**Please note:** This is a joint survey between National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), and National College Attainment Network (NCAN), but given the different responsibilities of each association's membership the survey is divided into three sections:

- Survey questions for NASFAA members
- Survey questions for NCAN members
- Survey questions for all respondents

When you access the online survey link in your email you will only see the survey questions that match your association membership.

For the purposes of preparing for the data needed to complete the survey we are providing a PDF of the entire survey instrument. To identify which data you will be asked to provide we have done the following:

- Questions which require data from NASFAA members are highlighted in blue.
- Questions which require data from NCAN members are highlighted in yellow.

Thank you for your time in preparing for this survey.

**Survey introduction:**

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), and National College Attainment Network (NCAN) are seeking to evaluate solutions that would streamline and improve the verification process to reduce verification burden for institutions and students. Please answer the following questions related to verification selection data, observed verification trends, and potential solutions for improving the verification process for students, college access professionals, and financial aid administrators.

*For all questions requiring data entry please enter only whole numbers, do not use a decimal (.) or percentage (%) sign.*

# NASFAA Membership Questions

**Question:** Please share the percentage of applicants at your institution who were selected for verification by the Central Processing System (CPS) for the following years:

| Year | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percent Selected | | | |

**Question:** What percentage of applicants at your institution were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20?

| | All Verification Tracking Groups | V1 & V5 Verification Tracking Groups | V4 Verification Tracking Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| All students | | | |
| Incoming (first-time) students | | | |
| Continuing/transfer students | | | |

**Question:** Of all students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20, what percentage did not submit all of the required documentation required for verification?

| | All Verification Tracking Groups | V1 & V5 Verification Tracking Groups | V4 Verification Tracking Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| All students | | | |
| Incoming (first-time) students | | | |
| Continuing/transfer students | | | |

**Question:** Among all students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 but whodid not submit all of the required documentation required for verification, what was/were the most common missing or incomplete verification items? (Please choose up to 5.)
- Verification Worksheet
- Parent tax return
- Parent tax transcript
- Parent W-2 form(s)
- Student tax return
- Student tax transcript
- Student W-2 form
- Parent IRS verification of non-tax filer status letter (VNF)
- Parent Signed statement of non-tax filer status
- Parent Documentation of tax filing extension status
- Student IRS verification of non-tax filer status letter (VNF)
- Student Signed statement of non-tax filer status
- Student Documentation of tax filing extension status
- Proof of student's high school completion status

- Proof of student's identity
- Student Statement of Educational purpose
- All documentation received, but after deadline
- Other missing/incomplete documentation (Please specify below.)

**Question:** The Department of Education (ED) permitted institutions to accept a signed copy of the 2017 tax return in lieu of IRS tax transcripts for the 2019-20 award year. Did your institution continue to require tax transcripts for the 2019-20 award year after the January 9, 2019 Electronic Announcement granting this authority?
- Yes
- No
- On a case-by-case basis

**Question:** What percentage of all students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 but did not submit all of the required documentation required for verification still enrolled at your institution for 2019-20?

|  | All Verification Tracking Groups | V1 & V5 Verification Tracking Groups | V4 Verification Tracking Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| All students |  |  |  |
| Incoming (first-time) students |  |  |  |
| Continuing/transfer students |  |  |  |

**Question:** Of students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 and did not submit all of the required documentation required for verification, but still enrolled at your institution for 2019-20, how did these students pay for their educational expenses? (Select all that apply.)
- Out of pocket (include instances where parents/relatives made payments, student made payments themselves, disbursements were made out of a 529 prepaid or college savings plan)
- Institutional aid
- Interim disbursement of federal student aid
- Private (non-institutional) loan
- Institutional loan
- Payment plan
- Private scholarship
- No payments made
- Don't know

**Question:** Of students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 but did not submit all of the required documentation required for verification, but still enrolled at your institution for 2019-20, what percentage graduated in the 2019-20 academic year?
- Open-ended text box.
- I don't know

**Question:** Of students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 but did not submit all of the required documentation required for verification, but still enrolled at your institution for 2019-20, what percentage of students returned to your institution or graduated in the 2020-21 academic year?

