

§21.61

(2) The process for seeking review of the award has been completed.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(1) and (d))

§21.61 Release.

If an applicant, its agent, or its attorney accepts payment of any award or settlement in conjunction with an application under this part, that acceptance—

(a) Is final and conclusive with respect to that application; and

(b) Constitutes a complete release of any further claim against the United States with respect to that application.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(1))

PART 30—DEBT COLLECTION

Subpart A—General

Sec.

30.1 What administrative actions may the Secretary take to collect a debt?

30.2 On what authority does the Secretary rely to collect a debt under this part?

Subpart B [Reserved]

Subpart C—What Provisions Apply to Administrative Offset?

GENERAL OFFSET PROCEDURES

30.20 To what do §§30.20–30.31 apply?

30.21 When may the Secretary offset a debt?

30.22 What notice does the debtor receive before the commencement of offset?

30.23 How must a debtor request an opportunity to inspect and copy records relating to a debt?

30.24 What opportunity does the debtor receive to obtain a review of the existence or amount of a debt?

30.25 How may a debtor obtain an oral hearing?

30.26 What special rules apply to an oral hearing?

30.27 When does the Secretary enter into a repayment agreement rather than offset?

30.28 When may the Secretary offset before completing the procedures under §§30.22–30.27?

30.29 What procedures apply when the Secretary offsets to collect a debt owed another agency?

30.30 What procedures apply when the Secretary requests another agency to offset a debt owed under a program or activity of the Department?

30.31 How does the Secretary apply funds recovered by offset if multiple debts are involved?

34 CFR Subtitle A (7–1–12 Edition)

IRS TAX REFUND OFFSET PROCEDURES

30.33 What procedures does the Secretary follow for IRS tax refund offsets?

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING DEBTS TO CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES

30.35 What procedures does the Secretary follow to report debts to consumer reporting agencies?

Subpart D [Reserved]

Subpart E—What Costs and Penalties Does the Secretary Impose on Delinquent Debtors?

30.60 What costs does the Secretary impose on delinquent debtors?

30.61 What penalties does the Secretary impose on delinquent debtors?

30.62 When does the Secretary forego interest, administrative costs, or penalties?

Subpart F—What Requirements Apply to the Compromise of a Debt or the Suspension or Termination of Collection Action?

30.70 How does the Secretary exercise discretion to compromise a debt or to suspend or terminate collection of a debt?

Subpart G [Reserved]

AUTHORITY: 20 U.S.C. 1221e–3(a)(1), and 1226a–1, 31 U.S.C. 3711(e), 31 U.S.C. 3716(b) and 3720A, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 51 FR 24099, July 1, 1986, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§30.1 What administrative actions may the Secretary take to collect a debt?

(a) The Secretary may take one or more of the following actions to collect a debt owed to the United States:

(1) Collect the debt under the procedures authorized in the regulations in this part.

(2) Refer the debt to the General Accounting Office for collection.

(3) Refer the debt to the Department of Justice for compromise, collection, or litigation.

(4) Take any other action authorized by law.

(b) In taking any of the actions listed in paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary complies with the requirements of the Federal Claims Collection

Office of the Secretary, Education

§ 30.20

Standards (FCCS) at 4 CFR parts 101-105 that are not inconsistent with the requirements of this part.

(c) The Secretary may—

(1) Collect the debt under the offset procedures in subpart C of this part;

(2) Report a debt to a consumer reporting agency under the procedures in subpart C of this part;

(3) Charge interest on the debt as provided in the FCCS;

(4) Impose upon a debtor a charge based on the costs of collection as determined under subpart E of this part;

(5) Impose upon a debtor a penalty for failure to pay a debt when due under subpart E of this part;

(6) Compromise a debt, or suspend or terminate collection of a debt, under subpart F of this part;

(7) Take any other actions under the procedures of the FCCS in order to protect the United States Government's interests; or

(8) Use any combination of the procedures listed in this paragraph (c) as may be appropriate in a particular case.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3711(e))

[53 FR 33425, Aug. 30, 1988]

§ 30.2 On what authority does the Secretary rely to collect a debt under this part?

