

Appendix H: Glossary of Terms

Customer Service Center

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

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.

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 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.

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.

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, cancellations, etc. 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 Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG). Data providers are assigned a mailbox, which is used to send/retrieve data to/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-8 and B-9 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 Detail records in the Database Extract file.

Error Submittal Summary Notification File

A file that NSLDS distributes to data providers notifying them that the Submittal file was not processed because there were problems with the file or they missed their schedule. The Error Submittal Summary Notification file is made available via the SAIG within 48 hours after the Submittal file was transmitted or scheduled to be transmitted.

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 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, which 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 of the Extract Validation process is the Submittal file that the data provider must transmit to NSLDS.

Field Code

A three-digit code number used to find the corresponding data elements [e.g., Date of First Disbursement (225)]. 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 the Database Extract file is properly formatted (e.g., 300-byte record), the Header record is populated correctly and the School code in all Detail records matches the School code in the Header record. The Extract Validation process will terminate if file-error 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 school 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. Perkins data providers should call the NSLDS Customer Support Center at (800) 999-8219 to resolve identifier conflicts.

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 update or are 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 identify uniquely a loan. They include Student's Social Security Number, Code for Original School, Type of Loan, and Date of First Disbursement.

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.

Message Class

The term used by SAIG to describe a file of grouped records that help identify the type of records within the batch. The message classes used by data providers to update NSLDS are: Error Submittal Notification file (SHSNTFOP); Load Process Error file (SLDERROP); and the Submittal file (SHSLDSIN).

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 "orphaned."

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.

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 Perkins 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)

A validated, mirror image of a data provider's Database Extract file that is transmitted to and updates the NSLDS database. This file is created by DataPrep software if all file-level errors are eliminated and the number of domain-level errors in the Database Extract file is below the acceptable threshold set by the U.S. Department of Education. 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 the Load Process Error file available 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). This file is available under the References and Documentation section of the www.fsadownload.ed.gov Web site. At a minimum, schools or servicers must “refresh” the TEF file on a quarterly basis, or as often as updates are made to the file.

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. 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.

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.