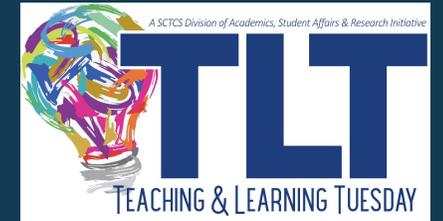


FEDERAL UPDATE



Arva Thomas | Training Officer
U.S. Department of Education

Teaching & Learning Tuesdays
June 22, 2021

Federal Student Aid
An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

AGENDA

- 01 Distance Education and Innovation Regulations
- 02 Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021
- 03 COVID-19 and HEERF Resources
- 04 Operational Updates and Reminders

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION REGULATIONS

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Timeline

- April 2, 2020 – NPRM
- September 2, 2020 – Final Rule
- July 1, 2021 – Effective date (with early implementation option)

Goal

- Create new regulations and update existing regulations to remove barriers and allow for innovation while providing guardrails to protect students

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Modified definitions

- Clock hour
- Correspondence course
- Credit hour
- Distance education
- Incarcerated student
- Nonprofit institution

Added definitions

- Academic engagement
- Juvenile justice facility
- Provides additional guidance related to direct assessment program requirements and ED approval process

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Eligibility Review Timeframe

- Regulations require prompt action by ED on eligibility applications

Foreign Institutions

- Students enrolled in eligible foreign institutions may complete up to 25% of an eligible program at eligible U.S. institution
 - Eligible foreign institution may still permit Direct Loan borrower to perform research in U.S. for not more than one academic year *if* research conducted during the dissertation phase of a doctoral program

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Reasonable Length

Additional flexibility demonstrating a reasonable relationship between:

- Length of program; and
- Licensure requirements associated with recognized occupation for which program prepares students

Modification to clock-to-credit hour conversion

- Equates a semester/ trimester hour to 30 clock hours and a quarter hour to 20 clock hours of instruction
- Removes consideration of homework time

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4)

- Students no longer considered withdrawn if any of the following apply:
 1. Student completes all requirements for graduation before completing days scheduled to complete in period
 2. Student successfully completes one or more modules that comprise 49% or more of number of days in payment period or at least half-time enrollment
 3. Institution obtains written confirmation that student will resume attendance at later point in period
- Denominator of R2T4 based on coursework included in determination of Title IV awards

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

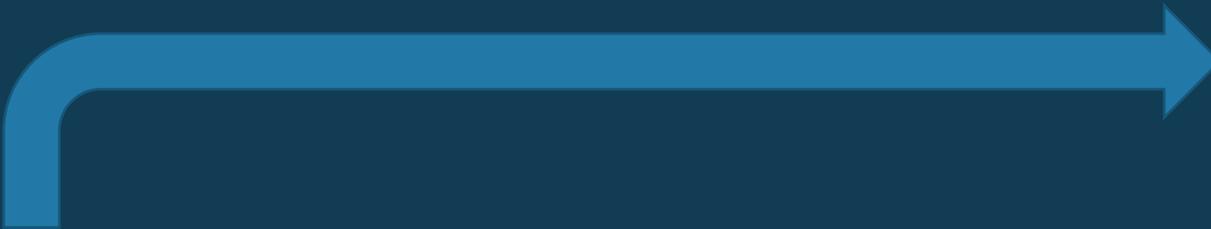
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

- Institutions may use credits completed over calendar time rather than credits completed divided by credits attempted for maximum timeframe and pace evaluation (quantitative) for credit hour program
- Institutions no longer required to maintain a pace (quantitative) evaluation for nonterm credit-hour or clock-hour program
 - SAP policies for such programs must still have qualitative and maximum timeframe evaluations

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021

Includes FAFSA Simplification Act and Coronavirus Relief Provisions

FY2021: STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



Program	FY 2020	FY 2021
Pell*	\$22.475B	\$24.545B
FSEOG ¹	\$865M	\$880M
FWS ²	\$1.18B	\$1.19B

**Federal Pell Grant Program funded through mix of discretionary and mandatory funding streams*

**Pell amounts represent only those made available through FY 2020 and FY 2021 appropriations law — discretionary funding stream*

