

Custom Layouts

Processing Pell Grant Data – Processing Cycles

Pell Grant processing relies on Electronic Data Exchange (EDE). Schools exchange data with the RFMS routinely. Schools should develop data production and transmission schedules around the various Pell Grant processing cycles. The major processing cycles are:

- Origination Record
- Disbursement Record

The Federal Pell Grant Program affords schools maximum flexibility in the timing and content of their transmissions. However, certain rules apply. The RFMS processes school data via the Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG, formerly Title IV WAN) daily, in the following order:

- Origination Records
- Disbursement Records

Generally, the RFMS retrieves data from the Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG, formerly Title IV WAN) four times each day at approximately 6:05 a.m., 11:05 a.m., 1:05 p.m., and 5:05 p.m. (ET). The times RFMS returns data to the SAIG depend on the volume of data retrieved. For the majority of the time, the acknowledgements are returned to SAIG within 5 hours.

Pell Authorization

RFMS sends an Electronic Statement of Account (ESOA) to schools to notify them of their initial authorization. As the school reports disbursements to RFMS, RFMS makes any necessary adjustments to the authorization and notifies GAPS so that funds will be available to the school. RFMS enables the Department to track a school's need for funds as the award year progresses and adjust the school's authorization on that basis.

The Electronic Statement of Account is a 200-byte fixed-length record. ESOAs are transmitted by the RFMS to the SAIG on the same day they are processed by the Department. There are no paper SOAs for 2001-2002; instead, the file is sent in the PGAS message class. ESOAs can be retrieved by your school at any time for a six-month period following their placement on the network. If they are not retrieved within this six-month period, they are deleted.

ESOA's are transmitted in batches containing a batch header record, one or multiple ESOAs, and a batch trailer record. Descriptions of the contents of these records follow later in this section.

Under SAIG, records are no longer broken into 80-byte segments; therefore, reformatting to recombine transmission segments back into 200-byte ESOA records is no longer necessary.

Origination Records

The origination record establishes a student's eligibility and amount of annual Pell Grant award in the RFMS.

- Origination records are prepared and submitted by schools to RFMS.
- Origination record data is received and edited by RFMS to ensure that the student is eligible to receive the reported amount of Federal Pell Grant funds and to establish the student account in the RFMS.

After RFMS edits the origination data, it returns the accepted, corrected, duplicate, or rejected values for each origination record in an origination acknowledgement record. The origination acknowledgement record contains:

- Acceptance status of the record.
- Accepted or corrected value for each data item.
- Comment codes for corrections or rejections.

In a rejected record, all data is sent back as reported by the school. For accepted records, the origination acknowledgement record also contains an RFMS calculated student scheduled award.

Origination records can be updated if needed when the origination acknowledgement record is received by the school. Changes to the origination record which result in a reduction of the award amount may result in RFMS generating negative disbursements. Origination award amounts are used to verify disbursement requests. For more details, see the Implementation Guide.

No changes should be made to any record that has not been acknowledged.

Academic Calendar

The Academic Calendar is an academic term that is used by schools to describe student's credit hours. It is also a field of the Origination Record (field position 207). The Academic Calendar must be valid or system-accepted for the Origination Record to be processed. The Academic Calendar dictates which Payment Methodology can be accepted. The Academic Calendar has the following values:

- 1 = Credit Hours (nonstandard terms)
- 2 = Credit Hours – Standard Terms of Quarters
- 3 = Credit Hours – Standard Terms of Semesters
- 4 = Credit Hours – Standard Terms of Trimesters
- 5 = Clock Hours
- 6 = Credit Hours Without Terms

Submitting Origination Records

Headers and Trailers

An RFMS submission can include one type of data, such as Origination or multiple types of data such as Origination and Disbursement. To keep the data in order, there is a system of Headers and Trailers.

An example is provided below:

Transmission Header

Transmission batch Header "PGOR00IN"

Grant Batch Header "#O"

Origination Record

Grant Batch Trailer

Transmission Batch Trailer

Transmission Batch Header "PGDR00IN"

Grant Batch Header "#D"

Disbursement Record

Grant Batch Trailer

Transmission Batch Trailer

Transmission Trailer

Schools using EDEExpress for creating batches and EDconnect to send them simply batch and export their data as the instructions indicate and all the Headers and Trailers will automatically be applied when the data is sent to Pell.