(a)(1) The Secretary takes an action referred to under § 30.1(a) in accordance with—

(i) 31 U.S.C. chapter 37, subchapters I and II;

(ii) Other applicable statutory authority; or

(iii) The common law.

(2) If collection of a debt in a particular case is not authorized under one of the authorities described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the Secretary may collect the debt under any other available authority under which collection is authorized.

(b) The Secretary does not use a procedure listed in § 30.1(c) to collect a debt, or a certain type of debt, if—

(1) The procedure is specifically prohibited under a Federal statute; or

(2) A separate procedure other than the procedure described under § 30.1(c) is specifically required under—

(i) A contract, grant, or other agreement;

(ii) A statute other than 31 U.S.C. 3716; or

(iii) Other regulations.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3711(e))

[53 FR 33425, Aug. 30, 1988]

Subpart B [Reserved]

Subpart C—What Provisions Apply to Administrative Offset?

GENERAL OFFSET PROCEDURES

§ 30.20 To what do §§ 30.20-30.31 apply?

(a)(1)(i) Sections 30.20-30.31 establish the general procedures used by the Secretary to collect debts by administrative offset.

(ii) The Secretary uses the procedures established under other regulations, including § 30.33, What procedures does the Secretary follow for IRS tax refund offsets?, 34 CFR part 31, Salary Offset for Federal Employees Who Are Indebted to the United States Under Programs Administrated by the Secretary of Education, and 34 CFR part 32, Salary Offset to Recover Overpayments of Pay or Allowances from Department of Education Employees, if the conditions requiring application of those special procedures exists.

(2) The word “offset” is used in this subpart to refer to the collection of a debt by administrative offset.

(b) The Secretary does not rely on 31 U.S.C. 3716 as authority for offset if:

(1) The debt is owed by a State or local government;

(2) The debt, or the payment against which offset would be taken, arises under the Social Security Act;

(3) The debt is owed under:

(i) The Internal Revenue Code of 1954; or

(ii) The tariff laws of the United States; or

(4) The right to collect the debt first accrued more than ten years before initiation of the offset.

(c)(1) The Secretary may rely on 31 U.S.C. 3716 as authority for offset of a debt to which paragraph (b)(4) of this section would otherwise apply if facts material to the Government's right to

§ 30.21

collect the debt were not known and could not reasonably have been known by the official or officials of the Government who are charged with the responsibility to discover and collect the debt.

(2) If paragraph (c)(1) of this section applies, the Secretary may rely on 31 U.S.C. 3716 as authority for offset up to 10 years after the date that the official or officials described in that paragraph first knew or reasonably should have known of the right of the United States to collect the debt.

(d) The Secretary determines when the right to collect a debt first accrued under the existing law regarding accrual of debts such as 28 U.S.C. 2415.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

[51 FR 24099, July 1, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 35646, Oct. 7, 1986; 53 FR 33425, Aug. 30, 1988; 54 FR 43583, Oct. 26, 1989]

§ 30.21 When may the Secretary offset a debt?

(a) The Secretary may offset a debt if:

(1) The debt is liquidated or certain in amount; and

(2) Offset is feasible and not otherwise prohibited.

(b)(1) Whether offset is feasible is determined by the Secretary in the exercise of sound discretion on a case-by-case basis, either:

(i) For each individual debt or offset; or

(ii) For each class of similar debts or offsets.

(2) The Secretary considers the following factors in making this determination:

(i) Whether offset can be practically and legally accomplished.

(ii) Whether offset will further and protect the interests of the United States.

(c) The Secretary may switch advance funded grantees to a reimbursement payment system before initiating an offset.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

34 CFR Subtitle A (7-1-12 Edition)

§ 30.22 What notice does the debtor receive before the commencement of offset?

(a)(1) Except as provided in §§ 30.28 and 30.29, the Secretary provides a debtor with written notice of the Secretary's intent to offset before initiating the offset.

(2) The Secretary mails the notice to the debtor at the current address of the debtor, as determined by the Secretary from information regarding the debt maintained by the Department.

