Red font indicates text that will be pre-programmed in the interview script by Abt. Purple font indicates instructions to the interviewer. Blue boxes are instructions or transitions that the interviewer will read to respondents. Radio buttons indicate only one answer should be selected. Checkboxes indicate the interviewer should check all that apply.

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#### I. Introduction

- II. My name is [say your NAME]. My organization, Abt Associates, is contracted by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to conduct a study of the Experimental Sites Initiative Loan Counseling Experiment. Thank you for making time to speak with me today we are very interested in learning more about if and how the loan counseling experiment was carried out at your institution. The call should take no longer than 45 minutes.
- III. We appreciate all the information you may have already provided to the Department's Federal Student Aid (FSA) office. Prior to our call, I reviewed the ESI Reporting Tool and School Survey data that you shared with the Department of Education for the 2017-18 school year. I am following up to gather additional information.
- It's important that you know your responses today will be used only for research purposes, to describe how the Loan Counseling Experiment operated. None of our study reports will name you as an individual. The study information is being collected under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Personally identifiable information (PII) about individual respondents will not be released, and individual colleges will not be identified in published reports. However, data displayed by college for the Department of Education could be attributed to your institution or possibly an individual respondent. Your identifiable data will not be stored for reuse in future research.
- **V.** If any questions are unclear or you would like additional clarity about a particular question, please let me know.
- **VI.** Do you have any questions before we begin?
- **VII.** All answers should be recorded verbatim. To avoid signaling to respondents that they should be doing a particular activity or following particular guidelines, do not use response categories as follow-up prompts. If respondents answer a question earlier in the interview, prior to its appearance on the protocol, record their answer when given and skip the question when you come to it on the protocol.

### **VIII. Timing of Loan Counseling Experiment**

- **IX.** We want to understand more about if, and when, your institution participated the Loan Counseling Experiment over the past several years. To begin, I'd like to confirm the years your institution required additional loan counseling for some student borrowers.
- 1. During which of the following years did you require additional loan counseling for some students?

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Check if yes				

2. [If "no" for a given year] Why did you not require additional loan counseling in [YEAR]?

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Difficulty obtaining the required additional loan counseling product				
Difficulty developing the counseling curriculum/materials				
Difficulty integrating the counseling into existing school technology				
Difficulty identifying borrowers eligible for additional loan				
counseling				
Difficulty implementing because of COVID-19 pandemic				
Upcoming change to ASLA instead of FACT				
Change in leadership				
Reduction in financial aid/counseling staff				
Other. Specify:				
, ,				

### X. Additional Loan Counseling Approach

- **XI.** Next, I have some questions about how you selected the required additional loan counseling approach for your institution.
- 3. We want to be sure that we know who developed the required additional loan counseling approach your institution used during each year of the experiment. Who was the developer of the required additional loan counseling approach you used in each year?

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
U.S. Department of Education Financial Awareness Counseling Tool (F.A.C.T.)				
iGrad				
Other commercial product. Specify other product:				
Your institution				
ASLA				
Other. Specify:				

4. [If changed] Why did your institution change the approach used?

□ Students provided negative of students provided negative of required additional loan cource of students provided negative of students provided negative of the staff time of the staff wanted to cover difference of the staff wanted loan counseling wanted loan counseling of the staff wanted loan counseling wanted loan	feedback abo nseling feedback abo feedback abo e to deliver th	ut the amou ut the in-per ut the online ne required a	son counseling counseling solditional loan	g. Specify: Specify: counseling	
<ol><li>[If never used the F.A.C.T.] Were you online loan counseling tool, called t</li></ol>		_			rs a free
O Yes O No					
6. [If the college ever developed their of the most important reason that you counseling?				_	
7. How important were each of the folcounseling approach? Please answe important," "don't know," or "not a reason.	er "not at all i	mportant," "	'somewhat im	nportant," "v	/ery
	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know	Not applicable
Free or low purchase price	O	O	O	O	O
Easy to integrate counseling into existing school technology	O	O	O	O	O

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know	Not applicable
Free or low purchase price	0	O	0	0	O
Easy to integrate counseling into existing school technology	O	O	O	•	O
Familiarity, because used same approach for entrance counseling	O	O	O	0	O
Ability to tailor topics to students' specific needs	O	O	O	•	O
Ability to cover topics not included in iGrad or other commercial products	O	O	0	0	0
Ability to cover topics not included in the F.A.C.T.	0	O	0	•	0
Other, please specify:					

[If "ability to cover topics not included in the F.A.C.T." is somewhat or very important] What topics
did you include in the required additional loan counseling that are not part of the F.A.C.T.?

