

Conflicting Information and Resolution

Conflicting information occurs when the information reported, either verbally or in any documentation submitted to any department at the SMCCCD, does not match the information reported on the FAFSA or supplemental forms/documents. This discrepancy must be significant enough to affect eligibility or materially impact the amount and types of aid a student is eligible to receive.

Federal regulations mandate that schools must have a system in place to identify and resolve discrepancies in all FSA-related information received by any school office. This process must be followed for all students, not just those selected for verification. Resolution involves determining which information is correct and documenting the school's findings in the student's file. Conflicting information must be resolved before awarding or disbursing aid or making a professional judgment adjustment. If conflicting information arises after a student's aid has been disbursed, the school may remove any disbursements of aid from the student's account and require resolution of the conflicting information before disbursing further aid. In such cases, the student may be liable to the College for any balance owed due to receiving aid they were not eligible for based on conflicting information.

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

- **Social Security number:** Possible resolution: copy of social security card.
- **Date of Birth:** Possible resolution: official birth certificate (scrapbook copies not accepted). The student must also contact A&R and complete the "Change of Personal Information" form
- **Name change:** Possible resolution: Court documentation showing name was legally changed and/or social security card. The student must also contact A&R and complete the "Change of Personal Information" form.
- **Dependency status:** Possible resolutions: official birth certificate (scrapbook copies not accepted), 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.
- **Discrepant Data:** with Admissions and Records--Individuals who have completed high school, college or university course work in a country other than the United States must obtain a complete evaluation of foreign transcripts, degrees, and other relevant documents, even if the foreign coursework has been accepted by a college or university in the US.
- **High School Diploma/GED:** If a student did not state on their FAFSA application completion of HS/GED, student must submit a copy of their High School diploma.
- **Bachelor's Degree:** If a student does not indicate that he/she has a bachelor's degree or higher on the FAFSA but does on the A&R application, student must provide official Transcripts from all schools and have them evaluated by A&R

- **Program of Study:** Students must be in an eligible program of study for financial aid purposes. Students must update program of study via WebSmart
- **Residency Status:** If a student indicated California residency on their admission application but did not do so on their FAFSA, they must correct their FAFSA application.
- **Discrepant Tax Data:** Financial aid directors and technicians must verify whether an individual is required to file a tax return, determine the correct filing status, and ensure that no individual is claimed as an exemption by more than one person. If an individual is required to file taxes but has not, they must complete the appropriate tax form and submit a tax transcript or use the FTI tool on the FAFSA before the financial aid application can be processed. If it is found that a student and/or spouse, or a dependent student's married parents, have filed as "head of household" or claimed a spouse as a dependent, they will be required to amend their tax return and file under the correct status. Simply combining the two tax returns is not acceptable. A copy of the IRS tax return transcript will be needed before the financial aid application can be completed. Publication 17 of the IRS [Your Federal Income Tax](#) is an excellent resource.
- **Cal Grant Eligibility:** It is necessary to verify financial eligibility for all Cal Grant recipients who have been selected for verification or who have an ISIR/Cal ISIR loaded into our system with a transaction number of 2 or greater. The purpose of this review is to ensure that changes to a student's application do not result in the student's information exceeding the Cal Grant income and asset ceiling.

Conflicting information does not need to be resolved if:

- The conflicting information does not change the student's SAI or otherwise affect the student's eligibility for Title IV aid;
- The student dies during the award year; or
- The conflicting data are received after the student is no longer enrolled and has no intention of re-enrolling at the school in the future.