

her would not create a binding obligation. The school may not require security or endorsement in any other circumstances.

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[50 FR 34434, Aug. 23, 1985, as amended at 56 FR 13771, Apr. 4, 1991; 57 FR 45735, Oct. 5, 1992]

§ 57.309 Payment of nursing student loans.

(a) Nursing student loans from any fund may be paid to or on behalf of student borrowers in installments considered appropriate by the school except that a school may not pay to or on behalf of any borrower more during any given installment period (e.g., semester, term, or quarter) than the school determines the student needs for that period.

(b) No payment may be made from a fund to or on behalf of any student borrower if at the time of the payment the borrower is not a full-time or half-time student.

§ 57.310 Repayment and collection of nursing student loans.

(a) Each nursing student loan, including accrued interest, will be repayable in equal or graduated periodic installments in amounts calculated on the basis of a 10-year repayment period. Repayment of a loan must begin 9 months after the student ceases to be a full-time or half-time student, except that if a borrower reenters the same or another school as a full-time or half-time student within the 9-month period, the date upon which interest will accrue and the repayment period will begin will be determined by the date upon which the student last ceases to be a full-time or half-time student at that school.

(1) The following periods will be excluded from the 10-year repayment period: (i) All periods up to a total of 3 years of active duty performed by the borrower as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps or the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps;

(ii) All periods up to a total of 3 years of service as a volunteer under the Peace Corps Act; and

(iii) All periods up to a total of 10 years during which the borrower is pursuing a full-time or half-time course of study at a school leading to a baccalaureate degree in nursing or an equivalent degree, or to a graduate degree in nursing, or is otherwise pursuing advanced professional training in nursing (or training to be a nurse anesthetist). For purposes of this paragraph, "otherwise pursuing advanced professional training in nursing" shall include full-time or half-time training, beyond the first diploma or degree in nursing received by the particular borrower, of at least 1 academic year which will advance the borrower's knowledge of and strengthen his or her skills in the provision of nursing services.¹

(2) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (b)(3) of this section, a borrower must establish a repayment schedule with the school providing for payments not less often than quarterly. Any borrower whose repayment becomes more than 60 days past due must be placed on a monthly repayment schedule by the school. A borrower may at his or her option and without penalty, prepay all or part of the principal and accrued interest at any time.

(3) A school may grant forbearance whenever extraordinary circumstances such as unemployment, poor health or other personal problems temporarily affect the borrower's ability to make scheduled loan repayments.

(b) *Collection of nursing student loans.*

(1) Each school at which a fund is established must exercise due diligence in the collection of nursing student loans due the fund. In the exercise of due diligence, a school must follow procedures which are at least as extensive and effective as those used in the collection of other student loan accounts

¹Individuals who received nursing student loans prior to July 1, 1969, remain subject to the repayment provisions of 42 CFR 57.314(a)(3)(1976) as adopted on February 4, 1974. These provisions can be found at 39 FR 16473 (May 9, 1974), and a copy can be obtained by writing the Division of Student Assistance, Bureau of Health Professions, 5600 Fishers Lane, Parklawn Building, room 8-34, Rockville, MD 20857.

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due the school, and must use the steps outlined below in accordance with collection practices which are generally accepted among institutions of higher education:

(i) Conduct and document an entrance interview (individually or in groups) with the borrower prior to disbursing NSL funds in any academic year. During the entrance interview the school must obtain documentation which indicates that the borrower is aware of the rights and responsibilities associated with NSL funds and personal information which would assist in locating the borrower if he or she fails to keep the school informed of his or her current address. The requirement of this subparagraph may be met by correspondence if the school determines that a face-to-face meeting (individually or in groups) is impracticable.

(ii) Conduct and document an exit interview (individually or in groups) with the borrower. During the exit interview, the school must provide each borrower with information necessary to carry out the terms of repayment, remind the borrower of the rights and responsibilities associated with NSL funds, and update the personal information collected prior to disbursing NSL funds which would assist in locating the borrower if he or she fails to keep the school informed of his or her current address. If the borrower terminates studies without advance notice, the school must document attempts to inform the borrower of the substance of the exit interview and to secure exit interview information from the borrower by mail.

