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Tip^{of} the Week

College placement test schedules have been set for the academic year 2008-09. TG has added the schedules, which show dates for registration and test-taking, as a handout to its *Adventures In Education* Web site. You can direct interested students and parents to it at www.aie.org/handouts/index.cfm. The testing schedules are located at the bottom of the page.

Federal updates

ED releases revised loan purchase agreements

On July 25, ED posted revised versions of the Master Participation Agreement (MPA) and the Master Loan Sales Agreement (MLSA) to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site. As reported in *Shoptalk Online* (edition 463), earlier versions of the agreements were posted on July 10, 2008. The agreements, as well as the Notice of Intent to Participate, must be executed by FFELP lenders that wish to participate in one or both of the loan purchase programs.

Many of the revisions made to the agreements are either corrections of typographical errors or corrections of incorrect references within the documents. Other revisions, while more substantive, do not significantly impact the basic structure and requirements of the loan purchase programs.

ED schedules next ECASLA webinar

ED has scheduled the next installment in its series of web-based training on the implementation of ECASLA for Friday, August 1, 2008 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm CST. This webinar will cover the operational details of the loan participation purchase program. More information is available on the IFAP Web site at <http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/0724LiveInternetWebinars.html>.

For more information

ED encourages all interested parties to review the revised documents in full. The announcement and the revised documents are available online at <http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/072508LoanPurchaseAgreement.html>.

Closed school corner

The following table provides a list of newly reported school closures and error corrections from the Postsecondary Educational Participants System (PEPS) and from the July 2008 *Closed School Monthly Report* supplied by the Department of Education.

Newly reported closures

OPE School ID	School Name and Address	Unofficial Closure Date	ED's Official Closure Date
03275301	Touch of Class School of Cosmetology 405 N. McDonald St. McKinney, TX 75069-3920	N/A	11/23/07
00193703	Ottawa University – Tempe 10429 S. 51st St., Ste. 100 Phoenix, AZ 85044-5228	N/A	06/21/08
00193711	Ottawa University – Gateway 1100 North 35th St. Phoenix, AZ 85008-5210	N/A	06/21/08
02223100	Heritage Institute 350 S. Washington St. Falls Church, VA 22046-4400	N/A	10/26/07

TG updates

TG sets dates for 2009 Financial Aid Leadership Symposium

TG has set training dates for the 2009 Financial Aid Leadership Symposium, which will be held February 2–6, in Round Rock, Texas.

Since 2006, TG has offered a unique learning experience to supervisors and managers looking to advance in financial aid — the Financial Aid Leadership Symposium. The Symposium is a week-long workshop on the principles of good leadership in the context of a financial aid office. Among other things, participants learn how to build trust, motivate staff, and create a vision for a team. The great advantage to attendees is that they grasp these concepts by discussing real-world issues drawn from their own work experiences.

A tradition of growth

The Symposium stresses interaction in its program. Participants work in small groups, make individual presentations on issues, and discuss financial aid issues in an open forum. Throughout, attendees get the feedback of experts in various fields like policy and training.

Besides grooming participants to be more effective leaders, the Symposium also offers a number of other benefits, including an informal network of peers who stay in touch via e-mail. Graduates use the e-mail network to seek advice or feedback on particular issues.

Attendees of the Symposium enjoy the freeing atmosphere of the Symposium, which encourages candid discussion on current challenges in the industry or at the office.

TG senior corporate trainer Tom Rebstock describes the Symposium's benefits this way: "I believe the Symposium plays an important role in these times of rapid change in the financial aid industry," he said. "We're continuously improving the agenda to maintain a fresh leadership curriculum that is customized within the context of a financial aid office."

Tom hopes to have the most varied applicant pool ever for the 2009 Symposium, one that brings together a cohort from multiple states.

How can I attend the 2009 Symposium?

To enhance the hands-on learning environment, enrollment in the Symposium is limited to a small, diverse cohort of selected applicants.

To apply, complete an application on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/training/leaders.

The application deadline is December 1, 2008.

The fee for the symposium is \$1,000 per participant and includes the full week of classes and materials, as well as hotel accommodations and selected meals.

More information

To learn more about TG's Financial Aid Leadership Symposium, visit *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/training/leaders. You can also contact Tom Rebstock at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2835, or send an e-mail message to tom.rebstock@tgslc.org.

Chris Scott, TG's segment manager for lenders, brings a decade of expertise to his job

TG devotes many resources to creating its products and services, including specialists in technology, sales, policy, customer service, and other areas. One person helps to guide the work of all these teams as they develop services for lenders — TG's Chris Scott, segment manager for lender customers.



Chris's primary responsibility is to understand what lenders in the student loan industry need. He focuses on how lenders process loans so that TG can design products that satisfy lender requirements in more effective ways.

"I help to develop a picture of a lender's business drivers, that is, the set of priorities that affect what a lender does and why," said Chris. "We can use this information in creating products and being more efficient in the delivery of financial aid information and training."

Chris's work can touch many areas of TG business, including internal processes. "By refining our product development process, we can deliver products that meet customer needs in faster, better ways," said Chris.

Never a dull moment

Chris brings over a decade's worth of banking experience to his job. He began his career as a credit analyst and then worked as a commercial relationship manager for two large banks. His major responsibilities were related to customer acquisition, credit risk management, and relationship management.

"My prior experience has given me a unique understanding of the lending business, both operationally and financially," said Chris.

What appeals to Chris about his present work? For one thing, the challenging variety.

"I could be working on the design phase of a new TG product, and the next minute, I could be conducting a customer survey or developing a presentation for our sales team," said Chris. "Boredom is simply not an option."

The opportunity to meet new people is also attractive to Chris. And he is constantly challenged to expand his product and business skill sets, for example, by translating customer need into actual product.

