

# Federal Student Aid 2021 In-School Financial Aid Satisfaction Survey

## [PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS IN ALL CAPS, BOLDED IN 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 financial aid recipients who are enrolled in college.

The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. CFI Group, an independent research and consulting firm, is conducting this survey, which is authorized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Control No. 1845-0045. Your responses will remain anonymous and will only be reported in aggregate form with all data hosted on secure servers. If you have any questions, please contact [surveyhelp@cfigroup.com](mailto:surveyhelp@cfigroup.com).

Thank you in advance for your valuable feedback.

### **PRA Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) 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 five minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing 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/Office of Student Experience and Aid Delivery/Customer Analytics Group at 830 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20202 or [customersurveys@ed.gov](mailto:customersurveys@ed.gov) directly. [Note: Please do not return the completed survey to this address.]

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## Introduction

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Are you currently enrolled in college?

- 1 Yes **[CONTINUE WITH THINKB]**
- 2 No **[END SURVEY]**

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## Information/Communication

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**THINKB** 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 financial aid?

- 1 None
- 2 Very little
- 3 Average
- 4 Above-average
- 5 Expert

SOURCESEL Where have you gone to find information about financial aid? Please select all that apply.  
**[MULTI-SELECT] [RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS]**

- 1 My school's online account
- 2 My school's financial aid counselors
- 3 U.S. Department of Education (e.g., StudentAid.gov, myStudentAid App)
- 4 My student loan servicer (e.g., Great Lakes, Navient, FedLoan Servicing, NelNet, MOHELA, etc.)
- 5 Social media
- 6 Family member or friend
- 7 Bank or credit union
- 8 Employer
- 9 Media (i.e., TV, radio, print ads)
- 10 Paid advisor/expert
- 11 Internet search (e.g., Google, other internet search websites)
- 12 Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**
- 13 I have not used any of these sources of information **[SKIP TO COMMTYPE]**

INFOTRUST Please rank your top three most trusted sources of information about financial aid. Please rank up to three selections by entering numbers 1 through 3 below. **[RANK ORDER TOP THREE]**

- 1 My school's online account
- 2 My school's financial aid counselors
- 3 U.S. Department of Education (e.g., FAFSA.gov, StudentAid.gov, myStudentAid App)
- 4 My student loan servicer (e.g., Great Lakes, Navient, FedLoan Servicing, NelNet, MOHELA, etc.)
- 5 Social media
- 6 Family member or friend
- 7 Bank or credit union
- 8 Employer
- 9 Media (e.g., TV, radio, print ads)
- 10 Paid advisor/expert
- 11 Internet search (e.g., Google, other internet search websites)
- 12 **[OTHER] [OPEN END FROM SOURCESEL "OTHER"]**
- 13 Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**

COMMTYPE What are the top three ways you prefer to receive information about financial aid? Please rank up to three selections by entering numbers 1 through 3 below. **[RANK ORDER TOP THREE]**

- 1 Websites
- 2 Emails
- 3 Text messages
- 4 Mobile apps
- 5 In-person
- 6 Printed materials
- 7 Virtual assistant
- 8 Podcasts
- 9 Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**

Please think about all the different types of information you may get about financial aid, regardless of the source. On a scale from 1 to 10, where “1” means “Poor” and “10” means “Excellent”, in general how would you rate the information you get about financial aid on:

- INFO1. Clarity of information
- INFO2. Usefulness
- INFO3. Being available in a format you prefer (e.g., websites, text messages, etc.)
- INFO4. Making clear any actions you need to take, if necessary

Don't know/Not applicable

FINLITNOW How would you characterize your degree of knowledge and understanding about financial aid now?

- 1. None
- 2. Very little
- 3. Average
- 4. Above-average
- 5. Expert

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#### School Financial Aid Process

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Think about the process to receive the financial aid you have been offered. For example, the paperwork you may need to submit, visits to your school's financial aid office, getting your master promissory note (MPN) signed, etc. Please also think generally about your experiences with the financial aid administration process at your school. On the 1 to 10 scale where 1 means “Poor” and 10 means “Excellent”, please rate the financial aid administration process at your school.

- PROC1. The timeliness of your financial aid offer notification
- PROC2. The information they provided about your personal financial aid offer
- PROC3. Making clear the steps you need to take to get your funds (e.g., course registration requirements, loan counseling, completion of school financial aid forms on paper or on-line, etc.)
- PROC4. Making clear when your funds will be available
- PROC5. Helpfulness of the financial aid staff you interact with
- PROC6. Knowledge of the financial aid staff you interact with
- PROC7. Responsiveness of the financial aid staff you interact with
- PROC8. Availability of your school's financial aid staff

Don't know/Not applicable

FINSPEND1 On the 1 to 10 scale with 1 as “Poor” and 10 “Excellent”, please rate how well your school did in explaining the financial aid process?

Don't know/Not applicable

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## Federal Student Aid Tools

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If you have used any of the following Federal Student Aid tools listed below, on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means “Poor” and 10 means “Excellent”, please rate the following tools: (Please skip any of these that you have not used.)

TOOL1 StudentAid.gov

TOOL2 [Loan simulator](#) (found on StudentAid.gov)

TOOL3 [Aidan](#) (virtual assistant tool currently in Beta testing available when logged in)

TOOL4 **[Ask only of survey respondents who have a Federal Direct Loan (LIFETIME\_DLU or LIFETIME\_DLS or LIFETIME\_DLP >0)]** [Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement](#) (currently optional for student loan borrowers, and formerly known as the “informed borrower confirmation”)

I have not used any of the above tools.

