

Moderator's Guide

U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid Video Focus Groups

October 21–23, 2014

Southfield, MI; Dallas TX; Long Beach, CA

▪ **Introductions (5)**

- Moderator Introduction
- Explanation of focus group environment – taping, observers, personal viewpoints important, no right or wrong answers
- First name, family situation, occupation, hobbies or interests that you have.

▪ **Warm Up/Target Insights (10)**

In this section we will explore how respondents think about life after postsecondary education, some of the pros and cons about being out of school and attitudes toward FSA.

- All of you indicated that you had participated in some postsecondary education – college, vocational or career school, grad school, and that you covered some portion of that cost via a federal student loan. Who or what encouraged you to seek a federal student loan?
- In terms of paying off your loan, are you at the beginning, in the middle, at the end? *How does that feel?*
- What impact has that loan, or paying it off, had on the way you live?
- How does the whole repayment process work for you? What do you do if you have a question about loan repayment?
- Has anyone had a situation where they wanted or needed to modify their loan repayment terms/schedule? How did you handle that?

• **Creative Exploration (65)**

- Federal Student Aid (or FSA) is the office of the U.S. Department of Education responsible for federal aid for college or career school, including federal student loans. FSA is developing some videos targeted to borrowers in repayment. We'd like to get your reaction to these videos, but before we do that, I'd like to capture your impressions or words that you associate with Federal Student Aid?

Collect brand impressions on flip chart. Moderator will probe for how the brand is viewed.

- OK, to the videos. At this point, the videos are at a very early stage. All videos begin with a storyboard and a script. You will have to imagine this as a finished video that you would watch online. When it's finished, the videography will be clear and the sound crisp, so we don't want to spend time talking about how rough it is now.
- I will show you a storyboard which is a series of images so that you get an idea of what you might see in the finished video. Then I'll read you a script. After that, I'll give you a couple of minutes to write down:
 - The message you get from the video
 - What you would *do* if you saw/heard this video.

Moderator shows first storyboard and reads first script.

- *Respondents write down their response*
- *So, what was the message that you took away?*
 - *Respondents play back what they heard in their own words. Moderator probes for message comprehension and understanding*
- *What was personally appealing to you?*
- *Did the video feel relevant to your personal situation? How?*
- *Did you learn anything new from this video?*
- *Was this a surprising message for you to hear? What was surprising?*
- *How would you use this information? How would you react? What would you do? Where would you go to follow up?*
- *Was there anything here that was unappealing? Was anything confusing?*
- *How does this message influence your opinion of FSA?*

Repeat for additional creative executions. Creative executions will each be coded with a letter. Order of exposure will be rotated. After all creative executions have been reviewed, storyboards will be placed around the room.

- *Now, on your pad of paper, I want you rank these video ideas in order of:*
 - *Which was most compelling to you – meaning that it got your attention and motivated you to want find out more? Rank most (1) to least compelling*
 - *Which had the most positive impact on your impression of FSA? Rank most (1) to least positive opinion*
- *Moderator probes on what elements of each video execution were most/least impactful and why*

- **End Frame Exploration (5)**

- *At the end of each of the video concepts, you saw an end-frame—a set of words on a plain background that summarized or punctuated the video. I'm going to show you some end frame options—just the words—and I'd like to get your reaction to them. I'd like to know if they make the video more or less interesting, and whether they'd have any impact on your decision to act.*

○ Moderator reveals and probes on end card options

- **Brand Opinion (5)**

- *Based on this campaign, what are the words that you associate with FSA*
 - *Write words on flip chart*
- *Are these words different from your impression at the beginning of our session? How?*
- *What did you hear or see that caused the change?*

Wrap and close