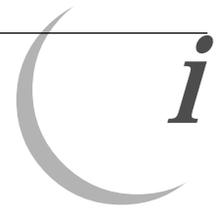

Introduction



This volume of the Federal Student Aid Handbook discusses the eligibility requirements for students and parent borrowers and your responsibilities to ensure that recipients qualify for their aid awards.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are many factors that you must consider when reviewing a student's application for aid from the FSA programs, such as whether the student is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, whether the student is making satisfactory academic progress, and whether the student has a defaulted FSA loan. To answer these questions you receive information about the student from several different sources, including the Department of Education's Central Processing System (CPS) for financial aid applications and the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).

Throughout the year the Department provides updates to schools in the form of Dear Partner/Colleague Letters. These letters and other information, such as Federal Register notices and announcements containing system updates and technical guidance, are available on the *Information for Financial Aid Professionals* (IFAP) website (www.ifap.ed.gov).

Schools using software from the Department also receive other materials that explain how the software operates, such as technical references, which are available on the SAIG website. The FSA Handbook doesn't cover the operation of specific pieces of software. Schools using third-party software should consult the vendor's reference materials for technical guidance.

RECENT CHANGES

The FSA Handbook has been reorganized for the 04-05 award year to correspond to the operations of a financial aid office rather than the types of aid programs. For this volume, that means that the EFC, Packaging, and Overpayment chapters were relocated in other volumes, while a new chapter was added that gives the student eligibility requirements that are program-specific.

The name of the agency formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has changed from the Bureau of

Program and systems information online

Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG)

www.fsadownload.ed.gov

Technical References and Users

Guides for—

- CPS
- Electronic Data Exchange
- RFMS EDE Pell
- Direct Loans
- SSCR
- FISAP
- Packaging

IFAP

ifap.ed.gov

- Federal Registers
- Electronic Announcements
- Dear Partner/Colleague Letters

Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This agency resides in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the data match for citizenship status is referred to as the DHS match. However, since the match is actually done with the USCIS, and since it is that agency's field offices with which you may need to interact, we refer to both the DHS and USCIS in the chapter on citizenship and eligible noncitizens.

Also in the chapter on citizenship, we have added a statement that for lawful permanent residents whose LPR card has expired and who receive an indication of this on a G-845S response, you should not report the student to the Inspector General if the only problem is that the student needs to update his card. See G-845S response item 12 in chapter 2.

We have added a margin note on p. 11 that distinguishes between the drug question on the FAFSA and the longer-standing drug abuse hold that is a consequence of the 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act.

The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) was removed from the list of accepted ability-to-benefit tests but will continue to be valid through September 8, 2004. See p. 5.

We have also added a margin note pertaining to the Compact Act and its effect on FSEOG and FWS eligibility for citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. See p. 34.

With the addition of the chapter on program-specific requirements, a question arose about how to organize some of the information. Our general conclusion was that guidance that only pertained to one of the broad types of program (DL and FFEL, the Campus-Based programs, Pell) would appear in the program-specific chapter, while guidance that spanned program types would stay in another appropriate chapter. Consequently, the instruction on preparatory coursework, because it only applies to (DL and FFEL) Stafford and PLUS loans, is now in chapter 6, and the instruction on teacher certification programs, because it applies to Perkins, FWS, and Stafford and PLUS loans, remains in chapter 1.

If you have any comments regarding the FSA Handbook, please contact Research and Publications via e-mail at fsaschoolspubs@ed.gov.