(iii) Notify the borrower in writing of the impending repayment obligation at least twice during the grace period;

(iv) Notify a borrower who is in deferment status in writing of the impending repayment obligation 1 to 3 months prior to the expiration of the approved period of deferment;

(v) Perform regular billing;

(vi) Follow up past due payments with a series of at least four documented and reasonably spaced attempts to contact the borrower, at least three of which must be in writing at not more than 30-day intervals, prior to the loan becoming 120 days

past due, provided that the school has a current address for the borrower;

(vii) Perform address searches when necessary;

(viii) Use collection agents, which may include the use of an internal collection agent;

(ix) Institute legal proceedings against borrowers after all other attempts at collection have failed, unless the school determines, subject to the approval of the Secretary, that such litigation would not be cost-effective; and

(x) Become a member of a credit bureau and notify the credit bureau of accounts past due by more than 120 days. In place of one or more of the procedures outlined above schools may substitute collection techniques that are equally or more effective, but only after they have demonstrated the effectiveness of the techniques and obtained written approval from the Secretary.

(2) *Late charge.* (i) For any nursing student loan made after June 30, 1969, but prior to October 1, 1985, the school may fix a charge for failure of the borrower to pay all or any part of an installment when it is due and, in the case of a borrower who is entitled to deferment under section 836(b)(2) of the Act, or cancellation or repayment under section 836(b)(3) of the Act, for any failure to file timely and satisfactory evidence of the entitlement. The amount of the charge may not exceed \$1 for the first month or part of a month by which the installment or evidence is late and \$2 for each succeeding month or part of a month. The school may elect to add the amount of this charge to the principal amount of the loan as of the day after the day on which the installment or evidence was due, or to make the amount of the charge payable to the school no later than the due date of the next installment following receipt of the notice of the charge by the borrower.

(ii) For any nursing student loan made on or after October 1, 1985, the school shall assess a charge for failure of the borrower to pay all or any part of an installment when the loan is more than 60 days past due and, in the case of a borrower who is entitled to deferment under section 836(b)(2) of the Act, for any failure to file satisfactory

evidence of the entitlement within 60 days of the date payment would otherwise be due. No charge may be made if the loan is less than 61 days past due. The amount of this charge may not exceed an amount equal to 6 percent of the amount due at the time the charge is calculated. The school may elect to add the amount of this charge to the principal amount of the loan as of the day on which the charge is calculated, or to make the amount of the charge payable to the school no later than the due date of the next installment following receipt of the notice of the charge by the borrower.

(3) With respect to any nursing student loan made after June 30, 1969, the school may require the borrower to make payments of at least \$15 per month on all outstanding nursing student loans during the repayment period.

(4) A school must, on an annual basis, review and assess the collectibility of any loan more than 3 years past due. If the school determines that the prospects of future collection are promising enough to justify periodic review of the debt, and neither the statute of limitations nor the 10-year repayment period has expired, the school may retain the account for continued collections, provided that it makes an attempt at least semi-annually to collect from the borrower. When the due diligence procedures required by paragraph (b)(1) of this section have been exhausted, the school is responsible for determining the collection methods it will use for the semi-annual collection effort required on these loans. If the school determines that the prospects of future collection are not promising, or when the statute of limitations or the 10-year repayment period has expired, the loan must be considered uncollectible. A school may determine a loan to be uncollectible sooner than 3 years past due when it has evidence that the loan cannot be collected, but in no case should a school consider a loan as uncollectible if it has not been in default for at least 120 days. A school is not subject to the requirements in paragraphs (b)(4) (i) and (iii) of this section for loans that became uncollectible, as determined by the school, before January 1, 1983.

