



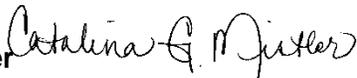
OPERATIONS MEMO

Update of the California Student Aid Commission

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GOM 2014-01

TO: Financial Aid Administrators
High School Counselors

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SUBJECT: 2014-15 Online California Dream Act Application

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce that the 2014-15 online California Dream Act Application (CA Dream Application) is now available at www.caldreamact.org. Students eligible under 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; however, online application is strongly encouraged since it is faster, easier and provides the applicant with immediate feedback.

2014-15 Application Enhancements

The 2014-15 online CA Dream Application was redesigned to include improvements intended to make the application easier for students and parents to complete and for institutions to use. These enhancements include:

Student Application

- **Access Determination Logic** – To reduce the number of students completing the wrong application, the online application will now ask a series of questions to direct the applicant to the correct application. Students will select either the CA Dream Application or the FAFSA based on their citizenship status and AB 540 eligibility
- **Redesign of Application User Interface** – The online application will use tabs to divide the application into separate sections. The tabs include: *Instructions, Student, Dependency, Parent, Signature, Confirmation, and California Student Aid Report (Cal SAR)*. The new tab format will make the application easier to fill out and complete.
- **Data Validation of User Responses** – Each of the answer fields will have data validation to prevent entry of inappropriate alpha and numeric characters.
- **Integrated Skip Logic** – The application will skip unnecessary questions that are not relevant to the applicant.



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- **Help Text** – The majority of the questions will have a floating help text box to explain the context of each question.
- **Cal SAR** – Applicants will be able to view and download a PDF version of the submitted application and subsequent corrections.

Institution Interface in WebGrants

- **Confirmation View** – Financial aid administrators with WebGrants access will be able to view the most current confirmation page for the student's CA Dream Application. This feature will allow administrators to help students complete any missing information or requirements on their application.
- **Cal SAR Report** – Financial aid administrators with WebGrants access will also be able to view and download all of the Cal SAR reports for the student.
- **Cal ISIR Reports** – An initial ISIR file and a correction file will now generate weekly for download capability in WebGrants. The Commission expects to have a batch correction process for the 2015-16 application 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. Although, unawarded Cal Grant applicants will be selected for verification, the Commission requires verification only for awarded Cal Grant participants.

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.

Cal ISIR Records

The California Dream Act Initial ISIR report and the California Dream Act Correction ISIR report consist of 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 California Dream Act Initial ISIR allows you to view information initially submitted to you by the student, and the California Dream Act Correction ISIR reflects the changes made on the initial ISIR. The ISIRs can be accessed in WebGrants under the "Data Transfer" link and then "Report Download."

California Dream Act Application Resources

The 2014-15 California Dream Act Application documents, forms and other resources are also available on the www.caldreamact.org home page for your use.

The *2014-15 California Dream Act Application Guide for Colleges and Universities* will be released later this month and will include the 2014-15 updates along with valuable information on the CA Dream Application process. The 2013-14 version can be accessed on the main California Dream Act Web page, under the “Dream Act Resources” section.

The Guide covers a wide range of content from the history of the California Dream Act to submitting Cal ISIR corrections in the WebGrants system to recommending “best practices” in Dream application processing. As administrators and counselors become more familiar with the CA Dream Application process, we hope that the Guide will be a valuable resource that communicates clear and consistent information, especially for assisting students.

Dream Act Training

California Dream Act training webinars will continue to be held for segmental representatives, high school and college campus administrators, outreach organizations, and various other groups.

Each online training session will be approximately one hour. Participants can log on from their office or home computer and follow along screen-by-screen while listening to the live audio feed over the phone. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive immediate answers.

To register and get more information on California Dream Act training webinars, visit www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1445. Once you have registered, a confirmation e-mail will be sent to you with the Website login instructions and teleconference phone line information. Retain this confirmation e-mail, as you will need it to join the training session.

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.

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. Should you encounter any issues with the online application, especially as you assist students, please contact the Commission immediately.

Schools should direct any questions on the California Dream Act Application and the 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!