If the institution always used an off-shelf-approach (F.A.C.T., ALSA, iGrad, other commercial product, or any combination of these approaches), GO TO Q.13.

9.	9. [If the institution ever developed their own approach] Was the required additional loan counseling developed by your institution offered in-person, online/computer-based, or a combination?							
	Clarify what is meant by in-person versus online/computer based and select the appropriate response category below (for example, if a student must go to a classroom to complete the required additional loan counseling but the content is delivered through software then select online/computer based).							
	<ul> <li>O In-person.</li> <li>O Online/computer-based counseling.</li> <li>O A combination of in-person and online /computer-based counseling.</li> </ul>							
	a. [If the required additional loan counseling is offered in-person] How was the additional loa counseling delivered?							
			One-on-one					
			Small group					
			A combination of One-o	n-One and Small (	Group			
			Other, specify		·			
	b.		uired additional loan coun	seling is offered in	n-person] Who d	elivered the		
			required loan counseling		r porocinj trino d			
			Peer-to-peer					
			Financial aid staff					
			College advisor					
			Faculty from a specific d	lenartment				
				repartiment				
			Other, specify					
10.			included in the required reach mode of delivery id		_	-		
				[If in-person or a	[If online or a	[If a combination		
				combination of in-person and	combination of in-person and	of in-person and online <i>l</i> computer-		
				online/	online/	based counseling]		
				computer-based	computer-	51		
				counseling]	based counseling]			
					Couriseiing			
				a. In-person	b. Online/ Computer-	c. Both in-person and online/		
					based	computer-based		
					counseling	counseling		
		nation about st						
		rowing recomr deral student lo						
	an limits	iciai staaciit it	uno					
	udent loar	n amount						

Projected balance at comp Budget for remaining years Starting salaries for occupa	latia.a					
Starting salaries for occurs			Ц	Ц		
	ation of interest					
Repayment options	a a company a disconinta a cat					
General financial literacy (of Other. Specify:	e.g., compounding interest)			_		
Other. Specify.						
- ·	ombination of in-person a to students in-person?	nd online delivery	'] What content	or topic was most		
(If the institution devel online, GO TO Q. <mark>13</mark> .)	oped the approach to req	uired additional lo	oan counseling w	vas always delivered		
delivered it in-pers	developed their own approon] What was the most in I loan counseling in-perso	mportant reason				
COUNSEIING First v	hat does vour institution	use for entrance	counseling?	ffers from entrance		
14. Now, how does the Same as er More tailor Mode of do	what does your institution e required additional loar atrance counseling red to individual student elivery, specify: opics covered cify:					

# XIII. Experiences Implementing the Experiment

Now I want to ask you about your experiences implementing the experiment.

# Identifying Eligible Students

	5. When did your institution identify eligible students for the required additional loan counseling?					
		Before financial award notifications are prepared After financial aid award notifications are sent After the student loan is disbursed On a rolling basis throughout the academic year Other. Specify:				
16.	What s	tudents were eligible for additional loan counseling at your institution?				
		Undergraduate students Students who completed entrance counseling already Student awarded a federal student loan for the year Student enrolled at least half time Other. Specify:				
17.		all students who met the eligibility criteria included when determining who would be ed to have additional loan counseling and who would not be?				
	0	Yes				
	0	No				
18.	[If NO]	Which eligible students were not included, and why were they not?				
19.	What c	hallenges did your institution encounter identifying eligible students?				
19.	What c	hallenges did your institution encounter identifying eligible students?  Identifying the appropriate students in the data system  [If noted] What made it challenging to identify the right students?				
19.		Identifying the appropriate students in the data system				
19.	0	Identifying the appropriate students in the data system [If noted] What made it challenging to identify the right students?  Identifying students who had already completed entrance counseling Identifying students who also met other eligibility criteria (undergraduate student, enrolled				
19.	0	Identifying the appropriate students in the data system [If noted] What made it challenging to identify the right students?  Identifying students who had already completed entrance counseling Identifying students who also met other eligibility criteria (undergraduate student, enrolled at least half time) in addition to being awarded a federal student loan Identifying eligible students in later years, after the first year of the experiment (once some students were already receiving additional loan counseling)				
19.		Identifying the appropriate students in the data system [If noted] What made it challenging to identify the right students?  Identifying students who had already completed entrance counseling Identifying students who also met other eligibility criteria (undergraduate student, enrolled at least half time) in addition to being awarded a federal student loan Identifying eligible students in later years, after the first year of the experiment (once some				

