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This response is provided to clarify what messaging submission capabilities exist via the Feedback application. Federal Student Aid engaged in a project task to “combine” two contact engagement work-streams into one schema. The project was completed in February 2018; the resultant system capability being referred to as the Feedback and Dispute Management System (FDMS) or “Feedback” for short titling. The combined systems specific design still permits anonymous submissions of complaints, positive feedback or allegations of suspicious activity.

FSA encourages submitters to use their FSA ID when submitting a complaint as it not only facilitates research and resolution of a complaint, it also permits a submitter to transmit documents securely to the Feedback system and check on the status of a pending complaint. But, users are not prohibited from submitting complaints without an FSA ID; nor are users prohibited from submitting a complaint anonymously.

The Office of Inspector General (ED-OIG) is the appropriate Department entity to which whistleblower complaints should be made. In the update implemented in February 2018, at the request of the ED-OIG, FSA added to the online home page for the Feedback system a link to the ED-OIG’s online complaint submission page. Users can elect to submit a report through the Feedback system or to the ED-OIG. There is nothing to prohibit an individual from making a report through both online transmission methods.

In light of the comment, FSA will examine improvements it can make to the online Feedback pages to clarify the existing process for anonymous submissions.

Further, FSA will examine improvements it can make to its Annual Report to increase the amount of information about complaints received in the Feedback system in Fiscal Year 2019.