| | Percentage | I Don't Know |
|---|---|---|
| Percent who enrolled at my institution in the 2020-21 academic year but did not graduate in 2020-21 | | |
| Percent who enrolled and graduated from my institution in the 2020-21 academic year | | |
| Percent who neither enrolled nor graduated in the 2020-21 academic year | | |

**Question:** Please answer the following questions comparing enrolled students who were selected for verification by the CPS in the 2019-20 academic year and submitted all of the required verification documentation versus those who did not submit all of the required verification documentation:

| | Submitted all required verification documentation | Did not submit all required verification documentation | Don't have this data/Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average GPA at the end of the first term of 2019-20 | | | |
| % on SAP probation/warning/lost eligibility due to failure to make SAP at the end of the first term of 2019-20 | | | |
| # of credits enrolled for the first term of 2019-20 | | | |
| Enrolled in the term immediately following the first term they enrolled after being selected for verification | | | |
| Graduated in the term immediately following the first term they enrolled after being selected for verification | | | |

**Question:** Does your institution use the National Student Clearinghouse or another service or method to track whether students enrolled at a different institution other than your institution?
- Yes
- No

**Question:** skip logic: If "*Does your institution use the National Student Clearinghouse or another service or method to track whether students enrolled at a different institution other than your institution?*" = Yes, ask: What percentage of students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 who did not submit all of the required documentation required for verification enrolled at an institution other than yours for 2019-20?
- Open-ended text box.
- I don't know

**Question:** Of all students who were selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20, what percentage had an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) within Pell-eligible range on the ISIR transaction that was selected for verification (prior to verification being completed)?

- Open-ended text box.
- I don't know

**Question:** Of those selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 for whom verification was completed by your institution, what percentage had no EFC change as a result of verification?

| | Percent of students | Don't have this data/Don't know |
|---|---|---|
| All students | | |
| Students whose EFC fell within Pell-eligible range on ISIR transaction that was selected for verification (prior to verification being completed) | | |
| Students whose EFC fell outside of Pell-eligible range on ISIR transaction that was selected for verification (prior to verification being completed) | | |

**Question:** Of those selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 for whom verification was completed by your institution and who had an EFC within Pell-eligible range on the ISIR transaction that was selected for verification, what percentage had an EFC increase as a result of verification that impacted the Pell award amount?

| | Percent of students | Don't have this data/Don't know |
|---|---|---|
| All students | | |
| Verified EFC made student ineligible for Pell | | |
| Verified EFC made student eligible for lower Pell amount | | |

**Question:** Of those selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 for whom verification was completed by your institution and who had an EFC within Pell-eligible range on the ISIR transaction that was selected for verification, what percentage had an EFC decrease as a result of verification that impacted the Pell award amount?

- Open-ended text box.
- I don't know

**Question:** Of those selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 for whom verification was completed by your institution and who had an EFC within Pell-eligible range on the ISIR transaction that was selected for verification, what percentage had an EFC increase or decrease as a result of verification that did not impact the Pell award amount?

- Open-ended text box.
- I don't know

**Question:** Of those selected for verification by the CPS in 2019-20 for whom verification was completed by your institution and who had an EFC outside of Pell-eligible range on the ISIR transaction that was selected for verification, what percentage gained Pell grant eligibility as a result of verification?
- Open-ended text box.
- I don't know

**Question:** Does your institution accept the results of verification processed by another school?
- Yes
- No

**Question:** *skip logic: If "Does your institution accept the results of verification processed by another school?"= No, Display:* Why not? (Select all that apply)
- Wasn't aware that we were permitted to accept another school's verification results
- Don't trust other aid offices' verification process
- Worried about my institutions' liability for accepting another aid office's verification results
- Process of requesting a letter from other school indicating which transaction is the verified transaction is too burdensome
- 100% verification school, so we're collecting documents from all students anyway

**Question:** *skip logic: If "Does your institution accept the results of verification processed by another school?" = No, Display:* Would any changes to the law or regulations make your office more likely to accept another financial aid office's verification results?
- Yes, once the FUTURE Act, which permits direct data sharing between the IRS and ED, is implemented
- Yes, if there were an easier way to confirm which ISIR transaction had been verified by another school other than collecting a letter from the school that performed the verification
- Yes, if schools were assured that they would not be held liable for verification errors made by another school
- No
- Unsure/would rather not say