(b) The written notice informs the debtor regarding:

(1) The nature and amount of the debt;

(2) The Secretary's intent to collect the debt by offset;

(3) The debtor's opportunity to:

(i) Inspect and copy Department records pertaining to the debt;

(ii) Obtain a review within the Department of the existence or amount of the debt; and

(iii) Enter into a written agreement with the Secretary to repay the debt;

(4) The date by which the debtor must request an opportunity set forth under paragraph (b)(3) of this section; and

(5) The Secretary's decision, in appropriate cases, to switch the debtor from advance funding to a reimbursement payment system.

(c)(1) In determining whether a debtor has requested an opportunity set forth under paragraph (b)(3) of this section in a timely manner, the Secretary relies on:

(i) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark for the debtor's request; or

(ii) A legibly stamped U.S. Postal service mail receipt for debtor's request.

(2) The Secretary does not rely on either of the following as proof of mailing:

(i) A private metered postmark.

(ii) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

NOTE: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method for proof of mailing, a debtor should check with its local post office.

(d) If a debtor previously has been notified of the Secretary's intent to offset or offered an opportunity to take any

Office of the Secretary, Education

§ 30.24

of the actions set forth in paragraph (b)(3) of this section in connection with the same debt, the Secretary may offset without providing the debtor with an additional notice of intent or opportunity to take any of those actions under these offset procedures.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

§ 30.23 How must a debtor request an opportunity to inspect and copy records relating to a debt?

(a) If a debtor wants to inspect and copy Department documents relating to the debt, the debtor must:

(1) File a written request to inspect and copy the documents within 20 days after the date of the notice provided under § 30.22; and

(2) File the request at the address specified in that notice.

(b) A request filed under paragraph (a) of this section must contain:

(1) All information provided to the debtor in the notice under § 30.22 or § 30.33(b) that identifies the debtor and the debt, including the debtor's Social Security number and the program under which the debt arose, together with any corrections of that identifying information; and

(2) A reasonably specific identification of the records the debtor wishes to have available for inspection and copying.

(c) The Secretary may decline to provide an opportunity to inspect and copy records if the debtor fails to request inspection and copying in accordance with this section.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1880-0515)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

[51 FR 24099, July 1, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 35646, Oct. 7, 1986]

§ 30.24 What opportunity does the debtor receive to obtain a review of the existence or amount of a debt?

(a) If a debtor wants a review within the Department of the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii), the debtor must:

(1) File a request for review within 20 days after the date of the notice provided under § 30.22; and

(2) File a request at the address specified in that notice.

(b) A request filed under paragraph (a) of this section must contain:

(1) All information provided to the debtor in the notice under § 30.22 or § 30.33(b) that identifies the debtor and the particular debt, including the debtor's Social Security number and the program under which the debt arose, together with any corrections of that identifying information; and

(2) An explanation of the reasons the debtor believes that the notice the debtor received under § 30.22 or § 30.33(b) inaccurately states any facts or conclusions relating to the debt.

(c) The Secretary may decline to provide an opportunity for review of a debt if the debtor fails to request the review in accordance with this section.

(d)(1) The debtor shall:

(i) File copies of any documents relating to the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii) that the debtor wishes the Secretary to consider in the review;

(ii) File the documents at the address specified in that notice, and

(iii) File the documents no later than:

(A) 20 days after the date of the notice provided under § 30.22; or

(B) If the debtor has requested an opportunity to inspect and copy records under § 30.23 within the time period specified in that section, 15 days after the date on which the Secretary makes available to the debtor the relevant, requested records.

(2) The Secretary may decline to consider any reasons or documents that the debtor fails to provide in accordance with paragraphs (b) and (d) of this section.

(e) If the Secretary bases the review on only the documentary evidence, the Secretary:

(1) Reviews the documents submitted by the debtor and other relevant evidence; and

(2) Notifies the debtor in writing of the Secretary's decision regarding the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii) and, if

§ 30.25

appropriate, the question of waiver of the debt.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1880-0515)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

[51 FR 24099, July 1, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 35647, Oct. 7, 1986]

§ 30.25 How may a debtor obtain an oral hearing?

