



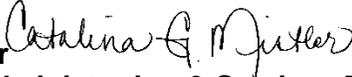
OPERATIONS MEMO

Update of the California Student Aid Commission

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GOM 2012-33

TO: High School Counselors

FROM: Catalina G. Mistler 
Chief, Program Administration & Services Division

CONTACT: Program Administration & Services Division

Phone: (888) 294-0153

Fax: (916) 464-8002

Email: schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov

SUBJECT: California Dream Act – High School Update

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is providing this Operations Memo as an update to the implementation of Assembly Bill 131 (AB131), the California Dream Act Application (CA Dream Application). The Commission will continue to provide updates on the California Dream Act Application and how applicants become eligible for the Cal Grant program and how campuses can access the student information.

The passage of AB131 authorized the awarding of state-funded student financial aid to AB 540 eligible students. Eligible programs include UC Grants, State University Grants and, from California Community Colleges, Board of Governors Fee Waivers (BOG) and other community college student financial assistance programs. The first financial aid assistance through AB 131 begins with school terms starting after January 1, 2013.

The Commission, in consultation with college campuses and the public school segmental offices, developed an online CA Dream Application to act as a single application, like the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The application gathers sufficient financial information to determine eligibility for institutional financial aid at campuses and to award state Cal Grants. Beginning January 1, 2013, AB 540 high school seniors can start applying for the 2013-14 Cal Grant Programs and other institutional aid using the CA Dream Application.

2012-13 Dream Act Application Processing

Since the CA Dream Application was made available on April 2, 2012, students have been applying for institutional aid at public institutions for the 2012-13 academic year winter/spring term. To date, over 9,500 students have submitted complete applications allowing the calculation of an Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is calculated using the same federal methodology used to calculate an EFC from FAFSA data. The use of federal methodology is a requirement of state law for the Cal Grant program and requires asking mostly the same questions as found on the FAFSA.



Similar to the FAFSA, the CA Dream Application uses skip logic to reduce the number of questions asked of the applicant. For example, students affirmatively responding to any of the 10 dependency questions are not asked questions on parental finances. Applicants initially can release the CA Dream Application data to up to 10 California campuses and can release the data to more campuses by replacing schools on subsequent ISIRs.

Upon submission of the online CA Dream Application the information is processed real-time. Real-time processing is possible because no database matches have to be made with other agencies. In the case of a complete application, the student is presented with their EFC and information on what to do next. Incomplete applications, or those with inconsistent application information, are also processed real-time allowing the student to be informed before leaving the application of data elements that require either correction or reaffirmation.

After submission, the record is placed in a file that is posted to WebGrants on a weekly basis. All records processed for the week are placed into the California Dream Act ISIR file on the WebGrants Report Download Screen. The CA Dream Application ISIR files contain only those ISIRs processed for the past week.

During this first processing year, the Commission has served a student population that is largely new to any financial aid application processes. The knowledge gained in working with the CA Dream applicants and parents has allowed the Commission to enhance the CA Dream Application. Many improvements and enhancements have been implemented as the Commission staff continues to consult with the segmental representatives and campus financial aid representatives. More enhancements are expected to be rolled out with the 2013-14 year application.

Determination of AB 540 Eligibility

The determination of an applicant's eligibility under AB 540 is a college campus responsibility. For the last eleven years, state schools have been confirming student eligibility and collecting the student affidavit required for establishing AB 540 eligibility. Now, for the first time, private colleges will be responsible for collecting and retaining a Cal Grant applicant's AB 540 affidavit. State assistance under AB 131 for students attending private institutions is limited to the Cal Grant program.

Student Assistance and Communications

Complete instructions for the 2012-13 CA Dream Application are online at www.caldreamact.org. A Dream Application worksheet, which fills the same role as the FAFSA on the Web worksheet, allows students to gather the information necessary to complete the CA Dream Application. Information on AB 540 and a CA Dream Act FAQ are also available. Students and parents requiring assistance with their CA Dream Application may call the Commission's toll free number at (888) 224-7268 or email us at caldreamact@csac.ca.gov.

2013-14 Dream Act Application Processing

Starting January 1, 2013, the Commission will begin accepting and processing 2013-14 CA Dream Applications for Cal Grants and for other state institutional aid. Similar to the FAFSA, the 2013-14 CA Dream Application will request 2012 financial data from the applicant. Students must meet the March 2 deadline to qualify for the 2013-14 Cal Grant Program.

Please contact the Commission's School Support Services Branch at (888) 294-0153 or at schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov for any assistance on the CA Dream Application.