



COD Processing Update

December 12, 2014

NEWS/UPDATES

- **COD Batch Processing Suspension and Web Site Outage December 12-14, 2014 (11/24/14)**

During the period December 12-14, 2014, Federal Student Aid plans to implement additional COD System functionality for the 2014-2015 Award Year.

Federal Student Aid will post an Electronic Announcement on the [Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#) that provides operational implementation guidance related to the new functionality.

COD Batch Processing Suspension and Web Site Outage Information

To install the additional COD System functionality, Federal Student Aid will suspend COD batch processing beginning at 8:00 P.M. (ET) on Friday, December 12, 2014. Records submitted after this time will be held and processed after 3:00 P.M. (ET) on Sunday, December 14, 2014.

Note: All actual disbursements with a disbursement date from December 12, 2014 through December 14, 2014 must be received by the COD System **no later than 9:00 AM (ET) on Friday, December 12, 2014**, and subsequently accepted by the COD System, in order to generate the appropriate funding level increase prior to the outage. Disbursements submitted by the deadline but not subsequently accepted, disbursements submitted after the deadline, and disbursements with a disbursement date after December 14, 2014 will be processed and funded after the outage.

In addition, between 8:00 P.M. (ET) on Friday, December 12, 2014 and 3:00 P.M. (ET) on Sunday, December 14, 2014—

- Users will not be able to submit or retrieve data via the [COD Web site](#).
- Users will not be able to access the COD Reports area of the [COD Web site](#).
- An individual will not be able to complete any actions or view loan correspondence via the [StudentLoans.gov Web site](#).
- An individual will not be able to complete any actions via the [TEACH Grant Web site](#).

Federal Student Aid apologizes for this inconvenience and appreciates your understanding and patience while it completes this important activity.

- **RESOLVED - Duplicate Drawdown Information Incorrectly Posted in COD System [(11/25/14) Updated 12/5/14]**



Last month, Federal Student Aid determined that a processing issue caused financial transactions for the Pell Grant, TEACH Grant, and Direct Loan programs for November 18, 2014 and November 19, 2014 to be duplicated and posted to the COD System in error. The financial transactions were reported and posted correctly in G5.

Federal Student Aid corrected the duplicate financial transactions on November 26, 2014, by processing a reversing transaction in the COD System.

Impact to the DL and TEACH Grant SAS for November Month-End

Both the duplicate transactions and the reversing transactions will appear in the Cash Detail section of the November month-end SAS, to be generated the weekend of December 6, 2014.

Schools impacted by this issue will also receive an e-mail with this same information.

Federal Student Aid apologizes for the inconvenience the issue has caused. If you have questions about this issue, contact the COD School Relations Center.

- **2015-2016 COD Technical Reference Now Available (11/25/14)**

The [2015-2016 COD Technical Reference](#) is now available on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site. The 2015-2016 COD Technical Reference contains development information for the 2015-2016 Award Year. If you have any questions about this material, contact the COD School Relations Center.

- **COD School Testing for the 2015-2016 Award Year (11/25/14)**

In a [November 24, 2015 Electronic Announcement](#), Federal Student Aid notifies schools that the COD School Relations Center will conduct Common Record Manual Verification and Structured Application Testing for the 2015-2016 Award Year from January 2, 2015 through November 6, 2015. Optional Unstructured Testing will be available April 20, 2015 through December 18, 2015.

All entities that wish to participate in COD School Testing must submit the "COD School Testing 2015-2016 Sign-Up Document" to the COD School Relations Center. Schools, third party servicers, and software vendors can submit the sign-up document beginning Friday, January 2, 2015.

For more information on COD School Testing including who should participate in testing, school testing phases, the school testing sign-up process and other contact information, please refer to the announcement.

- **William D. Ford Direct Loan Program Reconciliation (11/25/14)**

In a [November 21, 2014 Electronic Announcement](#), Federal Student Aid provided specific information to assist schools in reconciling the William D. Ford Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program. Direct Loan Reconciliation is the process by which a school reviews and compares Direct Loan data recorded on the



Department of Education's (the Department's) systems with the information in the school's internal records. Both the Financial Aid Office and Business Office should review the information.

