ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant 2008-2009 Award Year Processing Deadline

Attachment to September 2009 Electronic Announcement

The purpose of this document is to provide comprehensive information related to the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant), and Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) 2008-2009 Award Year processing deadline. As required by regulations, and consistent with the "Notice of Deadline Dates for Receipt of Applications, Reports, and Other Records for the 2008-2009 Award Year" published on June 18, 2009 (74 FR 28918) in the Federal Register, the deadline for electronically transmitting ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant records for the 2008-2009 Award Year to the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System is *Wednesday, September 30, 2009.*

In another September 2, 2009 Electronic Announcement posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site, we provide comprehensive information related to activities and deadlines that coincide with the September 30, 2009 deadline for 2008-2009 ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant awards. This announcement is about the September 30, 2009 end of the Federal fiscal year. Schools should refer to the Electronic Announcement to ensure that 1) all necessary reports are obtained and 2) all applicable 2008-2009 ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant origination, disbursement, and change records are submitted and accepted prior to the outages.

All actual disbursements with a disbursement date from September 25, 2009 through October 2, 2009 must be received by the COD System *no later than 9:00 P.M. (ET) on Friday, September 25, 2009,* and subsequently accepted by the COD System, in order for them to be included in the funds available for drawdown prior to the shutdown. This means that all new 2008-2009 ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant awards and increases to 2008-2009 ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant awards must be submitted by the *9:00 P.M.* (ET) deadline on Friday, September 25, 2009.

Note: Closeout information for Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants for the 2008-2009 Award Year can found in a May 29, 2009 Electronic Announcement. Additional closeout information will be provided in a forthcoming announcement.

We cover information in the following order:

- Tools to Assist Schools with Reconciliation Prior to September 30, 2009 (three subsections)

- Acceptance and Rejection of 2008-2009 Award Year Data After September 30, 2009

- Requesting Administrative Relief or Extended Processing for 2008-2009 Award Year

If you have questions about this document, contact the COD School Relations Center at 800/474-7268. You may also e-mail CODSupport@acs-inc.com.

If you have questions about using EDExpress to run a comparison between a YTD Record and your school's database, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support at 800/330-5947 (TDD/TTY 800/511-5806) or by e-mail at CPSSAIG@ed.gov.

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Attachment to September 2009 Electronic Announcement

<u>**Tools to Assist Schools with Reconciliation Prior to September 30, 2009**</u>

There are two Data Requests available to schools as they complete both the year-end and ongoing reconciliation processes for ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant awards. The Reconciliation Report is a student summary of processed records. The Year-to-Date (YTD) Record contains detailed origination, disbursement, and summary information at a transaction level. Each Reconciliation Report and YTD Record produced is specific to one program—ACG, National SMART Grant, or Pell Grant.

Through the next three subsections, we provide information related to Reconciliation Report and YTD Record use. The subsections are as follows:

- Sending 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports to Reporting Schools

- Using 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports to Identify Discrepancies

- Using 2008-2009 YTD Records and COD Web site to Assist in Resolving Discrepancies

Sending 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports to Reporting Schools

To assist schools with final reporting before the September 30, 2009 deadline, we will send 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports to schools' Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) mailboxes based on the following schedule:

- *Beginning September 2, 2009,* we will send a *2008-2009 Pell Grant Reconciliation Report* to the SAIG mailboxes of all reporting schools with at least one funded 2008-2009 Pell Grant disbursement.

- *Beginning September 2, 2009,* we will send a *2008-2009 ACG Reconciliation Report* to the SAIG mailboxes of all reporting schools with at least one funded 2008-2009 ACG disbursement.

- *Beginning September 2, 2009,* we will send a *2008-2009 National SMART Grant Reconciliation Report* to the SAIG mailboxes of all reporting schools with at least one funded 2008-2009 National SMART Grant disbursement.

Schools will receive these 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports on or shortly after the dates specified above.

Key information about the 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports that we will send to reporting schools is as follows:

- Each report will include information for all ACG, National SMART Grant, or Pell Grant recipients, as applicable, at all attended campuses for the reporting school.

- Each report will be in the standard fixed-length format as specified in Volume VI, Section 8 of the 2008-2009 COD Technical Reference.

- Each report will be sent to the reporting school's SAIG mailbox via the appropriate program/award year message class.

    ACG Reconciliation Report Message Class – AGRC09OP

    National SMART Grant Reconciliation Report Message Class – SGRC09OP

    Pell Grant Reconciliation Report Message Class – PGRC09OP

Note: While we will automatically send the 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports to schools as specified above, a school can request an ACG Reconciliation Report, a National SMART Grant Reconciliation Report, and/or a Pell Grant Reconciliation Report via the COD Web site or by submitting the batch data request for the appropriate program/award year message class via the SAIG. For information about how to request these reports, refer to Volume VI, Section 8 of the 2008-2009 COD Technical Reference.