Schools using a third party software or a mainframe to process their data can use EDconnect to send the data. EDconnect will apply the Transmission Header and Trailer and the Transmission Batch Header(s) and Trailer(s) to the batches. The third party software or mainframe must create the Grant Batch Header(s) and Trailer(s).

The software the school uses to prepare origination records should help it enter data in the correct origination record format. Some fields that can be entered in the origination record are required, and others are optional. The school will need to make sure the information is correct in both types of fields of the origination record for that student.

Tip: When a Grant Batch Header fails batch level edits, the entire origination record batch is returned to the school/servicer. The Grant Batch Header returned provides the Batch Reject Reasons.

Construction

Schools must be operational for EDE Electronic Payments Service in order to submit Federal Pell Grant origination and disbursement data via the SAIG. (The school/servicer point initiates an origination record batch by transmitting the following):

- **Grant Batch Header Record:** The grant batch header record reports the school's identifying code numbers, output media type, and processing dates.
- **Origination Record:** An origination record is included for each student reported in the origination batch. All fields applicable to the recipient must be completed. No fields may be left blank unless noted in the record layout.

- **Grant Batch Trailer Record:** The grant batch trailer record reports the number of student records included in the transmission; amount reported on this transmission; and the total number of records in this transmission.
- **Grant Batch Editing:** The RFMS receives each origination batch from the SAIG and performs specific batch-level edits. If the submission passes all of these edits, the batch is submitted for Federal Pell Grant program processing. If a grant batch fails any of the batch-level edits, the header record is updated to indicate the reason for rejection and the header and trailer are returned to the submitting school/servicer for corrective action. None of the transaction data in the rejected batch are forwarded to the program for processing.

The grant batch reject reasons field, positions 77 - 100 of the grant batch header record, indicates the specific reject reason(s). Grant Batch Reject Reasons are listed in Appendix D.

Each batch number may only be submitted once to RFMS for processing. If the same batch number is submitted twice, it will be rejected at the second submission. If a batch is sent twice in error at the same time, both batches will be rejected. The batch number in the Grant Header and the Grant Trailer must both be changed with each new batch.

All other fields contain blanks. When the RFMS finds a missing grant batch trailer, the RFMS constructs a grant batch trailer record for the returned batch.

During the edit process, batches are either approved or rejected. For rejected batches, the grant header and trailer are returned immediately to the school without the detail records. The rejected grant header shall have the comment codes to notify the school why the batch was rejected. Schools must resubmit the detail records in new batches with new batch numbers after the errors are corrected. If the Pell Reporting Campus ID number in the grant header record is missing or incorrect, the batch acknowledgement cannot be returned to the school.

The grant batch reject reasons are specific to electronic processing and are different from the edit/comment codes produced in Federal Pell Grant Program processing. Grant batch reject reasons indicate errors related to the transmission of origination and disbursement data between the school/servicer and the RFMS. The edit/comment codes, on the other hand, apply to all Federal Pell Grant origination and disbursement processing. The text associated with each edit/comment code is provided at the end of this technical reference as Appendix D.

Origination Record Batch Processing

Federal Pell Grant processing creates an origination acknowledgement for every record sent, minus those transactions that are skipped due to rejected batches. An origination acknowledgement is returned to the school/servicer for each student record in origination record batches received and processed by the Federal Pell Grant Program. (Origination record batches received and processed **exclude** rejected origination record batches.) All questions regarding these reports should be directed to Pell Customer Service at 800/4PGRANT.

RFMS transmits origination acknowledgement batches to the network for pick-up by the school/servicer. The school/servicer should receive back an origination acknowledgement batch for each accepted origination record batch it transmits. Batch integrity is maintained during processing.

RFMS transmits origination acknowledgement batches to the network the same day they are processed by the Federal Pell Grant Program. The school/servicer retrieves the origination acknowledgement batches following their placement on the network.

