

# Verification Policy 2020-2021

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Following federal guidelines, Saint Leo University (SLU) verifies 100% of applications that are selected for verification and are accepted for admission. As needed, SLU will select an application for verification with conflicting, or otherwise unclear, information.

Required verification items are defined below. Applicants electing to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool **and** who do NOT alter any information imported from their IRS tax return(s) are not required to submit tax documentation. **Using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool is the most effective way to provide income data.** Student/parent 2018 tax return transcript(s) will be required if the applicant elects not to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool **or** alters any information imported from their IRS tax returns. If unable to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool or obtain a tax return transcript, please contact Student Financial Services.

## Required Verification Items

- Adjusted Gross Income
- U.S. Income Tax Paid
- Untaxed Portions of Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Distributions and Pensions
- IRA Deductions and Payments
- Tax Exempt Interest Income
- Education Credits
- Number of household members
- Number in college
  
- Non-filer: Income earned from work and verification of non-filing
  - Acceptable documentation:
    - Verification worksheet or signed certification statement and W2s for each source of employment income (if applicable); *and*
    - Any IRS document that clearly indicates verification of non-filing status, or states that the IRS does not have a tax return record on file for the tax year are acceptable for verification of non-filing. This includes a Tax Return Transcript or a Tax Account Transcript that includes a message such as “no record of return filed” or “no transcript on file”; or
      - Confirmation of non-filing from the IRS can be obtained by using IRS Form 4506T and checking box 7.
        - Dependent students are exempt from verifying non-filing status
  
- High School Completion Status
  - Acceptable documentation: High school diploma or high school transcript showing date diploma awarded or a state recognized equivalent (GED, state certificate, approved home-school credentials) or academic transcript showing completion of two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor’s degree. Students that completed secondary education in a foreign country and are unable to provide a diploma/transcript must provide a “secondary school leaving certificate” if not already provided to the university.
  
- Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose
  - Acceptable documentation: Appear in person to a SLU official and present valid government-issued photo identification (driver’s license, state issued photo ID or passport) **and** a signed statement of educational purpose. SLU will photocopy the identification, note on photocopy the name of the person accepting the documentation, and the date it was received. If unable to appear in person, the student must provide a valid government-issued photo identification (driver’s license, state issued photo ID, or passport) **and** an original notarized statement of educational purpose signed by the student.

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When applicants' FAFSA data is received and selected for verification, their record is flagged in the financial aid processing system with the appropriate documents required to complete verification, based on data from the application.

The applicant is required to submit additional documentation, as requested, to clarify conflicting or otherwise unclear information. Students are notified of all documents required to complete the verification process via SLU email addresses.

Students receive a communication via email with a link that allows access to the information needed to complete the verification process. When verification is complete and the student is awarded, a financial aid offer is sent to the student.

### **Deadlines:**

- All financial aid applicants must submit the FAFSA by midnight Central time, June 30, 2021.
- Any corrections or updates must be submitted by midnight Central time, September 11, 2021.
- All requested documentation needed to complete the verification process must be received by Saint Leo University on or before September 15, 2021 or within 120 from your last day of enrollment, whichever is earlier.
- For all financial aid applicants selected for verification, the process must be completed prior to the deadline published in the *Federal Register*. The tentative deadline is September 18, 2021 or 120 days after the last day of the student's enrollment, whichever is earlier.

Verification is complete when SLU has all requested documentation and a valid SAR (one on which all the information is accurate and complete). This includes any necessary corrections that must be made by SLU.

### **Information for Individuals with Unusual Circumstances**

#### **Filing an Amended Tax Return:**

Individuals who filed an amended tax return must submit a tax return transcript obtained from the IRS that lists tax account information of the tax filer for tax year 2018; and a signed copy of the IRS Form 1040X that was filed with the IRS.

#### **Filing a Tax Extension:**

To complete the verification process, you must provide:

- IRS approval of further extension (beyond the automatic six-month extension for tax year 2018);
- Appropriate verification worksheet, and copies of W-2 and/or 1099s form(s);
- Confirmation of non-filing letter from IRS (Verification that tax return has not yet been filed)
  - Dependent students are excluded this requirement

If self-employed, a signed and dated statement certifying the amount of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and U.S. income taxes paid is acceptable in the absence of W-2s or 1099s.

