



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

By Kim Slote, policy analyst

TECHNICAL

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Jan. 4, 2016: Availability of EDEExpress for Windows 2016-2017, Release 1.0. This release contains global, application processing and packaging functionality for the 2016-2017 cycle. You can access EDEExpress for Windows 2016-2017 on the Federal Student Aid Download website located at <https://www.fsadownload.ed.gov>. Other EDEExpress 2016-2017 documents offered on the website include:

- Installation Guide for EDEExpress for Windows 2016-2017
- EDEExpress for Windows 2016-2017, Release 1.0 Cover Letter
- EDEExpress for Windows 2016-2017, Release 1.0 Desk Reference
- 2016-2017 Packaging Technical Reference

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 22, 2016: Testing of Microsoft Windows 8 Operating System with EDESuite PC Products. Testing has been completed by the USDE to ensure compatibility of Windows 8 as an operating system for EDESuite PC products. While this announcement does not constitute official support for Windows 8, results indicate institutions should be able to

proceed with use of Windows 8 without encountering any major issues. Additional information is provided on what products were used during the test.

On Jan. 28, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Issue Alert – Means-Tested Benefits Questions Not Correcting to Blank When Using FAA Access to CPS Online. Information in this announcement explains an issue discovered with FAA Access to CPS Online. Corrections to student and parent means-tested benefits questions to blank are not being retained and submitted for processing by the system. Both 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 corrections entered on the FAA Access site are being affected. While the USDE researches a fix for this issue, the following workarounds are recommended:

- Submit a correction to an earlier transaction for the student on FAA Access that has a blank value for the means-tested benefit question, if it exists; this will generate a new transaction that carries forward the blank value.
- Request that the student or parent submit the correction using *FAFSA on the Web* or by correcting the paper *Student Aid Report (SAR)*.



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- Use your school's third-party software, if available, to submit the correction.

FFEL SPECIAL ALLOWANCE RATES

A [SAP Memo](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 7, 2016: Federal Family Education Loan Program Special Allowance Rates for the Quarter Ending Dec. 31, 2015.

Attachments to the memo contain the quarterly special allowance rates computed for the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2015. The bond equivalent rates of the 91-day Treasury Bills auctioned during the quarter are also provided. The average rates are below.

- Commercial Paper Rate .37 percent
- LIBOR Rate .26 percent
- Treasury Bill Rate .14 percent

RESOURCES

On Jan. 8, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Loan Servicing and Collection Information – Availability of Loan Servicing and Collection Information Page. To aid the financial aid community in assisting consumers with servicing and collection of their federally-owned loans, Federal Student Aid has developed a new [Loan Servicing and Collection Information page](#) on the Information for Financial Aid

Professionals website. Information and resources available on the website include:

- Servicing Overview
- Communications
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Borrower Resources
- National Student Loan Data System
- Forms

Federally-owned student loans include William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program loans, Federal Family Education Loan Program loans purchased by the USDE and Federal Perkins Loan Program loans assigned to the USDE.

FORMS

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 8, 2016: Federal Perkins Loan Assignment Form and Instructions. The revised Federal Perkins Loan Assignment Form has been approved for immediate use. The new form has an expiration date of Dec. 31, 2018 and can be found on the [Campus-Based Processing Information Page](#). The previous version of the form with an expiration date of Nov. 30, 2015 will continue to be accepted until Nov. 30, 2016. There were no substantive changes to the previous form or instructions.



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Dear Colleague Letter [GEN-16-02](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 29, 2016: Approval of Deferment and Mandatory Forbearance Request Forms for the Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins Loan Programs. The following deferment and mandatory forbearance request forms are attached to this DCL.

- In-School Deferment Request (SCH) – Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins
- Graduate Fellowship Deferment Request (GFL) – Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins
- Rehabilitation Training Program Deferment Request (RHT) – Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins
- Unemployment Deferment Request (UNEM) – Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins
- Economic Hardship Deferment Request (HRD) – Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins
- Parent PLUS Borrower Deferment Request (PLUS) – Direct Loan and FFEL
- Temporary Total Disability Deferment Request (TDIS) – Direct Loan and FFEL
- Mandatory Forbearance Request: Student Loan Debt Burden (SLDB) – Direct Loan, FFEL, and Perkins

- Mandatory Forbearance Request: Medical or Dental Internship/Residency, National Guard Duty, or Department of Defense Student Loan Repayment Program (SERV) – Direct Loan and FFEL

Information on implementation and transition to the new forms is included in this DCL, along with details on sections requiring completion.

INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION RECORD

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Jan. 8, 2016: Listing of Colleges on ISIRs Provided to State Grant Agencies. Institutional Student Information Record data about colleges listed by the student will continue to be provided to state grant agencies. However, that listing will not be provided in the order the student listed the schools. The full list of colleges will be given in random order to the state grant agencies.

TRAINING

On Jan. 13, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): 2016 FSA Training Conference for Financial Aid Professionals. The 2016 FSA Training



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Conference will be held Nov. 29 to Dec. 2, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Be sure to mark your calendar and watch for conference registration and lodging information that will be available later this summer at <http://fsaconferences.ed.gov>.

