2022-23 Program Guidelines College Access Loan (CAL)

Texas Higher Education COORDINATING BOARD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COLLEGE ACCESS LOAN PROGRAM

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Program Guidelines are intended to support institutions by highlighting requirements that appear in the Texas Education Code (TEC) and Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the relevant statutes and rules. The information in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not override the statute or rules for this program.

> Statutes (TEC) and rules (TAC) periodically change and may affect the links referenced in this document. Copies of statutes and rules used to create these guidelines are available in Appendix 2.

PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE (TAC, Title 19 Section 22.42)

The College Access Loan (CAL) Program is part of the Hinson-Hazlewood College Student Loan Program, authorized by TEC, Chapter 52, Subchapter A. Rules for administering the program can be found in TAC, Title 19, Chapter 22, Subchapter C. The CAL Program provides alternative educational loans to Texas students who are unable to meet the cost of attendance.

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS (TAC, Title 19, Section 22.45)

The following institutions and entities located in Texas are eligible to participate in the CAL Program:

- Public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education (including junior colleges) accredited by a recognized accrediting agency, as defined in TEC, Title 3, Section 61.003
- Regional education service centers or other entities that offer an alternative educator certification program approved by the State Board for Educator Certification, as defined in TEC, Title 2, Section 21.049

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (TAC, Title 19, Section 22.46 & 22.47)

STUDENTS MUST	COSIGNERS MUST:
✓ be classified by the institution as a Texas resident; ✓ be registered with Selective Service, or be exempt (see Selective Service Statement); ✓ have insufficient resources to finance their education; ✓ be enrolled at least half-time, as determined by the institution, in a course of study leading to a certificate; an associate, baccalaureate, graduate or higher degree; **or** an approved alternative educator certification program; ✓ meet the satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements set by the institution; and ✓ receive a favorable credit evaluation or provide a cosigner who has a good credit standing and meets other requirements.	✓ be at least 21 years of age; ✓ have a regular source of income; ✓ not be the borrower or the spouse of the borrower; ✓ receive a favorable credit evaluation; and ✓ be a U.S. citizen or a permanent U.S. resident and reside in the U.S. or in a U.S. territory.

STUDENTS AND COSIGNERS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CREDIT APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS:

✓ Have an Experian VantageScore of 650 or higher
✓ Do not have public records such as tax liens or bankruptcy proceedings
✓ Have a minimum of four credit trade lines, excluding student loans or authorized user accounts
✓ Do not have defaulted on any federal or private education loans

⚠ **ALERT: Child Support Arrearages**

Per Texas Family Code, Title 5, Section 231.006, a student who is obligated to pay child support and is more than 30 days delinquent is not eligible to receive a state-funded grant or loan.

Institutions determine how to best comply with this state requirement and should work with their legal counsel on questions related to this statutory mandate.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (TAC, Title 19, Section 22.46)

A student must meet the minimum SAP requirements of the institution in the semester any loan is made. Institutions have the flexibility to define what it means to meet SAP requirements. If a student is not meeting the institution's SAP, a documented appeal process may be used to determine if the student is eligible for CAL. A student can receive a CAL if a SAP appeal has been approved by the institution.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR TASFA FILERS:

If a student files a Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA), the financial assistance to be deducted should include all aid they were awarded. No Title IV eligibility would be included in the deduction of other forms of financial assistance when calculating the loan amount.

CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR NON FAFSA FILERS:

If a student is eligible but chooses not to file a FAFSA, the financial assistance to be deducted should include all aid they were awarded. The institution must also deduct the maximum Direct Loan eligibility (including subsidized and unsubsidized) based on the student's grade level and the institution's best determination of dependency status (even if the institution does not participate in the Direct Loan program). If the institution has nothing in their records that would suggest the student is independent, then dependent can be used as the default.

ELIGIBILITY

UPDATED

Under [TEC, Title 3, Section 51.9095](#), an individual must file a statement of their selective service status with the institution confirming registration or exemption.

This statute applies to all state-funded financial aid, as well as "federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by this state." The statement is required from students receiving federal aid or private donations that pass through the state Treasury or Governor's office (i.e., Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER)), state-appropriated funds, or institutional funding, which includes programs funded by tuition set-asides, exemptions, and waivers.

> ⚠ **ALERT: Proof of Selective Service Status No Longer Required**
>
> Institutions are no longer required to collect "proof" of registration or exemption from students or to verify the accuracy of the statement against external databases or other resources if conflicting information does not exist (see [Updated Guidance on Statutory Requirements that Impact Financial Aid Memo](#)).
>
> Note: The THECB approved an amendment to TAC, Title 19, Section 22.3 during their quarterly meeting held on April 28, 2022.

