



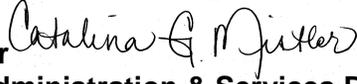
# SPECIAL ALERT

Update of the California Student Aid Commission

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GSA 2012-04

**TO:** Financial Aid Administrators  
High School Counselors

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**SUBJECT:** 2012-13 California Dream Act Application

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This Special Alert announces that the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) has completed the California Dream Act Application (Dream Application) for institutional aid and will release it on Monday, April 2, 2012. For the first time under Assembly Bill 130 (AB 130) and Assembly Bill 131 (AB 131), Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) students may apply for and receive student financial aid from both private- and public-funded student financial sources.

The 2012-13 Dream Application was developed by the Commission to allow AB 540 students to apply for student financial aid in accordance with AB 130 and AB 131 beginning in January 2013. Campuses packaging eligible AB 540 students for the 2012-13 academic year will be able to use the student's financial data collected from the Dream Application to determine eligibility for institutional financial aid under the provisions of AB 130 and AB 131. This release of the Dream Application is made available for those campuses ready to make use of their AB 540 student data.

Many of the Dream Application questions are similar to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) questions, as the Commission has replicated the federal FAFSA process without some of the more complicated skip logic and processing functions. The 2012-13 Dream Application uses the same federal methodology used for federal financial aid purposes. The Dream Application asks students and their parents, sufficient questions to allow the calculation of an Expected Family Contribution (EFC). With an EFC, public colleges and universities can determine eligibility for institutional grants like the UC Grant and State University Grant, and also Board of Governors fee waivers at the California Community Colleges. The EFC calculation is consistent with federal methodology as required by state law.



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Like the FAFSA, applicants will be able to start an application and save it for up to 60 days prior to submission if completion is not possible in one sitting. Also, a California PIN code will be assigned upon completion of the Dream Application to allow the student and parent to sign electronically. Students can use the PIN later to add colleges or update their application information. Parents can sign with a PIN and later use the PIN to re-sign if changes are made to the application.

College campuses can download the California ISIR (Cal ISIR) file layout, Cal ISIR test files and Cal ISIR Comment Code explanation documents from the WebGrants Help Page. The student data will be delivered to colleges in a format most likely to be able to interface with campus Financial Aid Management (FAM) systems. Campus FAMs should be able to process the Cal ISIR to import the EFC and other data into their systems. Please be aware that due to the near perfect match with the federal ISIR, campuses should take precautions to notate or otherwise track the Cal ISIR so as to not lead to unexpected results, such as confusing the Cal ISIR for a federal ISIR.

Further details and information on the processing of the California Dream Act Application will be provided in a Grant Operations Memo to be released soon.

It is important that AB 540 students contact their college campus financial aid offices to determine whether they are to complete the Dream Application or another application for their campus financial aid process. To assist students, counselors and campuses in serving these students, the Commission has posted several documents and data files in several locations. Watch for Dream Application webinars which will be scheduled for those interested in learning more about the application process.

We encourage current AB 540 high school seniors who plan to attend college for the 2012-13 academic year to use the Dream Application that will provide campuses financial data to determine eligibility for institutional aid. The Dream Application instructions and pre-completion worksheet are posted at [www.caldreamact.org](http://www.caldreamact.org).

### **2013-14 Dream Application for Cal Grants**

The Dream Application for Cal Grants will be available on January 1, 2013. Commission staff will continue to enhance the Dream Application to add the Cal Grant eligibility criteria for the 2013-14 academic year. The Dream Application for Cal Grants will allow college campuses the ability to update student Cal ISIRs in a manner more consistent with federal ISIR processing.

Questions on Dream Application implementation can be directed to the Commission's School Services Support Branch at (888) 294-1053 or at [schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov).

*Working together to effectively promote education beyond high school!*