



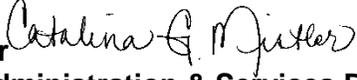
OPERATIONS MEMO

Update of the California Student Aid Commission

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GOM 2013-04

TO: Financial Aid Administrators
High School Counselors

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SUBJECT: 2013-14 Online California Dream Act Application

The 2013-14 online California Dream Act Application (CA Dream Application) is now available at www.caldreamact.org. Students eligible under Assembly Bill (AB) 540 and AB 131 can apply for Cal Grants and other state financial aid benefits using this application. Students requiring a paper application can download the paper CA Dream Application by accessing the same Web page.

As communicated in Special Alert [GSA 2013-02](#), the online CA Dream Application was initially released on January 14, 2013, but required temporary halting of the online version for further testing. The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) reached its server capacity limit and identified some programming and load issues. However, during this unexpected downtime, no student was prevented from applying for the CA Dream Act as the Commission immediately placed a notice on its website enabling students to submit their names and email addresses to receive an electronic notification when the online application became active and available. In addition, the paper CA Dream Application has been available since January 1, 2013.

We are pleased to report that the online CA Dream Application is currently functioning successfully and many students are submitting applications.

CA Dream Application for Cal Grants and Public Institutional Aid

The CA Dream Application functions in a similar manner as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by processing the applicant's financial status. The CA Dream Application will be used to determine financial eligibility for academic year 2013-14 Cal Grants at California public and private colleges and universities. For Cal Grant award consideration, a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) must also be submitted. See Grant Operation Memos [GOM 2012-35](#) and [GOM 2013-01](#) for more information on submitting Cal Grant GPAs without Social Security numbers.

The CA Dream Application can also be used by students attending California public colleges and universities to apply for state-funded grants such as the University of



California (UC) Grant, the State University Grant, and the Community College Board of Governor's (BOG) Fee Waiver.

Students should be aware that although the Cal Grant program has a March 2, 2013 filing deadline, each college may have filing deadlines for their own financial aid and scholarship programs. After March 2, the CA Dream Application will be open until June 2014 for those programs that do not have a filing deadline.

2013-14 Application Enhancements

The 2013-14 online CA Dream Application was redesigned with some enhancements to simplify the application process, minimize errors and improve the application. The following are some of the enhancements:

- Home Portal – The CA Dream Application home portal was completely redone to look more appealing and make it easier for the user to select the correct options. The applicant will also have the choice to select from two academic years (2012-13 and 2013-14). For Cal Grant purposes, the student should select 2013-14.
- Dream Act User ID – Starting with the 2013-14 academic year, all applicants will be required to establish a Dream Act User ID during the initial application. Once established, applicants can retrieve their online CA Dream Application and make corrections at any time. Dream applicants who are already in our system through a 2012-13 CA Dream Application submission should create a User ID by clicking “Retrieve My Application” and then “Create User ID & Password.”
- Renewal Application – Applicants with an existing 2012-13 CA Dream Application must file a 2013-14 application to be considered for 2013-14 state financial aid including the Cal Grant. However, they will be given an option to carry over the 2012-13 demographic, student and parent information to the 2013-14 application. The financial and tax information will not carry over, so the student must enter that data on the 2013-14 application.
- Dream Act ID – The Dream Act ID, also known as the “pseudo-SSN,” will display on the Confirmation Page of the CA Dream Application. All of the Dream Act ID numbers will start with three leading zeros or “000.”
- Confirmation Page – The Confirmation Page is now divided into three sections: “Action Needed,” “What you need to review for accuracy,” and “What you need to know.” The “Action Needed” section will generate comment codes that require student or parent action to complete the CA Dream Application. The most common comment code is 108 which indicates that the parent must sign the application.
- Parent Pin/Signature Page – Additional improvements were made to the parent pin/signature page that will simplify the signature process and minimize some of the issues from the 2012-13 application.

The Commission will continue to review any issues that applicants may encounter and closely monitor the application submission process to ensure that every applicant is successful. The Commission's Customer Relations Branch is trained to assist students and parents through the application process, if necessary. Every effort will be made to identify additional enhancements to the application for the 2014-15 academic year.

Verification Flag

The Commission will select at random, twenty percent of completed applications for verification. Students who are selected will have the “Y” value selected on field 371 on the Cal ISIR record and a null value in field 370, as the Commission will not identify a specific verification group. If a student is selected, they will see comment code 170 or 171, based on dependency, on their confirmation page that states, “*Your Dream Application has been selected for a review process called verification. Your school has the authority to request copies of certain financial documents from you and your parent(s).*” The respective field numbers on the Cal ISIR record and comment codes mirror the federal ISIR record layout and comment codes. Selected Dream Applicants should follow the same federal verification process at your institution as the one used for students who file the FAFSA.

Since the verification process will be performed by the institution, the Commission will continue to process the CA Dream Application for Cal Grant consideration even if the Cal ISIR has a “Y” value. This Cal Grant awarding cycle does not deviate from the current condition in which the Commission processes federal ISIRs that are selected for verification for the Cal Grant award. Once a student has completed the verification process, institutions report to the Commission through a grant record change (G-21) if the student is no longer Cal Grant eligible. Similarly, Dream Applicants who are selected for verification will continue to receive Cal Grant consideration and institutions can report eligibility changes via the G-21 process in WebGrants.

To remove the verification flag on the Cal ISIR and comment code, institutions can change the verification flag to an “N” value on the ISIR Correction Screen (scheduled for release mid-February) in WebGrants. Schools may also select students for verification in the ISIR Correction Screen by simply changing the verification flag to a “Y” and submitting a Cal ISIR correction. More information and details on the ISIR correction screen will be available in a separate GOM.

Cal ISIR Records

The first 2013-14 Cal Dream Act ISIRs for download will be available on Monday, February 4, 2013. As a reminder, the Cal Dream Act ISIR report will contain applicants who filed a CA Dream Application from the prior week and listed your institution as one of the school choices on their application. The Cal Dream Act ISIRs can be accessed in WebGrants under the “Data Transfer” link and then “Report Download.”

Application Support

Complete instructions for the CA Dream Application, including online support for each question, are available at www.caldreamact.org. Phone support for students filing the CA Dream Application is available from the Commission’s Customer Relations staff at (888) 224-7268, or questions can be emailed to caldreamact@csac.ca.gov. Spanish language staff are available to assist students and parents in understanding the application process.

Training webinars will be scheduled to provide more information on the CA Dream Application process. Watch for communications announcing the training dates and times.

Schools should direct any questions on the CA Dream Application and the Dream Act application process to the Commission’s School Support Services Branch at (888) 294-0153 or at schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov.

Working together to effectively promote education beyond high school!