Origination Acknowledgement Records

Origination acknowledgement records contain the data reported by the school/servicer on the origination records, edit/comment codes, and any corrections or reject reasons applied during Federal Pell Grant processing of the origination records.

The school/servicer must review each origination acknowledgement batch for corrections applied and for rejects; then correct the data as required. The school/servicer corrects origination acknowledgements by transmitting a new origination record for each student whose data requires changes.

Duplicates are not rejected records, but should be reviewed by schools/servicers for any problems or software issues.

Disbursement Records

Disbursement records are used to report student Pell Grant disbursement data to ED. They also determine and commit the amount of Federal Pell Grant funding available to each school.

As in prior award years, each school under the advance payment method receives an initial authorization as start-up funding. For example, if the initial authorization amount established by the Department is \$100,000 and the school reports disbursements totaling \$101,000, that school's authorization will increase by \$1,000. Schools receive Electronic Statements of Account (ESOA) for each adjustment to their authorization, after the disbursements exceed the initial authorization.

Schools prepare and submit disbursement records to RFMS for each disbursement made to a recipient, using EDEExpress or their own software. Each student disbursement record must have a unique reference number. In assigning these numbers, it is recommended that schools start with number one (01) for a student and use consecutive numbers for each additional disbursement transaction submitted to the Department for that student. (Note that 91-99 are reserved for ED use.)

RFMS receives and edits the disbursement record against accepted origination records. If an origination record match is not found, RFMS rejects the disbursement record. If a disbursement exceeds the accepted origination record annual award or 100% of the student's eligibility across all schools, RFMS corrects the record by adjusting it downwards.

Disbursement Acknowledgement Records

After RFMS processes disbursement records for a school, it sends the school a disbursement acknowledgement. These acknowledgements provide schools with an accurate and timely status of their accepted Federal Pell Grant disbursements. With this information, schools can reconcile their disbursement records with the Department.

If disbursement records are submitted with origination records, RFMS processes the origination records before the disbursement records. If RFMS rejects the origination record, it will also reject the disbursement record. It is recommended that schools send origination records to RFMS early so that records can be edited and problems resolved before schools make disbursements to students.

Printing the ESOA

The Department of Education specified format for printing ESOAs is provided in the ESOA Print Format and Specifications found in the Custom Layouts Section 1.

EDEExpress checks the ESOA record to ensure that an ESOA for the correct award year is printed by the correct software. If you develop your own software, you need to implement the same check.

Data Request Records

The Data Request record is submitted by the school to request information files from RFMS. These files are Multiple Reporting, Statement of Account, Year-to-Date, and Reconciliation data. The Multiple Reporting Record and Statement of Account are sent throughout the Award Year by RFMS automatically as they are generated. By using the data request, schools can also obtain this information on demand. The Year-to-Date file must always be requested by the school.

A Data Request may be sent electronically, as a file, or may be submitted through the RFMS Web page (www.pellgrantsonline.ed.gov). If a school submits a Year-to-Date or Reconciliation request with all zeroes (0) in the attended campus field, the file is generated for the reporting campus as well as all attended campuses under the reporting campus. If a school submits a request and leaves the attended campus field blank, the request will be rejected. If a school enters a valid attended campus ID associated with the reporting campus, a Year-to-Date or a Reconciliation file will be generated for that campus.

Data Request Acknowledgement Records

After RFMS processes the Data Request records, a Data Request Acknowledgement record is sent back to the institution for all data requests received.

Institution Data Records

The Institution data record contains changes to the school's data.

Multiple Reporting Records

The Multiple Reporting Record (MRR) process provides information to a school about a student's origination and disbursement status at other schools and the amount of the scheduled award disbursed. This new function allows schools to identify the two primary types of multiple reporting conditions: concurrent enrollment and eligibility overaward. MRRs may be requested at any time by submitting a data request record.

An MRR can be system generated automatically by RFMS or requested if a disbursement record is submitted and the system detects a Potential Overaward Project (POP) condition. POP is a process that prohibits an eligible student from receiving more than the maximum Federal Pell Grant scheduled award amount when two or more schools report disbursements for the same student.