		Did not encounter any challenges
20.		not encounter any challenges is not selected] What was the biggest challenge your tion encountered when identifying eligible students?
		mining which Students Were Required to Complete onal Loan Counseling and which Students Were Not
21.	-	you describe the process you used to determine the students who would be required to ete additional loan counseling and the students who would not?
		Half of eligible students to get additional loan counseling, half not  Used last digit of SSN to determine who gets additional loan counseling or not  Even for additional loan counseling, odd not  Odd for additional loan counseling, even not  ner. Specify:
22.		Used the same process to determine which students would be required to complete additional loan counseling as the first year Kept students in the same condition each year Implemented with a new group of students each year Other. Specify:
23.		d the process of determining which students would be required to complete additional bunseling differ for transfer students?
		The process was the same for transfer students
24.		SSN] What challenges did your institution encounter determining the students who were ed to complete the addition loan counseling based on social security numbers?
		Linking SSNs to eligible borrowers across different data systems Unable to automate the process of determining which students were required to complete additional loan counseling and which were not using SSN Needed to change who was required to receive additional loan counseling after identifying errors.

	a.	<ul> <li>[If yes] Did corrections occur before students were required to complete additional loan counseling or after the wrong students were required to complete additional loan counseling?</li> <li>O Before any students were incorrectly required to complete additional loan counseling</li> <li>O After the wrong students were required to complete additional loan counseling</li> </ul>
	b.	Were corrections made in the same year as the error or a later year?  O Same year  O Later year
		her. Specify: e did not have any challenges
to det	erm	N] What was the biggest challenge for your institution in using social security numbers ine which students were required to complete additional loan counseling and which were not?
compl O	-	
Notify	/ino	g Students about the Additional Loan Counseling
	_	oint in the process of obtaining a loan did your institution inform students about the loan counseling requirement?
	At Af	fore the financial aid award notification the same time as the financial aid award notification ter the financial aid award notification ter the student loan is disbursed her. Specify:
Monit	ori	ng Students' Completion of Additional Loan Counseling
28. When	did	students have to complete their required additional loan counseling?
0	Be Du Du	fore their student loan was disbursed fore tuition payments were due ring the same semester/trimester/quarter that the loan was disbursed ring the same award year that the loan was disbursed her. Specify:
29. How a	re y	ou able to tell if students had completed the required additional loan counseling?

	_ _	Online system tracks students' completion of additional loan counseling Modified an existing system to track completion Maintain a list of students who complete additional loan counseling, by adding names as each student completes counseling (usually when counseling delivered in-person) Students submit documentation of completion Other. Specify:
30.		ents did not complete the required loan counseling before tuition payments were due, was any follow-up to encourage them to complete it?
		No follow-up Contacted student via email or text Other. Specify:
31.	require	rirst year the additional loan counseling was required, what portion of the students ed to complete additional loan counseling who received direct loans actually did so? Read esponse option.
	0 0 0	All (100%) Nearly all (about 80 - 95%) Most (about 56 - 79%) About half (about 45 - 55%) Less than half (about 15 - 44%) A few (1 - 14%) None (0%)
32.	Was th	is about the same each year, higher in later years, lower in later years? Read each response
	0	Higher portion (of students required to complete additional loan counseling actually did so) each year
	0	About the same portion (of students required to complete additional loan counseling did so) each year
	0	Lower portion (of students required to complete additional loan counseling actually did so) each year
	0	Other. Specify:
33.	were n	first year the additional loan counseling was required, what portion of the students who ot required to complete the required additional loan counseling ended up completing it? ach response option.
	0 0 0	None (0%) A few (1 - 14%) Less than half (15 - 44%) About half (45 - 55%) Most (56 - 79%) Nearly all (80 - 95%) All (100%)

- **34.** Was this about the same each year, lower in later years, higher in later years? Read each response option.
  - O Lower portion (of students NOT required to complete additional loan counseling actually had the additional counseling) each year
  - About the same portion (of students NOT required to additional loan counseling actually had it) each year
  - O Higher portion (of students NOT required to complete additional loan counseling actually had it) each year
  - O Other. Specify:
- 35. When it came to tracking students across multiple years, how challenging were the following? Please answer "not at all challenging," "a little challenging," "moderately challenging," "very challenging," "don't know," or "not applicable." How challenging was... Read each potential challenge.

