



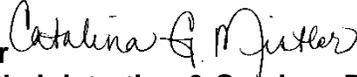
OPERATIONS MEMO

Update of the California Student Aid Commission

January 29, 2014

GOM 2014-05

TO: Financial Aid Administrators

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SUBJECT: Unpaid California Dream Act Cal Grants

This Operations Memo from the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) provides information regarding factors that have been adversely affecting California Dream Act financial aid applicants.

Through contact with students, schools and student service groups, the Commission has determined that some campuses have yet to disburse 2013-14 Fall term funds for Dream Act students. The Commission urges campuses to find a way to disburse funds to Dream Act students at the same time as disbursements made to other students. Many campuses have found solutions. For example, one smaller campus issued checks for Dream Act students that could be cashed at their campus book store.

Since this method might not be possible at campuses with large Dream Act student populations, another approach is to work with your disbursement servicer to have checks for Dream Act students expedited. Ask your servicer if the campus can send a list of Dream Act student disbursements to the servicer for expedited processing. Dream Act students should not have to wait longer for their student aid disbursements than students who have filed the FAFSA application.

Here are some other causes of disbursement delays for Dream Act students as reported by campuses and students:

1. Colleges have requested verification documentation from students and the students are unclear how to verify their or their parent's income. Despite the fact that campuses provide verification forms for students, Dream Act students may require a little more assistance since they or their parents might not have filed tax returns.

It is suggested that campuses review their verification procedures to make sure that the procedures cover the types of situations that a Dream Act applicant may be facing. Clear communication on how to provide documentation of income for tax filers and non-tax filers would be in order.



2. The college might not be aware that the student is an AB 540 eligible student.

Many students who have completed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) process have a valid Social Security number (SSN) and may have filed the FAFSA application. These students may not immediately appear to the college to be AB 540 students. Campuses should review any federal ISIR records that are requesting a confirmation of the student's citizenship status. This will assist in determining students who have filed the wrong application. For more information on this topic please see Commission Grant Operations Memo [GOM 2013-28](#), issued October 14, 2013.

3. At some campuses, including private colleges, undocumented AB 540 eligible students may not understand that the AB 540 affidavit is required or no financial aid may be disbursed. Campuses should post a notice explaining this and include reference to the affidavit in notices to Dream Act students. A generic affidavit can be found on the www.caldreamact.org website.
4. Dream Act Application Cal Grant awards may not be appearing on the college's Cal Grant roster. Students should be encouraged to go to www.webgrants4students.org to log-in and check if the Commission has the correct college listed.

In addition, students are informing us that campus staff are advising them of the following reasons for not being paid:

1. An e-mail is required from the Commission before the student can be paid.
2. Cal Grant eligibility is not determined by the school.
3. Contact the Commission for payment.
4. The students are not on the school's roster.
5. Only the FAFSA is used at the school, not the CA Dream Application.
6. Nothing is known about the Dream Application.
7. There is no way for the school to pay Dreamers.
8. The students were selected for verification and the school is waiting for the Commission to send them the verification form.
9. There is no Dream Act program at the school.
10. After the March 2 deadline, Dreamers would be considered for the September 2 deadline.

We encourage campuses that have identified solutions for processing Cal Grant payments for their undocumented students to share their experiences with other campuses through the CASFAA and CCCSFAAA list services. The Commission will be holding a number of Dream Act live chat sessions over the next four months for financial aid administrators and other student service professionals and volunteers. These sessions would also provide an excellent opportunity to share your successes with the financial aid community.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this memo, please contact the Commission's School Support Services staff at (888) 294-0153 or via e-mail at schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov.

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