(a) If a debtor wants the Secretary to conduct the review requested under § 30.24 as an oral hearing, the debtor must file a written request for an oral hearing together with the request for review filed under § 30.24(a).

(b) A request filed under paragraph (a) of this section must contain the following in addition to the information filed under § 30.24(b):

(1) An explanation of reason(s) why the debtor believes the Secretary cannot resolve the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii) through a review of the documentary evidence.

(2) An identification of:

(i) The individuals that the debtor wishes to have testify at the oral hearing;

(ii) The specific issues identified in the notice regarding which each individual is prepared to testify; and

(iii) The reasons why each individual's testimony is necessary to resolve the issue.

(c) The Secretary grants a debtor's request for an oral hearing regarding the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii) only if:

(1)(i) A statute authorizes or requires the Secretary to consider waiver of the indebtedness involved;

(ii) The debtor files a request for waiver of the indebtedness with the request for review filed under paragraph (a)(1) of this section; and

(iii) The question of waiver of the indebtedness turns on an issue of credibility or veracity; or

(2) The Secretary determines that the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii) cannot be resolved by review of only the documentary evidence.

(d) Notwithstanding paragraph (b) of this section, the Secretary may deny

34 CFR Subtitle A (7-1-12 Edition)

oral hearings for a class of similar debts if:

(1) The issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or 30.33(b)(3)(ii) for which an oral hearing was requested, or the issue of waiver, rarely involve issues of credibility or veracity; and

(2) The Secretary determines that review of the documentary evidence is ordinarily an adequate means to correct mistakes.

(e) The Secretary may decline to consider any reasons that the debtor fails to provide in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1880-0515)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

[51 FR 24099, July 1, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 35647, Oct. 7, 1986]

§ 30.26 What special rules apply to an oral hearing?

(a) The oral hearing under § 30.25 is not a formal evidentiary hearing subject to 5 U.S.C. 554, unless required by law.

(b) If the Secretary grants an oral hearing, the Secretary notifies the debtor in writing of:

(1) The time and place for the hearing;

(2) The debtor's right to representation; and

(3) The debtor's right to present and cross examine witnesses.

(c) If the Secretary grants an oral hearing, the Secretary designates an official to:

(1) Govern the conduct of the hearing;

(2) Take all necessary action to avoid unreasonable delay in the proceedings;

(3) Review the evidence presented at the hearing, the documents submitted by the debtor, and other relevant evidence; and

(4) After considering the evidence, notify the debtor in writing of the official's decision regarding the issues identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii) and, if appropriate, the question of waiver of the debt.

Office of the Secretary, Education

§ 30.29

(d) The official designated under paragraph (c) of this section may decline to hear any witnesses or testimony not identified by the debtor in accordance with § 30.25(b)(2).

(e) The decision of the designated official under paragraph (c) of this section constitutes the final decision of the Secretary.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

§ 30.27 When does the Secretary enter into a repayment agreement rather than offset?

(a) If a debtor wants an opportunity to enter into a written agreement to repay a debt on terms acceptable to the Secretary, the debtor must:

(1) File a request to enter into such agreement within 20 days after the date of the notice provided under § 30.22; and

(2) File the request at the address specified in the notice.

(b) A request filed under paragraph (a) of this section must contain all information provided to the debtor in the notice under § 30.22 or § 30.33(b) that identifies the debtor and the debt, including the debtor's Social Security number and the program under which the debt arose, together with any corrections of that identifying information.

(c) If the Secretary receives a request filed in accordance with this section, the Secretary may enter into a written agreement requiring repayment in accordance with 4 CFR 102.11, instead of offsetting the debt.

(d) In deciding whether to enter into the agreement, the Secretary may consider:

(1) The Government's interest in collecting the debt; and

(2) Fairness to the debtor.

(e)(1) A debtor that enters into a repayment agreement with the Secretary under this section waives any right to further review by the Secretary of the issues relating to the original debt identified in the notice under § 30.22(b)(3)(ii) or § 30.33(b)(3)(ii).

