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Tip^{of} the Week

The September 2005 *Integrated Common Manual* is available on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/resources/integrated_online_manual.cfm

Federal updates

Developments on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

There have been several recent developments pertaining to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that affect the financial aid community. First, in the last few weeks, there have been three pieces of legislation signed by the president that affect students and schools in major disaster areas. In addition, last week ED published guidance regarding the extension of filing and application deadlines for students and schools impacted by Hurricane Rita.

Katrina legislation

As provided on TG's Hurricane Katrina Web page, located at www.tgslc.org/abouttg/disaster_relief.cfm, three bills have been enacted that provide relief to students and schools in certain disaster related circumstances, as follows:

- The Pell Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act (Public Law 109-66), signed September 21, 2005, amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) to authorize the Secretary of Education to waive certain requirements for repayment of a federal Pell grant by a student if all of the following apply:
 - The student was residing in, employed in, or attending an institution of higher education located in a major disaster area.
 - The student’s attendance was interrupted because of the disaster's impact on the student or the school.
 - The student’s withdrawal ended within the academic year during which the major disaster designation occurred or during the next succeeding academic year.
- The Student Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act (Public Law 109-67), signed September 21, 2005, also amends the HEA to authorize the Secretary of Education to waive certain requirements for repayment of federal student grant assistance by a student if all of the following apply:
 - The student was residing in, employed in, or attending an institution of higher education located in a major disaster area.
 - The student’s attendance was interrupted because of the disaster's impact on the student or the school.
 - The student’s withdrawal ended within the academic year during which the major disaster designation occurred or during the next succeeding academic year.
- The Natural Disaster Student Aid Fairness Act (Public Law 109-86), signed October 7, 2005, authorizes, and in certain cases requires, the Secretary of Education to waive certain matching funds requirements and reallocation rules, and to extend the availability of certain funds, with respect to campus-based student assistance programs under the HEA, for institutions of higher education that:
 - Are located in areas affected by a Gulf hurricane disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita; or
 - Have accepted for enrollment any students who were affected by such disaster.

The act also states that such students may be affected by reason of:

 - Having been enrolled or accepted by an institution in the affected area;
 - Being dependent on parents residing or employed in such an area; or

- Having suffered direct economic harm as a direct result of such disaster, as determined by the Secretary using consistent and objective criteria.

Rita guidance

On October 14, ED published a notice in the *Federal Register* providing an extension of the deadline dates for specific filing and reporting activities as a result of the extensive damage and disruption in the southern U.S. caused by Hurricane Rita.

This *Federal Register* notice extends, for affected schools and third-party servicers, the FISAP, annual compliance audit submission, 2004-2005 Pell grant reporting, Pell grant disbursement records submission, and Direct loan record submission deadlines. The notice also extends, for affected applicants, the FAFSA correction deadlines; the deadlines for changes to mailing or e-mail addresses, changes of institutions, and requests for a duplicate SAR made by phone to the Federal Student Aid Information Center; and the deadlines pertaining to paper signature pages and electronic signatures. Finally, the notice provides an extension of the length of time that an affected school has to receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) or Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR), and verification documentation, to consider a student for federal aid for the 2004-2005 academic year.

To access the *Federal Register* notice, visit

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-20623.htm>.

More information

For more information on the aforementioned legislation or guidance pertaining to students and schools impacted by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita, contact TG customer assistance at (800) 845-6267 or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgsic.org.

TG updates

Need to update your *Lender Fact Sheet*? Just let us know

TG offers *Lender Fact Sheets* to help students, parents, and schools understand more about the lenders that guarantee loans through TG. If you are a lender that partners with TG, TG suggests that you review your *Lender Fact Sheet* periodically to see if any information needs to be updated. If you find something that needs to be modified, contact Bonnie Brinkley in TG loan guarantee operations.

Each *Lender Fact Sheet* includes the lender's address, lender code, average borrower indebtedness, loan volume, and lender servicing and secondary loan holder arrangements. In all cases, the information pertains only to loans guaranteed through TG. The data on TG's *Lender Fact Sheets* are relevant to legislators as well as the school and lender communities. The *Fact Sheets* also can be used by families and students to make informed decisions about financial service providers from which to borrow educational loans.

To review your *Lender Fact Sheet*, visit *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/schlfs/new_lender.cfm. To contact Bonnie Brinkley, call (800) 252-9743, ext. 4543; send an e-mail message to bonnie.brinkley@tgslc.org; or send a letter to P.O. Box 83100, Round Rock, Texas, 78683-3100.

2006 TG Conference update

Mark your calendars to join TG and your financial aid industry colleagues at the 2006 TG Annual Conference. TG's Annual Conference is a premier industry training event that helps financial aid administrators and industry partners maximize their industry knowledge to improve financial aid services for families and students.

The 2006 TG Annual Conference will be held April 18 - 20, 2006, at the Hilton Austin Hotel in downtown Austin, Texas.

The TG conference mirrors TG's vision: To provide information and training that helps with the educational endeavor of thousands of aspiring students. This past year, more than 650 financial aid professionals gathered in Austin to learn about the latest industry developments, network with colleagues, and enrich their skills.

