

June 2017

**RE: Direct Loan Tools for Windows, Release 17.0**

Dear DL Tools Users:

Federal Student Aid is pleased to announce the availability of William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (DL) Tools for Windows, Release 17.0. DL Tools is a multi-year Windows-based application designed to provide the following functionality related to all Direct Loan schools' software:

- Compare the School Account Statement (SAS) to loans and actual disbursements recorded in EDEExpress 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 EDEExpress using an automated process.
- Run the Disbursement Measurement Tool Report to help monitor Direct Loan records in your EDEExpress database.

DL Tools was developed to process data for multiple program years. DL Tools Release 17.0 contains functionality for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 cycles.

All Direct Loan schools can use the SAS Compare and Cash Management functions. The Rebuild function can be used by schools to rebuild Direct Loan records in EDEExpress for Windows databases. Non-EDEExpress users can export data from a rebuilt EDEExpress database to recreate non-EDEExpress loans or databases. For information on creating file formats and exporting data from EDEExpress to an external system, see Volume III of the *2017-2018 Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) Technical Reference*.

The Disbursement Measurement Tool Report (available in DL Tools if connected to EDEExpress) and certain Direct Loan lists with tolerances (available in EDEExpress) 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 DL Tools reports to use, when to run them, and what action to take as a result. You can use the reports to review progress as part of a continuous improvement plan.

If you do not use EDEExpress, you can still use DL Tools to assist in reconciling Direct Loans. You can import cash, loan, or disbursement data from your external Direct Loan system into DL Tools and compare your data to the SAS. Fixed-length record layouts for each of these file types are included in Volume IV, Section 3 of the *2017-2018 COD Technical Reference*.

**Important DL Tools Comparison Reports Note:** DL Tools Loan and Disbursement Comparison Reports are designed to be run using the SAS with year-to-date (YTD) detail, *not* monthly detail. See Volume VI, Section 8 of the *2017-2018 COD Technical Reference* for information about default settings and SAS option selections. You can change your SAS options (YTD detail, for example) by accessing the COD Web site at [cod.ed.gov](http://cod.ed.gov).

## About this Cover Letter

This letter includes the following information:

- An overview of DL Tools for Windows, Release 17.0
- A notice regarding Product Registration feature in Release 17.0
- A list of enhancements available in DL Tools Release 17.0
- Release 17.0 software and user documentation download instructions
- Microsoft Windows Compatibility and Section 508 Compliance notices
- Contact information for technical support and additional assistance

## DL Tools for Windows, Release 17.0

DL Tools Release 17.0 can be installed as an upgrade to DL Tools Release 16.0, which enables you to carry forward 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 DL Tools data from your Release 16.0 database. You cannot upgrade to Release 17.0 from a DL Tools version earlier than Release 16.0.

To upgrade your DL Tools database from Release 16.0 to Release 17.0, run the Stand Alone Custom installation option (for standalone PCs) or the Workstation installation option (for PC workstations accessing a database stored on a network drive).

If you are installing the DL Tools software for the first time, you must choose the Stand Alone Full installation option (for standalone PCs) or the Network Server and Workstation installation options (for PC workstations accessing a database stored on a network drive).

**Important Note on Backups:** You cannot access 2014-2015 data in your DL Tools database after you upgrade from Release 16.0 to Release 17.0. We recommend you create a backup copy of your Release 16.0 database (**DLT.mdb**) before upgrading to Release 17.0 in the event that you must access your 2014-2015 data using an earlier version of DL Tools on another PC.

For more information on installing DL Tools Release 17.0, see the *DL Tools for Windows Release 17.0 Installation Guide*, available for download from the [FSAdownload](#) Web site.

## Release 17.0 Enhancements

The following enhancements are available in DL Tools Release 17.0:

### General Changes

- **Program Year 2014-2015 Removed** – We removed DL Tools functionality and message classes applicable to program year 2014-2015.
- **Program Year 2017-2018 Added** – We added DL Tools functionality and message classes applicable to program year 2017-2018.

### Rebuild

- **Matching and Auto-Generation of EDEExpress Program Profiles** – When rebuilding EDEExpress 2017-2018 Direct Loan records using DL Tools, EDEExpress attempts to match new program-related data sent on individual records to established program profiles in EDEExpress Program Profiles setup. If EDEExpress identifies a program profile with the same combination of values for the Program Credential Level, Published Program Length, Published Program Length Units, Weeks Program Academic Year, Special Programs, and CIP Code fields, the associated program profile code is assigned to the rebuilt record.