(2) If a debtor breaches a repayment agreement, the Secretary may offset, or, under § 30.30, refer to another agency for offset:

(i) The amount owing under the agreement; or

(ii) The entire original debt, to the extent not repaid.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

[51 FR 24099, July 1, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 35647, Oct. 7, 1986]

§ 30.28 When may the Secretary offset before completing the procedures under §§ 30.22–30.27?

(a) The Secretary may offset before completing the procedures otherwise required by §§ 30.22–30.27 if:

(1) Failure to offset would substantially prejudice the Government's ability to collect the debt; and

(2) The amount of time remaining before the payment by the United States which is subject to offset does not reasonably permit completion of the procedures under §§ 30.22–30.27.

(b) If the Secretary offsets under paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary:

(1) Promptly completes the procedures under §§ 30.22–30.27 after initiating the offset; and

(2) Refunds any amounts recovered under the offset that are later found not to be owed to the United States.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

§ 30.29 What procedures apply when the Secretary offsets to collect a debt owed another agency?

The Secretary may initiate offset to collect a debt owed another Federal agency if:

(a) An official of that agency certifies in writing:

(1) That the debtor owes a debt to the United States;

(2) The amount of the debt; and

(3) That the agency has complied with 4 CFR 102.3; and

(b) For offsets under 31 U.S.C. 3716, the Secretary makes an independent determination that the offset meets the standards under § 30.21(a)(2).

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

§ 30.30

§ 30.30 What procedures apply when the Secretary requests another agency to offset a debt owed under a program or activity of the Department?

(a) The Secretary may request another Federal agency to offset a debt owed under a program or activity of the Department if the Secretary certifies in writing to the other Federal agency:

- (1) That the debtor owes a debt to the United States;
- (2) The amount of the debt; and
- (3) That the Secretary has complied with 4 CFR 102.3.

(b) Before providing the certification required under paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary complies with the procedures in §§ 30.20–30.27.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

§ 30.31 How does the Secretary apply funds recovered by offset if multiple debts are involved?

If the Secretary collects more than one debt of a debtor by administrative offset, the Secretary applies the recovered funds to satisfy those debts based on the Secretary's determination of the best interests of the United States, determined by the facts and circumstances of the particular case.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3716(b))

IRS TAX REFUND OFFSET PROCEDURES

§ 30.33 What procedures does the Secretary follow for IRS tax refund offsets?

(a) If a named person owes a debt under a program or activity of the Department, the Secretary may refer the debt for offset to the Secretary of the Treasury after complying with the procedures in §§ 30.20–30.28, as modified by this section.

(b) Notwithstanding § 30.22(b), the notice sent to a debtor under § 30.22 informs the debtor that:

- (1) The debt is past due;
- (2) The Secretary intends to refer the debt for offset to the Secretary of Treasury;
- (3) The debtor has an opportunity to:
 - (i) Inspect and copy Department records regarding the existence,

34 CFR Subtitle A (7–1–12 Edition)

amount, enforceability, or past-due status of the debt;

(ii) Obtain a review within the Department of the existence, amount, enforceability, or past-due status of the debt;

(iii) Enter into a written agreement with the Secretary to repay the debt; and

(4) The debtor must take an action set forth under paragraph (b)(3) by a date specified in the notice.

(c) Notwithstanding § 30.23(a), if a debtor wants to inspect and copy Department records regarding the existence, amount, enforceability, or past-due status of the debt, the debtor must:

(1) File a written request to inspect and copy the records within 20 days after the date of the notice provided under § 30.22; and

(2) File the request at the address specified in that notice.

(d) Notwithstanding the time frame under § 30.24(a), if a debtor wants a review under that paragraph, the debtor must file a request for review at the address specified in the notice by the later of:

(1) Sixty-five days after the date of the notice provided under § 30.22;

(2) If the debtor has requested an opportunity to inspect and copy records within the time period specified in paragraph (c) of this section, 15 days after the date on which the Secretary makes available to the debtor the relevant, requested records; or

(3) If the debtor has requested a review within the appropriate time frame under paragraph (d) (1) or (2) of this section and the Secretary has provided an initial review by a guarantee agency, seven days after the date of the initial determination by the guarantee agency.