Conference training sessions are divided into educational tracks. Attendees have their pick of a variety of topics, such as financial aid management systems, debt management and default aversion, best practices for schools and lenders, customer service, TG's technical solutions and tools, professional development, general industry interest, and TG lender processes.

Learn more

Watch *TG Online*, www.tgslc.org/tgconference/index.cfm, for updates on the 2006 TG Annual Conference. For more information, you may contact Judith Cunningham at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2905, or send an e-mail message to judith.cunningham@tgslc.org.

Skill builders: How do you define great customer service?

The business world has recognized the important role customer service plays in attracting and retaining customers. Providing outstanding service is a hallmark of good business and can set a company apart from its competitors.

But service is important not only in the for-profit business world. It is an equally important factor in the higher education industry, including the financial aid office.

If you attend any financial aid industry conference lately, there is likely to be a training session offered that is related to customer service — why it's important or how your office can improve on it.

But what exactly is customer service, and what specific traits define *great* customer service?

TG Speakers Bureau session can help

Tom Rebstock, TG's customer training team leader, can help you find the answer in the unique TG Speakers Bureau session, *Crafting the Keys to Customer Service in Financial Aid*.

"Everybody talks about customer service, but no one has ever defined exactly what that is within a college financial aid office, so I thought it would be important to find out," Tom said.

Over the past four years, Tom has informally polled more than 1,400 financial aid administrators and staff from higher education institutions across the country — four-year and two-year, public and private, nonprofit and proprietary — to find out how financial aid professionals define outstanding customer service at their schools.

"What I found is that no matter the location or the type of school, financial aid professionals use many of the same characteristics to describe what represents outstanding customer service," Tom said.

What defines "great" customer service?

Tom has compiled this information into a list of the "Top 10 keys to customer service," which he shares during his TG Speakers Bureau training session following a discussion and group exercises.

Some of the traits that Tom found define customer service in the financial aid office include providing accurate, complete information; offering accessible and flexible services; and teamwork.

"One of the things we all hate is asking three different people at a business the same question and getting three different answers," Tom said. "A student should be able to ask the front-desk person, a counselor, and the director the same question and get the same answer."

Tom pointed out that, like in the for-profit business world, customer service is becoming more important in higher education, because students are becoming more informed, know they have choices, and are able to take their business elsewhere.

"Excellent customer service can set your school apart from the competition and can be an important factor when students are deciding which school to give their business to," Tom said.

More information

To learn more about *Crafting the Keys to Customer Service in Financial Aid* or TG's other Speakers Bureau training sessions, visit the TG Speakers Bureau page on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/speakers/index.cfm. To schedule a TG Speakers Bureau event, call (800) 252-9743, ext. 4650, or send an e-mail message to customer.services@tgslc.org.

TG resources: Lender and School Advisory committees

TG appreciates the advice of its customers, and one group that provides valuable advice is TG's Lender and School Advisory Committees (LSA). Committee members:

- Offer input to TG
- Recommend ideas for technology strategies and policy implications
- Discuss issues and activities that help support the needs of TG's school, lender, servicer and secondary market partners

LSA members help set the Committee's agenda, and elected chairpersons conduct quarterly meetings to optimize industry input and discussion. Members serve two-year, staggered terms, and approximately half the membership changes annually.

You can learn more about TG's Lender and School Advisory Committees and how to become involved by visiting *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/lisa/index.cfm. The LSA page includes a list of current members with contact information and a description of the Committee's selection process for members. Visitors to the site will also find summaries of the LSA's charters and the agendas of past meetings.

Question of the week

Q: How does buying or selling a loan affect lender record retention requirements?

A: Per subsection 3.4.A of the *Common Manual*: "A lender that sells a loan to another lender remains subject to the five-year minimum retention requirement for all documentation generated through the date it sells the loan. A lender that purchases a loan from another lender is subject to the five-year minimum retention requirement for all documentation generated from the time of the loan's origination through the date the purchasing lender no longer holds the loan. [§682.414(a)(4)(iii)]"

Do you have a question?

If you have a question that needs an answer, feel free to *Ask TG™*. To submit a question to *Ask TG™*, visit <http://tgslc.custhelp.com>.

TG offices closed

TG will be closed from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, October 25, for a corporate-wide activity. TG will reopen at 5 p.m.

Legislative update

The October 18 issue of TG's *Legislative Report* includes an update on House leaders beginning the process of determining spending cuts through the budget reconciliation process, reductions in FY 2006 appropriations, and budget

rescissions. Keep up with the latest developments by reading the full report on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/lege_report/index.cfm.

This, that, and the other

According to the Digest of Education Statistics, 2004, from ED's National Center of Education Statistics, more than 80 million people are involved in providing or receiving formal education in the U.S.

"In the fall of 2004, about 71.7 million persons were enrolled in American schools and colleges. About 4.3 million persons were employed as elementary and secondary school teachers and as college faculty. Other professional, administrative, and support staff at educational institutions numbered 5 million. Thus, about 81 million people were involved, directly or indirectly, in providing or receiving formal education." To read the digest, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d04/>



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To ask questions about *Shoptalk Online*, please contact Communications at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4732 or communications@tgslc.org.

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