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FEDERAL UPDATES

Disaster Forbearances Reminder

In Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) GEN-01-11, ED issued guidance about relief for borrowers affected by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. In this DCL, FFELP lenders were authorized to grant a forbearance to borrowers (or endorsers, if applicable) who either reside in or, to the extent the lender has knowledge, work in the designated disaster area (New York City). The DCL also permitted lenders to grant a forbearance to other borrowers affected by the terrorist attacks who do not reside or work in New York City. These authorized forbearances ended on January 31, 2002.

A lender may continue a forbearance beyond this initial period for an affected borrower, as long as the borrower provides supporting documentation and completes a written forbearance agreement with the lender. Lenders are encouraged to remain sensitive to a borrower who claims to have been directly impacted by the disaster, to determine whether to continue the borrower’s forbearance. It may also be in the borrower’s best interest to examine his or her eligibility for a deferment or discharge before considering the borrower for a continued forbearance.

More Information

For a complete synopsis of the disaster guidance issued by ED, see *Shoptalk Online*, Edition 124.

Calendar Year Variable Interest Rate

ED announced the PLUS/SLS variable interest rate for 2002 for loans using the "91-day Treasury Bill" method. Due to wording of the promissory notes, some loans are subject to a calendar-year adjustment of the variable interest rate based on the "91-day Treasury Bill" method that existed prior to the enactment of the Higher Education Act Technical Amendments of 1987. It is likely that most of these loans have already been paid in full or refinanced.

The interest rate is equal to the average of the 91-day Treasury Bills auctioned during the previous 12-month period ending November 30 plus 3.75 percent, not to exceed 12 percent. The interest rate for calendar year 2002 is 7.60 percent [3.85% (91-day T-bill average) + 3.75%].

NSLDS Makes Changes to SSCR Process

The National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) has made some changes to the Student Status Confirmation Reporting (SSCR) process. The new process offers users the following changes:

- More flexibility in timing of rosters,
- The ability of lenders and servicers to obtain enrollment data directly from NSLDS,
- New screens that simplify online enrollment reporting, and
- A name change from SSCR to Enrollment Reporting.

Other significant changes involve the calculation of aggregate loan limits and data available to aid the award process.

For details about these and other changes, read the NSLDS Newsletter at www.nslsdfap.ed.gov by clicking on "News & Events" in the menu bar.

TG POLICIES

TG Modifies Lender File Requirement for Electronic Signatures

In the November 6, 2001, edition of *Shoptalk Online* (Edition 130), TG explained how TG Loans By Web™ (LBW) supports the use of electronic signatures. Lenders should take note of a TG modification to the process.

The first paragraph in the section of the article titled "Lender Interface" indicated that a lender must be able to receive a "CommonLine Application *Send File*" from TG. TG has modified the lender requirements to the following:

To facilitate the data exchange, lenders must be able to receive a CommonLine *Response File* from TG. Once the interface is built, TG conducts testing with the lender to ensure a seamless transition from LBW to the lender's web site.

More Information and Questions

The original article is available online at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/shoptalk/2001/st130/st13003.htm#esig.

For questions or more information about the modification or about LBW, lenders should contact their TG Lender Consultant, call TG Product Support at (800) 332-1455, or send an e-mail message to product.support@tgslc.org.

TG UPDATES

Take a Look at “The Big Picture”

Now that it’s on your calendar, you’d probably like a bit more detail about the TG 2002 Conference, “The Big Picture: Take a Leading Role.” Why not check out the tentative agenda?

The agenda (www.tgslc.org/tgslc/Conference/agenda.htm) offers a schedule for the April 10-12 conference along with tentative topics and sessions. You’ll find that plans are in the works for sessions ranging from “Stress and the Financial Aid Professional” to “799 Reporting” and “Reauthorization.”

Although plans are still being developed, the agenda shows that this is one conference you don’t want to miss. Why not take the time now to register online at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/Conference/conf_entryform.cfm?

Nominate Your “Best”

And remember to do your part to recognize those who “take a leading role” in the financial aid community by nominating financial aid professionals, lenders, and projects for the 2002 Conference awards. TG is looking to recognize the Best Director, Best Producer, and Best Production.

The deadline for the receipt of nominations at TG has been extended to midnight on February 8, 2002. You’ll find more detail about the 2002 awards in *Shoptalk Online* Edition 137 at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/shoptalk/2002/st137/st13703.htm#winner.

More Information and Questions

For more information about the conference, including how to become a TG 2002 Conference sponsor and how to make reservations for your stay in Austin, visit *TGWorks Online* at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/Conference/index.htm.

For questions about the conference, contact Judy Cunningham at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2905, or send an e-mail message to judy.cunningham@tgslc.org.

