

Federal Financial Aid Eligibility Requirements

Federal Student Aid Programs available are Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and Federal Work-Study.

1. File a free application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) at www.studentaid.gov.
2. Demonstrate financial need.
3. Have a standard high school diploma or GED. Effective Fall 2016, Ability to Benefit (ATB) students may be eligible to receive Pell Grant, Direct Loans, Federal Work Study and SEOG. Students must meet ATB criteria established by the U. S. Department of Education for Eligible Career Pathways Programs (ECP) in order to be eligible for aid.
4. Students must have all transcripts on file for high school or previous college credit.
5. Be enrolled as a regular student in an eligible program.
6. Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.
7. Not be in default on Federal Perkins Loan, Direct or FFEL, Direct or FFEL PLUS Loan or Supplemental Loan for Students (FSLs).
8. Not owe a refund on a Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG).
9. Students with a corrected Student Aid Report (ISIR) are not packaged until the correction returns from the Central Processing System (FAFSA/CPS)
10. Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Financial Aid.

Verification Policy

Verification is the process of confirming the accuracy of student reported data on financial aid applications. Only a portion of the student population is selected for verification by the U. S. Department of Education.

1. The Financial Aid Office (FAO) verifies those applicants identified by the Department of Education (DOE). After student information is electronically transferred from the Department of Education (DOE) to the FAO electronically through the SAIG mailbox.
2. The FAO imports the information directly into the Administrative Computer System (Banner). Through the running of various processes in Banner, tracking requirements are added to students accounts based on the different requirements listed the C flags and the different assigned Verification Groups by the DOE.
3. All students receive an initial tracking letter outlining what is required to complete their financial aid at their school e-mail provided by the school. If students were not selected for verification, the letter instructs them to log in to their MyWallaceState account to view their awards and for additional information. This letter has step by step instructions on the back side of the letter. Students are told in this letter they are to log in to their account for future updates concerning their Financial Aid.
4. If students are selected by the DOE for verification, they are told in the initial letter to submit the required documentation. On their MyWallaceState account a link is placed beside the requirement for any verification items required. Students are required to follow the link to set up a Dynamic Forms user ID and password using their Wallace State E-mail so they can submit the information electronically. The student can complete the form at their convenience by clicking the link beside the requirement and completing the form or attaching the requested documents. Each requirement is specific for Dependent or Independent students from the information submitted on FAFSA. A text box beside the link gives more information about the requirement. For example if the student was required to submit a tax return transcript, the link beside the requirement would be to the www.irs.gov website and the text beside it explains this requirement. The letter also explains to students that they are NOT eligible to receive financial aid until all requirements are complete.
5. Once students submit their documentation it is marked P for pending. Students can see this on their account in real time with a date beside the status.

P = Pending, S= Satisfied, F= Correction Pending, I = Incomplete/need more information and W= Waived. These items are always available on the student's website under "Unsatisfied Requirements" and "Satisfied Requirements". These items are updated by staff and by the batch processes in Banner as new data is received and reviewed. Corrections come in and automatically satisfy the correction requirement and the aid is automatically processed.

6. Financial Aid staff verify files using a quick flow in Banner to reduce errors. The quick flow is made up of various screens used to verify information and determine eligibility.
7. In addition, Financial Aid staff may ask for additional documentation or add another requirement for verification if there is a discrepancy or a condition which is unusual and warrants investigation.
8. The Financial Aid staff may correct any information that is not matched and set the computer to send out the correction on the next transmission.
9. Students with a corrected ISIR are not packaged until the correction returns from CPS.
10. Once the correct ISIR is loaded into Banner, the student records goes through the Budgeting and Packaging Processes and the student is e-mailed they have been offered financial aid and how to view their award offer.
11. The student would log in to MyWallaceState and click on their Financial Aid Status and see the amount awarded. The student may accept or decline their aid or parts of their aid.
12. There are also two other tabs with information called Terms and Conditions and Title IV Authorization that a student should complete. They are not required to complete these for disbursement, but they notify the student of their options.

Conflicting Information for Non-Selected Applicants

The FAO is required to resolve any discrepancies discovered in a student's file. Because need analysis information is only collected from the DOE, and additional information is typically not selected for verification, conflicting information is systematically rare. However, all conflicting information must be cleared before a student is eligible to receive funds.

Verification Time Frame

Upon receipt of any documentation that a student intends to apply for financial aid, a Tracking Letter listing missing items is sent to the student when the student record is activated after receipt of a federal transmission. This letter informs the student of additional information which is required to complete his/her financial aid file. If the FAO has received DOE information identifying the student as being selected for verification, the tracking items letter requests the appropriate verification items. Financial Aid will not be awarded until all verification items are received.

Students are notified that the majority of financial aid funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis and that until the missing items are submitted to the FAO, additional processing of their file is not possible.

Wallace State requires that tuition and fees (<https://www.wallacestate.edu/ecoa>) be paid or have financial aid in place before the first day of class each term. Payment deadlines are published in the schedule each term.

Document Collection Procedures

Required documentation items are identified and receipt date is maintained on an automated tracking system. All required documents are identified with a "P" when the documents arrive, along with a receipt date beside the document name.

Documentation

Documentation submitted to the FAO must be legible, appropriate, and have the student's social security number or student number for identification purposes. If the student submits a document which is not legible (i.e., a copy of a tax return transcripts in which the income numbers are not identifiable), appropriate (a tax return transcript is requested and the student submits a W-2), or identifiable (student submits a copy of the step-parents tax return transcript and the last name does not match the student's and there is no student social security number) a request for additional documentation and the document will be marked incomplete.