Using 2008-2009 Reconciliation Reports to Identify Discrepancies

Upon receipt, the 2008-2009 ACG Reconciliation Report, 2008-2009 National SMART Grant Reconciliation Report, and 2008-2009 Pell Grant Reconciliation Report can each be downloaded and then viewed, printed, or imported into a spreadsheet for comparison with a school's data. For example, the file can be imported into a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel (XLS). Since the file is not in XLS (spreadsheet format), the spreadsheet program will automatically prompt the user to convert it by following the directions displayed. Once the file has been imported into a spreadsheet, the column widths and data formats must be reviewed and adjusted to meet the user's needs.

Note: The format of any dollar value data element will need to be updated to numeric with two decimal places.

Using 2008-2009 YTD Records and COD Web site to Assist in Resolving Discrepancies

After a school completes a comparison of its ACG, National SMART Grant, and/or Pell Grant data with the data in the COD System, the school must resolve all discrepancies. To assist in the resolution process, a school can request a 2008-2009 ACG YTD Record, a 2008-2009 National SMART Grant YTD Record, and/or a 2008-2009 Pell Grant YTD Record. A YTD Record can be requested for one student or for all recipients in a particular program at the school. The YTD Record contains detailed ACG, National SMART Grant, or Pell Grant origination and disbursement data at a transaction level. This detailed information can assist in the determination of the appropriate resolution.

A school can request a 2008-2009 YTD Record for the appropriate program via the COD Web site or by submitting the batch data request for the appropriate program/award year message class (ACG – AGRQ09IN, National SMART Grant – SGRQ09IN, and Pell Grant – PGRQ09IN) to the COD System via the SAIG. The school will then receive a data request acknowledgement and the requested report in the corresponding program/award year message class (ACG – AGYR09OP, National SMART Grant – SGYR09OP, and Pell Grant – PGYR09OP) via the SAIG.

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Attachment to September 2009 Electronic Announcement

Note for EDExpress Users: To identify discrepancies, a school can use EDExpress to run a comparison between 2008-2009 ACG YTD Records, 2008-2009 National SMART Grant YTD Records, and/or 2008-2009 Pell Grant YTD Records and the school's ACG, National SMART Grant, and/or Pell Grant database. For more information about using the Compare functionality, refer to the 2008-2009 Desk Reference for EDExpress Release 2.0 under the "Software and Associated Documents" link on the Federal Student Aid Download (FSAdownload) Web site. A school can access the desk reference by completing the following steps:

> *Step 1:* Click on the EDExpress for Windows 2008-2009 Release 3.1 link, scroll to the bottom of the page, and select the Archive button.

> *Step 2:* In the archived releases of the 2008-2009 software, scroll to the Release 2.0 documentation at the bottom of the page, and click on the Release 2.0 Desk Reference link.
>
> While the YTD data information, found on page 70, only references Pell Grant, it is applicable to ACG and National SMART Grant as well.

Additionally, a school can use the COD Web site to view current ACG, National SMART Grant, and/or Pell Grant award origination and disbursement information in the COD System.

Acceptance and Rejection of 2008-2009 Award Year Data After September 30, 2009

After September 30, 2009, the COD System will accept and reject 2008-2009 ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant data as follows:

ACG and National SMART Grant Programs

- The COD System will accept and process decreases to previously accepted 2008-2009 award originations and decreases to previously accepted 2008-2009 disbursements.

- The COD System will accept and process originations and disbursements of new 2008-2009 awards or 2008-2009 award amount increases only if the Department has granted Administrative Relief or Extended Processing for the 2008-2009 Award Year.

Pell Grant Program

- The COD System will accept and process decreases to previously accepted 2008-2009 award originations and decreases to previously accepted 2008-2009 disbursements.

- The COD System will accept and process originations and disbursements of new 2008-2009 awards or 2008-2009 award amount increases only if 1) the student was in a Potential Overaward Process (POP) situation during the 2008-2009 Award Year or 2) the Department has granted Administrative Relief or Extended Processing for the 2008-2009 Award Year.

Notes:

1) Unless one of the situations outlined above applies, the COD System will reject originations and disbursements of new 2008-2009 awards or 2008-2009 award amount increases and return COD Edit 43 (New Award Amount or Award Increase Received After End of Processing Year and Institution has Not Been Granted Extended Processing) or COD Edit 71 (New Disbursement Increase, or Disbursement Release Indicator to "True" Received After End of Processing Year and Institution Has Not Been Granted Administrative Relief).