(i) A school must request permission to write off an uncollectible loan within 30 days of the determination that it is uncollectible or reimburse the fund in the full amount of the loan, pursuant to § 57.310(b)(4)(iii). The 30-day period for submitting the loan for write-off review begins on the date that the determination of uncollectibility is made, in accordance with paragraph (b)(4) of this section. In any instance where the Secretary determines that a school has failed to exercise due diligence in the collection of a loan, in accordance with the applicable regulatory requirements, the school will be required to place in the fund the full amount of principal, interest, and penalty charges that remains uncollected on the loan. Reimbursement must be made by the following June 30 or December 31, whichever is sooner, except that in no case will a school be required to reimburse the fund in less than 30 days following the Secretary's disapproval of the request for write-off approval.

(ii) If the Secretary determines that a school has exercised due diligence in the collection of a loan, in accordance with the applicable regulatory requirements, or if the school determines that the loan was uncollectible prior to January 1, 1983, the school will be permitted to reduce its accounts receivable for the NSL fund by the full amount of principal, interest, and penalty charges that remains uncollected on that loan and will not be required to return the Federal share of the loss to the Secretary.

(iii) If a school does not request permission to write off an uncollectible loan within the required timeframe, it must reimburse the fund for the full amount of principal, interest, and penalty charges that remains uncollected on that loan. This reimbursement must be made by the following June 30 or December 31, whichever is sooner, except that in no case will a school be required to reimburse the fund in less than 30 days following its determination that a loan is uncollectible.

(iv) Failure to comply with the requirements of this section will subject a school to the noncompliance provisions of § 57.318 and the Department's

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Claims Collection regulations (45 CFR part 30), as appropriate.

(5) *Disclosure of taxpayer identity information.* Upon written request by the Secretary, the Secretary of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may disclose the address of any taxpayer who has defaulted on a nursing student loan, for use only by officers, employees, or agents of the Department, to locate the defaulted borrower to collect the loan. Any such mailing address may be disclosed by the Secretary to any school from which the defaulted borrower received a nursing student loan, for use only by officers, employees, or agents of the school whose duties relate to the collection of nursing student loan funds, to locate the defaulted borrower to collect the loan. Any school which requests and obtains such address information must comply with the requirements of the Secretary and the IRS regarding the safeguarding and proper handling of this information.

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§57.311 Cancellation of nursing student loans for disability or death.

(a) *Permanent and total disability.* The Secretary will cancel a borrower's indebtedness in accordance with section 836(b)(4) of the Act if the borrower is found to be permanently and totally disabled on recommendation of the school and as supported by whatever medical certification the Secretary may require. A borrower is totally and permanently disabled if he or she is unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity because of a medically determinable impairment, which the Secretary expects to continue for a long time or to result in death.

(b) *Death.* The Secretary will cancel a borrower's indebtedness in accordance with section 836(b)(4) of the Act upon the death of the borrower. The school to which the borrower was indebted must secure a certification of death or

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whatever official proof is conclusive under State law.

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§57.312 Repayment of loans for service in a shortage area.

(a) *Service in a shortage area.* Subject to the availability of funds, a person who:

(1) Has obtained a degree as specified in section 846(a)(1) of the Act;

(2) Has obtained one or more nursing student loans or any other loans necessary for costs (including tuition, books, fees, equipment, living and other expenses which the Secretary determines were necessary) of attending a school of nursing; and

(3) Enters into an agreement with the Secretary to serve as a full-time registered nurse for a period of not less than 2 years in an Indian Health Service health center, a Native Hawaiian health center, a public hospital, a migrant health center, a community health center, a nursing facility, a rural health clinic, or in a health facility determined by the Secretary to have a critical shortage of nurses, will have a portion of these loans repaid by the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section. Prior to entering an agreement for repayment of loans, other than nursing student loans, the Secretary will require that satisfactory evidence be provided of the existence and reasonableness of the education loans (i.e., a copy of the written loan agreement establishing the loan).

(b) When entering into agreements under paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary shall give priority to:

(1) Applicants with the greatest financial need; and

(2) Applicants that, with respect to health facilities described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, agree to serve in such facilities located in geographic areas with a shortage of and need for nurses, as determined by the Secretary.

(3) In addition to the priorities under paragraphs (b) (1) and (2) of this section, should specific needs warrant, the Secretary may establish additional