

Updated Minimum and Optimal System Configuration Recommendations

Attachment to December 2007 Electronic Announcement

System Configuration Recommendations

The updated system configuration recommendations provided in the table below will allow a school to properly participate in the required electronic processes needed to administer the Title IV Federal student aid programs. Schools that currently participate in the designated electronic processes using a desktop computing environment for all or part of their Title IV Federal student aid processing will find this updated information helpful in planning hardware and software refreshes. These schools include those that use our EDconnect software for sending and receiving data via the Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) and/or one or more of our EDESuite software products (such as EDEExpress).

System Configurations		
Hardware/Software	Minimum Configuration	Optimal Configuration
IBM or Fully IBM-Compatible PC	1.2 GHz Processor	2.8 GHz/333 MHz Processor or better
Memory	1 GB RAM	2 GB Dual Channel or better
Hard Disk	60 GB Hard Drive	250 GB Hard Drive or better
CD-ROM	48x CD-RW Drive	16X DVD+/-RW8 Drive
Keyboard/Mouse	IBM-Compatible Keyboard and Mouse	IBM-Compatible Keyboard and Mouse
Monitor and Video Card	Capable of Super Video Graphics Adapter (SVGA) Resolution (800x600) or higher	Capable of Super Video Graphics Adapter (SVGA) Resolution (1024x768) or higher
Internet Connection	56 Kbps Modem (meets or is upgradeable to V.90 standard)	High-Speed Internet Connection (i.e., DSL, Cable Modem, or Fiber Optic)
Printer	Laser Printer (capable of printing on standard 8.5" x 11" paper)	Laser Printer (capable of printing on standard 8.5" x 11" paper)
Operating System	Windows 2000 Professional at a minimum	Windows XP Professional

As in the past, we provide the updated system configuration recommendations in terms of the minimum configuration and the optimal configuration. Although all of the designated electronic processes can be performed using the minimum configuration, we strongly recommend the

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optimal configuration, particularly if a school sends or receives 4,000 or more records in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) document (batch). This is because the XML file formats used by the EDEExpress software and the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System are large and require increased storage and computing capabilities. For the same reason, we encourage schools to consider moving away from “dial-up” and instead use high-speed Internet connections. Doing so will significantly reduce both transmission time and transmission interruptions.

Note: At this time, we have not certified the Microsoft Corporation’s Windows Vista as a supported operating system for EDEExpress or the other EDESuite software products. This guidance also applies to the Local Area Network (LAN) or “server” version of Windows, known as Windows Server 2008, which we understand will be released by the Microsoft Corporation in 2008. We will communicate about additional supported operating systems after completion of our certification process.

System Configuration Questions and Answers

Q1 Must all of my school’s desktop computers (PCs) meet the updated minimum or optimal system configuration recommendations?

A1 No. The updated system configuration recommendations apply only to desktop computers on which your school will run an EDESuite software product and/or EDconnect.

Q2 How does my school determine which system configuration recommendations to follow?

A2 The determination of which updated system configuration recommendations to follow should be based on the number of XML transactions your school will process. Although all of the designated electronic processes can be performed using the minimum configuration, we strongly recommend the optimal configuration if your school will send (transmit) and receive 4,000 or more records in an XML document (batch). This recommendation is based on the fact that XML file formats require increased storage and computing capabilities.

Note: Currently, XML file formats are used by EDEExpress and the COD System.

Q3 Should my school consider student population and database size when determining the system configuration that is right for us?

A3 Yes. The greater the size of your school’s student population or Title IV applicant pool, the larger your software database or databases will be. Accordingly, there will be increased workload and processing demands on your system. While the updated minimum system configuration recommendations would be sufficient, your school may require a more robust, augmented system to process records as efficiently as possible.

For assistance in determining the system configuration that is right for your school, consult with your IT Department or with hardware/software manufacturers and retailers. These experts will be able to analyze the functionality, capacity, performance, interoperability, maintainability, upgradeability, and size/weight/power/mobility of the

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core elements of the system keeping in mind your school's workload and business processes.

Q4 Should my school consider using a high-speed Internet connection instead of a dial-up connection?

A4 Yes, if your school will send large amounts of data. Although a high-speed Internet connection is only included in the optimal system configuration recommendations, we encourage schools that will send and receive large amounts of data to consider moving away from a dial-up connection. Using a high-speed Internet connection will significantly reduce the time needed to transmit XML files and will increase the probability of an uninterrupted transmission session.

Q5 Why are the recommended operating systems Windows 2000 Professional and Windows XP Professional but not Windows 98/98SE/ME?

A5 Windows 2000 Professional and Windows XP Professional are more efficient and stable than the older Windows 98/98SE/ME operating systems. Refer to the installation guides for the EDESuite software product and/or EDconnect for information about recommended Network Operating Systems with Network Installations as well as any potential conflicts with specific systems.

Q6 Can my school use an Apple Macintosh to run one of the EDESuite software products?

A6 No. As reflected in the updated system configuration recommendations, your school can use only an IBM or IBM-compatible PC to run an EDESuite software product. PC emulators are problematic for the use of EDESuite.

Q7 My school would like to use the computer that runs EDESuite software products, in particular EDEExpress, and/or EDconnect to run other applications. Will this interfere with EDEExpress and/or EDconnect?

A7 Your school can have other applications loaded on the same computer that runs EDEExpress and/or EDconnect. However, these other applications should be closed prior to running EDEExpress and/or EDconnect. Additionally, to ensure that the computer is running at its optimal performance and that it meets your school's hard drive space needs, you should periodically check the disk space availability and clean out old software applications and files. Refer to the installation guides for EDEExpress and EDconnect for additional information.

Q8 Who can my school contact with additional questions about EDESuite software products or EDconnect?

A8 For assistance with additional questions about EDESuite software products or EDconnect, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support at 800/330-5947 (TDD/TTY 800/511-5806) or by e-mail at CPSSAIG@ed.gov.