¹ Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

² Federal Work Study (FWS)

FAFSA[®] PROVISIONS

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) becomes Student Aid Index (SAI)

- EFC established in HEA in 1972; called “Student Eligibility Index” until 1984 – 1985
- SAI used to calculate eligibility for need-based aid – except Pell Grant eligibility
- Pell Grant eligibility will follow completely different formula to determine eligibility
- SAI will be used to determine Pell award for amounts less than maximum Pell

FAFSA[®] PROVISIONS

Student Aid Index (SAI)

- Simplified compared to EFC
- Only includes income information available from IRS
- Changes what counts as assets and how assets are treated
- Could be negative
 - Negative number treated as zero for awarding purposes
- “Auto-Zero” SAI only available to those not required to file Federal tax return

FAFSA[®] PROVISIONS

- Reduce number of questions on FAFSA
- Add new questions to FAFSA
- Change some FAA authority regarding adjustments to FAFSA data elements used to determine SAI
- Change some FAA authority regarding other adjustments such as dependency status (including homeless youth determinations)

PELL GRANT PROVISIONS

- Pell Grant eligibility not based on Student Aid Index (SAI)
 - SAI may impact amount
- Student Pell eligibility based on Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), household size, and poverty guidelines
- Allows Pell Grants for otherwise eligible students who are incarcerated but enrolled in eligible prison education program

OTHER CHANGES TO STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

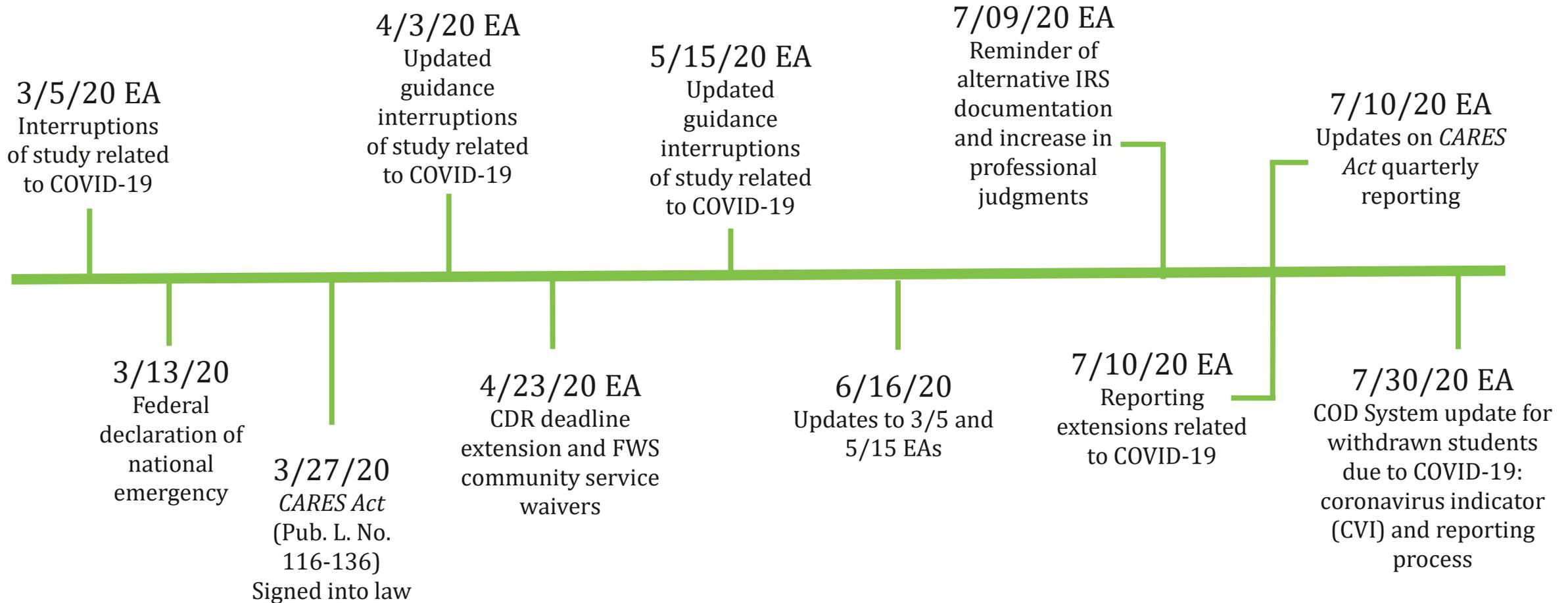
- Removal of Selective Service requirements for Title IV eligibility
- Removal of drug conviction requirements for Title IV eligibility

