

FSA received four comments about its Feedback System.

One commentor expressed general support for the Feedback System. FSA appreciates the support.

Another commentor called for broader oversight of the student loan system, particularly as it related to identity theft. This comment is outside the scope of this information collection which is limited to the Feedback System.

One financial aid administrator described issues that students residing in Freely Associated States face when seeking to submit a FAFSA. This comment is beyond the scope of this information collection, which is limited to the Feedback System. However, when comments about FAFSA policy are submitted through the Feedback Center, the suggestions are captured and shared with the appropriate entities within FSA for consideration.

Another financial aid administrator noted that while the user interface with the Feedback System provided a positive experience, it creates additional work for schools that must respond to complaints submitted by FSA customers. The commentor described difficulties in accessing encrypted files. The commentor also noted that the timeline by which schools must respond to complaints is too short and requested that FSA not send forward complaints that are unrelated to Title IV aid.

The Department of Education's Federal Student Aid (FSA) office is required to encrypt any files being shared electronically that contain personally identifiable information. WinZip is the Department of Education's recommended method of encryption as it is FIPS 140-2 compliant. FSA continues to explore other options to transmit our requests for information/documentation as it relates to school related complaints received through the FSA Feedback Center but must continue to utilize WinZip until another method/option is approved.

With respect to complaints that do not relate to Title IV issues, part of our procedures is to conduct an initial review of the complaint and determine if additional information from the institution is needed. When a request is sent, a timely response is required. We encourage institutions to request an extension whenever a response is not feasible within the 5 business days timeframe.

Federal regulations cited at 34 C.F.R §668.24 state an institution that participates in any Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) program and the institution's third-party servicer, if any, shall cooperate with an independent auditor, the Secretary, the Department of Education's Inspector General, the Comptroller General of the United States, or their authorized representatives, a guaranty agency in whose program the institution participates, and the institution's accrediting agency, in the conduct of audits, investigations, program reviews, or other reviews authorized by law. The Department considers requests to institutions for information to resolve student complaints as "investigations" that fall within the language of this regulation.