This is a Student Loan TIPS podcast produced by SDSU Extension in collaboration with Extension Family Resource Management Specialists and Educators across the North Central Region.  This podcast is titled: How to Talk to Lenders

While much of the student loan process is automated and online, there may be times when you need to contact your lender directly via email or telephone. Here are some examples of when you may need to contact your lender directly:

* Your loan balance is higher than you expect it to be,
* You believe your loan was incorrectly placed in default,
* You would like to request a reconsideration of a loan discharge request, or
* You disagree with a notice of offset or garnishment.

It is up to you to determine and document why you think the lender has made an error.

In this podcast, we provide specific tips for talking with your federal student loan lender. However, these same tips can generally be applied to the process you’d use for any lender dispute, including those servicing private student loans.

A good starting resource for understanding common disputes is available at https://studentaid.gov/feedback-ombudsman/disputes/common-issues It may be possible to resolve your concern on your own..

If after reviewing the different scenarios, you still have concerns, your next step is to contact your loan servicer. Your loan servicer is the company that collects payments, responds to customer service inquiries, and performs other administrative tasks associated with maintaining a federal student loan on behalf of a lender. If you're unsure of who your federal student loan servicer is, you can look it up using the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) using your FSA ID.

When you contact your loan servicers, keep the following in mind.

* Keep careful notes of all conversations you have. Follow up in writing so you have a physical record of what has been said and done.
* Request a copy of your customer service history; some loan servicers make available copies of the notes that customer service representatives make on your account.
* When you speak with someone on the phone, make a note of whom you speak to and when, and what was said. When corresponding via postal mail, keep a copy of your letter and of any replies you receive.
* Save the originals of all receipts, bills, letters, and emails regarding your account. Provide copies of the originals if you are asked for them. Send letters via [certified mail](https://www.usps.com/ship/insurance-extra-services.htm), with a return receipt requested.
* Don’t let the emotion of the moment get to you. If you are not getting a proper response to your questions, calmly explain again what information or resolution you are seeking.
* Be polite and courteous, but don't be afraid to give the details of any incident and to state your concerns. Write down the facts in the order they took place and stick to what is relevant. Include important details such as your account number at the top of your letter.
* Ask for a specific timeframe for receiving a response.
* Be sure to tell the customer service representative how you can be reached.

Source: https://studentaid.gov/app/additionalInformation.action

As a result of your interaction with your lender you may decide that you’d like to submit a complaint. If your loans were federal student loans, you can submit feedback on the studentaid.gov website.

For all types of loans, you can submit a complaint on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau website at consumerfinance.gov/complaint.

Thanks for listening to this podcast. If you have questions or need more information, go to [www.nccea.org](http://www.nccea.org) to find the Extension website for your state.