

The nation's guarantors provide the following summaries to inform schools, lenders, and servicers of the latest *Common Manual* policy changes. These changes will appear in the manual's next annual update. These changes will also be incorporated into the *Integrated Common Manual*. The *Integrated Common Manual* is available on several guarantor websites, and it is also available on the *Common Manual's* website at [www.commonmanual.org](http://www.commonmanual.org). Please carefully note the effective date of each policy change.

### **Program Participation Agreement and Voter Registration**

The *Common Manual* has been updated with statutory provisions incorporated by the Higher Education Opportunity Act. A school located in a state not covered by section 4(b) of the National Voter Registration Act (commonly known as the Motor Voter Registration Act) must make a good faith effort to distribute a mail voter registration form to each enrolled student physically in attendance at the school and to make the forms widely available. A school may also comply with this requirement by electronically transmitting a message to the student that is devoted exclusively to voter registration and that contains either of the following:

- A voter registration form acceptable for use in the state in which the school is located.
- An Internet address where such a form can be downloaded.

**Affected Sections:** 4.1.A Establishing Eligibility  
**Effective Date:** Voter registration information distributed by a school on or after August 14, 2008.  
**Basis:** §493(a)(1)(A) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), P.L. 110-315; HEA §487(a)(23)(D).  
**Policy Information:** 1291/171  
**Guarantor Comments:** None.

### **Relief from the Consequences of Cohort Default Rates**

The *Common Manual* has been revised to conform to a final rule change published in the *Federal Register* dated October 28, 2009. Manual language regarding the exemption for some historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and tribally controlled and Navajo community colleges has been deleted. These schools will no longer qualify for an exemption from the loss of FFELP, FDLP, or Federal Pell Grant Program eligibility based on cohort default rates in excess of applicable thresholds.

**Affected Sections:** 16.1 Overview of Cohort Default Rates and Terminology  
16.4 School Official Cohort Default Rates, Adjustments, and Appeals  
16.4.B School Appeals  
**Effective Date:** Official FY 2003 cohort default rates.  
**Basis:** §668.198 (removed); *Federal Register* dated October 28, 2009, p. 55651.  
**Policy Information:** 1220/171  
**Guarantor Comments:** None.

### **Definition of “institution of Higher Education”**

The *Common Manual* has been revised to acknowledge a provision of the Higher Education Opportunity Act that modifies the glossary definition of “institution of higher education.” An institution of higher education is any of the following:

- A school that admits as a regular student one who received a secondary education in a home school

setting that is treated as a home school or a private school under state law.

- A school that admits as a regular student one who will be dually or concurrently enrolled in a secondary school. However, a school must not award Title IV funds for postsecondary enrollment to a student who is concurrently enrolled in a secondary school.
- A school that does not offer a bachelor's degree or a two-year degree, but offers a degree that is acceptable toward a graduate or professional degree program, subject to the Department's review and approval.

**Affected Sections:** Appendix G  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2010.  
**Basis:** §101(a)(2) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), P.L. 110-315; HEA §101(a) and (b); §600.4; DCL GEN-08-12.  
**Policy Information:** 1221/171  
**Guarantor Comments:** None.

#### **Loan Funds Delivered to a Student Who Subsequently Drops to Less-Than-Half-Time Enrollment**

The Common Manual has been revised to clarify that, in the case of a student that drops to less-than-half-time status, but is still enrolled, the school does not perform a return of Title IV funds calculation and is not required to return a Stafford or PLUS loan disbursement that the school delivered when the student was enrolled at least half time.

**Affected Sections:** 8.9.C Return of Unearned Loan Funds  
**Effective Date:** Students who drop to less-than-half-time enrollment on or after the publication date of DCL GEN-00-24.  
**Basis:** DCL GEN-00-24  
**Policy Information:** 1222/171  
**Guarantor Comments:** None.