TOOL5 **[If TOOL2, or TOOL3, or TOOL 4 > 0]** In a sentence or two, please specify what you like about any of the tools and what you would improve in the tool. (Please be sure to indicate the tool name in your comment such as Loan simulator, Aidan, and/or Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement.) **[OPEN END]**

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## Entrance Counseling

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GETCOUN Have you received entrance counseling for your student loans? **[Ask only of survey respondents who have a Federal Direct Loan (LIFETIME\_DLU or LIFETIME\_DLS or LIFETIME\_DLP >0)]**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No **[SKIP TO FINLIT]**
- 3 I don't know **[SKIP TO FINLIT]**

COUNFORM What was the format of the counseling session(s) you attended?

- 1 Videotaped presentation
- 2 Online at Studentloans.gov or studentaid.gov
- 3 Private meeting with a financial aid counselor (in person, online, or over the phone)
- 4 Group meeting with financial aid counselor
- 5 Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**

On the 1 to 10 scale, where “1” means “Poor” and “10” means “Excellent”, please rate the counseling you received on:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| COUN1 | Helpfulness of the information provided  |
| COUN2 | Convenience (e.g., time and place)   |
| COUN3 | Format (e.g., way the information was presented)   |
| COUN4 | Prepared you to make the best future decisions in managing your federal loans  |
| COUN5 | Ability to customize the counseling with your specific circumstances (school, program length, reside on or off-campus, etc.) |

Don't know/Not applicable

COUNIMP How could entrance counseling be improved? **[OPEN END]**

FINLIT Which of the following would you participate in or access to assist in student loan borrowing decisions? (Please check all that apply.) **[MULTI-SELECT] [RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS]**

1. Mandatory 1 credit hour financial literacy course that teaches financial concepts and skills offered by your school before the beginning of the first academic term
2. In-person student loan counseling at my school (beyond entrance and/or exit counseling)
3. More online resources that show loan balances and financial decision points
4. Mobile app for managing your money including financial aid and student loans
5. Personal financial management (including financial aid) video tutorials
6. Have fellow student (i.e., peer) financial aid experts available
7. Financial literacy podcasts
8. Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**
9. None of the above

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#### ACSI Benchmark Questions

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Please think about your experiences this past academic year dealing with financial aid issues as you work on your post-high school education, including what was covered in this survey so far, and with anything else you can think of.

- ACSI1. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Very Dissatisfied" and 10 means "Very Satisfied", how satisfied are you with the financial aid process?
- ACSI2. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "Falls Short of Your Expectations" and "10" means "Exceeds Your Expectations," to what extent has the financial aid process met your expectations?
- ACSI3. Imagine what an ideal process for financial aid for post-high school education would be like. How well do you think the financial aid process you deal with now compares with the ideal you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Not Very Close to the Ideal," and "10" means "Very Close to the Ideal."

IMPROVE How do you think the financial aid process could be improved to better serve students such as yourself? **[OPEN END]**

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#### Outcome Measures

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Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means "Not at all Confident" and 10 means "Completely Confident" how confident are you in the following:

CONFFIN Confidence in receiving sufficient financial aid to meet your educational goals?

CONFM Confidence in your ability to manage your student loans both now and after you leave school?

Don't know/Not applicable

COMP1 Using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “Not at all Important” and “10” means “Very Important,” how important has the aid you have received been to your ability to complete your program of study?

Don't know/Not applicable

FUTRE1 What could Federal Student Aid do to make you feel more prepared for when you start paying back your student loans? **[OPEN END] [Ask only of survey respondents who have a Federal Direct Loan (LIFETIME\_DLU or LIFETIME\_DLS or LIFETIME\_DLP >0)]**

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## Background

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DEG Have you completed any degrees or certifications?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No **[SKIP TO WORK]**

DEGCOMP What degrees or certifications have you completed? Please select all that apply. **[MULTI-SELECT]**

- 1 Certificate/licensure
- 2 Associates degree
- 3 Bachelor's degree
- 4 Master's degree
- 5 Professional degree (MBA, J.D., etc.)
- 6 Ph.D.
- 7 Other

WHYBACK Why have you decided to pursue additional higher education? Please select all that apply. **[MULTI-SELECT]**

- 1 Continuing studies in same field
- 2 Pursuing new field or academic interest/career change
- 3 Returning to school due to unemployment or economic hardship
- 4 To have better job opportunities
- 5 Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**

WORK What is your employment status?

- 1 Not employed and not looking for work
- 2 Not employed and looking for work
- 3 Employed part time – one position
- 4 Employed part time – multiple positions
- 5 Employed full-time
- 6 Self-employed

HIGHFINLIT Did your high school require you to take a personal finance course?

1. Yes, it was helpful
2. Yes, but it was not helpful
3. No
4. I don't remember

SRVCR Which of the following organizations is your federal student loan servicer? **[Ask only of survey respondents whose COD STU\_GRADE\_LVL ≠ (does not equal) 1st Year, Never Attended, and who have a Federal Direct Loan (LIFETIME\_DLU or LIFETIME\_DLS or LIFETIME\_DLP >0)]**

1. FedLoan Servicing (PHEAA)
2. Great Lakes Education Loan Services
3. Navient
4. NelNet
5. CornerStone
6. Granite State (GSMR)
7. HESC/EdFinancial
8. MOHELA
9. OSLA Servicing
10. Other (please specify) **[OPEN END]**
11. I don't know who my loan servicer is
12. I have not borrowed federal student loans