Any of the following can be used to meet the statutory statement requirement:

- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status ([English Statement](#) or [Spanish Statement](#))
- Printout from [SSS.gov](#) website
- Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) if status is available
- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status imbedded in the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT OF REGISTRATION STATUS

In accordance with [Texas Education Code, Section 51.9095](#), male students must file a Selective Service Statement of Registration Status with their institution or other entity granting financial assistance. For more information about the Selective Service System, visit [sss.gov](#).

Please mark **one** option below:

☐ I was born female and not required to register.

☐ I was born male and am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register.

☐ I was born male and am **REGISTERED** with the Selective Service.

☐ I was born male and am over the age of 18. I am not registered with Selective Service and I am not exempt from registration with Selective Service.

☐ I was born male and am **EXEMPT** from registration because: (please briefly explain why you are exempt in the box below.)

I, _____, hereby certify that the Selective Service status statement provided above is true and accurate.

Student ID:_____ Signature:_____ Date:_____

Complete and return to the Financial Aid Office at your institution of higher education.

Selective Service Statement of Registration Status   *As of 09/28/2021*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COLLECTION METHOD

The institution has flexibility to create an online, paper, or alternate method to collect the statement as long as it uses the content developed and required by the THECB.

FREQUENCY COLLECTING THE STATEMENT

If the student's status will NOT change, the statement collected can be used for subsequent semesters at the same institution.

If the student is NOT registered for selective service, a statement must be collected each time they apply for financial aid or a student loan until the statement indicates registered or exempt.

MALES AGE 26 OR OLDER

Individuals older than the maximum age at which an individual is required to be registered with the Selective Service System under federal law are not required to complete this status statement.

RETENTION SCHEDULE

The status statement must be retained in the student's record based on the retention schedule outlined in the institution's Program Participation Agreement (PPA).

AWARDING

AWARD AMOUNTS (TAC Title 19, Section 22.49)

Students may receive CAL funding to cover reasonable expenses only, not to exceed the cost of attendance (COA) (see IRS Certification Requirements). When certifying a CAL, institutions are confirming that the amount of the requested loan is $100 or greater and does not exceed the difference between the student's COA and other forms of financial assistance for which the student is eligible (regardless of whether the student actually accepts the aid).

The other forms of student assistance that must be considered when determining the amount of a CAL eligibility include:

- free sources of student aid, such as gifts, grants and scholarships; **AND**
- the amount of any Federal Direct Stafford Loan (including subsidized and unsubsidized) that a student borrower is eligible to receive.
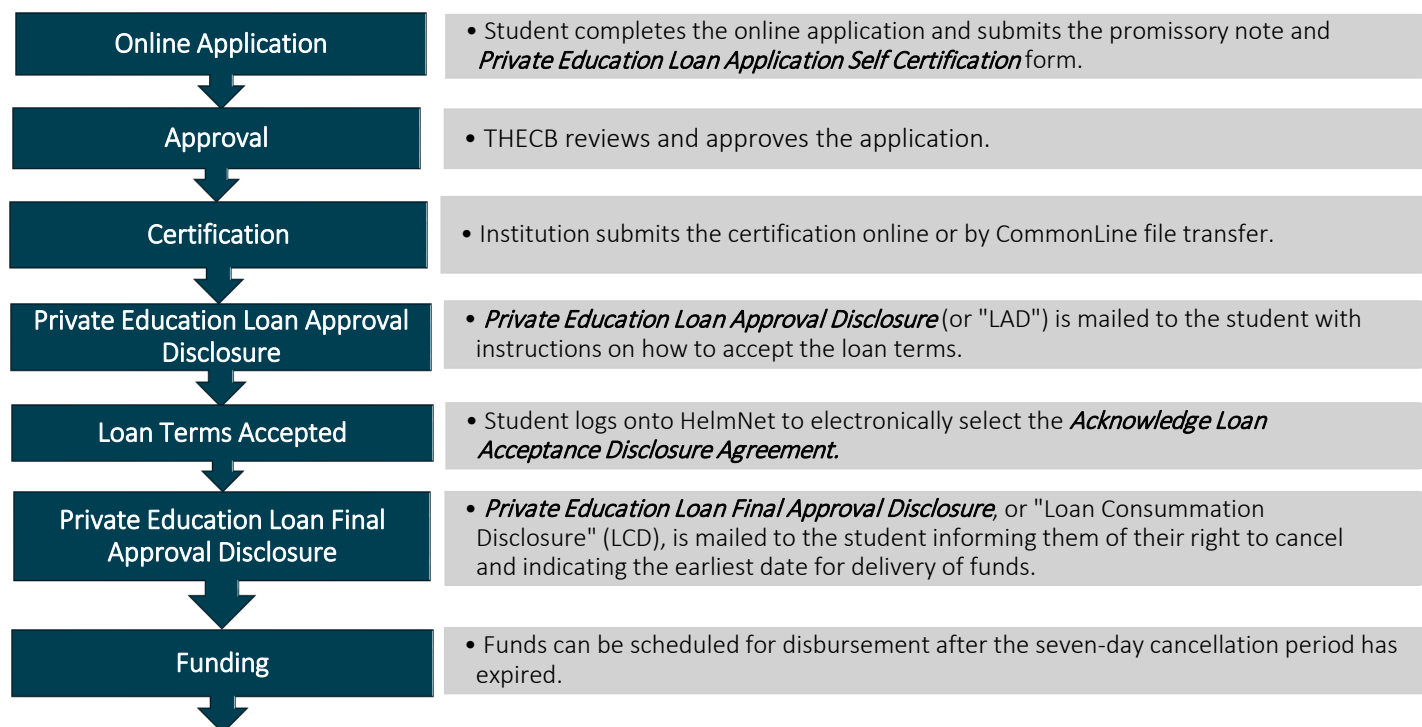
Eligibility for Federal PLUS loans should not be considered when determining the amount of a CAL.

