

Federal Student Aid In-Grace Customers Satisfaction Survey

[Programming instructions in bold brackets]

You have received this survey as part of an initiative the United States Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid has undertaken to improve customer satisfaction for borrowers who are in their student loan grace period. Our records indicate that you are in your student loan grace period for one or more of your federal student loans.

The survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete. CFI Group, an independent research and consulting firm, is conducting this survey. Your responses will remain anonymous and will only be reported in aggregate form.

Thank you in advance for your valuable feedback.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1845-0045. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions and completing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, please contact Federal Student Aid/Customer Experience Office/Customer Analytics Group at 830 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20202 or customersurveys@ed.gov directly. [Note: Please do not return the completed instrument, form, application or survey to this address.]

Introduction

1. Most federal student loans offer students a six-month grace period in which they do not have to make payments. Are you currently in a grace period for one or more of your student loans?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No **[close survey]**
 - c. I don't know/I'm not sure

2. Which best describes your current status?
 - a. I graduated with a degree/certificate
 - b. I left school (withdrew)
 - c. I am a current student
 - d. I am on a leave of absence

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

- e. Other (please specify) **[capture open end]**
3. **[If Q2 = a]** What degree(s) did you earn most recently? Please check all that apply (for example, if you completed a dual-degree program).
- a. Certificate
 - b. Associate's degree
 - c. Bachelor's degree
 - d. Master's degree
 - e. Professional degree (MBA, J.D., etc.)
 - f. Doctorate degree
4. Thinking back to the time before you took out any loans to fund your education, how would you characterize your degree of knowledge and understanding about federal student loans/federal grants?
- a. None
 - b. Very little
 - c. Average
 - d. Above average
 - e. Expert
5. While you were enrolled in school (for the loans that are in-grace), approximately how many times did you contact your school's financial aid office to better understand your federal student loans?
- a. Never
 - b. Once
 - c. Twice
 - d. 3 to 10 times
 - e. More than 10 times

Exit Counseling

6. At the time you graduated, left school, or became enrolled below half-time, you may have been offered exit counseling to help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student loan borrower. Did you complete exit counseling?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know/I'm not sure
- 6a. **[If Q6=b]** Why did you not complete exit counseling? **[capture open end]**

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

7. **[If Q6=a]** How did you complete your exit counseling?
- Video presentation
 - Online tutorial offered by my school
 - Online at studentloans.gov (U.S. Department of Education website)
 - Private meeting with a financial aid counselor
 - Group meeting or discussion with financial aid counselor
 - Publication received through the mail
 - Other (**specify**) [**capture open end**]

[If Q6 = a] On scale of 1 to 10 with “1” being “poor” and “10” being “excellent,” please rate the exit counseling you received on:

8. **[If Q6=a]** Helping you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student loan borrower
9. **[If Q6=a]** Helping you understand how to manage your loan(s)
10. **[If Q6=a]** Helping you understand your repayment plan options
11. **[If Q6=a]** The timing of the exit counseling (e.g., at a convenient or appropriate time prior to your graduation or withdrawal)
12. **[If Q6=a]** At your school, as part of your exit counseling, did your school make somebody available to contact you about your student loans?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't remember
- 12a. **[if Q12=a]** Did you contact anyone at your school about your student loans after you completed exit counseling?
- Yes
 - I tried to but did not reach the person
 - No

Communication

13. Have you been contacted about your student loan(s) going into repayment? (Check all that apply) **[Programming Logic Note: (if choice “d” is chosen, choices “a”, “b”, or “c” cannot be selected while “a”, “b”, and/or “c” can be selected simultaneously.)]**
- Yes, I have been contacted by my school
 - Yes, I have been contacted by the U.S. Department of Education
 - Yes, I have been contacted by a loan servicer
 - No, I have not been contacted about my student loan(s)
14. How do you prefer to receive communication about your loan repayment options? (check all that apply) **[randomize choices “a” through “e”]**

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

- a. Mail
- b. Email
- c. Text messages
- d. Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- e. Notifications from a mobile app (for smartphone, tablet, etc.)
- f. Other (please specify) **[capture open end]**

15. Did you take any additional financial aid counseling beyond entrance counseling and exit counseling for your federal student loans?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15a. **[if Q15=a]** Please briefly describe this additional counseling – who provided it, how you accessed it (e.g., via phone, online, in person), and what you found useful about it.
[capture open end]

Please think about any communications such as letters or emails you have received regarding your loans. On a scale of 1 to 10 with “1” being “poor” and “10” being “excellent,” how would you rate the communications you have received about your loan(s) on:

- 16. Clarity
- 17. Their usefulness
- 18. Making clear any actions you need to take, if necessary

Other Info on Student Loans

19. Where have you gone to find information about your repayment options? (Check all that apply)

- a. Online loan servicer account management
- b. Phone number for loan servicer
- c. Website: www.nslsds.ed.gov (National Student Loan Data System)
- d. Website: www.studentaid.gov
- e. Website: www.studentloans.gov
- f. Other online government resources
- g. Online non-government resources
- h. Exit counseling at my school
- i. Talking with staff at my school (e.g. financial aid officers)
- j. Talking with friends or family
- k. Mobile phone apps
- l. Social media resources (for example, Twitter, YouTube, or Facebook)
- m. Other (please specify) **[capture open end]**
- n. I have not used any of these sources of information