SULA REPEAL

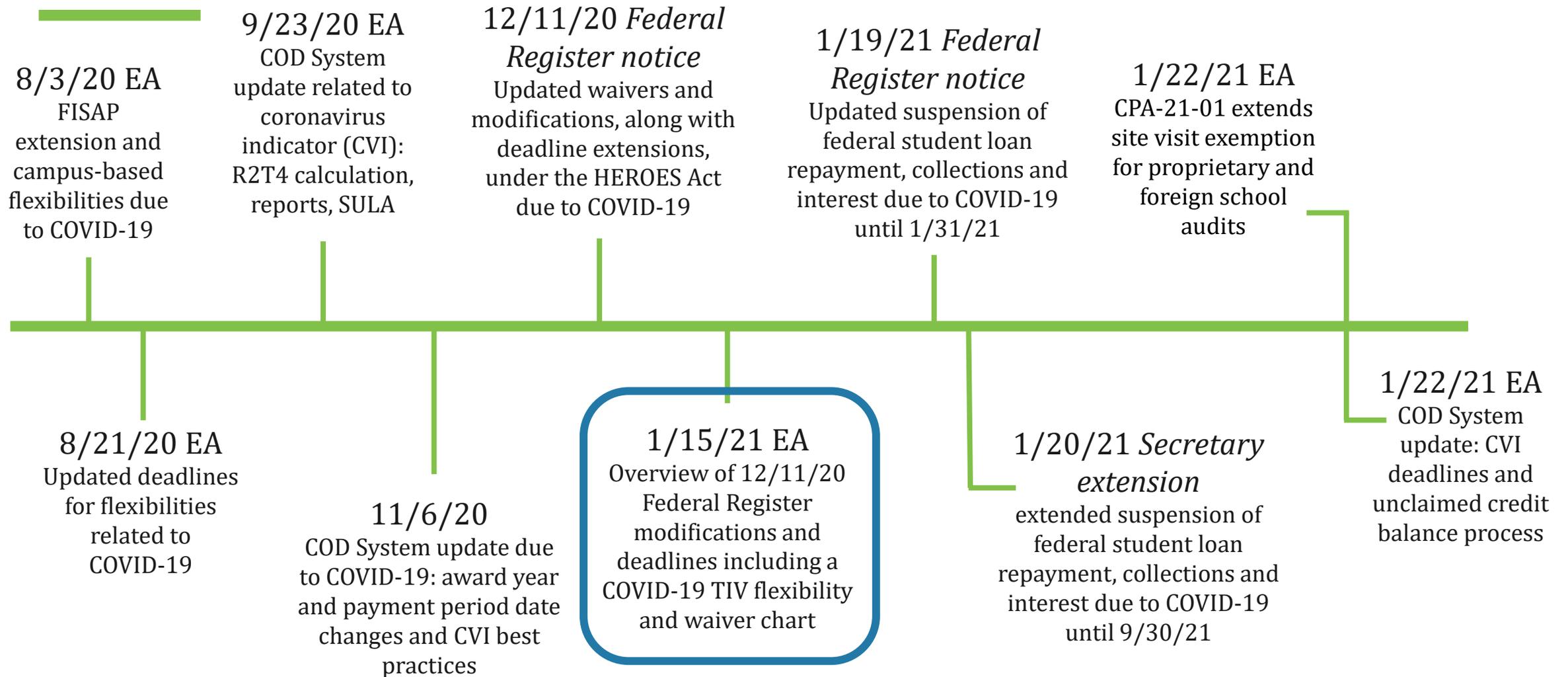
- ED directed to repeal 150% Direct Subsidized Loan Limit
 - FAFSA[®] Simplification Act, part of Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021
- Future FSA modifications
 - COD will cease applying 150% limit to awarding of new Direct Subsidized Loans; and
 - NSLDS[®] will cease to determine Loss of Subsidy on existing Subsidized Loans
- Monitor Knowledge Center for updates; sign up to receive notifications of Electronic Announcements

