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Smart Solutions

Offer your incoming and returning students some help in planning their semester budget with this [online budget worksheet](#) from TG's *Adventures In Education*.

Industry Update

Common Manual updates

Guarantor representatives who serve on the *Common Manual* Governing Board have approved several changes to the *Common Manual*. Details on these changes have been added as a PDF [available on TG Online](#). Click the "*Common Manual Updates*" link in the right column to view the changes. An updated *Integrated Common Manual* incorporating the changes will be posted and made available through *TG Online*. These changes will also appear in the *Manual's* next annual update.

Questions

Please note the effective date of each policy change. If you have questions about any of the changes, contact TG Customer Assistance at (800) 845-6267, or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgslc.org.

TG Report

TG offers schools new web resources for Program Integrity rules

Final regulations on a collection of 14 topics intended to strengthen the integrity of the Title IV programs were published on October 29, 2010. These new rules primarily impact schools — both financial aid professionals and their colleagues with other campus administration responsibilities.

To help schools understand and prepare to implement these rules, TG is providing resources on its [Program Integrity web page](#) that include a number of TG and Department of Education (ED) resources to help schools navigate the new rules.

Roadmap, flow charts, and more

One beneficial resource available on the web page is a set of “TG Tools,” PDF documents that can support school efforts to help research, comprehend, and communicate required changes. Located in the right column of the page, schools can download the [New Regulations Roadmap](#), a helpful chart that provides links to web-based resources to brief higher education administrators on the recent changes. These links lead the reader to a variety of helpful resources, including:

- The proposed and final rules as published in the *Federal Register*, and
- Links to articles in *Shoptalk* that provide introductory overviews of the relevant issues.

In addition to the New Regulations Roadmap, the web page offers links to a series of seven PDF documents featuring flow charts and graphics on a variety of Program Integrity final rules concepts, to aid in understanding and communicating the changes more effectively and efficiently.

These PDFs feature such topics as:

- A decision tree to determine if a disbursement of Title IV funds for books and supplies must be made available,
- A checklist of federal requirements and options for schools regarding satisfactory academic progress policies, and

- A chart that visually represents the process for calculating a program's on-time completion rate for gainful employment purposes.

All PDFs also include links to related articles in previous editions of *Shoptalk*.

Links to other web resources

In addition to the tools described above, the Program Integrity web page also features links to other web-based resources. Links are provided to *Federal Register* notices of proposed rulemaking and final rules, and to all relevant articles published in previous editions of *Shoptalk*.

Finally, the Program Integrity web page includes links to resources prepared and published by ED, including links to handouts and video recordings on these topics delivered at ED's Federal Student Aid Conference, held November 30 - December 3, 2010.

Progressive updates and additional information

TG will provide updates and enhancements to these resources as they become available, and notice of these changes will be published in upcoming editions of *Shoptalk*. If you have questions or need assistance with TG's Program Integrity web page or related resources, please contact TG Customer Assistance at (800) 845-6267, or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgslc.org.

TG announces upcoming webinars on industry topics

TG's free webinar series on industry topics continues over the next few months. TG will provide presentation materials for each session, which can be downloaded, viewed, or printed. Time for questions and answers will follow the presentation portion of all sessions. Webinars are posted in an [online archive](#) within a day or two of the broadcast. View the recorded webinars at your convenience!

Join TG for the following webinars:

- **The ABCs of Credit Reports & Student Loans** — Thursday, January 20, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. and a repeat presentation at 3 p.m.-4 p.m. Central Time

Establishing and maintaining a good credit history is a huge investment in a borrower's future. A credit history—which, among other things, reflects whether or not student loans are paid on time—could affect a borrower's ability to get a car, apartment, or job. Join us as we discuss the importance of good credit, and how to obtain, read, and correct a mistake on a credit report. We'll end with some simple tips that will keep creditors smiling!

- **Challenging Your Draft Cohort Default Rate** — Thursday, February 10, 3 p.m.-4 p.m. Central Time

Ensuring the accuracy of the data used to calculate a school's draft cohort default rate (CDR) is an essential factor in managing CDRs. The webinar will discuss the release of the draft fiscal year (FY) 2009 two-year rates and why it is important for a school to verify the accuracy of the data used to calculate its rate. Beginning with the release of the draft FY 2009 rates, ED is requiring all schools to use its eCDR tool in order to submit an incorrect data challenge. This webinar will describe the process for preparing and submitting an incorrect data challenge using the eCDR tool, and also provide tips on what a school should look for on its Loan Record Detail Report (LRDR) when verifying its CDR. This webinar is intended for school personnel directly responsible for monitoring and verifying the accuracy of a school's CDR.

- **Challenging Your Draft Cohort Default Rate**—Friday, February 11, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. Central Time

Repeat of the February 10 webinar. See description above.

- **TG Default Aversion Services — Providing a Greater Opportunity for Success**—Thursday, March 17, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. and a repeat session at 3 p.m.-4 p.m. Central Time

Defaulting on a student loan can have a domino effect, damaging the borrower's prospects of a secure financial future, affecting a school's cohort default rate, and adding to the taxpayer's burden. As a 30-year veteran of the student loan industry, TG understands the repercussions of default and works to mitigate those effects with new and better forms of support for schools and borrowers. Our approach to default management is simple — to serve our customers in diverse ways so that they have more sources of information, better options for managing repayment, and greater opportunity for success. As a FFELP guarantor, TG offers a variety of resources that help in this effort. Join us for an informative webinar that will introduce you to TG's suite of default aversion services. This session will cover our consulting services, online tools, and commitment to assist schools in their default aversion efforts.