Note: A student's Federal Direct Loan Program eligibility must be taken into consideration, even if the institution does not package Direct Loans or if the student declines to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). (See TAC, Title 19, Section 22.46(b))
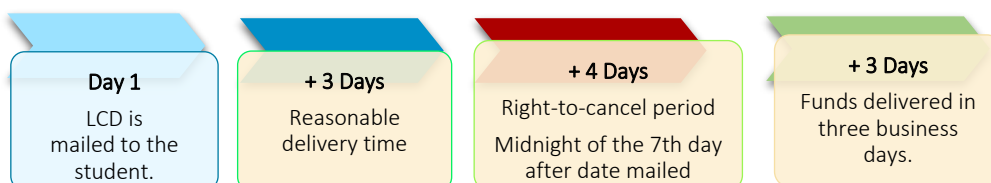
PROCESSING FUNDS

LOAN PROCESS FLOW

Below is the loan process flow that occurs when a student completes a CAL application:

Step	Description
Online Application	• Student completes the online application and submits the promissory note and *Private Education Loan Application Self Certification* form.
Approval	• THECB reviews and approves the application.
Certification	• Institution submits the certification online or by CommonLine file transfer.
Private Education Loan Approval Disclosure	• *Private Education Loan Approval Disclosure* (or "LAD") is mailed to the student with instructions on how to accept the loan terms.
Loan Terms Accepted	• Student logs onto HelmNet to electronically select the *Acknowledge Loan Acceptance Disclosure Agreement*.
Private Education Loan Final Approval Disclosure	• *Private Education Loan Final Approval Disclosure*, or "Loan Consummation Disclosure" (LCD), is mailed to the student informing them of their right to cancel and indicating the earliest date for delivery of funds.
Funding	• Funds can be scheduled for disbursement after the seven-day cancellation period has expired.

The earliest that funds can be disbursed is 11 business days after the LCD is mailed to the student.

Day 1	+ 3 Days	+ 4 Days	+ 3 Days
LCD is mailed to the student.	Reasonable delivery time	Right-to-cancel period Midnight of the 7th day after date mailed	Funds delivered in three business days.

CERTIFYING LOAN APPLICATIONS

Institutions can certify eligible loans throughout the academic year on an as-needed basis. The certification of the loan cannot exceed the student's requested amount. Funds will not be disbursed until the promissory note is signed by the borrower (and cosigner, when applicable) and the Financial Aid Administrator certifies the loan application using one of the following two methods:

1. Certify the loan through the [HelmNet portal.](#)
2. Submit a **Commonline Loan Certification File** using the [MOVEit DMZ](#) secure file transfer portal.

> 🛑 **STOP:** Institutions must submit a [User Access Form](#) to request, update, or remove access to the HelmNet portal.

REQUESTING LOAN CHANGES

A CAL can never exceed the amount certified by the institution. After certification, a CAL can be increased up to the original **certified** amount when:

- the student cancels all or part of the loan but later ends up needing the money during the loan period;
- the student becomes ineligible before the disbursement from the THECB and the institution cancels the loan, but the student later becomes eligible during the loan period; or
- the institution has already returned funds to the THECB during the loan period but needs all or part of the funds reissued.