If there is no match to an existing program profile, EDEExpress creates a new program profile code with that specific combination of values and assigns it to the rebuilt record. Program profiles created automatically by EDEExpress as the result of a DL Tools Rebuild import are assigned the code “Auto Gen DLT RBD #####,” where “#####” is the next available code numerically.

### Disbursement Detail External Add (DLEXDISB)

- **Transaction Date Ranges Updated** – Release 17.0 allows only the following transaction date ranges when you are importing a Disbursement Detail External Add file (message class DLEXDISB) for the specified program year:
  - For 2015-2016 files, the valid transaction date range is 6/21/2012 to 12/28/2019.
  - For 2016-2017 files, the valid transaction date range is 6/21/2013 to 12/28/2020.
  - For 2017-2018 files, the valid transaction date range is 6/21/2014 to 12/28/2021.

# How to Download the DL Tools Software and Documentation

You can download DL Tools and related user documentation from the FSAdownload Web site.

## DL Tools Software

Instructions for downloading DL Tools are located in the “Downloading Documentation and Software from the FSAdownload Web Site” section of the *DL Tools for Windows Release 17.0 Installation Guide*.

**Note:** Some organizations restrict their users from downloading programs from Internet sites. If you have trouble downloading, contact your technical support staff first to ensure that you have full download rights.

## User Documentation

The *2017-2018 COD Technical Reference, Volume IV (DL Tools)* provides record layouts, report mock-ups, and other additional details on using DL Tools Release 17.0.

## Compatibility and Compliance

### Microsoft Windows Information

While we do not officially support the Microsoft Windows 8 or Windows 7 operating systems for use with our EDESuite PC products (including EDEExpress and DL Tools), we have performed compatibility testing with each operating system and resolved the majority of the issues discovered during testing.

- In September 2015, we tested Microsoft Windows 8 as an operating system during our development of the 2016-2017 version of our EDESuite PC software. Our test results indicated that schools should be able to proceed with use of Windows 8 without encountering any issues.
- In 2012, we tested Microsoft Windows 7 as an operating system during the development of the 2012-2013 versions of our EDESuite PC software. Our test results indicated that schools should be able to proceed with use of Windows 7 without encountering any major issues, largely due to enhancements we implemented previously for the Windows Vista operating system. For more information on our Windows 7 testing, see the [August 8, 2012 electronic announcement](#) posted to the IFAP Web site.

**Note:** Federal Student Aid has not yet tested the Microsoft Corporation’s Windows 10 as an operating system for its PC software products, including the EDEExpress and DL Tools software. We do not currently have a projected date for Windows 10 compatibility testing. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

**Note:** You will receive warning messages at the start of the DL Tools installation process if you are running the 64-bit version of Microsoft Windows or your PC has a 64-bit processor. Click **OK** to close these messages, which do not prevent you from proceeding with the installation process.

## **Section 508 Compliance**

To comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, DL Tools is compatible with screen reader technology used by the visually impaired. Screen reader software cannot interpret color shading in DL Tools software entry fields or directly read the contents of software grid cells. To accommodate these restrictions, DL Tools includes the following features:

- All DL Tools fields that are shaded yellow to indicate they are required also display a “-R” after the software label. The “-R” indicates a required field.
- All DL Tools grids display “floating” text descriptions of the contents of grid cells when cells are selected. The text displays one cell above (or below, if the first cell is selected) the selected cell. The text lists Row number, Column title, and (if applicable) the current Value. Clicking once in a cell, or using the Tab key or arrow keys to move to a cell, displays the text. Clicking a second time, or using the Tab key or arrow keys to move from a cell, hides the text.

For more information on DL Tools functionality related to Section 508, see the help topic “Enable 508 Grid Functionality?” in DL Tools Release 17.0.

## **Getting Help**

### **If You Have Technical Support Questions**

Contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support if you have questions regarding DL Tools installation or functionality, have trouble accessing the FSAdownload Web site, or you require other technical assistance.

You can reach CPS/SAIG Technical Support Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. (ET), at **800/330-5947 (TDD/TTY 800/511-5806)**. You can also send e-mail inquiries, comments, or suggestions to [CPSSAIG@ed.gov](mailto:CPSSAIG@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](http://ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/services/fsatechsubscribe.html).

### **If You Have Questions Regarding the COD System**

If you have any questions about the COD System, contact the COD School Relations Center at **800/474-7268** for Grants or **800/848-0978** for Direct Loans. You may also e-mail [CODSupport@ed.gov](mailto:CODSupport@ed.gov).