



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

August 30, 2012

GEN 12-17

Subject: Commitment to use the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet

Summary: This letter reminds institutions that agree to comply with the principles in Executive Order 13607, Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members of their commitment to use the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet. This letter also provides additional guidance for institutions that have voluntarily adopted the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet format to provide financial aid offer information.

Dear Colleague:

This letter reminds institutions that agree to comply with the principles in Executive Order 13607, Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members (E.O. 13607), of their commitment to use the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet (Shopping Sheet) to provide each of their prospective veteran and service member students with a personalized form that contains standardized information describing the cost of the educational program and the amount of that cost that may be covered by available Federal educational benefits and financial aid.

In carrying out the principles of E.O. 13607, an institution commits to provide the Shopping Sheet to veterans and service members before they decide to attend the institution. This might be accomplished most easily by providing the Shopping Sheet to all students. An institution may make appropriate modifications by deleting items that are not relevant for particular groups of students (e.g., graduate students).

We would also like to remind you that, in Dear Colleague letter GEN-12-12, posted to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site on July 25, 2012 at www.ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/GEN1212.html, we announced the Shopping Sheet format and requested that institutions adopt this format to deliver financial aid offer information to students beginning with the 2013-14 award year.

The Shopping Sheet may be used to supplement or to replace an institution's existing award letter. An institution need not use the Shopping Sheet every time it revises a student's financial aid package. However, since the Shopping Sheet will help students compare aid offers, we encourage institutions to use it when financial aid packages are revised.

The Department of Education is engaged in discussions with the major financial aid software providers about how they can help institutions produce the Shopping Sheet. The Shopping Sheet is currently in PDF format, but we expect to have specifications and HTML format available in September 2012. The Shopping Sheet will also be included in the EDEExpress packaging module when it is released in January 2013. In the meantime, we encourage institutions to let their software providers know of their commitment to adopt the Shopping Sheet and to urge software providers to be prepared to implement the Shopping Sheet for the 2013-14 award year.

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide clear information to inform students' educational choices. For background and additional information on the Shopping Sheet, visit our Model Financial Aid Offer Form Web page at: www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/aid-offer/index.html. Please direct any questions about the Shopping Sheet to ShoppingSheet@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Bergeron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David A. Bergeron
Acting Assistant Secretary