

Confidentiality, Verification and Eligibility

Policy/Procedure

Confidentiality

Family financial information is held in the strictest confidence, and information about the amount of awards is not released outside the College administration without the approval of the student and/or family, unless required by federal law or subpoenaed by a court of law.

If fraud is suspected on an application for federal assistance, the college is required to report this situation to the U.S. Inspector General's Office. Information from the student's file will be released to authorities pursuing such an investigation.

Verification

The Federal processor subjects each application for federal financial aid to a series of edits designed to identify missing, inconsistent, or illogical responses. If the application fails to pass these edits, the application is selected for verification. Some applications are selected randomly. The financial aid office must check the accuracy of certain data elements before federal financial aid can be finalized for students in verification. We will request parent and student federal tax returns, W2 forms, and a Verification Worksheet. The financial aid counselor reviewing the file may also request additional information such as copies of 1099 forms.

Upperclass students selected for verification must provide all requested information before their financial aid application can be processed. For incoming students, tentative awards are usually made based upon estimated financial information. Students who do not provide requested documentation by the 60th day of enrollment may lose Federal Perkins Loans and Federal Work-Study eligibility. Eligibility may be reinstated if documents are submitted at a later date provided that funds are available. Federal Pell Grants, Federal Stafford Loans or Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants cannot be processed or credited until the verification process has been completed. Students who do not provide the necessary verification documents may lose Dickinson grant assistance as well. If verification shows that the information reported on the application is incorrect, eligibility for aid will be recalculated based upon accurate information. This process may change a student's Dickinson grant and/or other forms of aid.

Eligibility

A student must meet federal criteria in order to be eligible for federal financial aid. The criteria for individual federal aid programs are outlined in a separate publication, Guide to Student Federal Aid, available at http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html. This publication is also available from the Financial Aid Office. Eligibility for federal aid is determined according to the information provided on the FAFSA. This information is analyzed according to a formula called the Federal Methodology, which computes an expected family

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contribution based upon student and parent income and assets. The Cost of Education (COA) minus the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) equals the student's federal eligibility ("financial need").

Dickinson uses a separate Institutional Methodology to determine eligibility for Dickinson grant funds. Additional factors beyond the data items requested on the FAFSA are considered. These include (but are not limited to) home equity, a contribution from the noncustodial parent, and, in the case of a family with more than one in college, an evaluation of the actual costs involved in supporting the other student(s). Parents in college and siblings in graduate school are not normally counted as other family members in college.

Dickinson expects each financial aid recipient to work during the summer and contribute a minimum of \$1,550 toward college costs. Students are also expected to contribute a portion of their assets each year for educational expenses. Some students receive educational benefits from governmental agencies such as the Veterans' Administration and State Bureaus of Vocational Rehabilitation or from parents' employers in the form of tuition remission. Such benefits must be taken into consideration when determining the financial aid package.

The financial aid award notice will list all the financial aid programs for which the student is eligible. The amount of financial aid that the student receives from these programs depends on the student's computed need. The amount of Dickinson grant and scholarship aid may also be influenced by the academic achievement and promise of the applicant.

Students' financial need is recalculated for each year of attendance; as a result, awarded amounts of need-based aid may vary as need changes. The College attempts to maintain approximately the same amount of Dickinson grant funds from year to year unless need changes significantly. The student should submit a PROFILE application if, as a result of a significant change in family circumstances, additional assistance is being requested.

Related Information

History/Revision Information

Responsible Office/Division:

Effective Date:

Last Amended Date:

Next Review Date:

Also Found In: Information on Policies and Procedures - Financial Aid Office