**Question:** Does your institution currently use the IRS Income Verification Express Service (IVES) to collect tax transcripts?
- Yes, our financial aid offices uses IVES
- Yes, our third party verification processor uses IVES
- No
- Unsure/would rather not say

**Question:** *skip logic: If "Does your institution use the IRS Income Verification Express Service IVES to collect tax transcripts?" = No, Display:* Why not?
- Too expensive
- Don't see it as an advantage over collecting income documentation directly from students
- Wasn't aware of this service
- Stopped using it when ED began permitting institutions to collect signed copies of tax returns in lieu of tax transcripts

# NCAN Membership Questions

**Question:** The Department of Education's (ED) Office of Federal Student Aid lowered the verification selection rate for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic year.

Did your program experience a reduction in the percentage of your students selected for FAFSA verification over this time period?

- Yes, and we can quantify the percentage of our students selected
- Yes, but we can not quantify the percentage of our students selected
- No, and we can quantify the percentage of our students selected
- No, but we can not quantify the percentage of our students selected
- Do not know

*Question: skip logic: If "Did your program experience a reduction in the percentage of your students selected for FAFSA verification over this time period?" = Yes, and we can quantify the percentage of our students selected OR No, and we can quantify the percentage of our students selected, Ask:* What percentage of your students were selected for verification in the following academic years:

|  | *Percentage Selected* | *I don't know* |
|---|---|---|
| 2019-20 |  |  |
| 2020-21 |  |  |
| 2021-22 |  |  |

**Question:** Please rate the level of difficulty for the following challenges for **high school seniors** (or students applying to multiple institutions) to overcome while completing the verification process?

|  | Not at all challenging | Not very challenging | Neutral | Somewhat challenging | Very challenging |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Various methods of notifications for verification selection (email, student portal) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Various methods to provide the institution(s) with requested documents (in person, upload to secure portal) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Different institutions require different documents for the same verification request |  |  |  |  |  |
| Locating verification documents/forms/instructions on institutional websites |  |  |  |  |  |
| Institutional process includes a deadline that may not be feasible to meet |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receiving additional requests after meeting initial request for materials from |  |  |  |  |  |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| institutions (due to missing, additional requested) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in accessing parental documents requested (parents did not keep copies of tax returns, parent not willing to share documents, distant/estranged relationship with parent) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in accessing student documents requested (student did not keep copies of tax returns, student doesn't know if parent filed for them) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in accessing documents from the IRS (not eligible for IRS Get Transcript service, delay in receiving documents when requested by mail, address update process prior to tax form requests) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in using IRS Data Retrieval Tool to update income information in the FAFSA | | | | | |

**Question:** Please rate the level of difficulty for the following challenges for **returning students** to overcome while completing the verification process?

| | Not at all challenging | Not very challenging | Neutral | Somewhat challenging | Very challenging |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Various methods of notifications for verification selection (email, student portal) | | | | | |
| Various methods to provide the institution(s) with requested documents (in person, upload to secure portal) | | | | | |
| Locating verification documents/forms/instructions on institutional websites | | | | | |
| Institutional process includes a deadline that may not be feasible to meet | | | | | |
| Receiving additional requests after meeting initial request for materials from institutions (due to missing, additional requested) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in accessing parental documents requested (parents did not keep copies of tax returns, parent not willing to share | | | | | |

| documents, distant/estranged relationship with parent) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Difficulty in accessing student documents requested (student did not keep copies of tax returns, student doesn't know if parent filed for them) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in accessing documents from the IRS (not eligible for IRS Get Transcript service, delay in receiving documents when requested by mail, address update process prior to tax form requests) | | | | | |
| Difficulty in using IRS Data Retrieval Tool to update income information in the FAFSA | | | | | |

**Question:** For high school seniors, if your state provides student-level FAFSA completion data, is the "student selected for verification" field provided?
- No
- Yes

**Question:** Is the information provided on the Student Aid Report (SAR) adequate for notifying the student that they have been selected for verification?
- Yes
- No
- Other (Please specify below.)