To register

Register for these TG trainings [online](#). From the page, click each session link to begin the registration process. Schedules for additional training will be published regularly and announced in *Shoptalk*.

TG to present regional training and default aversion workshop opportunities throughout February

TG's regional training events and default aversion workshops provide opportunities for student services professionals to develop industry knowledge and stay informed

of recent developments. In February, TG will offer many such opportunities throughout Texas.

Default Aversion Workshops

With a focus on current default aversion strategies and methods, as well as TG's default management tools and resources, TG presenters use an interactive approach to solicit audience participation.

Please note the following dates and locations for these valuable events:

- Wednesday, February 9, Kingsville, Texas A&M University — Kingsville
- Friday, February 11, Houston, Houston Community College — SE Campus
- Wednesday, February 23, San Marcos, Texas State University

Visit the default aversion training web page on *TG Online* for more information about these workshops. Please note, if the February workshop opportunities do not fit your schedule or travel restrictions, TG will also present a default aversion workshop in Abilene at Hardin-Simmons University on Tuesday, March 8.

Regional Training

Presented in collaboration with the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA), and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), TG will offer two regional training opportunities in February. These day-long events offer a chance for to learn about regulatory topics, TG's financial literacy and default management strategies, product offerings, and more.

Please note the following regional training dates and locations:

- Thursday, February 3, Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Southern Methodist University
- Friday, February 18, El Paso, El Paso Community College

For more details on regional training events taking place in February, as well as future events, please visit the [regional training](#) web page on *TG Online*.

Borrower resources: TG offers web resource that explains borrowing options

Students and parents can always benefit from a single source of easy-to-navigate, easy-to-understand, credible information about student loans.

TG offers organized loan information [for borrowers](#), including:

- [About Student Loans](#), which emphasizes that families and students should consider financial aid such as scholarships and grants, before taking out a loan, which must be repaid;
- [FFELP Loans](#), which include [Stafford Loans](#) (subsidized and unsubsidized), [PLUS Loans](#) (for parents and professional or graduate students), and Consolidation Loans.
- [FDLP Loans](#), which include [Federal Direct Stafford Loans](#) (subsidized and unsubsidized), [Federal Direct PLUS Loans](#) (for parents and graduate or professional students), and Federal Direct Consolidation Loans.
- [Alternative Loans](#), also known as "private" or "nonfederal" student loans, which should be used sparingly to fill the gap between the cost of college and your savings plus financial aid; and
- [FFELP Purchased Loans](#), commonly referred to as "Put" loans, which are FFELP Stafford and PLUS loans that have been purchased by ED under the programs established by the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008.

More information

As always, schools and borrowers are encouraged to contact TG customer assistance at (800) 845-6267 or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgslc.org with any questions. Alternatively, *Ask TG*[™], TG's online query tool for borrowers and schools, includes a database of frequently-asked questions about financial aid, student loan processing (including Direct loans), and TG's products and services. To search the database or submit a question to *Ask TG*, visit tgslc.custhelp.com.

How TG's *Counselors Network* can serve your outreach efforts

Along with a financial deficit, the U.S. is running up a substantial "education deficit," according to a recent College Board report on college completion rates by state. The "College Competition Agenda 2010 Progress Report" notes that the U.S. ranks 12th in terms of graduation rates among industrialized nations, a fact which, like the financial deficit, could negatively affect the country's long-term prospects. The report states that high school counselors, an important link in the chain of educating and preparing students for college, are hamstrung in mitigating this deficit. Nationally, the ratio of students to high school counselors is high — almost 400 to 1 — which reduces the amount of time many counselors have to advise students on college admissions processes and potential careers.

If your college works with local high schools encouraging students to explore the college option, you'll find a great resource to offer to high school counselors in TG's *Counselors Network*. A free, monthly newsletter, the *Counselors Network*, provides

multiple forms of support to counselors. It serves as a conduit of college information to students, offers a calendar of activities that counselors can use to promote college interest, and proposes a variety of resources, including websites, which could benefit college-bound students.

Offer the newsletter to your counselor colleagues, or consider subscribing yourself for the suggested tips, ideas, and resources. Here are three ways in which the newsletter could benefit high school counselors.

- **Timely resources:** Each month, *Counselors Network* spotlights one or more tools that can supplement counselor efforts. As an example, the recent September edition details the "financial aid night in a can" presentation materials that ED provides at no cost. The newsletter also describes the latest version of the "Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid," a comprehensive reference for students interested in financial aid.
- **Activity checklist:** The newsletter regularly suggests a roster of timely counselor activities, such as contacting students with insufficient course credits to graduate; communicating with parents of upcoming seniors who are lacking course credits for graduation; and helping with summer school registration.
- **Tips for students:** As soon as the fall semester begins for high school students, the clock starts ticking on applying for and preparing for college. The *Counselors Network* offers counselors reminders on what steps students must complete each month. It also recommends ways in which students can better select colleges, including campus visit tips.

To subscribe

Visit TG's *Adventures In Education* to [subscribe to the Counselors Network](#), or direct colleagues and high school counselors to the subscription page.

News Briefs

With financial literacy as a significant topic of discussion among those involved in higher education finance and administration, it is important to have a basic understanding of the concept and its origins. Dan Kadlec, writing for CBS MoneyWatch.com, [shares his perspective](#) on when the term *financial literacy* was coined, why Americans are in need of a personal financial education now more than ever, and what may lie ahead in an article titled "*Financial Education: How We Got Here and Where We're Going.*"



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