For more information about Direct Loan Reconciliation, refer to the Electronic Announcement posted on the [IFAP Web site](#).

- **REMINDER: End of Paper Check Processing for DL Refunds of Cash Beginning January 1, 2015 (11/25/14)**

As noted in a [February 26, 2014 Electronic Announcement](#), Federal Student Aid is moving away from processing paper checks. Beginning January 1, 2015, we will no longer accept Direct Loan refunds of cash sent manually via paper check. As a result, schools should update their processes to refund cash electronically via the [G5 Web site](#) as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2014.

For more details about this change, refer to the Electronic Announcement posted on the [IFAP Web site](#).

- **150% EA #16 – Reminders About COD Reporting and Impacts to 150% Calculations (11/24/14)**

In a [November 21, 2014 Electronic Announcement](#), Federal Student Aid reminds schools of the importance of accurate and timely reporting of a student's Direct Loan (Direct Subsidized Loan, Direct Unsubsidized Loan, and Direct PLUS Loan) information to the COD System to ensure that the Subsidized Usage Period can be calculated correctly. It is equally important that schools update previously-reported loan information, including closed Direct Loan program years, as needed. Specifically, when a student's situation changes, in addition to changing disbursement dates or reducing amounts, schools **must** also change key award information like award amounts, loan period dates, and academic year dates. For complete information, refer to the announcement.

If you have 150%-related questions or questions about determining the correct loan period and academic year dates, submit them to 150Percent-Questions@ed.gov and include the name of your school in the subject line.

If you have questions about how to make changes to award or disbursement information on the COD System, contact the COD School Relations Center.

- **COD Common Record XML Schema Version 4.0b Now Available (11/21/14)**

In spring 2015, Federal Student Aid plans to implement Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System functionality that will support the processing of Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant), Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant, Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, and William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) awards for the 2015-2016 Award Year. In conjunction with this implementation, Federal Student Aid will begin using a new version of the COD Common Record Extensible Markup Language (XML) Schema. The new schema version is 4.0b.

For complete information about the new schema version, refer to "[COD Common Record XML Schema Version 4.0b](#)" posted on the IFAP Web site.



If you have questions about the schema, contact the COD School Relations Center.

- **Processing Tips - COD System Edits 204, 205, and 206 (11/3/14)**

In the past several weeks, Federal Student Aid has identified an increased number of Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System edits triggered for Direct Loan awards, specifically COD Reject Edits 204, 205, and 206. In an [October 31, 2014 Electronic Announcement](#) posted on the IFAP Web site, Federal Student Aid provides processing tips and reminders to assist schools in researching and resolving these edits for each impacted award.

For posted guidance and resources and other frequently asked questions related to 150%, refer to the [150 Percent Direct Subsidized Loan Limit Information page](#) on the IFAP Web site. If you have 150%-related questions, submit them to 150Percent-Questions@ed.gov and include the name of your school in the subject line.

If you have questions about the COD System edits, contact the COD School Relations Center.

- **REMINDER - Direct Loan Origination Fees Increased October 1, 2014 (10/3/14)**

As a reminder, the origination fees for Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and Direct PLUS Loans (for both parent and graduate student borrowers) increased as of October 1, 2014 (see [Dear Colleague Letter \(DCL\) GEN-14-10](#)). Schools should review their records to ensure the correct origination fee is being used. In a [May 9, 2014 Electronic Announcement](#), Federal Student Aid provided some operational updates and information about COD System readiness for processing Direct Loans with the new origination fees.

- **Availability of Report Readers for Pell Grant Reconciliation File, Pell Grant Year to Date (YTD) File, and School Account Statement (SAS) Disbursement Detail on Demand File (9/10/14)**

As a reminder, Federal Student Aid has posted three report readers for the following reports:

- Pell Grant Reconciliation File
- Pell Grant YTD File
- SAS Disbursement Detail on Demand File

The readers provide a simplified way of importing the report files into an Excel spreadsheet for school reconciliation purposes. To use the readers, a school must receive the **fixed-length format** of the reports.

