In accordance with regulations set forth by the United States Department of Education, Washington College’s Office of Student Financial Aid verifies every Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that has been selected for Verification before need-based federal aid can be disbursed. Verification ensures the accuracy of the information submitted on the FAFSA. The process reduces errors and ensures that eligible students receive all of the federal financial aid to which they are entitled and prevents ineligible students from receiving aid for which they do not qualify.

A FAFSA application may be selected by the United States Department of Education Central Processing Service or by the Office of Student Financial Aid. Reasons for being selected include, but are not limited to:

- Incomplete data
- Inconsistent and/or incongruent data
- Random selection
- Estimated income tax information

Students are notified if their FAFSA is selected for Verification via a comment on their Student Aid Report or SAR. Washington College financial aid applicants who are selected for Verification by the U.S. Dept. of Education notification will also be notified by the Office of Student Financial Aid. New students will be notified in their award letter. The financial aid award letter will explain that their FAFSA was selected for Verification, and that their award is preliminary until the process is completed. Returning students will receive notification via email. The email will be generated and sent as soon as we receive the FAFSA data from the Department of Education.

New students are awarded their financial aid based on the results of their FAFSA prior to the completion of Verification. Their award letter will notify them that their award is preliminary. New students selected for Verification should submit all required documents within two weeks of receipt of their Verification notification. New students selected for Verification who have not completed the process by May 1, will have all of their federal financial aid awards removed from their award package until they complete the process. Awards will be reinstated when Verification is complete based on the availability of funding.

Returning students selected for Verification should submit the required documents within two weeks of the receipt of the notice. Need-based financial aid will not be awarded until completion of the Verification process. In some extreme cases, returning students who have been selected but who cannot complete the process may appeal to the Office of Financial Aid for a preliminary award. These cases are usually due to the student/parent inability to submit the required Tax Return Transcript information in a timely manner before payment is due. A preliminary award may be granted if the appeal documentation is merited. In either case, whether a new or returning student is selected, no federal aid can be disbursed until the Verification process is completed.
FAFSA data items that may need to be verified include, but are not limited to:

- Household size
- Number in college
- Adjusted gross income
- Tax liability
- Untaxed income
- Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program Benefits (SNAP)
- Child Support Paid

To complete Verification, the student and parents will be required to submit the following documentation to The Office of Student Financial Aid:

- In lieu of a federal tax return transcript, tax filers can transfer their income tax information directly from the IRS to the FAFSA by using the Data Retrieval Tool or DRT. Data must be transferred without any changes. For information about the IRS Data Retrieval Tool go to: [https://fafsa.ed.gov/help/irshlp9.htm](https://fafsa.ed.gov/help/irshlp9.htm)
- Student and parent(s)’ 2015 W-2 form(s).

The Office of Student Financial Aid will notify the student and parent(s) in writing if additional documentation is required. Please do not send copies of tax returns (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ). The U. S. Department of Education regulations state we can only verify using tax return transcripts, or by use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT). Students can track the status of all documents required and received via WebAdvisor, under Forms Needed/Received.

The Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to make the necessary corrections to a selected student’s FAFSA based on the Verification documentation. The corrections are transmitted electronically to the United States Department of Education through the Student Aid Internet Gateway. The final financial aid award will be based on the resulting Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as calculated from the verified transaction.

Should the Office of Student Financial Aid have reason to believe that the information submitted on the FAFSA and/or the Verification documents has been altered and/or misreported in order to fraudulently receive federal need-based aid, all questionable evidence will be submitted to the Office of the Inspector General at the Philadelphia Regional Office.