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Management of Federal Student Aid Records

US Government Accountability Office

This questionnaire collects information on the management and use of student aid records by post-secondary institutions who partner with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid. It asks about the following at your institution:

1. Identify the types of information being collected and used as part of the federal student aid process, and what, if any, agreements exist to share the information collected.

2. Assess the recordkeeping policies and processes used to manage, store, and protect federal student aid information, including for records retention and disposition.

3. Determine what automated systems are being used to manage federal student aid program records and how those systems were acquired, and assess any plans that exist to modify or replace the systems.

Please answer this questionnaire specifically for: _____. *(Your school name will appear here)*

You may save and exit the questionnaire at any time. When you return to the survey website and log in, you will be returned to the place in the questionnaire where you exited.

Terminology

Records retention – the length of time each document or record will be retained as an active record.

Disposition – involves transferring records of permanent, historical value for archiving (preservation) and destroying all other records that are no longer needed for organization operations.

Automated systems – any computer hardware, software, database, or any combination of these, configured to accomplish specific information handling operations, such as communication, computation, dissemination, processing, and storage of information.

Student Aid Information

1. Does your school collect and use the types of information identified below as part of the federal student aid process?

	Yes	No
a. Personally identifiable information (e.g., date of birth, Social Security number, student ID numbers, or citizenship)	☐	☐
b. Financial information (e.g., tax information, adjusted gross income)	☐	☐
c. School-related information (e.g., degree, certificate, grade level, credit/clock hours)	☐	☐
d. Employment information of parent and/or student (e.g., employer or e-mail address)	☐	☐
e. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D1)*	☐

(Red markings indicate conditional questions triggered by previous corresponding answers)

(D1)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

[   ]

2. How does your school use the information identified in question 1?

	Yes	No
a. Support the disbursement of federal financial aid (e.g., loans, grants, federal work study)	☐	☐
b. School-based disbursement (e.g., scholarship programs)	☐	☐
c. Other (e.g., outside scholarships/fellowships)	☐ *(DISPLAY D2)*	☐

(D2)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

[   ]

3. Does your school have agreements in place with each of the following entities to share any or all of the information listed?

Entity	Personally identifiable information	Financial information	School-related information	Other information (explain below)
a. Banks				

	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
b. Private collection agencies	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
c. Loan servicers	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
d. Guaranty agencies	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
e. Contractors	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
f. Other entity (explain below)	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

IF OTHER ENTITY OR OTHER INFORMATION SHARED: Explain those answers in the box below.

Recordkeeping

4. Does your school have **policies** for managing (including accessing, using, and protecting) federal student aid information?

☐ Yes
☐ No *(DISPLAY D4)*
☐ Don't know

IF NO: How does your school ensure effective management of federal student aid information?

[ ]

5. Does your school have **documented processes** for managing (including accessing, using, and protecting) federal student aid information? *(Processes may be included in your school's policies on managing federal student aid information.)*

☐ Yes
☐ No *(DISPLAY D5)*
☐ Don't know

IF NO: Please describe the processes used by your school to manage federal student aid information.

[ ]

6. Does your school store **paper-based** federal student aid information?

☐ Yes *(continue with next question)*
☐ No *(Click here to skip to Question 8)*

7. Does your school store **paper-based** federal student aid information in the following ways?

	Yes	No
a. School-owned records storage facility	☐	☐
b. Contractor-owned records storage facility	☐	☐
c. Locked office on campus	☐	☐
d. Locked storage room on campus	☐	☐
e. Locked filing cabinets on/off campus	☐	☐
f. Fireproof cabinets	☐	☐
g. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D7)*	☐

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

8. Does your school store **electronic** federal student aid information?

☐ Yes *(continue with next question)*
☐ No *(Click here to skip to Question 10)*

9. Does your school store **electronic** federal student aid information in the following ways?

	Yes	No
a. Data server on school-owned network	☐	☐
b. Data server on contractor-owned network	☐	☐
c. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D9)*	☐

(D9)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

10. Does your school use the following to protect federal student aid information (either **paper-based** or **electronic** records)?

	Yes	No
a. Onsite, locked room or drawer	☐	☐
b. Onsite, locked server room	☐	☐
c. Off-site, secured facility	☐	☐
d. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D10)*	☐

(D10)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

Retention

11. Does your school have record retention **policies** that cover federal student aid information?

☐ Yes
☐ No *(DISPLAY D11)*
☐ Don't know

(D11)

IF NO: How does your school ensure effective retention of federal student aid information?

_____

12. Does your school have **documented processes** for record retention that cover federal student aid information? *(Processes may be included in your school's record retention policies.)*

☐ Yes
☐ No *(DISPLAY D12)*
☐ Don't know

(D12)

IF NO: How does your school handle the retention of federal student aid information?

