Appendix F: Glossary of Terms

Customer Support Center
The contact for data providers who have questions about NSLDS and the DataPrep software. The Customer Support Center (CSC) is open between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. (Eastern Time) on weekdays, except federal holidays. The phone number is 1–800–999–8219.

Database Extract File (extract.ff)
A formatted extract file created by data providers from their system of records that must adhere to NSLDS specifications. The file contains a Header record, multiple Detail records and, if needed, Past Period Change records. The Database Extract file is the input file to the Extract Validation process.

Database Extract File Loan Detail Report
A report that DataPrep generates from the Database Extract file to display all information about each loan. The report is generated using the "Loan Detail Report" menu option in the Windows version of DataPrep.

Data Provider
An organization, such as a guaranty agency for FFEL loans or a postsecondary institution for Perkins loans and enrollment data, that is responsible for providing data to NSLDS.

Data Provider Loan ID
An optional data field at the end of each Detail and PPC record that allows data providers to track a loan through the NSLDS process. The loan ID will be carried through the process and returned on each error record. It will also be included on Loan Detail files sent by NSLDS to data providers.

Date Sequence Errors
NSLDS edits the incoming data to ensure that date changes made on a loan fall within the acceptable range of dates, in relation to historical data that may exist in NSLDS for the loan. Date changes that fail the edits are Date Sequence Errors.

Delta Log File (deltalog.ff)
A file produced during the Delta process that contains a summary of data processed such as file record counts, process results, and processing time. The file is used to produce a Delta Log report.

Delta Process

    The process in which the current month's Validated Extract file is compared with the prior month's Validated Extract file. The process identifies all Detail records that are new, changed, or being forced. The output of the Delta process is the Submittal file that contains all Detail Loan records added, changed, or forced since the last Extract Validation process. The Submittal file also contains all PPC records included in the Database Extract file. The Submittal file is sent to NSLDS.

Delta Report

    A report produced by DataPrep containing a summary of data processed including file record counts, process results, and processing time. By comparing the current month's report with prior months' reports, a data provider can determine if the data in the Submittal file is reasonable.

Detail Record

    All data is reported at a loan level. A Detail record contains all data about a single loan such as loan identifiers, amounts, dates, and events such as disbursements, deferments, and cancellations. The record contents must adhere to NSLDS specifications.

Domain Error Threshold Levels

    The maximum percentage of domain-level errors permitted in the Database Extract file in order for DataPrep to create a Submittal file. For combined date and numeric field domain errors, the threshold is 10 percent; for missing identifiers, the threshold is 5 percent; and for missing new identifiers, the threshold is 5 percent.

Domain-Level Edits

    The editing of data for non-numeric characters or spaces in a numeric field, invalid dates (other than all zeros), missing identifiers, and missing new identifiers. If the percent of records with domain errors exceed the Domain Error Threshold Levels, the data provider must correct such errors and create a new Database Extract file.

EDConnect

    The U.S. Department of Education software package used by data providers to connect to the SAIG. Data providers are assigned a mailbox, which is used both to request and retrieve data from NSLDS. The SAIG ID account number serves as the mailbox identifier.

Error Code

A number associated with an error message used to inform the data provider about a failed edit condition. The error message explains why the record failed the edit. Appendix B (Tables B-6 and B-7) contains a list of all the error messages and their corresponding error codes.

Error Rate

The rate of errors determined by dividing the number of records that contain errors by the total number of records in the Database Extract file.

Events

Data elements that are treated as if they were linked because they give each other meaning (e.g., Date of Loan Status must have an accompanying Code for Loan Status). An event may be classified as a current, prior, or historical event.

Extract Error File (extrerr.ff)

The output file from the Extract Validation process that contains domain error records, the fields in which the errors occurred, and the value and description of the error(s). The Extract Error file is used to produce the Extract Error reports.

Extract Error Reports

Reports generated by DataPrep that show summary and detail information about loan records with domain errors identified in the Extract Validation process. The summary report contains a count of domain errors by field and error codes while the detail report identifies each loan record with a domain error. Data providers can use these reports to correct their databases.

Extract Validation Log File (extrlog.ff)

A file produced as a result of the Extract Validation process that contains a summary of the data processed, including the number and percent of domain errors, file record counts, open loan amount totals, process results, and processing time. This file is used to produce an Extract Validation Log report.

Extract Validation Log Report

A report produced by DataPrep containing a summary of data processed including the number and percent of domain errors, file record counts, open loan amount totals, process results, and processing time. By comparing the current month's report with prior months' reports, data providers can determine whether the data in the Extract file is reasonable and reflects the data provider's records.

Extract Validation Process
> The process in which DataPrep checks the data provider's Database Extract file for file-level and domain-level errors. If successful, the output is the Validated Extract file, which must then go through the Delta process before a Submittal file is generated.

Field Code
> A three-digit code number used to find the corresponding data elements [e.g., Date of Guaranty (025)]. Appendix A contains a list of all data elements and their corresponding field code numbers.

File-Level Edits
> Edits performed by the Validation Extract process to ensure that the Database Extract file is properly formatted (e.g., 640-byte record), the Header record is populated correctly, and the GA code in all Detail records matches the GA code in the Header record. The Extract Validation process will terminate if file-level errors are detected.

Header Record
> A record created by the data provider as part of the Database Extract file and used to identify the data provider and provide key date information used to process the Database Extract file. The header record contains the GA code, data provider indicator, submittal date, initial load date, and software version.

