Direct Loan Tools for Windows, Release 21.0

This section contains general overview information and guidance for schools and other agencies who use Direct Loan (DL) Tools Release 21.0 in combination with EDExpress, third-party software and/or other in-house systems to track, analyze, reconcile, and rebuild William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan data processed by the COD System for the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 Award Years.

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Overview

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (DL) Tools for Windows, Release 21.0 is a supplemental software product for Direct Loan participants. You can download software and related user documentation from the Software and Other Tools Web page, located at https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/topics/software-and-other-tools.

DL Tools is a Windows-based application designed to provide the following functionality related to all Direct Loan schools' software:

- Compare the Direct Loan School Account Statement (SAS) to loans and actual disbursements recorded in EDExpress or an external file, and/or compare the SAS to the DL Tools Cash database.

- Print the SAS in a readable format.

- Track Cash Receipts (drawdowns) and Refunds of Cash.

- Rebuild your Direct Loan origination and disbursement records in EDExpress using an automated process.

- Run the Disbursement Measurement Tool Report to help monitor Direct Loan records in your EDExpress database.

DL Tools Release, 21.0 includes functionality for the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 award years. Each annual release of DL Tools adds functionality for the new processing cycle and removes the oldest cycle, enabling you to use the current version for Direct Loan tasks for the three most recent cycles.

All Direct Loan schools can use the Compare and Cash Management functionality. The Rebuild function is used by schools to rebuild accepted Direct Loan records in EDExpress for Windows databases. However, non-EDExpress users can export data from a rebuilt EDExpress database to recreate non-EDExpress loans or databases.

The Disbursement Measurement Tool Report (available in DL Tools if connected to EDExpress) and the List–Document Activity report (available in EDExpress) assist schools with monitoring current operations, procedures, and program status, and can also help meet the Quality Assurance requirement in the Direct Loan program. Tolerances can be applied when running these reports. Tolerances are guidelines you set for evaluating the effectiveness of your school's Direct Loan processes and procedures. Your school decides which reports to use, when to run them, and what action to take as a result. You can use them to review progress as part of a continuous improvement plan.

DL Tools Comparison

DL Tools Loan and Disbursement Comparison Reports, located in the Compare dialog box, are designed to be run using the SAS Reports with YTD detail, not monthly detail. See Volume IV, Section 8 of this technical reference for information about default settings and SAS option selections. You can change your report options (YTD detail, for example) by accessing the COD System Web site at cod.ed.gov.

Using DL Tools without EDExpress

If you do not use EDExpress, you can still use DL Tools to assist in reconciling. You can import cash, loan, or disbursement data from your external Direct Loan system into DL Tools, thus creating a temporary database you can use to compare your data to the SAS.

- To add school cash data to the newly created database, import the External Cash file (DLEXCASH).

- To add school loan data to the newly created database, import the External Loan file (DLEXLOAN).

- To add school disbursement data to the newly created database, import the External Disbursement file (DLEXDISB).

Fixed-length record layouts for each of these file types are included in Volume IV, Section 3 of the *2021-2022 Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) Technical Reference*.

> These record layouts are used without header or trailer records.

When creating your external files, use the standard file names of DLEXCASH, DLEXLOAN, and DLEXDISB as noted at the top of each record layout. You need to include a carriage return/ line feed (CR/LF) (ASCII characters 13 and 10) at the end of each data record. At the end of the file, no end of file (EOF) marker is required, just the CR/LF markers.

Users always see the "-R" label added to software fields.

Section 508 Compliance

To comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, DL Tools for Windows, Release 21.0 is compatible with screen reader technology used by the visually impaired.

Screen reader software cannot interpret color shading in DL Tools software entry fields. To accommodate this restriction, DL Tools fields that are shaded yellow to indicate they are required also display a "-R" after the software label. The "-R" indicates the field is required.

DL Tools Release 21.0 Enhancements & Changes

The following enhancements and changes are available in DL Tools Release 21.0:

General

- **Program Year 2021-2022 Added** – We added DL Tools functionality and message classes applicable to program year 2021-2022. Be sure to select the appropriate Program Year field value (**2019-2020**, **2020-2021**, or **2021-2022**) in the DL Tools toolbar before running major functions such as import, print, or compare.

- **Program Year 2018-2019 Removed** – We removed DL Tools functionality and message classes applicable to program year 2018-2019.

- **Accessibility Enhancements to Print Functionality** – To improve accessibility for visually-impaired users and more effectively conform with requirements in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, we enhanced print functionality in Release 21.0 to include a new Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) output option, which is more adaptable to screen reader technology. We also redesigned DL Tools reports and lists to convey information in a more accessible, readable format.

  You can now designate a default report format (**PDF** or **HTML**) for each DL Tools user in System setup (**Tools**, **Setup**, **System**). Your default report format selection is selected automatically in the new **Format** field added to the Import, Compare, and Print dialog boxes, and can be modified as needed to the other format selection for individual reports. The new HTML format is only available when printing to the screen, to a file, or to e-mail (if available) for the report output destination.

> When printing in HTML format, note that report page breaks may not appear in logical locations and page numbers are not used.

Disbursement Detail External Add (DLEXDISB)

- **Disbursement Date Range Updated for 2021-2022** – We updated import functionality for the Disbursement Detail External Add file (message class DLEXDISB) to only allow a date range of 10/1/2020 to 12/28/2025 for 2021-2022 disbursement transactions.

Getting Help

Software Help

DL Tools Release 21.0 provides a help system to assist you with system setup and more details regarding use of this software tool.

General help is available from the menu bar and field help is available by pressing the F1 key. See the Using Help topic for more information.

CPS/SAIG Technical Support

Make sure you include both your TG number and your telephone number in your e-mail message.

For questions regarding technical assistance and software functionality, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support. You can reach CPS/SAIG Technical Support Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. (ET), at **800/330-5947**. You can also send e-mail inquiries, comments, or suggestions to CPSSAIG@ed.gov.

Additional Assistance

If you have questions regarding the Direct Loan reconciliation or closeout process, please contact the COD School Relations Center at 800/848-0978 or send an e-mail to CODSupport@ed.gov.

You can also post questions regarding DL Tools on FSATECH. FSATECH is an electronic mailing list for technical questions about Federal Student Aid systems, software, and mainframe products. For more information on subscribing to FSATECH, go to ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/services/fsatechsubscribe.html.

Federal Student Aid staff or the financial aid partner responsible for the system will research your question and post a response to the listserv so that everyone can benefit from the information.