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

20. On a scale of 1 to 10 with “1” being “poor” and “10” being “excellent,” how would you rate the ease of understanding the information about your student loan(s) using the resources you selected above?
21. When your grace period ends, you may be required to begin repaying your federal student loan(s) if you have not made other arrangements. Do you know where to go to make a loan payment?
- a. Yes, I have already made a payment
 - b. Yes, I know where to make my first payment
 - c. Yes, I am or will be deferring or forbearing my loan
 - d. No, I am unclear about where to go to make a payment
 - e. Other (please specify) **[capture open end]**

Understanding Repayment Options

On a scale of 1 to 10 with “1” being “no understanding” and “10” being “complete understanding,” please rate how well you feel you understand each of the following options for your student loan(s):

- 22. Repayment
- 23. Deferment
- 24. Forbearance
- 25. Consolidation

26. At the end of your grace period, what action will you take related to your student loan(s)?
- a. I will begin repayment
 - b. I will request a deferment
 - c. I will request a forbearance
 - d. I will consolidate my student loans
 - e. I plan to reenroll in school
 - f. I don't know or I am undecided
 - g. Other (specify) **[capture open end]**

26a. **[if Q26=f]** Why are you undecided about your student loan plans after your grace period ends? **[capture open end]**

27. **[if Q26=a]** What repayment plan have you chosen?
- a. Standard 10-year repayment
 - b. Graduated repayment
 - c. Extended repayment
 - d. Income-driven repayment (including Income-Based Repayment/Pay As You Earn (PAYE)/Revised PAYE/Income Contingent Repayment)

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

- e. I don't know because I don't have enough information
 - f. I am undecided
28. **[if Q27=e, f]** What information do you feel you still need to help you make a decision about the right payment plan for you? **[capture open end]**
29. **[if Q27=a-d]** What is your reason for choosing this repayment plan? (check all that apply) **[randomize choices "a" through "f"]**
- a. It is the automatic standard plan
 - b. It has a monthly payment that I can afford
 - c. It will allow me to pay off my loan(s) as fast as possible with the least amount of interest
 - d. Payments in this plan will qualify me for public loan forgiveness
 - e. It was recommended to me by my servicer
 - f. It was recommended to me by family or friends
 - g. Other (please specify) **[capture open end]**
30. **[If Q27 not d, e, or f]** Have you considered income-driven repayment (including Income Based Repayment/Pay As You Earn (PAYE)/Revised (PAYE)/income contingent repayment)?
- a. Yes, I have considered it, but chose another plan
 - b. No, I don't have enough information about
 - c. No, I am not interested
 - d. No, I don't think I qualify
- 30a. **[if Q30=a]** Why did you chose another plan instead of income-driven repayment? **[capture open end]**
- 30b. **[if Q30=b]** What information do you feel you still need to consider income-driven repayment? **[capture open end]**
- 30c. **[if Q30=c]** Why are you not interested in income-driven repayment? **[capture open end]**

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

ACSI Benchmark Questions

Please think about your experiences dealing with the student loan process, including exit counseling, communication with your loan servicer, information about your repayment options, and anything else you can think of related to paying back your student loan(s).

31. Using a 10-point scale on which “1” means “very dissatisfied” and “10” means “very satisfied,” how satisfied are you with the information and preparation you have received to begin paying back your loan(s)?
32. Using a 10-point scale on which “1” means “falls short of your expectations” and “10” means “exceeds your expectations,” to what extent has the information and preparation for repayment met your expectations?
33. Imagine what an ideal situation would be like for informing and preparing a student loan borrower for repayment. How well do you think the information and preparation you deal with now compares to the ideal you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which “1” means “not at all close to the ideal,” and “10” means “very close to the ideal.”

Outcomes and Closing

34. Approximately how much do you currently owe in student loans? (Please enter numbers with no spaces, commas or dollar signs (for example, if you have \$5,000 of loans please enter 5000).
 - a. **Federal student loans [capture number, validate numeric response]**
 - b. **Private (non-Federal) student loans [capture number, validate numeric response]**
35. What do you consider the highest monthly payment for your student loan(s) that is manageable for you right now?

Please enter a dollar figure below. (For example, if a manageable monthly payment is \$1,000, please enter 1000) **[capture number, do not require response – validate numeric response]**

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace – October 2017

36. When you first enrolled in school, you may have had an idea of how much you expected to borrow in student loans. Now that you are finished, did you end up borrowing more or less than you initially anticipated? **[For choices “a” through “e” please order them like below for half of the survey respondents and for the other half with the reverse order for choices “a” through “e” – meaning starting with “e” for “A lot less”, “d” for “Less”, “c”, “b”, and “a”, etc.]**
- A lot more
 - More
 - About what I expected
 - Less
 - A lot less
 - I’m not sure yet because I plan to continue my education
 - I don’t know/not sure
37. If you could go through the process of taking out loans to pay for your education all over again, would you take the same actions or make a change?
- Take the same actions
 - Make a change (please explain)
 - I don’t know/not sure
38. What is your current employment status?
- Employed part-time
 - Employed full-time
 - Paid internship, fellowship, or residency
 - Unpaid internship
 - Not employed, looking for work
 - Not employed, not looking for work
39. What is your approximate annual income (before taxes)? Please enter a number with no spaces, commas or dollar signs (for example, if your income is \$20,000 per year, enter 20000). **[capture number, do not require response – validate numeric response]**
40. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “not at all confident” and “10” means “completely confident,” how confident are you in your ability to manage your student loan(s) both now and in the future?
41. Have you considered the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF)?
- No, I do not have enough information about it
 - No, I am not interested
 - Yes, I have considered it, but I am not eligible
 - Yes, I am hoping to qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Questionnaire for Borrowers in Grace - October 2017

Please use the space below to provide us with any thoughts you may have about how to improve the resources and information regarding student loans and the repayment process.
[capture open end]