

Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG)

Program Overview

What is it?

The Ohio Department of Higher Education administers the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) program, which provides grant money to Ohio residents who demonstrate the highest levels of financial need (as determined by the results of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)) who are enrolled at Ohio public colleges or universities, Ohio private, non-profit colleges or universities, and Ohio private, for-profit institutions.

Who is Eligible?

Ohio residents in an associate degree, first bachelor's degree, or nurse diploma program at an eligible Ohio or Pennsylvania institution with an SAI (Student Aid Index) of 3750 or less ***and*** a maximum household income of $96,000.

How do students apply?

Students apply for OCOG benefits by completing the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).**

Is there a deadline?

- The application deadline is October 1 of each year.

OCOG Utilization

- Except for foster youth at community colleges and students receiving federal veterans' education benefits, OCOG is tuition and/or general fees specific. General fees are defined as those assessed uniformly to all undergraduate students and those that do not allow for a waiver to be offered to any student(s).

- Students are limited to 10 semesters or 15 quarters of state, need-based grant aid (including combination of OCOG and OIG).

- Students can be enrolled full-time, three-quarters-time, half-time, and one-quarter-time.

OCOG Award

- The maximum yearly award amounts for the 2026-2027 academic year are:

- Ohio public universities: $4,000
- Ohio private, non-profit colleges and universities: $5,000
- Ohio private, proprietary (for-profit) colleges and universities: $2,000
- Select colleges and universities in Pennsylvania: $600

Certificate of Authorization

OCOG is available to students in an associate degree, first bachelor's degree, or nursing diploma program. Ohio private non-profit, and private for-profit institutions must hold a Certificate of Authorization (COA) through the Ohio Department of Higher Education for the on-ground or distance education program in which the student is enrolled, to receive OCOG. Ohio COA's can be found at https://www.ohiohigered.org/independent-schools. Nursing diploma programs must be approved by the Ohio Board of Nursing.

OCOG Exceptions

Statute maintains that the Chancellor may choose to calculate the average tuition and general charges for each sector in determining OCOG eligibility.

Community Colleges

- For 2026–2027, the maximum Pell award of $7,395 continues to exceed the average tuition and general charges at community colleges, and therefore no OCOG awards will be available.
- However, students that otherwise qualify for foster youth status, Federal Veteran's Education benefits, or third term OCOG may be eligible for up to the public main campus award amount.

University Regional Campuses

- For 2026–2027, the average tuition and general charges at university regional campuses slightly exceeds the $7,395 Pell maximum. Therefore, a modified maximum OCOG award amount will be available.
- Regional campus students that otherwise qualify for Federal Veteran's Education benefits or third term OCOG may be eligible for up to the public main campus award amount.

OCOG Calculators

For ease of administration, calculators are available on our website http://www.ohiohighered.org/ocog/calculators:

- OCOG Refund Calculator
- OCOG Tuition-specific Eligibility Calculator
- OCOG Dual Enrollment and Financial Aid Consortium Calculator
- OCOG Eligibility for Qualified Foster Youth Calculator
- OCOG Remaining Eligibility Calculator
- OCOG Eligibility for the Treatment of Federal Veteran's Education Benefits

Academic Calendar & Extension Requests

Each institution has its own submission window each term, based on the academic calendar entered in HEI. **The window opens 15 days after the term start and closes 45 days later.** HEI sends reminder emails at the start of each term, and ODHE may grant extensions when circumstances beyond an institution's control prevent timely submission.

