



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

COMPLIANCE UPDATE By Amy Hedrick, Policy Analyst

COMMON MANUAL ANNUAL UPDATE

The annual update of the *Common Manual: Unified Student Loan Policy* is now posted on the *Common Manual* website. The 2021 version includes two policy proposal changes prepared by the Policy Development and Maintenance Contractor and approved by the Governing Board. Approved policies updated Section 11.16A “Eligibility Criteria – Tax-Exempt Organization Volunteer” to no longer prohibit a borrower’s religious-based volunteer activity from qualifying for the tax-exempt organization volunteer deferment and aligned the language in Section 13.2 “Claim Returns” with Section 13.3 policy and federal regulations to give guarantors forty-five days to return a regular Total and Permanent Disability Discharge request upon receipt of a lender’s claim. The annual update also includes two technical changes. Firstly, hyperlinks to the source documents for external citations have been removed; citations are now found in the FSA’s Partner Connect [Knowledge Center](#). Secondly, it includes updated Guarantor Contact Information in Chapter 1.

Ascendium Education Group will continue filling the role of the Policy Development and Maintenance Contractor for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The Governing Board monitors the work performed by Ascendium to ensure the *Common Manual* remains the best resource for the most updated information regarding the administration of the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. An updated copy of the *Electronic Common Manual* is also available on the *Common Manual* website. Both versions can be found at www.commonmanual.org. Previous versions of the *Common Manual* are located under the Archives section of the website.

Proposed policy updates and technical edits can be submitted by anyone in the FFELP community. The *Common Manual* Governing Board also welcomes comments on current proposals. The website provides contact information and templates for you to submit policy proposal suggestions and review and comment on proposals under consideration by the Governing Board. Instructions for how to submit comments or to submit policy proposals and technical edits for the *Common Manual* can be found at the following links.

- [Submit Policy Proposals/Tech Edits](#)
- [Submit Comments on Policy Proposals](#)