

Chapter 2

Electronic Resources

Essential Questions

- ☞ What are the advantages of participating through Electronic Data Exchange (EDE)?
- ☞ What do I need to know when deciding whether to use the Department's Direct Loan software?
- ☞ What are the hardware and software requirements for my campus?
- ☞ Do I need to integrate the Direct Loan software data with my school's system?
- ☞ Where can I get technical assistance?

Participation through EDE

Schools participating in the Direct Loan Program are required to participate electronically.

The Department of Education provides electronic support for all aspects of Direct Loan processing through the Electronic Data Exchange (EDE). The Direct Loan software is free, is updated annually, and is distributed as a component of EDEExpress. Schools have the options of

- ☞ using the EDEExpress software the Department provides
- ☞ developing their own software according to the Department's specifications
- ☞ using the EDEExpress software in combination with their own

Schools that use EDE software become EDE destination points or may choose to have a third-party servicer act as an EDE destination point.

In addition to processing Direct Loans from origination to reconciliation, schools that use EDEExpress can also

- ☞ enter and transmit initial, renewal, and correction FAFSA applications
- ☞ drawdown ISIR data from the CPS to be imported to, and used in, other software packages
- ☞ execute functions related to drawing down Direct Loan funds through the Department's Payment Management System

IMPLEMENTATION

Recommended hardware and software requirements for operating the Direct Loan Software is provided in the chart at the end of this chapter.

If your financial aid office is automated, how you decide to use the Direct Loan software does not depend on whether your financial aid system is independent or is connected with other automated campus programs. You can use the Direct Loan software in concert with your current system, replace your current system with the Direct Loan software, or modify your current system to include all the software requirements.

You may want to consider the questions below as you develop your implementation plan. It may also be helpful to talk with schools that have already implemented the program.

- ☞ Will incorporating Direct Loan software into your main system require support from your main campus computer facility, or can modifications be made solely in your office without relying on main campus support?
- ☞ If changes can be made within your office, how will you restructure staff to provide the time necessary to develop a new system? Which staff members should be involved?
 - Identifying who will perform each Direct Loan function within your school will help you determine which school personnel have access to various functions in the Direct Loan software. The software's functions can be broken down into the following levels:
 - 1 = provides access to reports only
 - 2 = provides access to all functions except importing and exporting, cash management, and Student Status Confirmation Report (SSCR)—other than reporting
 - 3 = provides access to all Direct Loan functions except cash management and the SSCR—other than reporting

- 4 = provides access only to drawdown requests and cash management functions (primarily designed for business officer use)
- 5 = provides access to all SSCR Direct Loan functions only
- 6 = provides access to all Direct Loan functions

- ☞ Could automation changes or enhancements be justified through Direct Loans, thereby benefiting your overall financial aid processing operations?
- ☞ If changes require outside resources, who will you need to involve? Are there other campus projects taking place at the same time? If so, how does the Direct Loan Program fit with other campus priorities?
- ☞ Could you hire a temporary technical person to help get you started?
- ☞ Could you work with other Direct Loan schools using the same commercial financial aid software to integrate that software with Direct Loan software?
- ☞ Do you have a way to deal with software maintenance? Will it be easier to maintain your mainframe or your PC?

Technical References

For additional information on EDE and for technical assistance with the Direct Loan software and hardware requirements, call

- ☞ Central Processing System
1 (800) 330-5947, from 8 A.M. to 7 P.M. CT
- ☞ You may also contact an EDE Specialist at the Department of Education at
1 (202) 708-8270.

If you would like a copy of the Department’s Direct Loan Technical Reference (a manual for schools that choose to develop their own Direct Loan software, using a mainframe, PC, or a combination of the two), or if you would like test case data, call Customer Service. If you have questions about the content of the Technical Reference, please call Technical Support.

- ☞ Title IV Wan Customer Service ☞ Custom School Technical Support
1 (800) 615-1189 1 (800) 756-4220
from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M., CT 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M., CT

Hardware and Software Requirements

Hardware and Software	Recommended
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DIRECT LOAN SCHOOL GUIDE

Processor	486 DX2 66MHZ or better
DOS Version	6.2 or higher (unless using Windows 95 or Windows NT)
Available hard disk space	300 MB (depending on the functions you use and how many records you store in your data base)
MS-DOS memory managers	Such as QEMM by Quarterdeck, configured to provide maximum conventional memory (unless using Windows 95 or Windows NT)
Memory	16 MB or higher
Printer	HP LaserJet compatible—EExpress for Windows has been tested using an HP LaserJet IIIsi printer with a IIIsi driver, and an HP LaserJet 4si printer with a 4si driver, and an HP LaserJet 5si printer with a 5si driver. All work successfully.
Monitor and Video Card	Capable of standard VGA (640 x 480) resolution
CD-ROM	Consider a Quad-speed (or better) CD-ROM drive for the EExpress Tutorial and other future software distributions
Tape Back-up System	To store data (optional but recommended)
Windows	Microsoft Windows version 3.1, Windows for Workgroups 3.11, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.5 or above
Network	Can be run on Novell NetWare 3.x and 4.x, Microsoft Windows NT Server, or Microsoft LAN Manager. For optimum performance, users should not run the software on a peer-to-peer network, such as LANtastic, Windows for Workgroups, and Personal Netware (see "Installation Guide for EExpress for Windows Version 3.4.0" for additional information.
Mouse	Microsoft compatible mouse
Modem	9600 baud (or faster) Hayes or fully Hayes-compatible asynchronous modem
Floppy Drive	3.5" high-density floppy disk drive