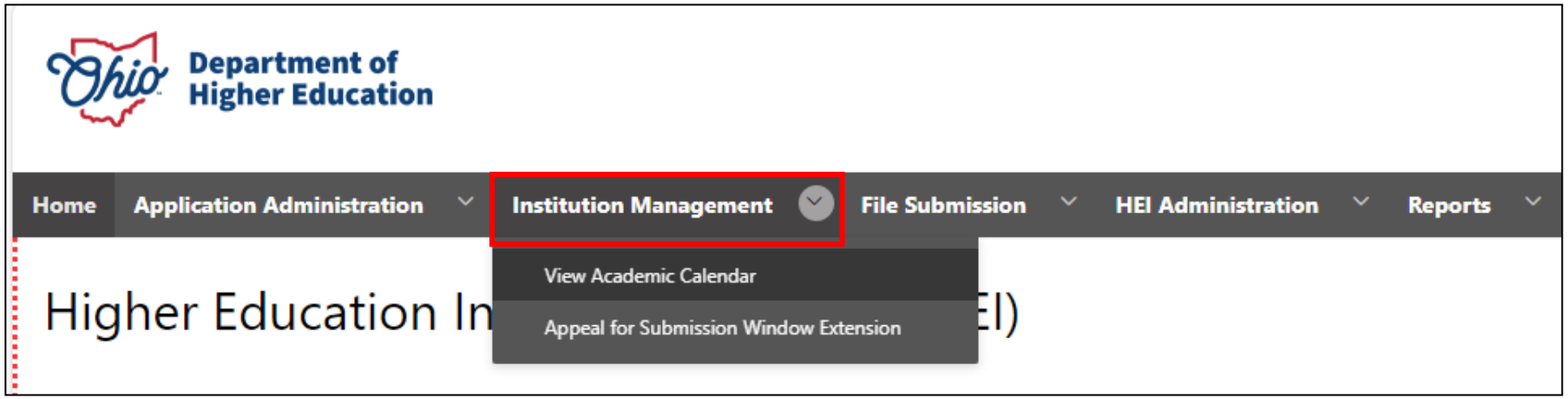
The HEI Submission and Extension Requests guidance memo found here: https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/highered.ohio.gov/sgs/guidance-memos/FA26-002.pdf

The **Academic Calendar** and **Extension Request** tools are available in HEI under **Institution Management**.

Institution Management

Institution Management has two functions:

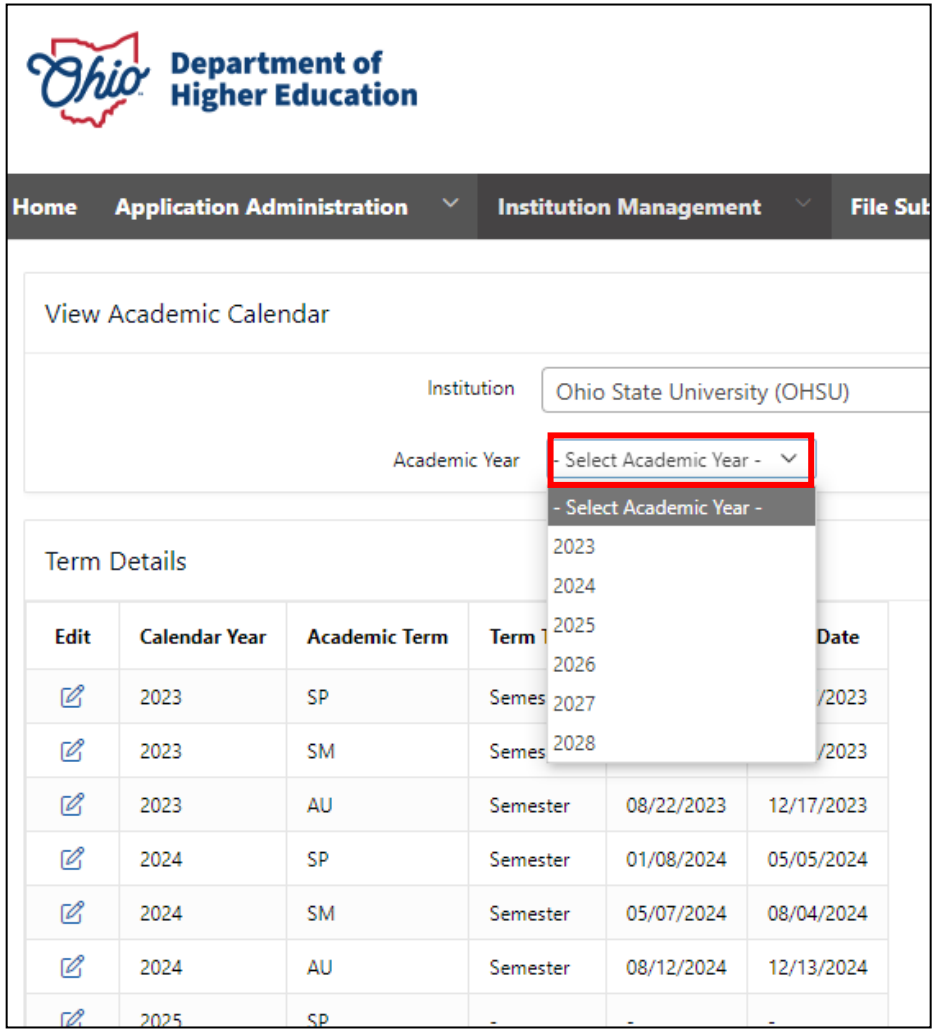
- **View Academic Calendar**
- **Appeal for Extension for Reporting**



