

TAX FILING REQUIREMENTS AND PROPER FILING STATUS - 2020

U.S. Department of Education rules stipulate that you cannot receive federal student financial aid unless proper tax forms with an acceptable filing status have been filed with the Internal Revenue Service. Because of parity of treatment of all aid applicants, these rules also apply to Amherst College institutional aid.

We cannot disburse federal student financial aid until amended returns have been filed with the Internal Revenue Service if an improper status or form was filed. An amended return may be filed using IRS Form 1040X, which is available at www.irs.gov.

For a **dependent student**, a 2020 tax return must be filed if the individual had:

- more than \$12,400 in earned income, or
- more than \$1,100 in unearned income (such as interest and dividends), or
- gross income more than the larger of \$1,100, or earned income (up to \$12,050) plus \$350.

For **parents and independent students**, a 2020 tax return must be filed if income subject to taxation exceeded:

- \$12,400 for a single individual under age 65
- \$5 for a married individual filing a separate return
- \$24,800 for a married couple filing a joint return if both spouses are under age 65
- \$18,650 for an individual under age 65 filing as head of household
- \$24,800 for a qualifying widow(er) or surviving spouse under age 65
- \$14,050 for a single individual age 65 or older
- \$26,100 for a married couple filing a joint return if one spouse is age 65 or older
- \$27,400 for a married couple filing a joint return if both spouses are age 65 or older
- \$20,300 for an individual age 65 or older filing as head of household
- \$26,100 for a qualifying widow(er) or surviving spouse age 65 or older

Also note that:

- Parents who are married cannot file separate returns with one parent filing as "single" or as "married filing separately" and the other parent filing as "head of household" and claiming children or other dependents. Married parents may file as "married filing jointly" or file separately as "married filing separately."
- In the case of divorced or separated parents, a dependent child may be claimed on a tax return by only one parent.
- In the case of divorced parents, if one parent claims the payment of alimony, the other parent must report alimony as taxable income.