

VERIFICATION POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this verification policy is to establish clear guidelines for verifying the accuracy and completeness of the FAFSA information provided by applicants seeking financial assistance from Ashland University.

ELIGIBILITY

All applicants who submit a FAFSA may be subject to the verification process. This includes both new applicants and returning students.

SELECTION

The U.S. Department of Education's FAFSA Processing System (FPS) selects which applications are to be verified through a random selection process. A percentage of applicants will be chosen for verification each academic year to ensure the integrity and credibility of the financial aid award process. In addition to selection by FPS, students may be selected by the institution if there are any apparent discrepancies or conflicting information on the applicant's FAFSA.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Applicants selected for verification will be required to submit specific documentation as part of the verification process. Dependent on the applicant's selected Verification Tracking Group, required documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- a) Ashland University verification worksheet.
- b) IRS Tax Return Transcript or signed copies of federal tax returns, including all schedules, for the applicant and their parents/spouse (if applicable).
- c) IRS Form W-2 or an equivalent document for each source of employment income received and an IRS Verification of Non-Filing Letter.
- d) Unexpired valid government-issued photo identification.
- e) Any additional documents deemed necessary by the financial aid authority.

DEADLINES

Applicants selected for verification must submit all required documentation within three weeks of receipt of notice. Federal need-based grants, loans, and work study may be delayed or canceled entirely if verification is not complete. The student is responsible for any interest that accrues on their account due to a delay in submitting documentation. Additionally, all verification documents must be submitted no later than 120 days after the student's last date of enrollment for the award year or date published annually in the Federal Register, whichever is earlier.

VERIFICATION PROCESS

The Financial Aid Office will carefully review the submitted documentation to verify the accuracy of the information provided on the financial aid application. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies found during the verification process will be addressed promptly. In conjunction with the submitted verification documents, the financial aid administrator will make any necessary corrections via FAFSA Partner Portal. Ashland University does not accept verification determinations for an applicant by another institution.

NOTIFICATIONS

Students selected for verification will receive an email and Self-Service checklist notification of any required and outstanding verification documents. In addition, these forms of communication provide directions and links for the submission of verification. Upon completion of the verification process, applicants will be notified of the results and can be viewed via the checklist on Self-Service. If there are any changes to the financial aid offer as a result of verification, the applicant will be informed of the adjustments via a revised financial aid offer.

Note: For incarcerated students, AU will notify the appropriate Site Director of required verification documentation via Slate. Accordingly, Site Directors will upload documentation via Auto-File.

FEDERAL TITLE IV DISBURSEMENTS

Ashland University conducts federal verification for selected applicants as a mandatory step in the student's financial aid application process. In relation to federal Title IV funds, it is important to note that Ashland University does not engage in interim disbursements or the disbursement of unsubsidized funds before the verification process is finalized.

FRAUD CASE REFERRALS

A school must refer to the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) any credible information indicating that an applicant for federal student aid may have engaged in fraud or other criminal misconduct in connection with his or her application. Common misconduct includes false claims of independent status, false claims of citizenship, use of false identities, forgery of signatures or certifications, and false statements of income. If the institution suspects such intent on the part of the student, it will be reported to the OIG by hotline (oig.ed.gov/oig-hotline) or phoning 1-800-MISUSED.

CONFINED OR INCARCERATED STUDENTS

For the 2024-25 award year, a confined or incarcerated individual as indicated through the incarcerated applicant flag will only be required to verify their identity and statement of educational purpose if selected for Verification Tracking Group V4 or V5. In addition, institutions are not required to verify a confined or incarcerated individual selected under Verification Tracking Flag V1.