

**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

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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.