2) In accordance with the allowable timeframe for submitting verification documentation/completing the verification process as specified in the June 18, 2009 Federal Register notice, the COD System will no longer accept "W" as a valid verification status code for 2008-2009 Pell Grant awards. The COD System will return COD Reject Edit 114 (Disbursement or Disbursement Adjustment received after Verification Status W Deadline Date).

Requesting Administrative Relief or Extended Processing for 2008-2009 Award Year

A school will be able to request Administrative Relief and Extended Processing for the 2008-2009 Award Year via the COD Web site *beginning on Thursday, October 1, 2009.* However, a school should not submit a request until after it has completed reconciliation of all program records as well as its research and is ready to submit the data to the COD System.

A school can request Administrative Relief or Extended Processing for the 2008-2009 Award Year as follows:

*   *Through February 1, 2010* – For natural disaster or other unusual circumstances, or an administrative error made by the Department

*   *Through May 3, 2010* – For a student enrolled in a clock-hour or nonterm credit-hour educational program who re-enters within 180 days after initially withdrawing and the school is reporting a disbursement within 30 days of the re-enrollment but after September 30, 2009.

If necessary, a school may also request additional extensions of an initially approved period through May 3, 2010. If granted, any additional extension period will be no more than 30 calendar days in length.

Upon request, the Department may grant Administrative Relief or Extended Processing as follows:

*   *Administrative Relief* – If an administrative or processing error made by the Department or one of its operating partners or an event, such as a natural disaster or other unusual circumstance beyond the school's control, prevented the school from meeting the deadline

- *Extended Processing* – If the school may make a late disbursement in accordance with 34 CFR 668.164(g) or may request unreported funds based upon a program review or initial audit finding in accordance with 34 CFR 690.83(d) or 34 CFR 691.83(d)

Late Disbursement Compliance

Late disbursement of 2008-2009 awards must comply with the late disbursement regulations. As explained in a May 20, 2008 Electronic Announcement and a July 1, 2008 Electronic Announcement, final regulations that were published on November 1, 2007 amended the provisions that allow schools to make late disbursements of Federal student aid authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). The two modifications to the late disbursement provisions in 34 CFR 668.164(g) are as follows:

1) The period for making a late disbursement is increased from 120 days to 180 days.

2) The provision that allows schools to request approval from the Department to make late disbursements beyond the late disbursement period is eliminated.

COD Web Site Requests

On or after Thursday, October 1, 2009, a school can request Administrative Relief or Extended Processing via the COD Web site. However, a school should not submit a request until after it has completed reconciliation of all program records as well as its research and is ready to submit the data to the COD System (see "Notes" below). The school must submit a separate request for each grant program for which it needs Administrative Relief or Extended Processing.

To request Administrative Relief or Extended Processing for the ACG Program, National SMART Grant Program, or Pell Grant Program, log in to the COD Web site and complete the following steps:

Step 1: Go to the School Summary Information screen.

Step 2: Click on "Request Post Deadline Processing" located in the menu on the left side of the screen.

Step 3: Complete all required fields—including choosing the reason for the request from a drop-down menu and providing a detailed description of the problem.

Note: In accordance with the late disbursement modifications, we updated the COD Web site's Request Post Deadline Processing screen to reflect the 180-day late disbursement period. Specifically, there is only one item related to late disbursement in the "Explain why you will need Extended Processing" drop-down menu. The item reads "Late Disb <= 180 Days".

Step 4: Click on the "SUBMIT" button below the data fields.

ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant 2008-2009 Award Year Processing Deadline

Attachment to September 2009 Electronic Announcement

Notes:

1) In general, the Department grants the majority of Administrative Relief and Extended Processing requests. To ensure expedient, efficient, and complete processing within the Administrative Relief or Extended Processing period after it is granted, a school should complete reconciliation of all program records as well as its research and data preparation ***before submitting the Administrative Relief or Extended Processing request via the COD Web site.***

2) The Administrative Relief or Extended Processing period will be no more than 30 calendar days in length. If a school completes reconciliation of all program records as well as its research and data preparation before submitting its request, this is more than enough time for the school to submit its data and fully reconcile its program records.

3) As a reminder, a school's data is fully reconciled when the school's Net Accepted and Posted Disbursements (NAPD) amount for a program/award year in the COD System equals the school's Net Drawdown amount for the program/award year in G5 (formerly GAPS).

Following receipt and review of a request for Administrative Relief or Extended Processing, the Department will e-mail the requestor that the request has been approved or denied. A school's submission of 2008-2009 data to the COD System before it has received the Department's e-mail approving the request will result in rejection of the data.

Upon receipt of the Department's approval, the school can submit data through its normal batch/document process or can create awards/originations and disbursements via the COD Web site. The school will receive acknowledgements for 2008-2009 post-deadline processing data entered via the COD Web site.