COVID-19 WAIVERS AND FLEXIBILITIES

OVERVIEW OF COVID-19 POLICY GUIDANCE



OVERVIEW OF COVID-19 POLICY GUIDANCE



COVID-19 WAIVERS AND FLEXIBILITIES

Recent communications

- Electronic Announcement (EA) published January 15, 2021 (Updated February 26, 2021)
 - [OPE Announcements-21-05](#) explains extensions of waivers and deadlines in [December 11, 2020 Federal Register notice](#)
 - All COVID-19 relief and flexibilities included in [attached chart](#)
- Electronic Announcements published January 22, 2021
 - [GENERAL-21-03](#) describes Dear CPA Letter CPA-21-01 extending site visit exemption for auditors
 - [COD-21-01](#) explains deadline extension for entering Coronavirus Indicator and other COVID-19 COD issues

COVID-19 WAIVERS AND FLEXIBILITIES

COVID-19 Guidance and FAQs for Title IV Programs

- [ED.gov COVID-19 Program information: FAQs and Responses \(Higher Ed\)](#)
- [ED.gov/OPE COVID-19 Title IV Frequently Asked Questions](#)

HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND I AND II (HEERF) RESOURCES



HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND I AND II

- HEERF I: [Ed.gov - CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- HEERF II: [Ed.gov - CRRSAA: HEERF II](#)
- HEERF Reporting: [Ed.gov - HEERF Reporting and Data Collection](#)
 - [January 15, 2021 EA \(OPE Announcements-21-03\)](#)
 - [January 15, 2021 EA \(OPE Announcements-21-04\)](#)

General questions about HEERF? Email HEERF@ed.gov

Questions about HEERF reporting requirements?

Email HEERFreporting@ed.gov or call 1-888-OPEPD-10 (1-888-673-7310)

OPERATIONAL UPDATES AND REMINDERS



PELL GRANT

- Maximum Federal Pell Grant increased for 2020-21 award year by \$150 to \$6,345
- Maximum Federal Pell Grant increased for 2021-22 award year by \$150 to \$6,495
- Dear Colleague Letter GEN-21-01: 2021-2022 Pell Payment and Disbursement Schedules
 - [DCL GEN-21-01 2021-2022 Federal Pell Grant Payment and Disbursement Schedules](#)

2021-22 VERIFICATION

- No changes to verification tracking groups
- No changes to verification data items
- 2021-22 Information to be Verified and Acceptable Documentation
 - *Federal Register* Notice published September 3, 2020
- 2021-22 FAFSA Verification Suggested Text
 - Electronic Announcement published September 25, 2020
- 2021-22 FAFSA Verification-Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Tax Return Transcript Matrix
 - Electronic Announcement published November 20, 2020
- COVID-19 verification waivers apply to 2021-22 award year

2021-22 VERIFICATION RESOURCES

- [Federal Register Notice - FAFSA Information to be Verified for the 2021-2022 Award Year](#), September 3, 2020
- [Electronic Announcement - 2021-2022 Verification Suggested Text Package](#), September 25, 2020
- [Electronic Announcement - 2021-2022 FAFSA Verification-IRS Tax Return Transcript Matrix](#), November 20, 2020
- [2021-2022 EDE Technical Reference \(July 2020 Update\)](#), July 29, 2020
- [2021-2022 ISIR Guide](#), July 14, 2020
- [2021-22 Application and Verification Guide](#), February 17, 2021

PERKINS LOAN

- Report Part III of FISAP Perkins information correctly
- Report to NSLDS® monthly
- Complete Distribution of Assets process if notified by ED
- Assign loans to ED in default two or more years