The institution can make certain predisbursement changes (see [HelmNet Change Transactions Instruction Guide](#)) through the HelmNet Portal or request changes, such as reinstatement, in writing through the THECB's online contact form link, [CONTACT US](#). Loans can be increased or reinstated up to the original certification amount. Institutions must confirm that the loan does not exceed the difference between the student's COA and other forms of financial assistance for which the student is eligible.

A CAL **cannot** be increased in the following situation:

- The institution certifies LESS than what the student was preapproved to borrow.

For example: The student is preapproved for a certain amount, but the institution certifies a smaller amount. The student then ends up needing more money after certification and wants to increase their current loan amount. The loan amount CANNOT be increased beyond the certified amount by the institution, even though the student was preapproved for more than what was certified.

> 🛑 STOP: REINSTATING CANCELED LOANS
>
> Institutions can send a request in writing through the [CONTACT US](#) link to reinstate a canceled loan or disbursement. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. An [Institution Loan Verification of Enrollment](#) (VOE) form may be needed to process a reinstatement.
>
> Common reasons why loans are canceled by the THECB:
> - Student did not approve the Loan Acceptance Disclosure (LAD) within 45 days of loan certification.
> - Student was reported by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database as enrolled less than half-time.
> - Student contacted the THECB and canceled the loan without informing the institution.

REQUESTING LOAN CHANGES CONTINUED

⚠️ **ALERT:** REQUIRED CONTACT US INQUIRY INFORMATION

Responses through *Contact Us* may take up to five business days to complete depending on the complexity of the request.

To ensure inquiries are routed correctly, the following steps must be completed:

- Select **Institution**.
- Enter the **Institution's Full Name**.
- Select **Financial Aid Question** (regardless of the inquiry reason).

Enter the following information in the Description box:

- Requestor's HelmNet portal ID (Username)
- CommonLine Unique ID #: (16 Characters)
- Student's first name, last name, and middle initial
- Last four digits of the student's Social Security number (SSN)

Note: For security purposes, do NOT provide the student's full SSN when submitting online inquiries.

Provide a detailed explanation of the change needed:

- **Unclear request:** "Please reinstate the loan."
- **Clear request:** "Please reinstate the loan. The student's SAP appeal has been granted and the student is now eligible."

Student Financial Aid Programs Information (SFAP) Webpage

INSTITUTIONAL TOLL-FREE NUMBER: 1-844-792-2640

ONLINE INQUIRIES: CONTACT US : select "Financial Aid Question" option under contact reason)

The Financial Aid Services Department is unavailable every third Thursday in the morning to allow for a monthly staff meeting.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

- The FAD Reporting Cycle One is available for submissions as of **February 11, 2019.**
- The Annual Opt In/Out form is due **February 28, 2019** and is available under the applicable memos through the Stay Connected page.
- The Good Neighbor Scholarship recommendations must be submitted by **March 15, 2019** through CBPass.
- The 2019-20 maximum award amounts have been released for all programs and are available under Recent

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Contact Us

*An asterisk * by the field indicates a required field!*

Received From*	INSTITUTION
Institution	College of Higher Educations
Contact Reason*	*Financial Aid Question
Description*	3*40 characters left

HelmNet ID: 00XXXXX00LastAA

Commonline unique ID #: 123456123456123

Student, Student, S
SSN:0011

Student was initially enrolled in 4hr for spring currently enrolled for 12hr

Please do NOT include your full Social Security Number inside the issue description. If you have a question about the status of a new loan application, accounts in repayment, or deferments, please use the last four digits of your SSN instead.

RETURNING PROGRAM FUNDS

A Return of Funds Form (RFF) must be submitted before any funds are returned to the THECB.

Note: Institutions that submit an RFF should coordinate the refunds with their Business Office and use the Electronic Funds Transfer process. Funds returned to the THECB must align with the online form and cannot include cents.

TIMELY DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS (TAC, Title 19, Section 22.2)

Institutions **must** follow these requirements when processing program funds:

- Institutions have **3** business days after receiving the funds to apply the funds to a student's account.
- Institutions have **6** business days after receiving the funds to return undisbursed funds.
- Institutions have **45** calendar days from the date a student becomes ineligible to return disbursed funds.
- Institutions have **120** calendar days to return funds after a student has notified the institution of a decision to cancel the award.

LOAN REPORTING TOOLS

The **Online Reporting** feature within the HelmNet portal provides institutions a secure method to run and export student-level data for CAL. Administrators can access reports to identify applications that are ready for certification, pending disbursements, and various summaries. Review the HelmNet Online Reporting Instructions for detailed instructions on how to pull available reports.

