

FSA Technology Office

Subject: Software Developers Conference Questions and Answers

Start Time: Wednesday, August 31, 2011 9:00:00 AM GMT-4:00PM

Q Is the Department of Education going to stop using SSN as the key identifier for the applicants, and stop using it as the header identifier in batch records?

A At this point there are no plans to stop using SSN as the key identifier for COD processing.

Q Will COD be in 1 phase or 2 phases for 2013?

A Currently, there are 2 releases planned for 2012-2013 award year. March 2012 and July 1, 2012.

Q When a PLUS borrower has an endorser on a loan and the MPN is inactivated for future disbursements, will there be something on www.studentloans.gov that informs a PLUS borrower that www.studentloans.gov still indicates they have an MPN on file.

A No, there are no plans for this to be added during the 12-13 award year. I have added to our enhancement list to be considered for future changes to Studentloans.gov.

Q We already use a token. Will the DOE issue their own token card to us to use on FSA and NSLDS websites?

A There will be a separate token issued that is associated with FSA systems.

Q Is FSA planning on requiring its external vendors, suppliers of software to schools to also require 2 Factor-Authentication?

A Yes, all privileged user that have access to FSA systems. This project encompasses all privileged users. Privileged user is anyone who can see more than just their personal data.

Q With Two Factor Authentication is there a goal to ultimately require school users to use a token to access data (via Ed Connect)?

A Yes, all privileged user that have access to FSA systems. This project encompasses all privileged users. Privileged user is anyone who can see more than just their personal data.

Q How will the FSA conference in November be different than this one today?

A Primary focus in November will be on the protection of PII data.

Q Will the identifier changes when matching student population to SSA be made through a web form? How will the school be notified of discrepancies?

A Schools will be notified of identifier changes via the current Name/DOB/SSN change report, which is available through COD. Since some institutions may have this report currently turned off however (They've elected not to receive it via SAIG distribution), COD Customer Service will be reaching out to those to notify them in the event they have some impacted student records.

Q Regarding security, some data submissions are allowed to be in Excel spread sheets. Will these be scanned for potential embedded malicious scripts before being opened?

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A Yes, I believe they are already being scanned. We have data protection on both the inbound and out bound side of scanning e-mails coming in or even (FTC) for that matter.

Q When you stated that school systems that PROCESS Federal data must be FISMA compliant, would that also include the systems or networks that a school uses to ACCESS Federal data or is it limited to the areas that actually store the data related to a student?

A When we say FISMA compliant, we are saying that the systems (and system components) used to process, store, or transmit federal data on behalf of the FSA need adequate controls to secure that information. Those controls must meet the minimum requirements identified in the standards and guides provided by NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology), which use is mandated under FISMA (Federal Information Security Management Act).

Again, this includes all components used to process, store, or transmit federal data. It does not include school system components that do not process, store, or transmit federal data.

Q Did I hear correctly that the private loans and student finance plans are only reported for completers?

A Yes, that is correct. Information about private loans received by a student who was enrolled in a Gainful Employment Program is only provided if the student completed or withdrew from the program.

Q Jeff mentions that the Department of ED will send out a list of students and schools are to confirm. How will this be sent and how can they make corrections to this data? It appears that this has not been defined yet so that we can 1. Accept the data into our systems and 2. Provide a method for schools to correct and send the data electronically via batch.

A As noted, the details of this process, including file layouts, etc., are still being developed. However, it is expected that these files will be provided to schools using the SAIG Network and mailboxes. NOTE that since the first rates that the department calculates are INFORMATIONAL ONLY, these files will not be provided to schools until sometime in the summer of 2012.

Q Will the rates be public for prospective students to view before enrolling in a program?

A Once, official rates are calculated and published, schools will be required to post them on their websites. In addition, it is expected that the department will establish a web site where the public, including prospective students can view the rates of schools they are interested in.

Q If a student makes a payment while in school, that is applied to the principal balance of the loan, does it count toward the reduction of principal balance by \$1.00?

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A Since the COHORT for the repayment rate are students whose loans entered repayment two to four years earlier, any payments made while the student was still enrolled would not be counted or relevant.

Q Private Loans and Institution Financing are reported for Completers and Withdraws. That is what the user guide says, but you just stated Completers?

A Error on my part, it is for both students who completed the program and who withdrew from the program.

Q My understanding was that the reporting institution's OPEID was reported in the Header and Trailer and each individual detail record would report the OPEID of the campus that the student attended at the record level. Also you mention that servicers can report for multiple schools. Is this also true for an institution that controls multiple institutions? In other words, does the file limit schools for reporting just multiple campuses that share the first six digits of the OPEID or can an institution that has multiple schools under common ownership report all schools and campuses in one file, i.e. or is it the OPEID or the TG number that determines which schools and campuses get reported?

A Yes, you can. If you want to report them all in the same file, all you need to do is register one. The location from which, you will be sending the file via the Gainful Employment Enrollment List page on the Web site, or if you want to do it for multiple, then of course as I mentioned, you would list out multiple locations on that Web page.

Q The enrollment reporting of OPEID information by COD in disbursement files was a "maybe" by COD at NASFAA. Is it now a definite since you said that during this presentation?

A Yes, it is a definite.

Q When you include the consolidation loans in the delinquency file, will you include the cohort year of the underlying loans in the file?

A We do not specify the cohort year on the underlying loans specifically, but we will include the Date Entered Repayment, which the school can then use to determine the appropriate cohort year. The School Portfolio Report is generated based on options selected by the school. In order to receive both the underlying loan as well as the consolidation loan, I would suggest that schools run the report with the option to allow for all loan statuses. And then schools will be able to mix and match and slice and dice to retrieve the loans as appropriate.