

CHAPTER 2 ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Essential Questions

- ❖ What are the advantages of participating through 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?
- ❖ 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 participate in the Direct Loan Program electronically; schools that also participate electronically in other Title IV programs can process student aid more efficiently.

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

- ❖ using the EDE software the Department provides
- ❖ developing their own software according to the Department's specifications
- ❖ using the EDE 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 ESAR data from the CPS to be imported to, and used in, other software packages
- ◆ process Federal Pell Grant payment documents and execute functions related to drawing down funds through the Department's Payment Management System

Hardware and Software Requirements

Recommended requirements for the Direct Loan Program are displayed on the chart on the next page.

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Hardware and Software	Recommended
Processor	486DX2 66MHZ or better
DOS Version	6.2 or higher
Available hard disk space	300MB (depending on the functions you use and how many records you store in your database)
MS-DOS memory managers	Such as QEMM by Quarterdeck, configured to provide maximum conventional memory (optional but recommended)
Memory	16MB or higher
Printer	HP LaserJet III compatible or above—be sure you use the Hewlett Packard (HP) IIIsi drivers, regardless of which printer you use
Monitor and Video Card	Capable of standard VGA (640 x 480) resolution
CD-ROM	<i>Consider</i> a Quad-speed (or faster) with a sound card for the EExpress Tutorial and other future software applications
Tape Backup System	To store data (optional but recommended)
Windows	Microsoft Windows version 3.1, Windows for Workgroups 3.11, or Windows 95—do not use the IAM while Windows 95 is running. The IAM is not compatible with DOS 7 or Windows 95.
Network	Can be run on Novell NetWare, IBM LAN Manager, and Microsoft LAN Manager. For optimum performance, users with large student populations to maintain 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 2.5.0" 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

Implementation

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 following questions as you develop your implementation plan:

- ❖ 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 benefitting your overall financial aid processing operations?
- ❖ If changes require outside resources, whom 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?

If you are considering changes, it may be helpful to talk with similar schools that have already developed solutions.

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. CST
- ❖ 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 data system on a mainframe, PC, or other type of system), and if you would like test case data, call

- ❖ Title IV Wan Customer Service
1 (800) 615-1189
from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. CST

If you have questions about the content of the *Technical Reference*, please call

- ❖ Custom School Technical Support
1 (800) 756-4220
8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M., CST or EST