	Not at all challenging	A little challenging	Moderately challenging	Very challenging	Don't know	Not applicable
Keeping track of students who are eligible across multiple years	0	0	0	0	0	0
Keeping track of students who are awarded direct loans across multiple years	0	0	0	0	0	0
Keeping track of students who are required to take the additional loan counseling across multiple years	0	0	0	0	0	0
Making sure students who were required to complete additional loan counseling continued to do it in each subsequent year	0	0	O	O	0	o
Making sure students who were NOT required to complete additional loan counseling did not complete it in any subsequent year	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other. Specify/;	0	0	0	0	0	0

36.	What was the biggest challenge for your institution in tracking students over time and making
	sure they completed the required additional loan counseling, if supposed to, and did not, if not
	supposed to?

-

# -----

### XIV. ESI Data Reporting Tool

**XV.** In this next section I'd like to ask about reporting data on students in the experiment using the ESI Data Reporting Tool.

37.	When reporting data using the ESI Reporting Tool, what students were included in the required
	additional loan counseling group ("treatment group")? Mark in the table below under "Treatment
	Group."

	Treatment Group	Comparison Group
Based on federal loan borrowing		·
Students awarded a federal student loan for the current year		
Students awarded a federal student loan in a prior year (regardless of whether awarded a loan in the current year)		
Students who were first-time federal loan borrowers		
Students who had already completed entrance counseling		
Students who had not completed entrance counseling		
Based on progress in school		
Students who were not first-time freshmen		
Students who were first-time freshmen		
Undergraduate students		
Students enrolled in any degree program, including graduate programs		
Based on enrollment status		
Students enrolled at least half time		
Students enrolled less than half time		
Other. Specify:		

the same each year d in later years. What changed?
d in later years, what changed?
aacc. / ca.cac cagca.

40. Did the students included who were not required to complete additional loan counseling stay the same or change in later years?

0	Stayed the same each year
0	Changed in later years. What were the changes?

41. [For institutions that reported students earning more than 40 credits per year] I'd like to understand more about the information institutions reported about credits earned. Across institutions, the reported credits earned in one school year ranged from 0 to 180 credits [and Z to ZZ in your college]. Given that a full-time course load is approximately 30-32 credits per year, what might explain the larger number of credits?

0	Clo Cre	dits for all students ck hours for all students dits for some students and clock hours for some students  dits and clock hours]
а.		w did you decide whether to report credits or clock hours?
		Based on student's major/program of study Other. Specify:
b.	Ηοι	w is it possible to tell if credits or clock hours were reported for an individual student?
		You can tell by the reported value.  Possible or plausible range for clock hours is  Possible or plausible range for credits is  Other. Specify:  Not possible to tell the difference
earned	l duri	tions that reported that cumulative credits increased more than the number of credits ing the year for any student] Institutions sometimes reported that students' cumulative ned over the year increased more than the number of credits earned in the same year.
a.		en that we would expect these numbers to be the same, what might explain the erence?
		Data come from two different systems  Transfer credits from another institution  Students concurrently enrolled at multiple institutions  Other. Specify:
b.	U U	Transfer credits from another institution Students concurrently enrolled at multiple institutions
b.	□ □ Wh yea	Transfer credits from another institution Students concurrently enrolled at multiple institutions Other. Specify:  en increases in cumulative credits differ from the number of credits earned during the