(e) Notwithstanding the time frames under § 30.24(d), a debtor shall file the documents specified under that paragraph with the request for review.

(f) Notwithstanding the time frame under § 30.27(a), a debtor must agree to repay the debt under terms acceptable to the Secretary and make the first payment due under the agreement by the latest of:

(1) The seventh day after the date of decision of the Secretary if the debtor requested a review under § 30.24;

Office of the Secretary, Education

§ 30.60

(2) The sixty-fifth day after the date of the notice under §30.22(b), if the debtor did not request a review under §30.24, or an opportunity to inspect and copy records of the Department under §30.23; or

(3) The fifteenth day after the date on which the Secretary made available relevant records regarding the debt, if the debtor filed a timely request under §30.23(a).

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3720A)

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING DEBTS TO CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES

§ 30.35 What procedures does the Secretary follow to report debts to consumer reporting agencies?

(a)(1) The Secretary reports information regarding debts arising under a program or activity of the Department and held by the Department to consumer reporting agencies, in accordance with the procedures described in this section.

(2) The term *consumer reporting agency*, as used in this section, has the same meaning as provided in 31 U.S.C. 3701(a)(3).

(b) Before reporting information on a debt to a consumer reporting agency, the Secretary follows the procedures set forth in §30.33.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3711, §16023, 16029, Pub. L. 99-272)

Subpart D [Reserved]

Subpart E—What Costs and Penalties Does the Secretary Impose on Delinquent Debtors?

SOURCE: 53 FR 33425, Aug. 30, 1988, unless otherwise noted.

§ 30.60 What costs does the Secretary impose on delinquent debtors?

(a) The Secretary may charge a debtor for the costs associated with the collection of a particular debt. These costs include, but are not limited to—

(1) Salaries of employees performing Federal loan servicing and debt collection activities;

(2) Telephone and mailing costs;

(3) Costs for reporting debts to credit bureaus;

(4) Costs for purchase of credit bureau reports;

(5) Costs associated with computer operations and other costs associated with the maintenance of records;

(6) Bank charges;

(7) Collection agency costs;

(8) Court costs and attorney fees; and

(9) Costs charged by other Governmental agencies.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of State law, if the Secretary uses a collection agency to collect a debt on a contingent fee basis, the Secretary charges the debtor, and collects through the agency, an amount sufficient to recover—

(1) The entire amount of the debt; and

(2) The amount that the Secretary is required to pay the agency for its collection services.

(c)(1) The amount recovered under paragraph (b) of this section is the entire amount of the debt, multiplied by the following fraction:

$$\frac{1}{1 - cr.}$$

(2) In paragraph (c)(1) of this section, *cr* equals the commission rate the Department pays to the collection agency.

(d) If the Secretary uses more than one collection agency to collect similar debts, the commission rate (*cr*) described in paragraph (c)(2) of this section is calculated as a weighted average of the commission rates charged by all collection agencies collecting similar debts, computed for each fiscal year based on the formula

$$\sum_{i=1}^N \left(\frac{X_i \cdot Y_i}{Z} \right)$$

where—

(1) *X_i* equals the dollar amount of similar debts placed by the Department with an individual collection agency as of the end of the preceding fiscal year;

(2) *Y_i* equals the commission rate the Department pays to that collection agency for the collection of the similar debts;

§ 30.61

(3) Z equals the dollar amount of similar debts placed by the Department with all collection agencies as of the end of the preceding fiscal year; and

(4) N equals the number of collection agencies with which the Secretary has placed similar debts as of the end of the preceding fiscal year.

(e) If a debtor has agreed under a repayment or settlement agreement with the Secretary to pay costs associated with the collection of a debt at a specified amount or rate, the Secretary collects those costs in accordance with the agreement.

(f) The Secretary does not impose collection costs against State or local governments under paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3711(e), 3717(e)(1), 3718)

§ 30.61 What penalties does the Secretary impose on delinquent debtors?

(a) If a debtor does not make a payment on a debt, or portion of a debt, within 90 days after the date specified in the first demand for payment sent to the debtor, the Secretary imposes a penalty on the debtor.

