



GRADUATE, UNDERGRADUATE AND EQUITY AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, California 94607-5200

April 22, 2024

Via Federal eRulemaking (www.regulations.gov)

The Honorable Nasser Paydar, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary Education
LBJ Building, 400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202

Re: Docket No.: ED-2024-SCC-0030-0001, Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request; Gainful Employment/Financial Value Transparency Reporting Requirements.

Dear Assistant Secretary Paydar:

On behalf of the University of California (UC), one of the country's premier public research university systems enrolling more than 233,000 undergraduates and over 62,000 graduates across 10 campuses and six academic health centers, we welcome the opportunity to comment on proposed gainful employment and financial value transparency reporting requirements.

UC appreciates the Department of Education's (ED) willingness to provide institutions of higher education with a variety of electronic processes to submit their regulatory-required student and program-level information, which includes batch submission, spreadsheet uploads and online updates that ultimately provide more transparency to students as part of a broader effort of protecting students from the irresponsible and predatory actions of certain institutions.

However, as institutions are still figuring out financial aid packaging with the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form rollout, UC would once again like to request an extension for compliance with the gainful employment data collection requirement, as institutions need instructions and time to understand how the reporting will take place. Specifically, UC asks for a minimum of a six-month delay for these data reporting requirements to mirror the delay in FAFSA processing that institutions have had to manage. These instructions have not yet been provided, and thus institutions have not been able to plan for actions they will need to take to ensure proper reporting. Should ED grant an extension of this data collection requirement, UC encourages the administration to send a letter to campuses informing them of this change and how it encompasses all degree programs for the various parts of the financial value transparency regulations. This type of communication would be helpful for awareness to the broader higher education community.



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We hope that the comments provided below will better inform ED of the potential burdens placed on institutions of higher education that are associated with the proposed reporting requirements and current deadline.

Section 1: Annual Program Information

Program Meets Licensure Requirements

An institution of higher education could indicate that it meets program licensure requirements in a state or region in which the program is provided, but it cannot attest to meeting the programmatic licensure requirements outside of the original state or region where a program is offered. From an administrative standpoint, it would be challenging to track by program, and it would prove to be a daunting task to expect campuses to track the requirements of every other state where a student may move.

Total Number of Graduates Taking and Passing Licensure Exams

In some cases, licensure exams may not be a program requirement, therefore this information may be unidentifiable since students who graduate may take the exam after leaving the institution. UC currently performs data matching by name and year of graduation, but it is not a perfect system (e.g., students get married after graduating and take licensing exams).

For ED's consideration, the federal government should devise a system in which this data may be more readily and accurately tracked.

Section 3: Completed or Withdrawn Student Information

Completed Student Information

The timing of reporting for withdrawn students is a concern as students can leave the campus without formally withdrawing (unofficial withdrawals). Campuses not required to take attendance may be unaware of the student's departure until the grading period ends for a term.

Total Amounts Reporting

Concerning the date the student completed or withdrew from the program, UC believes this field is already included in the current enrollment reporting mechanism through the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).



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We urge ED to confirm that this is not a duplicative effort and is only reiterating the field that will be used.

Total Amount of Institutional Debt

The total amount of institutional debt a student owes to the institution or to a party that extended an amount on behalf of the institution after completing or withdrawing from the program needs clarification. As the language is written, it could include accounts receivables that are not tied to student loan debt.

ED presently collects the tuition and fees amount via the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) and the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code by student in NSLDS. UC urges ED to consider aggregating the requested information using existing resources (e.g. data matching NSLDS and Student Clearinghouse information). Asking schools to sum up these costs will be significantly challenging for individual institutions to track and report—especially for students who may have repeated withdrawals across the course of their education and/or who enroll in other institutions separately or concurrently.

We commend ED's efforts to protect students and taxpayer investments and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed reporting requirements. We welcome additional engagement on this matter. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Chris Harrington, associate vice president for federal governmental relations, at Chris.Harrington@ucdc.edu or 202-997-3150.

Sincerely,

Shawn Brick
Associate Vice Provost, Student Financial Support
University of California, Office of the President

Enclosure

CC: U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona
UC Provost and Executive Vice President Katherine S. Newman

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UC Federal Government Relations Associate Vice President Chris Harrington