Office of Student Financial Aid Services

June 2022 Podcast

Hernan:

Hello UConn Nation. Yes, this is Hernan Cortez again. I am here to discuss some topics regarding financial aid. We have a special guest with us today, Joanne Moquin, who is from our processing unit, and she is going to chat with us a little bit and give you information regarding the Verification process. So, Joanne, welcome to our podcast.

Joanne:

Thank you, Hernan. I just want to let you know a little about myself. I've been in the financial aid office for the last seven years here at UConn. In fact, I just celebrated my seventh anniversary in mid-May. In total I've worked in financial aid field for 10 years now.

Hernan:

Ten years, wow. So, you are a decade old in financial aid. That's awesome.

Joann:

There you go.

Hernan:

To get this party started here. Can you tell us a little bit about what verification is?

Joanne:

Verification is the federal review process that requires us to request documentation from students and their parents to confirm the data that was entered on their FAFSA. Students are selected randomly by the Department of Education. Their FAFSA's are flagged in a way institutions know which students we have to request documents from. Students are also informed that they have been selected to complete this process. It is important to note that a student's financial aid package is considered an estimate at this point until their file has been verified.

Hernan:

That's very key. Yeah so, they have a financial aid offer. However, it is not finalized until these documents are submitted and completely verified. OK great. Thank you for that info. So, what is that families or students need to do?

Joanne:

So, students and parents should only submit the requested documentation to our office. So, if you been asked for something you don't want to submit more than. So, this should be done as soon as possible so that the financial aid package can be accurately determined. All documentation that is submitted to our office by July 1st will be processed by August 1st when fee bills are due. If documentation is submitted after that July 1st date, we cannot guarantee that it will be processed in time for the August 1 fee bill due date.

Hernan:

Good to know. So how can or what is the best way students can submit their documents?

Joanne:

There are a variety of ways you can that submit documents to our office, but the best way is to submit them through our secure file upload process which can be found in the student admin portal. Other forms of submission are not as secure, such as emailing them to us, or not as timely, such as mailing them to us. Another thing to mention is that PDFs are the ideal documents to send to us.

The most common documents that students and their families can expect us to request are parent and student tax information, household size and number in college worksheets, student non-filer statements, and parent and student W2s. Other documentation may be required after review of the file. Verification uses the prior-prior tax year's information. So, for example, 22/23 award year is looking at the tax information from 2020. The reason that we use this prior-prior tax documentation is because most families will have their taxes completed by the time the new FAFSA year is available. The 22/23 FAFSA became available on 10/1/21 and most people have finished filing taxes prior to 4/15/21.

Hernan:

No, thank you for that information, Joanne. Thank you very much. Now, is there anything else or anything special they need to know about verification?

Joanne:

Yes actually, as a matter of fact, on May 18th, the Department of Education waived the verification requirements for all documentation except the Statement of Identity and Educational Purpose. This form along with the copy of the student's ID still must be completed per federal regulations if a student was selected for that type of verification. For all others we sent an email to them to let them know if they have not completed their process yet. We let them know they do not need to submit any further requirements. But it is important to note that their, to note here that if we have received partial documentation, before we had found out about this change, we are required to review that documentation for any conflicting information. So that is something we would have to do. If we determine there is a conflict, we may request additional documentation to clear up that conflict. Another point of interest at this point is that if a student is told their file has been verified, it's pretty important not to touch that FAFSA without contacting us because we may have to re-verify if they go and change something we already verified. Like number in college, or household size or even tax information.

Hernan:

OK so, if I hear you right, basically if you've completed the verification, they are going to get a communication, an email from us saying, yes, your file has been confirmed, your financial aid is finalized. However, the best thing to do is not change your FAFSA or else they may be required to submit additional documentation.

Joanne:

Correct

Hernan:

Awesome. Awesome. Well, Joanne I know that's quite a bit of information for you to do and a lot of things that you have to do on your end.

And obviously students if you have any question regarding verification, please give us a call. We're here to answer anything regarding verification or financial aid as a whole. As you know you can give us a call at 860-486-2819 or you can email us at financialaid@uconn.edu. And with that we hope from the side of the Financial Aid office here, we hope you are enjoying your summer and stay tune for our next podcast which should be next month.

Thank you very much and have a good night.

And Joanne thank you for being here.

Joanne:

Thank you for having me.

Hernan:

Take care, bye bye.