

U.S. Department of Education and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Updates



ARTICLE 03.03.25 MEGAN H. CRANE, CPA

On February 14, 2025, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (the Department) released a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) notifying institutions that they should stop using race preferences and stereotypes as factors in admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life. The letter also advised that institutions should:

“(1) ensure that their policies and actions comply with existing civil rights law; (2) cease all efforts to circumvent prohibitions on the use of race by relying on proxies or other indirect means to accomplish such ends; and (3) cease all reliance on third-party contractors, clearinghouses, or aggregators that are being used by institutions in an effort to circumvent prohibited uses of race.”

If institutions do not comply, they risk losing federal funding. Read the full letter [here](#).

On February 28, 2025, the Department released a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) as a follow-up to the DCL. The FAQ is meant to provide more detail about how the “Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College, 600 U.S. 181 (2023) (“Students v. Harvard” or “SFFA”) decision applies to racial classifications, racial preferences, and racial stereotypes as well as how the Department will interpret the ruling in its enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations.”

The FAQ covers questions from the admissions process to investigation and non-compliance with regulations. The FAQ will continue to be updated as questions arise.

As the Department continues to provide updates and clarification on these policies, it is important for institutions to stay informed and ensure compliance with evolving regulations. The team at Dean Dorton will continue to monitor the situation and share relevant updates as they become available. If you have any questions or need guidance on how these changes may impact your institution, please don’t hesitate to contact [Megan Crane](#).

Read the FAQ [here](#).