

Conflicting Information Policy

Conflicting information occurs when information reported, either verbally or on any documentation submitted to any office at Southern State Community College, does not match the information being reported on the FAFSA or supplemental forms/documents and the discrepancy affects eligibility or is of sufficient magnitude to materially affect the amount and types of aid a student is eligible to receive.

Federal regulations mandate that a school must have a system of identifying and resolving discrepancies in all FSA-related information received by any school office. A school must resolve discrepancies for all students, not just those selected for verification. Resolution includes determining what information is correct and documenting the school's finding. Conflicting information must be resolved before awarding/disbursing aid or making a professional judgment adjustment. If conflicting information arises after a student's aid was originally disbursed, the school may remove any disbursements of aid from a student's account and require resolution of any conflicting information before disbursing any further aid. If this occurs, the student may be liable to the College for any balance owed as a result of receiving aid that he/she wasn't eligible for based on the conflicting information.

Common sources of conflicting information and possible resolutions can be, but are not limited to:

- Social Security number possible resolution: social security card
- Date of Birth possible resolution: official birth certificate
- Name change possible resolution: court documentation showing name was legally changed and/or social security card
- Dependency status possible resolutions: official birth certificate, court documentation showing orphan/ward of the court status, legal guardianship or legal emancipation, proof of income or support, proof of homelessness, DD-214, etc.
- Marital status (student and/or parent) possible resolutions: marriage certificate, divorce decree, proof of separation, proof of maintenance of separate residences for more than 6 months of the tax year in question (copy of lease, mortgage statement, etc.), and/or utility bills for more than 6 months of the tax year in question showing separate residences for the tax filer and/or the spouse.

Note: If marital and/or tax filing status was correctly filed for the tax year on the FAFSA, but the marital status is different as of the date the FAFSA was completed, then marriage certificate, divorce decree, proof of separation, and/or proof of maintenance of separate residences from the date of separation on the FAFSA or for 6 months, whichever is greater.

- Admissions status (and High School Completion) possible resolutions: proof of high school graduation, GED, proof of completion of a Bachelor's degree, etc.
- Income and taxes paid possible resolutions: IRS tax transcript, IRS Wage and Income Statement, W-2 Form, Schedule C tax form, 1099-C form, Amended tax return, paystub, etc.
- Tax filing status possible resolutions: marriage certificate, divorce decree, proof of separation, proof of maintenance of separate residences for more than 6 months of the tax year in question (copy of lease, mortgage statement, etc.), utility bills for more than 6 months of the tax year in question showing separate residences for the tax filer and/or the spouse, IRS 1040X form and IRS Tax Account Transcript showing amendment to filing status was made.

Note: If marital and/or tax filing status was correctly filed for the tax year on the FAFSA, but the marital status is different as of the date the FAFSA was completed, then marriage certificate, divorce decree, proof of separation, and/or proof of maintenance of separate residences from the date of separation on the FAFSA or for 6 months, whichever is greater.

- Number in household possible resolutions: proof of support and/or income for household member(s), OH Dept. of Social Services (DPSS) statement of benefits, proof of residence, etc.
- NSLDS data possible resolutions: birth certificate, social security card, marriage certificate, legal court documentation of name change, letter from loan guarantor, etc.
- The student and/or parent transferred their IRS tax information into the FAFSA, however they also stated that they did not file taxes.

A student may be asked to submit written documentation and/or additional information to clarify or correct information. This action may be in conjunction with the Verification process or a separate request. Financial aid administrators have the authority to request any documentation they need in order to resolve discrepancies, per section 479A of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the regulations at 34 CFR 668.51(b), 34 CFR 668.54(a)(3), 34 CFR 668.54(a)(5), 34 CFR 668.60(a), 34 CFR 668.60(b)(1), 34 CFR 668.60(c)(2) and 34 CFR 668.60(d).

It is at the discretion of the Office of Financial Aid as to which documentation is necessary to reasonably resolve the conflicting information. If there is reason to believe a student has intentionally submitted incorrect data or withheld information to gain access to federal, state, or institutional student aid, their student financial aid package may be cancelled and/or additional administrative action taken. Additionally, other offices must notify the Financial Aid office or the individual responsible for administering Title IV program of all the information received that may impact a student's financial aid status, such as but not limited to the following:

- Admissions & Records Office- Residency Status, college transcripts, change of enrollment status
- Fiscal/Foundation Office- any outside assistance received toward educational expenses

If the Office of Financial Aid has reason to believe that a student may have engaged in fraud, including false statements of income, when that information is credible and affects eligibility for financial aid or the amount of financial aid, SSCC must report this to the Office of the Inspector General in accordance with 34 CFR 668.16(g). Fraud involves false information with intent to deceive