46.	[For institutions that reported any students awarded \$0 in federal student aid] Institutions reported that nearly half of the students participating in the Loan Counseling Experiment were awarded \$0 in total federal student aid (excluding Federal Work Study). We expected participating students to have been awarded federal student aid. What are the reasons why students included in the ESI Data Reporting Tool were awarded \$0 in total federal student aid?
	Students were identified based on prior year borrowing (before they were awarded a loan for the surrent year)
	for the current year)  □ Data on federal student aid was not reported using the Reporting Tool, because it is reported to the Department of Education using a different data system  □ Other. Specify:
47.	[For institutions that reported any students who received a federal loan disbursement that was larger than their award] Across institutions, about 40% of students received a federal loan disbursement that was larger than their award. Given that we expect the amount disbursed to be the same or lower than the award, what might explain the amount disbursed being larger than the award?
48.	[For institutions that reported any students earning Federal Work Study] Across institutions, the average amount of Federal Work Study awarded to students who received an award was \$XXX [and \$ZZZ in your college]. Given that Federal Work Study awards are \$YYY on average, what might explain the low amounts?
49.	Institutions rarely reported information about whether students completed their degree program, although we expect that some students did complete their program. What might have made it difficult to report information about whether students completed their program?
50.	Institutions rarely reported information about whether students completed voluntary loan counseling, although we expect that some students did complete voluntary loan counseling. What might have made it difficult to report information about whether students completed voluntary loan counseling?
51.	How challenging were the following when using the ESI Reporting Tool? Please answer "not at all challenging," "a little challenging," "moderately challenging," "very challenging," "don't know," or "not applicable." How challenging was Read each potential challenge.

	Not at all challenging	A little challenging	Moderately challenging	Very challenging	Don't know	Not applicable
Understanding questions / data fields	0	0	0	0	0	0

Understanding instructions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asking ED questions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Having enough time to complete	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access required information from institution data system(s)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other. Specify:	0	0	0	0	0	0

XVII.	Interactions with the Department of Education
XVIII.	Next, I am going to ask you about your interactions with the Department of Education.
	type of communication did you have with the Department of Education about the Loan seling Experiment?
	Webinar(s) Reference materials Training or guidance for completing the School Survey Training to use the ESI Reporting Tool Contacted the department with questions Received responses to our questions from the Department Other. Specify:
53. On w	hat topics would more guidance have been helpful?
	Identifying student loan borrowers who were eligible for additional loan counseling Determining which students should be required complete additional loan counseling using their social security number Available approaches to additional loan counseling Completing the ESI reporting tool Other. Specify:
XX.T	ransition from the F.A.C.T. to the ASLA
Co	s you have likely heard, the Department of Education will be retiring the Financial Awareness bunseling Tool (F.A.C.T.) and implementing the Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement ASLA). In this section I'm going to ask about how your institution will transition from the FACT
54. What	will you use for entrance and exit counseling once the F.A.C.T. is retired?
	We will use ASLA and continue to use the loan counseling approach used for the experiment.

55.	What are the pros and cons of ASLA compared to the F.A.C.T. in terms providing information t
	students that is likely to help them make financially sound borrowing decisions?

	ASLA	F.A.C.T.
PROS		
Tailored to first time borrowers versus current loan borrowers		
Presents general summary information about average costs and borrowing at our school (total estimated student loan debt, estimated monthly payments, and graduation rates)		
Provides general financial literacy information about borrowing student loans		
Presents details on individual student's borrowing (loan history, outstanding balance, estimated monthly payment based on current balance, and loan limit information)		
Duration of counseling		
Frequency of when it is offered		
Other. Specify:	Ц	U
CONS	<u>_</u>	<u>_</u>
Does not differentiate between first-time and current loan borrowers		
Does not provide summary information about average costs and borrowing at our school		
Does not provide general financial literacy information about borrowing student loans		
Does not provide details on individual student's borrowing		
Duration of counseling		
Frequency of when it is offered	Ū	U
Other. Specify:		

# XXIII. Wrapping up

**XXIV.** Finally, I'd like to wrap up our interview by asking you about what you took away from the experience of providing additional loan counseling to students through your institution's participation in the Loan Counseling Experiment.

<b>56.</b> l	ls there any additional information that you would like to share about your experience with the
ı	Loan Counseling Experiment?
	5 .
_	
-	

# XXVI. Closing Statement

**XXVII.** Thank you so much for providing all this information. We really enjoyed learning more about your college's additional student loan counseling and appreciate your time!

**XXVIII.** The information you provided today will help the Department of Education better understand your needs and students' needs for student loan counseling.

XXIX.

....