REPAYMENT

The CAL has a six-month grace period for repayment of funds, beginning on the date the student ceases to be enrolled at least half-time at an eligible institution. Repayment is scheduled to begin after the expiration of the six-month grace period. All loans have a minimum monthly repayment amount of $50. There is a maximum repayment period of 10 years for loans with a principal balance under $30,000, and a maximum repayment period of 20 years for loans with a principal balance of $30,000 or more. If the balance is greater than $30,000 at the time the account initially enters repayment, the monthly payment amount must be enough to pay off the entire debt in no more than 20 years. The CAL will not be sold to another lender.

Note: Borrowers who enroll in the automatic debit or Automatic Clearinghouse (ACH) payment service receive a 0.25% interest rate reduction on the interest rate of each applicable loan in repayment.

✋ STOP: ANNUAL STUDENT LOAN DEBT DISCLOSURE (TAC, Title 19, Section 21.49)

All participating institutions must provide students with a letter, in an electronic format, estimating each student's total loan obligations, at least once a year. The purpose of this letter is to provide students with timely information on their education loan debt so they can make informed decisions about student loan borrowing.

Student loan debt disclosures must include:

- all education loan debt from the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), as well as information that the institution may *reasonably collect from its own records*;
- an estimate of the unpaid amount of federal education loans and state education loans obtained by the student at the curent institution (loans types must be identified for each total included);
- *an estimate of the total payoff amount or a range for that amount, including principal and interest; and
- *an estimate of monthly repayment amount, including principal and interest.

*At a minimum, institutions shall provide this information based on a 10-year repayment plan.

APPENDIX 1: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can institutions change disbursement amounts after a loan has been certified?

Yes. Institutions can process changes to pending disbursements up to the original certified amount through the HelmNet loan portal during the loan period.

Institutions can make the following changes on pending disbursements during certain stages of the loan life cycle:

- Cancel disbursement(s)
- Change disbursement date
- Change disbursement amounts
- Change disbursement status

For instructions on how to process loan changes, refer to the HelmNet Change Transactions Instruction Guide.

Note: To resinstate a loan, refer to Requesting Loan Changes section.

2. Can a student who is not meeting SAP appeal their SAP status and receive a CAL?

Yes. If a student is not meeting an institution's SAP, a documented appeal process may be used to determine if the student is eligible for CAL. A student can receive a CAL if a SAP appeal has been approved by the institution.

3. Do institutions need to place academic holds on students who are delinquent on state loans?

No. Institutions should not place an academic hold related to a THECB delinquency (see 2019 THECB Academic Holds Discontinued for Delinquent Borrowers Memo). Institutions have flexibility to place academic holds on student accounts that are unrelated to a state loan delinquency.

Beginning January 2021, the THECB reinstated the MOVEit DMZ Cumulative Delinquency Report file (see 2021 State Financial Aid Resource Updates Memo). Reporting can be used by institutions to help counsel students to reduce the likelihood of default and to avoid restrictions from borrowing future state loan funds.

4. If a student has reached the maximum aggregate limits for Direct loans, are federal loan amounts considered when calculating the College Access Loan award amount?

No. While the CAL award amount calculation would deduct any financial assistance awarded to the student, it would not include the Direct subsidized or unsubsidized loans since this student would not be eligible once the aggregate limits have been reached.

APPENDIX 2: QUICK REFERENCES

CONTACT FINANCIAL AID SERVICES	
By phone: (844) 792-2640	
Contact us by completing an online inquiry form and select "Financial Aid Question" as the Contact Reason.	
PROGRAM RULES AND STATUTES	
Texas Program Statutes	Texas Education Code TEC, Title 3, Chapter 52, Subchapter C [PDF]
Texas Program Rules	Texas Administrative Code TAC, Title 19, Chapter 22, Subchapter A [PDF] TAC, Title 19, Chapter 22, Subchapter C [PDF]
WEBSITES, PORTALS AND GUIDES	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
General college enrollment and financial aid information for students	College for All Texans
General loan information for students	HHloans Website
Loan and scholarship account information for institutions	HelmNet Login Portal HelmNet Online Reporting Manual [PDF] HelmNet Change Transactions Instruction Guide [PDF]
Secure file transfer and processing portal	MOVEit DMZ Portal MOVEit DMZ User Access Guide [PDF]
FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS	
Form for adding, updating, or removing a user's access for state financial aid web portals	User Access Form [PDF]
Form for returning program funds	Loan Programs Online Return of Funds Form
Instructions for returning funds electronically	Electronic Funds Transfer Information [PDF]
Institution Loan Verification of Enrollment (VOE) Form	Institution Loan Verification of Erollment Form [PDF]