CYBERSECURITY REQUIREMENTS

February 28, 2020 – Electronic Announcement

- Enforcement of Cybersecurity Requirements under Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)
 - All institutions agree to comply under Program Participation Agreement (PPA)
- Auditors expected to evaluate three information safeguard GLBA requirements in audits of postsecondary institutions or third-party servicers
- GLBA findings referred to Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and FSA's Postsecondary Institution Cybersecurity Team
 - Questions: fsaschoolcybersafety@ed.gov or 202-245-6550

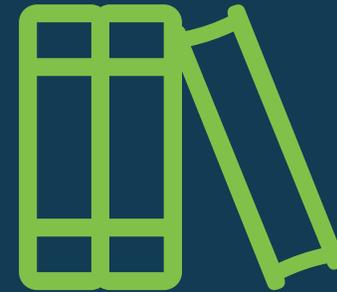
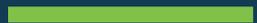
STOP STUDENT DEBT RELIEF SCAMS OF 2019

Public Law 116-251

- Signed into law December 22, 2020
- Effective June 20, 2021
 - 180 days after date of enactment of Act
- Law mandates:
 - Criminal sanctions
 - Exit Counseling
 - Preventing improper access
 - Detection and reporting of suspicious activity



FSA TRAINING RESOURCES



FSA TRAINING CENTER

<https://fsatraining.ed.gov>

The screenshot shows the FSA Training Center website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following items: HOME (highlighted with a green underline), DASHBOARD (with a dropdown arrow), LEARNING TRACKS (with a dropdown arrow), TRAINING COURSES (with a dropdown arrow), and RECORDED TRAINING (with a dropdown arrow). On the right side of the navigation bar, there is a settings gear icon and a green 'Menu' button. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of a wooden abacus with white beads. The text 'FSA Training Center' is displayed in white on the left side of the banner, with a green bar below it containing the text 'Training for Financial Aid Professionals'. Below the banner, there are three main content areas, each with a blue circular icon and a title: 1. 'HELP CENTER' with an information icon (i), with the subtitle 'Information - Site Assistance - Feedback'. 2. 'START YOUR TRAINING HERE' with a list icon (≡), with the subtitle 'Fundamentals vs Basics - Training Center Orientation'. 3. 'LEARNING PLAN TUTORIAL' with a group of people icon, with the subtitle 'Track and Assign Courses in the FSA Training Center'. Each content area has a blue bar at the bottom with a white right-pointing arrow.

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Common Origination and Disbursement System (COD)

- CODSupport@ed.gov 800-848-0978
- Pell Grant, Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant ,TEACH Grant, Direct Loan processing; Campus-Based/FISAP; Return of Title IV (R2T4) tool

National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)

- nslds@ed.gov; 800-999-8219
- Student eligibility, overpayments, loan history, and enrollment reporting

CPS/SAIG Technical Support

- CPSSAIG@ed.gov; 800-330-5947
- Central Processing System (CPS), Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG), FAA Access to CPS Online, assistance with software products such as EDconnect and EDExpress

Grants Management System (G5)

- edcaps.user@ed.gov; 888-336-8930
- Grants/Title IV management and payments

THANK YOU!



TRAINING FEEDBACK

- All attendees will receive email from FSA with link to online evaluation at end of conference
- Please complete online FSA session evaluation
 - Helps ensure quality training
 - Informs FSA of areas for improvement
 - Serves as effective tool for “listening” to our school partners

QUESTIONS?

FSA Partner Connect
Help Center
[Contact Customer Support Form](#)



QUESTIONS?

KNOWLEDGE CENTER ▾ TRAINING ▾ FINANCIAL AID DELIVERY ▾ TITLE IV PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY ▾ PARTNER CONNECT SERVICES ▾

[Help Center](#) > [Contact Customer Support](#)

Contact Customer Support

Please complete the Customer Support form if you have a question or would like to provide feedback. If you need further assistance, please contact the School Relations Center during its operating hours.

Contact Customer Support

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

* First Name * Last Name

* Email Address

* Topic

* Question/Feedback

School Relations Center

Phone	Phone Support Hours
1-800-848-0978	Monday - Friday: 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. Eastern Time

