have been selected for verification are required to submit all appropriate and acceptable documentation. Federal verification must typically be completed prior to the end of the academic year or before the student ceases enrollment, whichever occurs first. Students who fail to comply with verification requirements, including submitting documentation within required timelines, will not have Federal Title IV funds disbursed and may have Federal Title IV funds canceled. Hardin-Simmons University considers the student to be the responsible party for providing information and completing the verification process.

Students must provide documentation as requested by uploading documents via our secure portal via Campus Logic StudentForms. Documentation may be required for, but not limited to: information regarding child support paid, information regarding number of persons in the household, information regarding number of persons enrolled at least half-time in an eligible postsecondary institution, W2 for each source of income reported and properly filed tax return transcripts for the prior-prior tax year for persons who were required to file taxes.

Students and their families, who have used the IRS Data Retrieval Process and have not made adjustments to the information obtained, are not required to submit tax return transcripts. Use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool is the HSU preferred method.

Students or their parents who have filed under the status "married filing separately," or have had to amend their tax returns (example 1040X) are not eligible for the IRS Data Retrieval Process and must submit a **signed copy** of 1040 as well as the 1040x.

## Correcting Errors on the FAFSA 7.1

The financial aid specialist at HSU will verify all required elements, make any necessary changes, and submit corrections to the federal central processors. The student will be notified via an email and through their self-service portal that their aid offer has been revised if applicable.

## **Time Periods/Deadlines and Failure to Submit 7.1**

Institutional Deadlines for Verification and Consequences of Not Submitting Documentation:

Students who are selected for verification must submit the required verification documents by HSU's institutional deadline of May 1<sup>st</sup> of the award year. Failure to submit verification documentation by the institutional deadline means that the school cannot disburse FSEOG funds, employ or permit further FWS employment, or originate or disburse any additional Direct Loans (subsidized, unsubsidized, or PLUS). In addition to forfeiting eligibility for FSEOG, FWS, and Direct Loans for the award year if this deadline is not met, the student also forfeits their eligibility for other need-based aid (state and institutional).

Federal Deadline for Verification and Consequences of Not Submitting Documentation:

Students who are selected for verification may submit verification documents after HSU's institutional deadline, but by the federal deadline to be considered for Pell funds. The federal deadline for the 2023-2024 award year is September 21, 2024, or 120 days after the students' last day of enrollment, whichever is earlier. If a student does not provide the verification documentation within this additional time, he or she forfeits their Pell Grant for the award year.

## **Referral of Fraud Cases 7.1**

Students and parents are advised that HSU must and will refer to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) any credible information indicating that an applicant for FSA may have engaged in fraud or other criminal misconduct in connection with FAFSA applications. Common misconduct includes false claims of independent status, false claims of citizenship, use of false identities, forgery of signatures of certifications, and false statements of income. Note that fraud is the intent to deceive as opposed to a mistake on an application.

## **OIG Address and Phone Numbers (Ref. to Chapter 15 – Title IV Fraud)**

Inspector General's Hotline Office of Inspector General U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1500

Fax: (202) 245-7047

Phone: 1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733)

Hours: M, W 9–11 a.m. T, Th 1–3 p.m.

To submit a complaint [online](#), go to U.S. Department of Education, OIG.

## **Acceptable Documentation and Forms 7.1.2**

HSU Financial Aid utilizes Campus Logic StudentForms to streamline the verification process and create digital workflows. Campus Logic worksheets include instruction for completion and what, if any, additional documentation is required. Refer to <https://hsutx.studentforms.com/> for the appropriate verification worksheet documentation and verification requirements for both tax and non-tax filers. Students who are selected for verification will be placed in one of the following groups to determine which FAFSA information must be verified.

### **V1—Standard Verification Group**

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.

Students who are **not tax filers** must verify the following:

- Income earned from work,
- Household size,
- Number in college.

#### **V4—Custom Verification Group**

Students must verify identity/statement of educational purpose (SEP).

#### **V5—Aggregate Verification Group**

Students must verify identity/SEP in addition to the items in the Standard Verification Group(V1).

Paper Worksheets and documentation may be accepted as approved by the Director of Financial Aid and only in special situations. Any unsolicited tax documentation received will be destroyed.

#### **7.1.3 Data Elements to be Verified**

The Secretary of the DOE publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing the information that institutions and students may have to verify along with the documentation acceptable for verifying this information. Verification items that must be verified could vary based on which tracking group students are assigned to and could include:

- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) – V1, V5
- U.S. Income Tax Paid – V1, V5
- Education credits – V1, V5
- Untaxed pensions – V1, V5
- Untaxed portions of IRA distributions
- Untaxed portions of pensions
- IRA deductions and payments – V1, V5
- Tax exempt Interest income – V1, V5
- Income earned from work
- Household size – V1, V5
- Number in college – V1, V5
- Identity/statement of educational purpose – V4, V5

\*Non-tax filers: Income from work, household size, and number in college – – V1, V5

Colleges may choose to verify additional items in order to resolve conflicting information.

A verification flag of “Y” and an asterisk beside the EFC will refer to a comment in the student section of the SAR telling selected applicants that their school will ask for documentation.

#### **Conflicting and Inaccurate Information 7.1.4**

To ensure the integrity of all financial aid applicant data received at Hardin-Simmons University (HSU), the Student Financial Aid Office must resolve any conflicting information in a student’s file. Any HSU office may hold information or documentation that could create a conflict. The Financial Aid Office will work with all sources to collect documentation for the purpose of clarification and accuracy.

Examples of Conflicting Information

- Social Security number

- Date of Birth
- Name change
- Dependency status
- Marital status (student and/or parent)
- Admissions status regarding prior institutions
- Income and taxes paid
- Number in household
- Number in college
- NSLDS Data

A student may be asked to submit written documentation and/or additional information to clarify or correct conflicting information. This action may be in conjunction with the Verification Process normally processed by HSU or by a separate request for information.

#### **Student Notification of Verification Changes 7.1.5**

Students are notified via an automated email process of any changes caused by verification. They will also be notified of changes made to their financial aid package via automated email directing them to view their Colleague self-service account.