Multiple Reporting Record Process

Schools prepare and submit origination records for eligible students to RFMS using EDEExpress or their own software. After a school receives an Origination Acknowledgement, it may submit a data request record with a type code of "M" (for multiple). RFMS receives and edits the MRR data request to verify that the student has been originated at that school and that the physical layout of the record is accurate. If the record passes these edits, RFMS will search the database to identify all other originations and disbursements submitted by other schools for the students requested on the MRR. RFMS returns the data requested or rejects the request. If the request is rejected, RFMS acknowledges the receipt of the request and identifies the reason for its rejection.

For example:

- If a data request record containing correct data is submitted after the school has processed origination records, RFMS will accept the record and return an MRR for every student the school has originated that has been originated by another school.
- If a school submits a data request record but RFMS cannot find originations or disbursements to return on the MRR, RFMS will produce a rejection indicating there was no data.

- If a school specifies an MRR type code 2 of “S” (for student) and leaves the student identifier blank, RFMS will reject the record and produce an acknowledgement telling the school the request was incomplete.

Schools are encouraged to request MRRs prior to requesting disbursements to reduce the number of problems with POP.

A copy of the edits that RFMS uses to process data request records is included at the end of this section in Appendix D.

To provide additional assistance in submitting data requests records and the most effort-free process as possible, many of the RFMS edits have been incorporated into the EDEExpress software.

Requesting Multiple Reporting Records

There are several options available to you when requesting a MRR. A school can submit a data request created in either EDEExpress, their own software, or on the RFMS Web page (www.pellgrantsonline.ed.gov).

The requesting school must submit their data request in any of these platforms with the following information:

- Attended campus
- Multiple Reporting Request Code 1 = indicates the school is requesting data about Originations or Disbursements
 - O = Send Origination information
 - D = Send Disbursement information
- Multiple Reporting Request Code 2 = indicates the school is requesting data for a selected student, a selected school or all students
 - S = Send other schools for selected student
 - I = Send students for selected schools
 - A = Send all students
- MRR Student ID = The Student SSN and Name code is required if a selected student was indicated in Multiple Reporting Record Code 2, otherwise leave blank.
- MRR Institution Pell ID = The Pell ID for the selected school that was indicated in Multiple Reporting Record Code 2, otherwise leave blank.

In order to ensure that you receive the data that you are requesting caution should be used when building your request.

Most schools will be requesting the Multiple Reporting Request Code 1–D and Multiple Reporting Request Code 2–A. This will provide a listing of all of the school’s students who have received funding from any other school in the current award year.

A request for Multiple Reporting Request Code 1–O and Multiple Reporting Request Code 2–A will result in a tremendous amount of data and is not recommended. This request will provide a listing of all of the school’s students who were originated at any other school in the current year. A student may send their FAFSA to as many as six schools and all six schools may send an origination record and this would be multiplied by the number of students at the requesting school.

The following are the guidelines for which combination of Multiple Reporting Request Code 1 and Multiple Reporting Request Code 2 to use:

- O + A Originated students for all schools
- O + S Selected originated students
- O + I Originated students for selected schools
- D + A Disbursed students for all schools
- D + S Selected disbursed students
- D + I Disbursed students for selected schools

Types of Multiple Reporting Records Produced by RFMS

The two primary types of multiple reporting conditions that RFMS will identify are concurrent enrollment and eligibility overaward. In the case of concurrent enrollment, RFMS automatically generates and sends each school an MRR with a type code of “CE.” In the case of eligibility overaward, RFMS sends the blocking school an MRR with a type code of “PB” and the blocked school an MRR with a type code of “PR.” Because concurrent enrollment and eligibility overaward can occur simultaneously, RFMS produces combination codes of “RC” to the blocked school and “BC” to the blocking school.

Reconciliation File Record

For 2001-2002, a new Data Request type record, the Reconciliation File record, has been added to the RFMS record layouts. This type of request can be a request for an individual student or an entire school.

The Reconciliation file is a one record summary of the data RFMS has for the student. This record is similar to the old Student Payment Summary (SPS) record that was produced from PGRFMS. This record can be used to reconcile the total disbursement amount per student with RFMS. If the amounts do not match then there is information on the Reconciliation record that should help to determine where the discrepancy is located.