Dear Colleague Letter [ANN-16-01](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 21, 2016: FSA Coach – 2015-2016 Intermediate Training Course. A new module for FSA Coach for 2015-2016 is available for more experienced financial aid administrators. The Intermediate Training course offers a closer look at the following programs:

- Beyond the Basics of Packaging: Awarding for Summer Sessions and Modules
- Beyond the Basics of R2T4, Including R2T4 for Modules
- Limits to Direct Subsidized Loan Interest Benefits
- Monitoring for Pell Grant LEU and Resolving Unusual Enrollment History Flags

Users can access the training at <http://fsatraining.info>, to take the full course or complete each session individually. You will need a username and password to log in for Federal Student Aid E-Training.

On Jan. 25, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): 2016-2017 SAR and SAR Acknowledgement. Final versions of the Student Aid Report mock-up and SAR Acknowledgement mock-up are now available in PDF format. Both English and Spanish versions of the mock-ups are provided to be used as training tools for staff or for financial aid presentations.

HEAL PROGRAM

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Jan. 14, 2016: HEAL Program Information - Maximum HEAL Program Interest Rates for Quarter Ending March 31, 2016. The “Current Maximum Interest Rates” section of the [HEAL Interest Rates](#) page of the [HEAL Information Area](#) on the IFAP website has been updated with the maximum HEAL Program interest rates for the quarter ending March 31, 2015.

FINANCIAL AID SHOPPING SHEET

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 19, 2016: 2016-2017 Financial Aid Shopping Sheet. Updates, HTML specifications and the Institutional Metric Data file for the 2016-2017 Financial Aid Shopping Sheet are provided with this announcement.



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LOAN SERVICING

On Jan. 19, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Loan Servicing Information - Reporting Student Loan Interest Payments for 2015. The announcement includes general information for the financial aid community about reporting student loan interest payments. Answers to the following questions are provided.

- Under what circumstances do federal loan servicers report interest payments on IRS Form 1098-E?
- How many 2015 1098-Es should a borrower expect to receive?
- What are the different scenarios that may apply to 2015 1098 dissemination?

UNUSUAL ENROLLMENT HISTORY

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Jan. 20, 2016: Change to Unusual Enrollment History Selection. Beginning with the 2015-2016 FAFSA cycle, Direct Loans were added to the UEH monitoring. There was an increase in the number of applicants selected for UEH monitoring because of this change. Many of the applicants selected were graduate students. It is not unusual for a student to attend more than one institution as an

undergraduate then attend a different institution as a graduate student. To respond to concerns from the financial aid community, the criteria used to flag a FAFSA for UEH has been adjusted. FAFSA applicants' enrollment history will be monitored separately for their receipt of undergraduate and graduate Title IV aid. Additional information is provided in the announcement regarding these changes.

COMMENT REQUEST

A [Federal Register Notice](#) was issued by the USDE Jan. 21, 2016: Comment Request; Campus Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act Survey. The USDE is proposing an extension of an existing information collection. This information is necessary to increase transparency around college athletics for students, prospective students, parents, employees and the general public. The annual data compiled from this survey is made available to the public through the [Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool](#) and the [College Navigator](#). Comments must be submitted on or before March 21, 2016.

CAMPUS-BASED PROGRAMS

The USDE issued another [Federal Register Notice](#) Jan. 21, 2016: Campus-Based Programs 2016-2017 Deadline Dates. The



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notice announces the 2016-2017 award year deadline dates for postsecondary institutions to submit requests and documents for the Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Work Study and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Programs. To ensure continued funding levels and participation in the programs, institutions must comply with the campus-based reporting deadlines.

REFERENCES

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 22, 2016: Errata and Updates – Appendices [2015-2016 Federal Student Aid Handbook]. Substantial revisions have been made to the Appendices of the 2015-2016 Federal Student Aid Handbook. These revisions have been added to the Errata and Updates page for the 2015-2016 FSA Handbook and can be accessed [here](#).

FEDERAL PELL GRANT

On Jan. 27, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Process Change for Pell Grant Administrative Cost Allowance Payments Effective February 2016. Per regulation 34 CFR 690.10, institutions can receive Administrative Cost Allowance payments to defray the costs of administering the Pell Grant, FSEOG, FWS and Federal Perkins Loan programs.

Payments are processed two times a year, once in late Feb./early March and again in late Aug. Beginning with the first Pell Grant ACA payment for the 2015-2016 Award Year on Feb. 29, 2016, institutions will drawdown their payments from G5 rather than having the funds directly deposited into their bank account. This is a permanent process change that alters how institutions receive Pell Grant ACA payments. More information is provided in the announcement regarding this process change and how to access these funds.

Dear Colleague Letter [GEN-16-01](#) was published by the USDE Jan. 29, 2016: 2016-2017 Federal Pell Grant Payment and Disbursement Schedules. Both PDF and Excel versions of the Federal Pell Grant Payment and Disbursement Schedules are attached to the announcement. These schedules must be used to determine Federal Pell Grant awards for the 2016-2017 award year for full-time, three-quarter-time, half-time and less-than-half-time students. The maximum award for the 2016-2017 Federal Pell Grant is \$5,815.