



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DEC 13 2013

GEN-13-26

Subject: 2014-15 Financial Aid Shopping Sheet

Summary: This letter provides updates, HTML specifications, and the Institutional Metric Data file for the 2014-2015 Financial Aid Shopping Sheet.

Dear Colleague:

In July 2012, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet format and asked institutions to voluntarily commit to supplying it to prospective students for the 2013-2014 academic year. As of December, 2013, over 1,950 schools have reported their commitment to ED. A list of institutions adopting the Shopping Sheet can be found at: [www.ed.gov/financial-aid-shopping-sheet](http://www.ed.gov/financial-aid-shopping-sheet).

Over the last year, ED's process for determining updates to the Shopping Sheet included meeting with stakeholders and reviewing comments obtained through the [ShoppingSheet@ed.gov](mailto:ShoppingSheet@ed.gov) mailbox. The feedback we received indicated that institutions and financial aid administrators are becoming more familiar with the Shopping Sheet template and more comfortable providing it to prospective students. Feedback from students and guidance counselors also supported modest modifications for the 2014-2015 Shopping Sheet. In response, ED is making minor language changes to the front page of the Shopping Sheet. Additionally, we are adding a glossary to increase clarity for students, financial aid administrators, and guidance counselors, and we are providing additional space for institutions to incorporate customized information. A summary of changes is provided below.

#### **Language Changes**

- Under the "Grants and scholarships to pay for college" box, "Grants from your school" will be changed to read "Grants and scholarships from your school."
- Under the "Other options" box, "Parent PLUS Loan" will be changed to "Parent or Graduate PLUS Loan" to meet the needs of schools supplying the Shopping Sheet to graduate students.
- Under the Median Borrowing metric, "Students at UUS typically borrow \$X,XXX in Federal loans for their undergraduate study" will be changed to, "Students who borrow at UUS typically take out \$X,XXX in Federal loans for their undergraduate study." This will clarify that the Median Borrowing metric only includes students who borrow at the institution.

#### **Institutional Metrics**

- **Current Metrics:** The metrics on the Shopping Sheet will remain the same but we are updating the data used.

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### Additional Changes

- Glossary: ED has added a glossary as a second page to the Shopping Sheet. This addition will help explain financial aid terms used on the Shopping Sheet to students, financial aid administrators, and guidance counselors.
- Expanded Customizable Box: On the second page, following the glossary, an additional space has been created to allow institutions to provide more individualized information. This is in addition to the customizable box already featured on the first page of the Shopping Sheet.

This year, ED is releasing all components needed to complete institutional Shopping Sheets (HTML specifications and the institutional metric data file) as a compiled batch. All components are attached to this letter.

**HTML Specifications:** Institutions and their software providers may use the attached HTML specifications to produce and populate the Shopping Sheet, using the applicable fields from their existing data systems. The HTML includes a “download” button on the Shopping Sheet to allow prospective students to download their aid offer information into a machine readable format (XML). This XML layout is also attached. We encourage institutions providing the Shopping Sheet in electronic format to include this feature. Institutions that are delivering the Shopping Sheet in print form may want to remove the button. For convenience, a PDF version of the Shopping Sheet is also attached.

**Institutional Metric Data File:** The student information on the Shopping Sheet is populated using the applicable fields from institutions’ existing data systems. The data and information necessary to populate the institutional metrics section of the Shopping Sheet — the graduation rate, the loan default rate, and the median borrowing figures — are provided in the attached files. The institutional metrics data file will be updated on an annual basis. In addition, this announcement includes the image files necessary for situations when there is no graduation rate data or cohort default rate data available for a particular institution. Data used to populate the metrics on the Shopping Sheet comes from ED’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and National Student Loan Data System. Therefore, accurate institutional reporting is necessary to ensure that correct information is populated within the Shopping Sheet metric data file and, ultimately, received by prospective students. If an institution believes that certain data has been reported incorrectly, the institution needs to contact ED’s National Center for Education Statistics or the Office of Federal Student Aid to request a revision. An approved revision will be reflected in next year’s annual update of the Institutional Metric Data File.

We thank you for your consideration in adopting the Shopping Sheet. If you plan to adopt the Shopping Sheet for the 2014-15 academic year or wish to provide feedback, please contact us at [ShoppingSheet@ed.gov](mailto:ShoppingSheet@ed.gov).

Sincerely,



Brenda Dann-Messier  
Acting Assistant Secretary

## Attachments/Enclosures

### 2014-15 Shopping Sheet Template

#### HTML specifications (in ZIP and XML format)

- HTML Specification Package in ZIP Format
- XML Layout in XML Format

#### Institutional Metric Data Files

- Implementation Overview in Word Format
- Data File Schema in Excel Format
- Institutional Metrics Data in Excel Format
- Image for No Graduation Rate in GIF Format
- Image for No Cohort Default Rate in GIF Format