**Question:** Being selected for FAFSA verification discourages first-time students from enrolling in college
- True
- False
- Other (Please specify below.) Note: you may include data if available. For example, enrollment rate for those selected for verification vs those not selected for verification.

# Questions for All Survey Respondents:

**Question:** Please rate how helpful you believe the following solutions would be for reducing verification burden for students.

We understand that not all solutions will be familiar to all survey respondents. If, because of that, you don't feel you can offer an educated opinion as to its helpfulness, please use the Unsure/Don't Know option:

| | Very helpful | Somewhat helpful | Neutral | Not very helpful | Not at all helpful | Unsure/ Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Requiring all schools to use a standard verification form template developed by ED | | | | | | |
| ED creating a central portal that all schools can access, where students can upload verification documents | | | | | | |
| Legislation or regulation requiring institutions to accept verification results from other institutions | | | | | | |
| Legislation or regulation providing an easier way to confirm which ISIR transaction had been verified by another school other than collecting a letter from the school that performed the verification | | | | | | |
| Legislation or regulation assuring institutions that they would not be held liable for verification errors made by another school | | | | | | |
| ED amending its verification algorithm to better target applications likely to have an EFC change as a result of verification | | | | | | |
| Implementation of FAFSA Simplification Act/FUTURE Act changes enabling direct IRS-to-ED sharing of income data for all FAFSA filers | | | | | | |
| Universal statement/form for non-tax filers selected for verification (parents or independent students) | | | | | | |
| IRS Data Retrieval Tool to confirm non-filer status in lieu of required verification of nonfiling statement | | | | | | |
| Any FAFSA filer whose information is transferred from the IRS should not be selected for financial verification (i.e. the only verification group they could | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| be assigned is V4- identify/statement of educational purpose) | | | | | | |
| Students with $0 EFC should not be selected for financial verification (i.e. the only verification group they could be assigned is V4- identify/statement of educational purpose) | | | | | | |
| Continuously enrolled students who have successfully completed verification in the previous year should not be selected again. | | | | | | |

**Question:** What other solutions not mentioned in the previous question do you think would be helpful to reduce verification burden for students? (Open-ended text)

**Question:** Please rate how helpful you believe the following solutions would be for reducing verification burden for your institution or organization.

We understand that not all solutions will be familiar to all survey respondents. If, because of that, you don't feel you can offer an educated opinion as to its helpfulness, please use the Unsure/Don't Know option:

| | Very helpful | Somewhat helpful | Neutral | Not very helpful | Not at all helpful | Unsure/ Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Requiring all schools to use a standard verification form template developed by ED | | | | | | |
| ED creating a central portal that all schools can access, where students can upload verification documents | | | | | | |
| Legislation or regulation requiring institutions to accept verification results from other institutions | | | | | | |
| Legislation or regulation providing an easier way to confirm which ISIR transaction had been verified by another school other than collecting a letter from the school that performed the verification | | | | | | |
| Legislation or regulation assuring institutions that they would not be held liable for verification errors made by another school | | | | | | |
| ED amending its verification algorithm to better target applications likely to have an EFC change as a result of verification | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Implementation of FAFSA Simplification Act/FUTURE Act changes enabling direct IRS-to-ED sharing of income data for all FAFSA filers | | | | | | |
| Universal statement/form for non-tax filers selected for verification (parents or independent students) | | | | | | |
| IRS Data Retrieval Tool to confirm non-filer status in lieu of required verification of nonfiling statement | | | | | | |
| Any FAFSA filer whose information is transferred from the IRS should not be selected for financial verification (i.e. the only verification group they could be assigned is V4- identify/statement of educational purpose) | | | | | | |
| Students with $0 EFC should not be selected for financial verification (i.e. the only verification group they could be assigned is V4- identify/statement of educational purpose) | | | | | | |
| Continuously enrolled students who have successfully completed verification in the previous year should not be selected again. | | | | | | |

**Question:** What other solutions not mentioned in the previous question do you think would be helpful to reduce verification burden for your institution or organization? (Open-ended text)