Failure to Comply

Students who fail to submit verification documents never become complete; therefore, aid is not awarded for these students.

Submission After Deadline

Students who submit verification documents very late after the time they were requested will be awarded aid on an availability basis. Typically, by the end of the summer, aid funds beyond federal Pell Grant are depleted.

Notification of Verification to Applicants

Students are notified that they are selected for verification on the Student Aid Report (SAR). In addition, the tracking letter indicates to the student he/she has been selected for verification.

Verification of Data Elements

Wallace State Community College systematically verifies only those data elements required by the federal government. However, Counselors are free to ask for additional information if further investigation is needed to resolve a discrepancy from conflicting information.

Subsequent ISIR Transactions

The Financial Aid Office will review all subsequent ISIR transactions on each student to determine if any factors have changed on the student's situation in regard to Financial Aid Eligibility.

Fraud

After the Financial Aid Office has reviewed all documents submitted by the student it may determine or suspect the information to be fraudulent in nature and may report the case to the Inspector General's Office in accordance with the Federal Code 668.16 (g) for investigation. 668.16(g) refers to 668.16(f) which states the Financial Aid Office must:

668.16 (f) Develops and applies an adequate system to identify and resolve discrepancies in the information that the institution receives from different sources with respect to a student's application for financial aid under Title IV, HEA programs. In determining whether the institution's system is adequate, the Secretary considers whether the institution obtains and reviews:

1. All student aid applications, need analysis documents, Statements of Educational Purpose, Statements of Registration Status, and eligibility notification documents presented by or on behalf of each applicant;
2. Any documents, including any copies of State and Federal income tax returns, that are normally collected by the institution to verify information received from the student or other sources; and
3. Any other information normally available to the institution regarding a student's citizenship, previous educational experience, documentation of the student's social security number, or other factors relating to the student's eligibility for funds under the Title IV, HEA programs.

668.16 (g) Refers to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Education for investigation:

1. After conducting the review of an application provided for under paragraph (f) of this section, any credible information indicating that an applicant for Title IV, HEA program assistance may have engaged in fraud or other

criminal misconduct in connection with his or her application. The type of information that an institution must refer is that which is relevant to the eligibility of the applicant for Title IV, HEA program assistance, or the amount of the assistance. Examples of this type of information are:

- A. False claims of independent student status;
 - B. False claims of citizenship;
 - C. Use of false identities;
 - D. Forgery of signatures or certifications; and
 - E. False statements of income.
2. Any credible information indicating that any employee, third-party servicer, or other agent of the institution that acts in a capacity that involves the administration of the Title IV, HEA programs, or the receipt of funds under those programs, may have engaged in fraud, misrepresentation, conversion or breach of fiduciary responsibility, or other illegal conduct involving the Title IV, HEA programs. The type of information that an institution must refer is that which is relevant to the eligibility and funding of the institution and its students through the Title IV, HEA programs.

Contact Information for the Inspector General's Hotline is:

- Calling the OIG Hotline's toll free number 1-800-MIS-USED. Hotline Operators take calls during the hours of Monday and Wednesday 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM, Eastern Time; Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 PM until 3:00 PM, Eastern Time except for holidays.
- Downloading a hardcopy of the Hotline Complaint Form, and completing, mailing or faxing to:

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

Fax: (202) 245-7047

Awarding Policy

Effective with the 2012-2013 school year, student aid is processed in batch on the Banner administrative computer system in the following steps:

- ISIR data is downloaded. C code and tracking requirements required to clarify information to determine eligibility are added in batch to the student's account. The information can be seen on the student's MyWallaceState student account. The student is also mailed an initial letter with the requirements, the student number and directions on how to log in to the site.
- Tracking requirements that are viewed online also have a link beside them for a verification form or taxes if required, so the student does not have to search for a form or the link to the IRS website. There is also a text document beside the requirement that explains what the requirement is. Students can see if documents are Requested, Satisfied or Pending and the date these were changed in real time.
- Students selected for Verification information submit those documents and our staff checks those to ensure the information matches what was listed on the FAFSA form. If the information does not match, it is corrected and then student is not paid until the correction returns.
- Once all information is correct and the student record has cleared Admissions students accounts are put into a budget group depending on their information from FAFSA. Then they are packaged for the full amount of aid possible based on the criteria from their FAFSA. WSCC packages students to offer at the full-time award amount for Pell Grant and the full annual amount allowed by USDE guidelines for Direct Loans.
- Packaged students are notified by e-mail that their award offer is available to view with a link to their personal MyWallaceState account. This link also lists the Title IV Authorization where we ask them to make a decision about non-institutional charges being taken from their financial aid funds. We also have a Terms and Conditions online that gives a brief explanation to the student how their funds will be awarded. Neither of these forms are required to complete disbursement.

- Once a student accepts their funds, Pell Grant funds are added to their account as available. Students are offered loans on their award offer and have the option to accept, decline or accept a partial amount on the Direct Loan. Direct Loans are NOT added to the student's account unless they accept the loan and follow the additional requirements to complete the loan process. If they accept any part of the loans, a requirement for Entrance Counseling/MPN signature is automatically added to their tracking requirements if they accept their loans.
- Entrance counseling and completed MPNs are imported to update student records. When all of the requirements are met, the student is budgeted and packaged and funds added to the student account that is available. When the student registers for classes the funds authorize in the amount per the class load and program the student is registered in on their student account.
- Cost of Attendance (COA) is checked on all students after all registration periods for a term have been completed. COA is prorated based on the enrollment during the payment periods for the student.
- Students are awarded financial aid funds by being in a program of study that is approved for Title IV Aid.