_____

13. How long does your school retain **paper-based** federal student aid information? Select the one answer in each row that best describes the length of time for each type of information. **(If your school does not retain paper-based information, skip this question.)**

	Up to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 to 25 years	26 to 50 years	Over 50 years but not permanently	Permanently
a. Personal information (e.g., date of birth, Social Security number, citizenship)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Financial information (e.g., tax information, adjusted gross income)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. School-related information (e.g., degree, grade level)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Employment information (parent/student)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D13)*

(D13)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

14. How long does your school retain **electronic** federal student aid information? Select the one answer in each row that best describes the length of time for each type of information. **(If your school does not retain electronic information, skip this question.)**

	Up to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 to 25 years	26 to 50 years	Over 50 years but not permanently	Permanently
a. Personal information (e.g., date of birth, Social Security number, citizenship)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Financial information (e.g, tax information, adjusted gross income)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. School-related information (e.g., degree, grade level)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Employment information (parent/student)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*	☐ *(DISPLAY D14)*

(D14)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

Disposition

15. Does your school have records disposal policies that cover federal student aid information?

☐ Yes
☐ No *(DISPLAY D15)*
☐ Don't know

(D15)

IF NO: How does your school ensure that federal student aid information is not destroyed prematurely or in error? **(After answering, skip to question 17)**

[   ]

16. Has your school **implemented** the records disposal policies identified above in question 15?

☐ Yes *(DISPLAY D16A)*
☐ No *(DISPLAY D16B)*
☐ Don't know

(D16A)

Describe in the box below an example of how your school implemented its disposal policies related to federal student aid information.

[   ]

(D16B)

Explain in the box below why your school has not implemented its records disposal policies.

[   ]

17. Does your school perform the following control activities identified by the National Archives and Records Administration (for **both paper-based and electronic** records) to ensure that federal student aid information is not destroyed prematurely or in error?

|	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Regular review of records inventories	☐	☐	☐
b. Approval process for disposal notices from off-site storage	☐	☐	☐
c. Require certificates of destruction	☐	☐	☐
d. Monitor shredding services	☐	☐	☐
e. Obtain pre-authorization from records management program before records are destroyed	☐	☐	☐
f. Perform ad hoc monitoring of trash and recycle bins	☐	☐	☐
g. Receive notifications from facilities staff when large trash bins or removal of boxes are requested	☐	☐	☐
h. Conduct annual records clean out activities that are sponsored and monitored by records management staff	☐	☐	☐

i. Other ☐ *(DISPLAY D17)* ☐ ☐

(D17)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

i. Other ☐ *(DISPLAY D17)* ☐ ☐
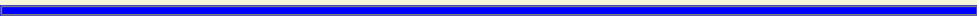
Automated Systems

18. Does your school use any of the following Department of Education automated systems to manage federal student aid information?

	Yes	No
1. Common Origination and Disbursement	☐	☐
2. Central Processing System	☐	☐
3. Debt Management Collection System 2	☐	☐
4. Department of ED/Perkins	☐	☐
5. e-Campus Based	☐	☐
6. Financial Management System	☐	☐
7. Financial Partners Portal	☐	☐
8. FSA Counselor Toolkit	☐	☐

	Yes	No
9. Great Lakes Commercial System	☐	☐
10. HEAL Online Processing System	☐	☐
11. Integrated Partner Management	☐	☐
12. Integrated Student Experience	☐	☐
13. Integrated Technical Architecture	☐	☐
14. Lessons Learned Database	☐	☐
15. Missouri Higher Education Assistance Authority	☐	☐
16. Performance Award Tracking System	☐	☐

	Yes	No
17. Partners Enterprise Business Cooperation	☐	☐
18. Postsecondary Educational Participants System	☐	☐
19. Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Authority	☐	☐
20. Participation Management	☐	☐
21. Student Aid Internet Gateway	☐	☐
22. Sallie Mae Commercial System	☐	☐
23. Title IV Data Center	☐	☐
24. ED Financial	☐	☐
25. Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corporation	☐	☐

	Yes	No
26. Granite State Management and Resources	☐	☐
27. Oklahoma Student Loan Authority	☐	☐
28. Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority	☐	☐
29. Vermont Student Assistance Corp	☐	☐

	Yes	No
30. Nelnet Servicing	☐	☐
31. National Student Loan Database System	☐	☐
32. Ombudsman Case Tracking System	☐	☐
33. Operational Vulnerability Management Solution	☐	☐
34. Person Authentication Service	☐	☐

19. Does your school use its own (developed or acquired) automated system(s) in handling federal student aid data?

☐ Yes *(DISPLAY D19)*
☐ No
☐ Don't know

(D19)

IF YES: Please list the system(s) and describe each.

20. Did your school use either of the following funding mechanisms to develop or acquire the automated systems that you listed in question 19?

	Yes	No
a. Department of Education (Office of Federal Student Aid) funded	☐	☐
b. School funded (e.g., endowment, operations budget)	☐	☐
c. Other	☐ *(DISPLAY D20)*	☐

(D20)

IF OTHER: Explain in the box below.

Information Security

21. Does your school have a documented information security program that includes policies and procedures to maintain reasonable and appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of federal student aid information, including the safeguards required by the Federal Trade Commission?

☐ Yes
☐ No *(DISPLAY D21)*

(D21)

IF NO: Please describe how your school ensures that the appropriate controls are in place to safeguard the federal student aid information it collects and uses.

Additional Comments

22. Do you have any additional explanations of your answers or comments on any of the issues in this questionnaire?

23. When you consider your answers to be final, and ready to be used in our analysis, click the box below. If you want a record of this questionnaire, click the "Print Your Answers" button below.

☐ **Answers are final**

Then click "Save & Exit" to save your questionnaire. Even after you indicate your "Answers are final", you can return to your questionnaire to change or provide additional answers at any time before we announce the closure of the survey.

We greatly appreciate your time and effort in our review for the Congress.

Print Your Answers

Save & Exit