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# Direct Loan Tools for Windows, Release 18.0

VOLUME IV  
SECTION



*This section contains general overview information and guidance for schools and other agencies who use Direct Loan (DL) Tools Release 18.0 in combination with EDEExpress, 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 2018-2019 Award Year.*

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## Overview

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (DL) Tools for Windows, Release 18.0 is a supplemental software product for Direct Loan participants. You can download software and related user documentation from the U.S. Department of Education’s Federal Student Aid Download (FSAdownload) Web site located at [fsadownload.ed.gov](https://fsadownload.ed.gov).

DL Tools is a 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.

**Important Note:** We redesigned the DL Tools software for 2018-2019 to implement software enhancements that improve usability and increase security. See the “DL Tools Software Redesign” section below for more information about new and revised functionality.

**Note:** Due to the software redesign, DL Tools was developed to process data for the 2018-2019 cycle only. In future versions, we will add functionality for each new cycle year, enabling DL Tools to assist you with Direct Loan tasks for multiple recent cycles.

### 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](https://cod.ed.gov).

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 EDEExpress for Windows databases. However, non-EDEExpress users can export data from a rebuilt EDEExpress database to recreate non-EDEExpress loans or databases.

The Disbursement Measurement Tool Report (available in DL Tools if connected to EDEExpress) and the List–Document Activity report (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 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.

## Using DL Tools without EExpress

If you do not use EExpress, 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 *2018-2019 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.

## DL Tools Software Redesign

We redesigned the DL Tools software for Release 18.0 to implement new software enhancements that improve useability and increase security. These enhancements, which mirror similar enhancements introduced in EExpress 2018-2019, include:

- The DL Tools Desktop, which provides a multi-paned, dynamically updated view of key information and quick access to frequently used functions from the software's main screen.
- Reinforced security setup options and password requirements that help keep your DL Tools database and student data more secure.
- The ability to apply password protection any documents printed from DL Tools to an external file.
- The use of Adobe PDF (Portable Document Format) for all print options.
- Automatic archival, compression, and encryption of imported data files in a secure, easily accessible format.
- The ability to resize, minimize, and maximize window and Desktop pane sizes within DL Tools.
- Updated all date-related entry fields to standardize entry in MMDDCCYY format.

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

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## Section 508 Compliance

To comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, DL Tools for Windows, Release 18.0 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 18.0 Enhancements & Changes

The following enhancements and changes are available in DL Tools Release 18.0:

### General

- **Program Year 2018-2019 Added** – We added DL Tools functionality and message classes applicable to program year 2018-2019.
- **DL Tools Print Update to Adobe PDF Format** – DL Tools now creates and stores all printed documents in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). You are not required to have Adobe software installed on your PC workstation to print or view DL Tools reports. However, you must have Adobe Reader (free software) or Adobe Acrobat (licensed software) and either product's associated Web browser plug-ins installed to use the Screen print option in DL Tools.
- **Password Protection for Printing to File** – You can now apply password protection to DL Tools documents you print to a file. To use this new functionality, select **File** as the report destination, then enter the same password in the **Password** and **Verify Password** fields. DL Tools saves the password-protected file it creates in PDF format in the destination folder.
- **New Password Setup Enables Additional Security Requirements** – The new Password Setup feature (**Tools, Setup, Password Setup**) enables you to establish default parameters and requirements for passwords you define in Security Users setup (**Tools, Setup, Security Users**). The new password settings include minimum password length, minimum and maximum password age (measured in days), and password history length (measured in number of password resets). You can also test passwords in this dialog box to ensure they meet the parameters and requirements you define.

Prior to establishing new user IDs and passwords in Security Users setup, we recommend you review the Password Setup dialog box with your technical staff and determine which default parameters and requirements you want to establish for DL Tools users at your school. You should consider how often you want your staff to change their passwords (minimum/maximum password age), how frequently they can re-use the same password (password history length), and the minimum length for each new password.

### Disbursement Detail External Add (DLEXDISB)

- **Disbursement Date Range Updated for 2018-2019** – We updated import functionality for the Disbursement Detail External Add file (message class DLEXDISB) to only allow a date range of 6/21/2015 to 12/28/2022 for 2018-2019 disbursement transactions.

If you do not have any Adobe products installed on your PC and you print a report to the Screen, DL Tools displays a warning message indicating it was unable to locate the appropriate Adobe browser plugin and offers the option of saving the report or attempting to open the report using your operating system's default viewer application.

## Getting Help

### *Software Help*

DL Tools Release 18.0 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.

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

### *CPS/SAIG Technical Support*

For questions regarding technical assistance and software functionality, call CPS/SAIG Technical Support at: 800/330-5947, TDD/TTY: 800/511-5806. E-mail CPS/SAIG Technical Support at: [CPSSAIG@ed.gov](mailto:CPSSAIG@ed.gov). A representative will respond within one business day.

### *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](mailto: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](http://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.