Potential Overaward Project (POP)

When schools submit a disbursement request, RFMS searches the database to determine if another school has submitted a disbursement for the same student. If RFMS finds another disbursement, the system checks the enrollment date reported by that school and calculates the total amount of the scheduled award disbursed. If the enrollment date at the other school is within 30 days of the enrollment date the requesting school has reported, or if the total Pell Grant award disbursed plus the disbursement being requested exceeds the student's scheduled award, RFMS produces an MRR for both schools and, if necessary, reduces the amount of disbursement.

Using the new RFMS, schools submit disbursement records only when they disburse funds to students and POP conditions are reported daily. Schools now have the capability to identify possible POP problems before they disburse funds by requesting an MRR. If schools do not identify POP situations before disbursing funds to students, RFMS automatically sends MRRs to the disbursing school and the other school(s) when it processes overaward disbursement records.

Electronic Requests for RFMS Data Batches

To assist schools in maintaining their student information within the EDEExpress software databases, the Department makes available:

1. Reposting individual acknowledgement batches within six months of posting in Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG, formerly Title IV WAN), and
2. A complete file of origination and disbursement data records processed year-to-date by the RFMS.

To have an acknowledgement batch reposted, contact SAIG.

You may send a request for the YTD electronically, via a feature in the EDEExpress software. The request is built and sent to SAIG by the software. The screens showing this feature will lead you through the process. The RFMS picks up the request, validates the request, then builds and sends the requested data back to the requesting school/servicer through the SAIG.

Note: You may continue to use current methods of calling the Pell Customer Service, or submitting a letter to request the data.

To help schools reconcile their databases with the RFMS master files, Year-to-Date (YTD) data is available electronically. The EDEExpress software compares each student's RFMS record against the corresponding record in your database and alerts you of any differences. The Department discontinued sending SPS' on paper and/or tape to schools automatically with the beginning of the 1998-99 processing year. Instead, YTDs are provided in the media that the school requests when they submit their requests.

The Year-to-Date records are copies of all of the data for a student in RFMS. The YTD can be used to rebuild a database.

Note: All schools are required to transmit electronically.

You can use the RFMS Web page at www.pellgrantsonline.ed.gov or refer to the RFMS Record Layouts to populate the data request record for submission to SAIG.

2001-2002 RFMS Record Layouts

The remainder of this section includes the following: 2001-2002 RFMS Record Layouts:

TIVWAN (SAIG) Transmission

- TIVWAN (SAIG) Transmission Header Record Description
- TIVWAN (SAIG) Transmission Batch Header Record Description
- TIVWAN (SAIG) Transmission Batch Trailer Record
- TIVWAN (SAIG) Transmission Trailer Record

Creating an Origination Record and Receiving Acknowledgement

- Grant Batch Header Record Description
- Grant Batch Trailer Record Description
- Origination Record Description
- Origination Acknowledgement Record Description

Batch Reject Reasons

- Origination and Disbursement Record Batch Reject Reasons
- Disbursement Record Batch Reject Reasons
- Data Request Record Batch Reject Reasons

Creating a Disbursement Record and Receiving Acknowledgement

- Disbursement Record Description
- Disbursement Acknowledgement Record Description

Receiving and Processing ESOAs

- ESOA Record Description (Summary)
- ESOA Record Description (Detail)

Printing the ESOA

- 2001-2002 ESOA Print Format
- ESOA Printing Guidelines
- Institution Data Records and Acknowledgements
- Institution Data Record Description
- Institution Data Acknowledgement Record Description

Electronic Data Requests

- Data Requests: Multiple Reporting, Reconciliation, SOA, YTD Record Description
- Data Request Acknowledgements Record Description
- Multiple Reporting Record Description
- Reconciliation File Record Description
- Year-to-Date Record (Origination) Description
- Year-to-Date Record (Disbursement) Description
- Year-to-Date Record (Summary) Description

Importing Data to Populate Databases

- External Origination Add/Change Record Description
- External Disbursement Add/Change Record Description