Identifier Conflict Errors
> NSLDS edits all incoming records to ensure a proper match to the correct student record. An incoming record containing the same SSN as one that already exists in NSLDS is confirmed by matching the Student's First Name and/or Date of Student's Birth using NSLDS match criteria. A record that matches on SSN but is not confirmed by name and Date of Student's Birth is an identifier conflict error. Identifier conflicts must be resolved between data providers before data can be updated in NSLDS.

Load-Level Edits
> The NSLDS editing of the Submittal file in which submittal data is checked against NSLDS data for date sequence errors, identifier conflicts, and invalid codes. Load-level errors are reported back to data providers for them to make corrections for the next submittal.

Load Process

Load processing is performed entirely within NSLDS which receives the Submittal file, verifies that the file passes all file-level edits, and checks all loan records for domain-, record-, and load-level edits, and duplicate records. Loan records that pass all edits are updated or added to the NSLDS database. Loan records that fail one or more edits are added to the Load Process Error file sent to the data provider. All errors are also tracked by NSLDS. Data providers are responsible for resolving error conditions by making corrections to their database or extract process.

Load Process Error File (loaderr.ff)

A file created by NSLDS identifying the records that require correction or conflict resolution. The file will contain all domain-, record-, and load-level errors detected during the NSLDS Load process. DataPrep provides the capability of generating summary and detail reports using various selection and sort criteria.

Load Process Error Report

A report generated by DataPrep that shows summary and detail information about loans with domain-, record-, and load-level errors identified in the Load process. The summary report contains a count of errors by field and error codes while the detail report identifies each loan record with an error. The information is provided to assist data providers in correcting loan records with errors.

Loan Detail File (loandtl.ff)

The file provided by NSLDS to data providers to assist with resolution of data anomalies. The file is in the same format as the Database Extract file. Data providers can request a complete file (includes all loans from the data provider in NSLDS) or a subset depending on the data provider's needs. DataPrep can be used to produce reports from the Loan Detail file using various selection criteria and sort parameters.

Loan Detail Report

A report that DataPrep generates from the Loan Detail file obtained from NSLDS by special arrangement. The report is generated using the "Loan Detail Report" menu option in the Windows version of DataPrep.

Loan Identifier Fields

The data elements used by NSLDS to uniquely identify a loan. They include Student's Social Security Number, Code for Original School, Type of Loan, Date of Guaranty, Indicator of Separate Loan, and PLUS Borrower's SSN.

Match Criteria
    An algorithm, used by NSLDS to properly identify individual students in the database, in which a Student's Social Security Number (SSN) is confirmed by also matching the Student's First Name and Date of Student's Birth. If there is a match on Student's SSN but no match on the other fields, there is an identifier conflict error.

Orphaned Loan
    A duplicate loan on the NSLDS database that is created when a data provider makes an incorrect student identifier change. The original loan record remains in the system with the old identifiers. Because they no longer match the identifiers in the Submittal file, the loan becomes an "orphan".

Past Period Changes (PPCs)
    Records in the Submittal file used to correct data stored in history. Historical data can only be corrected using a PPC record.

Prior Validated Extract File (priorextr.ff)
    The previous month's Validated Extract file that is compared with the current month's Validated Extract file in the Delta process. Differences between the two are then written to the Submittal file sent to NSLDS. Once the Submittal file is generated, the current month's Validated Extract file becomes the Prior Validated Extract file used in next month's Delta process.

Record-Level Edits
    Edits performed within each loan record to promote data integrity and ensure that the loan data is properly reported. Record-level edits enforce reasonability rules and FFELP program regulations.

Student Identifiers
    The data elements used by NSLDS to uniquely identify a student. They include Student's Social Security Number, Student's First Name, and Date of Student's Birth.

Submittal File (submit.ff)

The output of the Delta process created by DataPrep software if there are no file-level errors and the percentage of domain-level errors in the Database Extract file is below the threshold levels set by the U.S. Department of Education. The Submittal file contains all changes to current records, forced records, and all Past Period Change records. The file also contains a Header record that data providers add and a Trailer record that DataPrep adds during the Extract Validation process. This file is transmitted to NSLDS where it becomes input to the Load process.

Submittal Schedule

A schedule of dates defining when data providers must create the Database Extract file, run DataPrep, and send the Submittal file to NSLDS. The schedule also includes the date NSLDS will perform the Load process and will make available the Load Process Error file to the data provider.

Thresholds, Error Codes, and Field Codes File (TEF file) (tef.ff)

A file used by DataPrep software during the Extract Validation process and in various report creation programs that contain threshold standards, field codes and messages, error codes and messages, and Loan Status codes and their status (i.e., open or closed).

Trailer Record

The last record in a Submittal file that marks the end of the file and contains summary information about the number of records added, updated, and deleted; number of records in error at each level of validation; and various amount totals. The Trailer record is created by DataPrep once the Extract Validation process is completed successfully.

Unload JCL

The Job Control Language used by mainframe users to unload the DataPrep installation program. Mainframe users must then run the install JCL to install the DataPrep software on their mainframe.

Validated Extract File (valextr.ff)

The file created by the Extract Validation process and used in Delta processing to create the Submittal file. The file is created if there are no file-level errors in the Database Extract file and if the number of domain-level errors is below the acceptable threshold.

Viewers

Word processing software used to view or print various reports. The viewer developed for DataPrep (uta0.exe) provides a means to easily view and print the reports generated with the correct format. Other viewers include Notepad and Microsoft Wordpad. Additional viewers can be added by users if desired.