



**December 21, 2007**

\*\*This edition of the COD Processing Update will remain on the [COD Web site](#) until a new edition is posted. We will notify schools via a COD Web Message when a new edition has been posted.\*\*

## *ACG, National SMART Grant, and Pell Grant Programs*

### COD News

#### **COD Holiday Schedule For December 24, 2007, December 25, 2007, December 31, 2007, And January 1, 2008 (12/14/07)**

The COD School Relations Center will close at 3:00 P.M. (ET) on Monday, December 24, 2007 and Monday, December 31, 2007. In both cases, the COD School Relations Center will reopen at 8:00 A.M. (ET) on the next business day—Wednesday, December 26, 2007 and Wednesday, January 2, 2008, respectively.

The COD System will accept and process data from schools and send back responses/acknowledgments on Monday, December 24, 2007, Tuesday, December 25, 2007, and Tuesday, January 1, 2008, but schools will not be able to receive any Federal funds on those days. Requests for changes in funding levels and for funds will not be processed until Wednesday, December 26, 2007 and Wednesday, January 2, 2008, respectively.

Further information regarding Day Before Christmas Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day processing, funding impact, and customer service hours for COD and other Federal Student Aid/Department of Education call centers is posted [an Electronic Announcement on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#).

#### **G5 Phase I Implemented—Change in Service Outage Start Time on December 19, 2007 (12/19/07)**

As communicated in [a December 17, 2007 Electronic Announcement posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#), the Department of Education (the Department) has implemented Phase 1 of G5, which replaces the GAPS e-Payments functionality that was used by schools to draw down Campus-Based, Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant), Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant), and William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) funds.

In [a December 18, 2007 Electronic Announcement posted on the IFAP Web site](#), the Department informed the community that performance issues with the [G5 Web site](#) (inability to connect to the [G5 Web site](#), slow response time, and/or session time out) are continuing to occur. These performance issues are affecting users' ability to access the G5 system and/or execute transactions. As a result, payments may be delayed one day.



In [the December 18<sup>th</sup> Electronic Announcement](#), the Department communicated that its technical experts are working diligently on this problem and will need to complete network maintenance. Originally, the outage necessary to complete the network maintenance was scheduled to start at 4:00 P.M. (ET) on Wednesday, December 19, 2007. However, the Department will be able to delay the start of this outage until 7:00 P.M. (ET) on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

***This means that the [G5 Web site](#) will be unavailable to users from 7:00 P.M. (ET) on Wednesday, December 19, 2007 until 6:00 A.M. (ET) on Thursday, December 20, 2007.***

Other than during the service outage period noted above, users may wish to access the system during early or late hours when user traffic is reduced.

The Department sincerely regrets any inconvenience these issues may cause you and assures you that it is working to remedy the situation as quickly as possible. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

Additional information about G5 Web site (<https://www.g5.gov/>) registration, online training, and questions is provided below.

### **G5 Web Site Registration**

All users will need to register before they can access the [G5 Web site](#). To register, first determine your user status and then complete the applicable steps outlined below.

#### ***User Who Was Previously Registered for GAPS e-Payments Functionality***

- Step 1: Go to the [G5 Web site](#) at <https://www.g5.gov/>.
- Step 2: Under the yellow “Login to G5” box, click on the “Existing e-Payments user? Register Here” link.
- Step 3: Complete the information requested on the subsequent screens.

#### ***User Who Was Not Previously Registered for GAPS e-Payments Functionality or G5***

- Step 1: Go to the [G5 Web site](#) at <https://www.g5.gov/>.
- Step 2: Under the yellow “Login to G5” box, click on the “Not registered? Sign up” link.
- Step 3: Complete the information requested on the subsequent screens.

### **G5 Web Site Training**

Training on how to use the [G5 Web site](#) and all G5 processes is available on the Web site. To access the online training, complete the following steps:

- Step 1: Go to the [G5 Web site](#) at <https://www.g5.gov/>.
- Step 2: In the blue menu bar at the top of the page, click on the “Help” link.



Step 3: Click on the “Launch Help – Internet Explorer” link and complete the training.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions about G5, contact the G5/GAPS Hotline at 888/336-8930 or e-mail [G5admin@ed.gov](mailto:G5admin@ed.gov).

### **Updated Minimum And Optimal System Configuration Recommendations (12/19/07)**

Under the Department of Education’s (the Department’s) regulations at 34 CFR 668.16(o), one of the requirements for a school in administering the Title IV Federal student aid programs is that it participate in certain designated electronic processes. To do so, a school must have, or have access to, a minimum computer hardware and software configuration. The most recent notice of designated electronic processes, including minimum and optimal system configurations, was published in the Federal Register on September 12, 2004 and is available on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site (<http://ifap.ed.gov/fregisters/FR09142004.html>).

[A December 18, 2007 Electronic Announcement posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#) updates the recommended system configurations that were included in the September 12, 2004 notice. Schools that currently participate in the designated electronic processes using a desktop computing environment for all or part of their Title IV Federal student aid processing will find this updated information helpful in planning hardware and software refreshes. These schools include those that use the EDconnect software for sending and receiving data via the Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) and/or one or more of the EDESuite software products (such as EDEExpress).