Pencil Me In

Dates to remember:

- February 7 – TG’s “Applying for Financial Aid: The FAFSA Process” Teleconference
- February 7-8 – TASFAA Board Meeting, Dallas, TX
- February 9-12 – American Council on Education Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA
- February 11 – ATLE Board Meeting, Austin, TX
- February 17-20 – SASFAA Annual Conference, Louisville, KY
- February 18 – Presidents Day (TG offices closed)
- February 21 – TG Lender/School Advisory Meeting, Austin, TX
- February 27-28 – GEAR UP State Conference, El Paso, TX
- March 6-8 – EFC Annual Membership Meeting, Scottsdale, AZ
- March 6-8 – ED’s Spring Update Conference (for FFELP and Direct Loan Business Partners), Baltimore, MD
- March 7-8 – West Texas TASFAA Regional Rally, Lubbock, TX
- March 11-12 – NASFAA/HEWI Distance Learning: The Future of Education Conference, Adelphi, MD
- March 13-15 – MASFAP Annual Conference, Lake Ozark, MO

- March 17-20 – NCHelp Debt Management Conference, Frisco, TX
- March 20-22 – AASFAA Conference, Tuscon, AZ
- March 26 – Central Texas TASFAA Regional Rally, Waco, TX
- March 26-27 – Annual ELM Members' Conference, San Diego, CA
- April 3-5 – KASFAA Spring Conference, Topeka, KA
- April 3-5 – AASFAA Conference, Eureka Springs, AR
- April 3-5 – OASFAA Conference, Tulsa, OK
- April 4 – North Texas TASFAA Regional Rally, Denton, TX
- April 7-9 – WASFAA Annual Conference, Boise, ID
- April 10 – TG Users Group (TUG) Meeting, Austin, TX (at the Annual Conference site)
- April 10-12 – TG Annual Conference, Austin, TX
- April 14-16 – ISFAA, French Lick, IN
- April 14-16 – NMAASFAA, Truth or Consequences, NM
- April 14-17 – NCASFAA Conference, Atlantic Beach, NC
- April 21-23 – TACAC Annual Conference, Dallas, TX (tentative)
- April 21-24 – VASFAA Conference, Norfolk, VA
- April 23-26 – Texas Library Association Conference, Dallas, TX
- April 24-26 – CAFAA Conference, Grand Junction, CO
- April 25-26 – South Texas Regional Rally, Corpus Christi, TX

TRENDS AND ISSUES

Distance Ed Conference Is Not So Distant

It'll be here before you know it. The "Distance Learning: The Future of Education Conference," co-presented by Higher Education Washington, Inc. (HEWI) and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), is set for March 11-12, 2002. The conference, sponsored by TG, promises a thorough agenda covering a variety of topics related to distance education, including financial aid, accreditation, intellectual property rights, and more.

Conference Details

Scheduled speakers include Steven Smith, TG Assistant Vice President for Strategic Planning and Development, Dr. Bruce Chaloux, Director of the Electronic Campus of the Southern Regional Education Board, and Ellen Blackmun, Learning Anytime Anywhere Partnership (LAAP) Project Director from NASFAA. A comprehensive list of speakers and their biographies, as well as the full conference agenda, are available online at www.hewi.net.

Registration Information

The conference is being held at the Inn and Conference Center at the University of Maryland University College. Interested participants can register for the conference online (at the HEWI web site above) or can call (202) 842-4989.

Original Registrants Still Registered

Registrations for those who registered for the conference's original date (October 29-30, 2001) have been carried over to the March date. As reported in *Shoptalk Online*, Edition 126, the conference was postponed due to travel restrictions in and around the Washington, D.C., area subsequent to the events of September 11, in addition to a tornado that struck the campus of University of Maryland University College in late September.

TG's Distance Ed Resource

Before you attend the "Distance Learning: The Future of Education Conference," make sure to check out TG's online resource "Distance Education: Changes, Challenges, and Issues." The web site provides an overview of many of the issues facing distance education students, as well as schools establishing distance education programs. This valuable information tool is located at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/resources/distance.htm.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

TG's January 28 *Legislative Report* includes an update on issues from the second session of the 107th Congress and a report on a recent meeting of the Texas Senate Committee on Business and Commerce. Read the entire issue online at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/publications/lege_report/2002/lr_020128.htm.

THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER

In the world of distance education, there are two kinds of instruction: synchronous and asynchronous.

The traditional classroom and most varieties of distance education are characterized by *synchronous* instruction—where the teacher and student interact with each other simultaneously. A synchronous course might involve students watching a satellite transmission of a lecture—where the teacher and students are "in class" at the same time.

Another kind of education involves interaction between the teacher and student but not at the same time, such as when a teacher posts lessons on a web page and students log into their computers and complete the required activities at their own convenience. This is known as *asynchronous* instruction.

For more information about distance education concepts, visit TG's "Distance Education: Changes, Challenges, and Issues" at www.tgslc.org/tgslc/resources/distance.htm.

Contributors to this week's edition:	Judy Cunningham	Kelly Kaelin	Art Martinez
	Lisa Gregory	Laura Lavergne	George Torres

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To ask questions about the articles in *Shoptalk Online*, subscribe or order additional copies, please contact Communications at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2878 or communications@tgslc.org.

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