(b)(1) The amount of the penalty imposed under paragraph (a) of this section is 6 percent per year of the amount of the delinquent debt.

(2) The penalty imposed under this section runs from the date specified in the first demand for payment to the date the debt (including the penalty) is paid.

(c) If a debtor has agreed under a repayment or settlement agreement with the Secretary to pay a penalty for failure to pay a debt when due, or has such an agreement under a grant or contract under which the debt arose, the Secretary collects the penalty in accordance with the agreement, grant, or contract.

(d) The Secretary does not impose a penalty against State or local governments under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3711(e))

34 CFR Subtitle A (7-1-12 Edition)

§ 30.62 When does the Secretary forego interest, administrative costs, or penalties?

(a) For a debt of any amount based on a loan, the Secretary may refrain from collecting interest or charging administrative costs or penalties to the extent that compromise of these amounts is appropriate under the standards for compromise of a debt contained in 4 CFR part 103.

(b) For a debt not based on a loan the Secretary may waive, or partially waive, the charging of interest, or the collection of administrative costs or penalties, if—

(1) Compromise of these amounts is appropriate under the standards for compromise of a debt contained in 4 CFR part 103; or

(2) The Secretary determines that the charging of interest or the collection of administrative costs or penalties is—

(i) Against equity and good conscience; or

(ii) Not in the best interests of the United States.

(c) The Secretary may exercise waiver under paragraph (b)(1) of this section without regard to the amount of the debt.

(d) The Secretary may exercise waiver under paragraph (b)(2) of this section if—

(1) The Secretary has accepted an installment plan under 4 CFR 102.11;

(2) There is no indication of fault or lack of good faith on the part of the debtor; and

(3) The amount of interest, administrative costs, and penalties is such a large portion of the installments that the debt may never be repaid if that amount is collected.

(e)(1) The Secretary does not charge interest on any portion of a debt, other than a loan, owed by a person subject to 31 U.S.C. 3717 if the debt is paid within 30 days after the date of the first demand for payment.

(2) The Secretary may extend the period under paragraph (e)(1) of this section if the Secretary determines that the extension is appropriate.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1) and 1226a-1, 31 U.S.C. 3711(e))

Subpart F—What Requirements Apply to the Compromise of a Debt or the Suspension or Termination of Collection Action?

§ 30.70 How does the Secretary exercise discretion to compromise a debt or to suspend or terminate collection of a debt?

(a) The Secretary uses the standards in the FCCS, 4 CFR part 103, to determine whether compromise of a debt is appropriate if—

(1) The debt must be referred to the Department of Justice under this section; or

(2) The amount of the debt is less than or equal to \$20,000 and the Secretary does not follow the procedures in paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) The Secretary refers a debt to the Department of Justice to decide whether to compromise a debt if—

(1) The debt was incurred under a program or activity subject to section 452(f) of the General Education Provisions Act and the initial determination of the debt was more than \$50,000; or

(2) The debt was incurred under a program or activity not subject to section 452(f) of the General Education Provisions Act and the amount of the debt is more than \$20,000.

(c) The Secretary may compromise the debt under the procedures in paragraph (e) of this section if—

(1) The debt was incurred under a program or activity subject to section 452(f) of the General Education Provisions Act; and

(2) The initial determination of the debt was less than or equal to \$50,000.

(d) The Secretary may compromise a debt without following the procedure in paragraph (e) of this section if the amount of the debt is less than or equal to \$20,000.

(e) The Secretary may compromise the debt pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section if—

(1) The Secretary determines that—

(i) Collection of any or all of the debt would not be practical or in the public interest; and

(ii) The practice that resulted in the debt has been corrected and will not recur;

(2) At least 45 days before compromising the debt, the Secretary publishes a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER stating—

(i) The Secretary's intent to compromise the debt; and

(ii) That interested persons may comment on the proposed compromise; and

(3) The Secretary considers any comments received in response to the FEDERAL REGISTER notice before finally compromising the debt.

(f)(1) The Secretary uses the standards in the FCCS, 4 CFR part 104, to determine whether suspension or termination of collection action is appropriate.