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For individuals who have been called up for active duty or for qualifying National Guard duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency should submit a statement certifying that he/she has not filed an income tax return or a request for a filing extension because of that service.

### **Victims of IRS Tax Related Identity Theft:**

A victim of tax related identity theft who is not able to obtain a 2018 IRS Tax Return Transcript or use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool must submit a signed and dated statement indicating that they are the victim of IRS related identity theft and must contact the IRS at 1-800-908-4490. Upon authentication of the tax filer's identity, the IRS will provide a tax return database view transcript (TRDBV), by U.S. Postal Service that can be submitted to Saint Leo University.

### **Individuals Who Filed Non-IRS Income Tax Returns:**

- A tax filer who filed an income tax return with Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands may provide a signed copy of his or her income tax return that was filed with the relevant tax authority. However, if we question the accuracy of the information on the signed copy of the income tax return, the tax filer must provide us with a copy of the tax account information issued by the relevant tax authority before verification can be completed.
- A tax filer who filed an income tax return with the tax authority for American Samoa must provide a copy of his or her tax account information.
- A tax filer who filed an income tax return with tax authorities not mentioned above, i.e. a foreign tax authority, and who indicates that he or she is unable to obtain the tax account information free of charge, must provide documentation that the tax authority charges a fee to obtain that information, along with a signed copy of his or her income tax return that was filed with the relevant tax authority.

### **Individuals who are Non-IRS Nontax Filers:**

Residents of the Freely Associated States (Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia), and a U.S. territory or commonwealth or a foreign central government who are not required to file an income tax return under that taxing authority's rules must submit a copy of their Wage and Tax Statement (or equivalent documentation) for each source of employment income received for 2018, a signed statement identifying all of the individual's income and taxes for 2018, and documentation from relevant tax authority dated on or after October 1, 2018 that indicates a 2018 tax return was not filed.

### **Income Information for Tax Filers and Nontax Filers:**

An individual who did not retain a copy of his or her 2018 tax account information and for whom that information cannot be located by the IRS (or other relevant taxing authority) must submit to the institution:

- Copies of all of their IRS Form W-2s, a wage and income transcript, or an equivalent document;
- Documentation from the IRS or other relevant taxing authority that indicates the individual's 2018 tax account information cannot be located; and
- A signed statement that indicates that the individual did not retain a copy of his or her 2018 tax account information.

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### **Verification of Non-filing, Alternative Acceptable Documentation** effective 7-15-20

For independent students and parents of dependent students who did not file and are not required to file an income tax return for the 2018 tax year, and have attempted to obtain proof of non-filing from IRS online but was unsuccessful, an institution may accept:

- A signed statement from the individual certifying that;
  - You attempted to obtain the VNF from the IRS or other tax authorities and was unable to obtain the required documentation; and
  - You have not filed and are not required to file an income tax return for the 2018 tax year; and
  - A listing of the sources of any income earned by you from work and the amount of income from each source for the 2018 tax year; and
- A copy of IRS Form W-2, or an equivalent document, for each source of employment income received by the individual for the 2018 tax year. Alternative documentation maybe be accepted upon review by Student Financial Services.

### **IRS Transcript Request options:**

Make sure to request the “IRS Tax Return Transcript” and *NOT* the “IRS Tax Account Transcript.”

- Use IRS.gov or the IRS2Go app to access Get Transcript Online; after verifying your identity, you may immediately download or print the transcript, or
- Use IRS.gov or the IRS2Go app to access Get Transcript by Mail; transcript will be delivered within 10 days to the address of record, or
- Call 800-908-9946 for an automated Get Transcript by Mail feature, or
- Submit Form 4506-T or 4506T-EZ to have a transcript mailed to the address of record.

An IRS Tax Return Transcript is generally available within 2–3 weeks being accepted by the IRS.