The updated minimum and optimal system configurations are attached to [the December 18, 2007 Electronic Announcement posted on the IFAP Web site](#) in the document titled “Updated Minimum and Optimal System Configuration Recommendations.” Also included in the attachment are answers to some frequently asked questions about the recommended system configurations.

### **COD School Testing For The 2008-2009 Award Year (12/14/07)**

The COD School Relations Center will conduct Common Record Manual Verification and Structured Application Testing for the 2008-2009 Award Year from January 2, 2008 through July 25, 2008. Optional Unstructured Testing will be available June 2, 2008 through September 30, 2008.

School testing provides schools, third party servicers, and software vendors an opportunity to test business processes and system software with the COD System prior to the transmission and processing of actual production data. It also allows the opportunity to make corrections or enhancements to software applications and processes prior to sending data to the “live” production environment.

All entities that wish to participate in COD School Testing must submit the “COD School Testing 2008-2009 Sign-Up Sheet” to the COD School Relations Center. The sign-up document is located in the School Testing Guide, Volume V, Section 1, of the [2008-2009 COD Technical Reference posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#) and is also available on the [COD Web site](#) under the “Click here if you are looking for more information on Common Origination and Disbursement.” link.



For additional information, refer to [the December 12, 2007 Electronic Announcement posted on the IFAP Web site](#).



### **Updating School Contact Information in the COD System (12/21/07)**

Federal Student Aid wants to remind all schools and third party servicers that contact information in the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System must be kept current. Contact information is extremely important for the COD School Relations Center. Of utmost importance are e-mail addresses and mailing addresses.

- The e-mail address for the Financial Aid Administrator is used to deliver time-sensitive materials and critical COD processing information to the school.
- For a Direct Loan school, correct mailing address information ensures that Direct Loan closeout letters are delivered timely and to the correct place.

Please ensure that all contact information is updated as needed.

### **Submitting Updates to School Contact Information**

Depending on the type of information to be updated, a school must submit updates in one of the following two ways:

1. In accordance with 34 CFR 600.21, most changes must be reported using the [Electronic Application for Approval to Participate in Federal Student Financial Aid Programs \(E-App\)](#). This includes changes to the following information:
  - School name
  - School address (including any branches and locations)
  - Names of the President (or equivalent title), Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent title), and Financial Aid Administrator (or equivalent title)
  - Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the above officials

Once the E-App is processed, the [COD Web site](#) is updated within 24 hours. It may take longer if there is additional information required by the School Participation Team (formerly known as the Case Management and Oversight Division).

2. Two specific changes can **only** be made via the [COD Web site](#). These are changes to the Direct Loan Officer contact information/ mailing address and the Pell Grant Officer contact information/ mailing address. To view and/or update the current contact information for these officers, complete the following steps:
  - Log in to the [COD Web site](#).
  - From the School tab, select the “Financial Aid Contact” link (located under the School Information menu). The School Financial Aid Contact Information screen displays the current information for the school.
  - Update or add new contact information by clicking on the “Update” or “Add New” button in the heading for the officer to be updated.
  - Complete the new information and submit the changes.

This information will be processed and updated immediately on the [COD Web site](#).



An [Electronic Announcement](#) with this same information is posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site. If you have any questions about updating your school's contact information, contact the COD School Relations Center.



### **ACG and National SMART Grant Resources (12/21/07)**

As a reminder, the Department of Education (the Department) has posted a number of Dear Colleague Letters and Electronic Announcements that communicate regulatory, policy, and operational information related to the implementation of the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant) programs. In addition, Federal Student Aid has updated the [2006-2007 COD Technical Reference](#), the [2007-2008 COD Technical Reference](#), and posted the [2008-2009 COD Technical Reference](#). A school should refer to the [communications posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals \(IFAP\) Web site](#) and to the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 COD technical references for complete information about the ACG and National SMART Grant programs.

More specifically, the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 COD technical references cover all aspects of the operational implementation of the ACG and National SMART Grant programs. This includes information on the following key aspects of ACG and National SMART Grant processing:

- Financial Award ID and Financial Award Number (Award Sequence Number)  
Volume II, Section 1 “Implementation Guide”
- Citizenship and Student Level Code  
Volume II, Section 1 “Implementation Guide”
- Message Classes  
Volume II, Section 2 “Message Classes”
- Common Record Layout  
Volume II, Section 3 “Common Record Layout”
- Reports Generated by COD System  
Volume VI, Section 8 “COD Reports”
- Eligibility/Payment Reason and Rigorous High School Program Code for ACG  
Volume VI, Section 9 “Rigorous Secondary School Programs of Study, and Eligible Majors”
- Major/Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code for National SMART Grant  
Volume VI, Section 9 “Rigorous Secondary School Programs of Study, and Eligible Majors”

If your school needs help locating information related to the operational implementation of the ACG and National SMART Grant programs, contact the COD School Relations Center.

**Note for EDEExpress Users:** Volume III of the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 COD technical references provides additional guidance for schools that use EDEExpress in combination



with another system. If your school needs help locating information related to EExpress, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support at 880/330-5947 or by e-mail at [CPSSAIG@ed.gov](mailto:CPSSAIG@ed.gov).