The readers, along with instructions on how to use them, are posted on the [Common Origination and Disbursement \(COD\) Web site](#) and can be accessed by clicking on the “COD Resources” link located on the gray bar at the bottom of the home page.

The table below will assist schools in finding the correct reader for the appropriate award year(s).

File Name on COD Resources page	Report and Award Year(s)
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Contact Information: If you have questions, 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.



PELL Recon Reader 2008-2009 AY – 2013-2014 AY.xlsm	Pell Grant Reconciliation File, 2013-2014 and prior
PELL Recon Reader 2014-2015 AY.xlsm	Pell Grant Reconciliation File, 2014-2015
PELL YTD Reader 2008-2009 AY – 2013-2014 AY.xlsm	Pell Grant YTD File, 2013-2014 and prior
PELL YTD Reader 2014-2015 AY.xlsm	Pell Grant YTD File, 2014-2015
SAS Disb On Demand Reader v1.1.xlsm	SAS Disbursement Detail on Demand, all award years
Note: While there are multiple Pell Grant report readers covering different award years, there is only one instruction file posted for the report reader type.	

If you have questions about the readers or need additional assistance with using them, contact the COD School Relations Center.

• **COD System Warning Edit 211 (5/20/14)**

Since the April 2014 COD System implementation, many schools may have received COD Warning Edit 211 (Failure of Full Schema Enforcement). As a reminder, this warning edit is intended to help schools and software providers identify and fix invalid XML, but still allow the data to be processed by the COD System. Eventually, Federal Student Aid will reject batches sent with invalid XML and the data will not be processed by the COD System.

Since the cause of invalid XML can vary widely, Federal Student Aid cannot provide specific XML error(s) in the response when returning Warning Edit 211. However, some examples of common errors are:

- Submitting tags out of order
- Submitting a string longer than the posted maximum length value specified by the COD XML Schema
- Submitting an integer or decimal outside of the posted value range specified by the COD XML Schema
- Neglecting to submit a required tag within a complex element (for example, <City> in the <PermanentAddress> block)
- Submitting tag names that do not match the COD XML Schema (tag names are case-sensitive)

In addition, Federal Student Aid has posted guidance about using an XML validator tool to help schools identify XML errors. This guidance is posted on the IFAP Web site in a document titled “COD XML Schema Validation Instructions.”

When using an XML validator tool, schools should keep a few things in mind:

- Use of an XML validator tool is optional and a school will need to find the right XML validator tool based on its individual circumstances. Some schools may need to work directly with their technical staff or software provider to select an XML validator tool.
- In some cases, a school can download an XML validator tool to a computer. In other cases, a school can upload files to a Web-based XML validator tool. If a school opts to use a Web-based



XML validator tool and it has to upload files to run the validation, for security purposes, the school should use test data for the file upload.

- Federal Student Aid has validated the published COD XML Schema with some of the independent XML validator tools available, including XMLSpy, www.xmlvalidation.com, and XML Notepad 2007.

Finally, schools using a software vendor should consult with that vendor for additional assistance. In many cases, a school may need to ensure it is using the latest version of the chosen product.

Additional information about the COD XML Schema can be found on the IFAP Web site at

<https://ifap.ed.gov/ifap/codXMLSchema.jsp>. For additional questions about COD System processing or the COD XML Schema, contact the COD School Relations Center.

CURRENT ISSUES

DIRECT LOANS

There are no Direct Loan-related issues at this time.

GRANTS

There are no Grant-related issues at this time.

Keep School Contact Information Current in the COD System (12/12/14)

We remind schools and third party servicers that contact information in the COD System must be kept current. Contact information is extremely important for us to be able to reach the right people at the school, particularly about program-specific issues. The e-mail addresses for the President, Financial Aid Administrator, Pell Grant Financial Aid Officer, and Direct Loan Financial Aid Officer are used to deliver time-sensitive materials and critical COD processing information to the school.

Having current contact information for the Pell Grant Financial Aid Officer and Direct Loan Financial Aid Officer is most critical for a school that is an additional location to a main campus. The information allows us to contact those officers directly at the additional location rather than needing to contact the main campus.

For more information on updating School Contact Information, please refer to [the December 20, 2012 Electronic Announcement posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#).