Working with lenders and schools in the student loan industry has been rewarding in many ways, according to Chris. Lenders and financial aid officers are welcoming and generous with their time.

"Every new acquaintance has allowed me to ask a lot of questions, which has really helped me gain insight into the dynamics of the industry," said Chris.

Like other professionals devoting themselves to the student loan industry, Chris gains great personal satisfaction in knowing that, in some way, his work benefits college-bound students.

To learn more

For questions on TG lender products or services, contact TG's lender relationship consultants at (800) 252-9743, or send an e-mail to lenderrequests@tgslc.org.

Order TG's updated brochure on FFELP borrowing

Effective July 1, 2008, the annual and aggregate loan limits for Stafford loans for both dependent and independent undergraduate students have increased.



Certain interest rates have also changed. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA) made cuts to interest rates for certain subsidized Stafford loans. For loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2008, and before July 1, 2009, the rate is 6.0 percent. As this applies only to undergraduate students, the interest rate for subsidized Stafford loans for graduate students remains at 6.8 percent.

The interest rate for unsubsidized Stafford loans for both undergraduate and graduate students also remains at 6.8 percent.

TG's *Your Guide to Borrowing for an Education* brochure offers a chart of the new Stafford loan limits, detailing what amounts students can borrow by year and by student type. It also includes an interest rate table, listing the interest rates for subsidized Stafford loans by disbursement date for the next several years.

The brochure provides a variety of other useful information for borrowers, including a synopsis of how the FFELP works, the advantages of the FFELP, and details of the various loan types — subsidized Federal Stafford loan, unsubsidized Federal Stafford loan, and the Federal PLUS loan for parents of dependent students and for graduate/professional students.

Consider providing the brochure with its updated Stafford loan annual limit chart and new interest rate table to new or continuing students.

A look inside

Your Guide to Borrowing for an Education can answer many of the financial and procedural questions that students and borrowers have about the Federal Stafford and PLUS Loan Programs. Here are some highlights.

Interest rates and fees: Provides interest rates effective for Stafford and PLUS loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2008; defines particular fees that apply.

How to apply: Describes the first step for applying for all federal financial aid programs (except for Federal PLUS loans to parents) — the Free Application for

Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA; lists Web address information and phone contacts to begin the application process.

Paying back the loan: Defines the general terms by which many borrowers pay back Stafford and PLUS loans, including the minimum payment amounts, repayment periods, time by which to begin repayment, and other details.

Federal Stafford loan limits chart: Lists maximum amounts for Stafford loans by year and aggregate amounts; updated to reflect required changes effective July 1, 2008.

To order

The brochure is available in both English and Spanish. To order either version of the publication, visit the "Online Forms/Publications" ordering page on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/order/index.cfm.

To learn more

You can always direct your student and parent borrowers to other sources of help as well as give them this handy brochure. For questions about the FFELP, contact TG's customer assistance team at (800) 845-6267, or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgslc.org.

Trends and issues

Question of the week

Q.: For the purpose of verification, may a school accept a tax return with a stamp of the name, address, and telephone number of the company that prepared the return in lieu of the filer's signature, if a student or parent's tax return is completed by a tax preparer?

A.: A stamp is fine, but it must have the name, and SSN, EIN (Employer Identification Number), or PTIN (Preparer Tax Identification Number) of the individual tax preparer, not the company. This is stated in the 2008-09 *Federal Student Aid Handbook* (FSA Handbook) Application and Verification Guide, page AVG-33, and reiterated on page AVG-84:

"Instead of a return the filer has signed, you may accept a paper return on which the tax preparer has stamped, typed, signed, or printed her name (not the name of her company) and her SSN, EIN (Employer Identification Number), or PTIN (Preparer Tax Identification Number)."

Do you have a question?

If you have a question that needs an answer, feel free to *Ask TG™*. *Ask TG* is TG's online query tool for borrowers, schools, and lenders. It includes a database of

frequently asked questions about financial aid, student loan processing, and TG's products and services. To submit a question to *Ask TG*, visit tgslc.custhelp.com.

Correction to *Shoptalk Online's* Question of the Week on loan limits

The Question of the Week in the July 1, 2008, edition of *Shoptalk Online* included some incorrect information in the initial transmission of the issue. The information, which pertained to how the new undergraduate Stafford loan limits in the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act (ECASLA) will affect undergraduates whose parents are unable to borrow a PLUS loan, was subsequently corrected.

The corrected Question of the Week is now available online at www.tgslc.org/shoptalk/2008/st461/st46104.cfm#question.

The editorial staff of *Shoptalk Online* sincerely regrets the error and any inconvenience this may have caused our readers.

This, that, and the other

It's a common piece of advice to consumers: Shop around for the best deal. But students and their parents in the market for a private student loan should be careful. The more they look for the best deal from a lender, the more their credit score could potentially suffer.

Mortgage and auto loan seekers who comparison-shop within a relatively short period of time do not see their credit scores drop. But Fair Isaac, the company that helps credit bureaus calculate credit scores, does not extend the same break to private student loan applicants or their parents, who often co-sign for loans.

Each time a shopper asks for a quote from a lender, the lender files a credit report request with one of the credit bureaus. Multiple credit inquiries are a red flag, according to Fair Isaac. A series of inquiries indicates a borrower who may be floundering financially and applying for loans to prevent bankruptcy. Therefore, Fair Isaac's systems will calculate a lower credit score for such a borrower. Lenders may then turn around and quote the borrower a higher interest rate.

Find out more about the potential liability to students and parents by reading the complete *New York Times* article on the topic at www.nytimes.com/2008/07/26/business/yourmoney/26money.html?em&ex=1217131200&en=a347b9f406d249f6&ei=5087%0A.



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

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