(2) The Secretary—

(i) Refers the debt to the Department of Justice to decide whether to suspend or terminate collection action if the amount of the debt at the time of the referral is more than \$20,000; or

(ii) May decide to suspend or terminate collection action if the amount of the debt at the time of the Secretary's decision is less than or equal to \$20,000.

(g) In determining the amount of a debt under paragraphs (a) through (f) of this section, the Secretary excludes interest, penalties, and administrative costs.

(h) Notwithstanding paragraphs (b) through (f) of this section, the Secretary may compromise a debt, or suspend or terminate collection of a debt, in any amount if the debt arises under the Guaranteed Student Loan Program authorized under title IV, part B, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, or the Perkins Loan Program authorized under title IV, part E, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

(i) The Secretary refers a debt to the General Accounting Office (GAO) for review and approval before referring the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation if—

(1) The debt arose from an audit exception taken by GAO to a payment made by the Department; and

(2) The GAO has not granted an exception from the GAO referral requirement.

(j) Nothing in this section precludes—

(1) A contracting officer from exercising his authority under applicable

statutes, regulations, or common law to settle disputed claims relating to a contract; or

(2) The Secretary from redetermining a claim.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1082(a) (5) and (6), 1087hh, 1221e-3(a)(1), 1226a-1, and 1234a(f), 31 U.S.C. 3711(e))

[53 FR 33425, Aug. 30, 1988]

Subpart G [Reserved]

PART 31—SALARY OFFSET FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WHO ARE INDEBTED TO THE UNITED STATES UNDER PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Sec.

- 31.1 Scope.
- 31.2 Definitions.
- 31.3 Pre-offset notice.
- 31.4 Request to inspect and copy documents relating to a debt.
- 31.5 Request for hearing on the debt or the proposed offset.
- 31.6 Location and timing of oral hearing.
- 31.7 Hearing procedures.
- 31.8 Rules of decision.
- 31.9 Decision of the hearing official.
- 31.10 Request for repayment agreement.
- 31.11 Offset process.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 5514; 31 U.S.C. 3716.

SOURCE: 54 FR 31821, Aug. 19, 1989, unless otherwise noted.

§31.1 Scope.

(a) *General.* The Secretary establishes the standards and procedures in this part that apply to the offset from disposable pay of a current or former Federal employee or from amounts payable from the Federal retirement account of a former Federal employee to recover a debt owed the United States under a program administered by the Secretary of Education.

(b) *Exclusions.* This part does not apply to—

(1) Offsets under 34 CFR part 32 to recover for overpayments of pay or allowances to an employee of the Department;

(2) Offsets under 34 CFR part 30; or

(3) Offsets under section 124 of Pub. L. 97-276 to collect debts owed to the United States on judgments.

(c) *Reports to consumer reporting agency.* The Secretary may report a debt to a consumer reporting agency after notifying the employee, in accordance with 34 CFR 30.35, of the intention to report the debt, and after providing the employee an opportunity to inspect documents, receive a hearing, and enter into a repayment agreement under this part.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514; 31 U.S.C. 3711; 31 U.S.C. 3716)

§31.2 Definitions.

As used in this part:

Agency means—

(1) An Executive agency as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, including the U.S. Postal Service and the U.S. Postal Rate Commission;

(2) A military department as defined in 5 U.S.C. 102;

(3) An agency or court in the judicial branch, including a court as defined in 28 U.S.C. 610, the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation;

(4) An agency of the legislative branch, including the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives; and

(5) Any other independent establishment that is an entity of the Federal Government.

Days refer to calendar days.

Department means the Education Department.

Disposable pay means the amount that remains from an employee's pay after required deductions for Federal, State, and local income taxes; Social Security taxes, including Medicare taxes; Federal retirement programs; premiums for basic life insurance and health insurance benefits; and such other deductions that are required by law to be withheld.

Employee means a current or former employee of an agency. In the case of an offset proposed to collect a debt owed by a deceased employee, the references in this part to the employee shall be read to refer to the payee of benefits from the Federal retirement account or other pay of the employee.

Federal retirement account means an account of an employee under the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employee Retirement System.