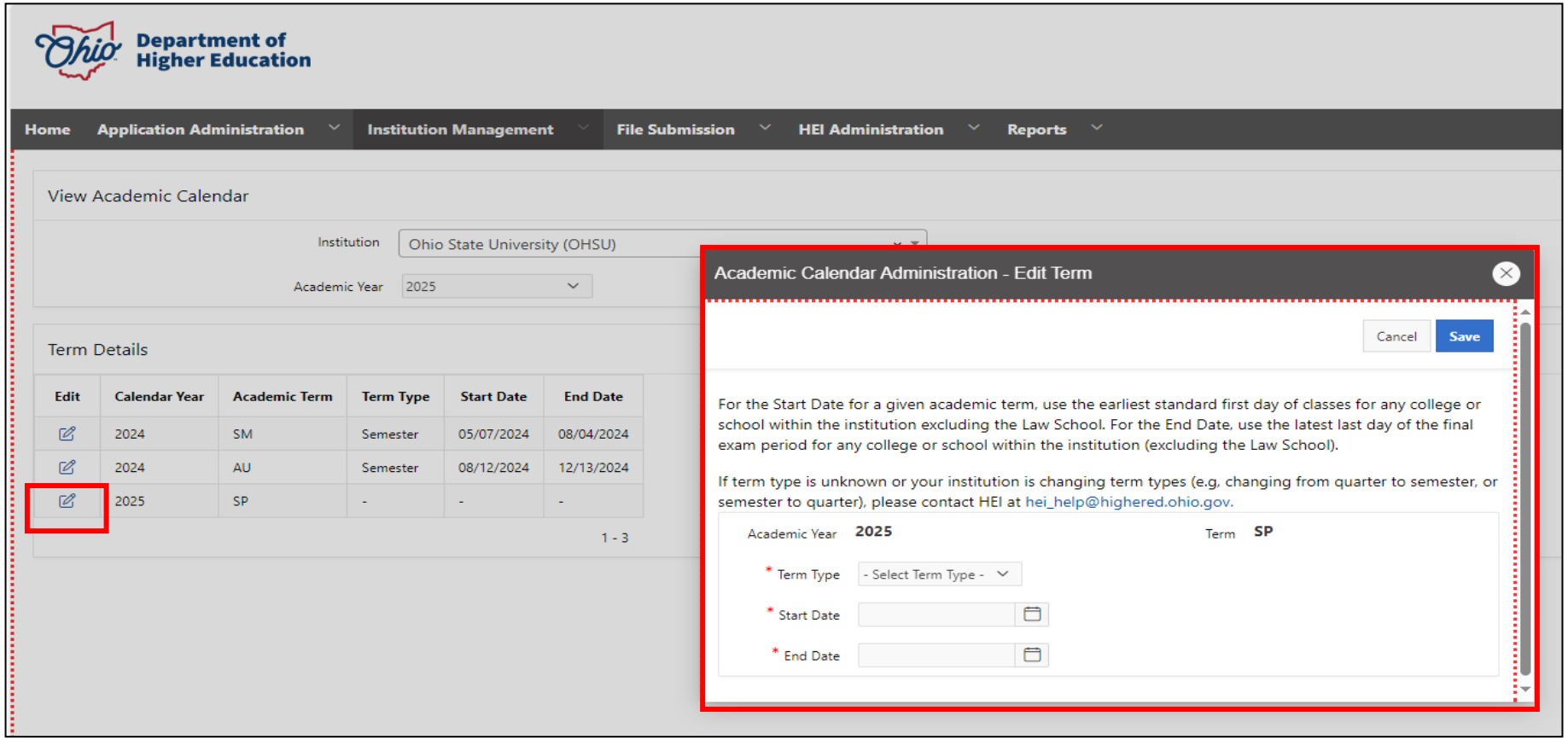
Institution Management- Setting up Academic Calendar

To establish the Academic Calendar:

- Select **View Academic Calendar** from the menu drop-down
- Then select **Academic Year**.



Institution Management- Setting up Academic Calendar

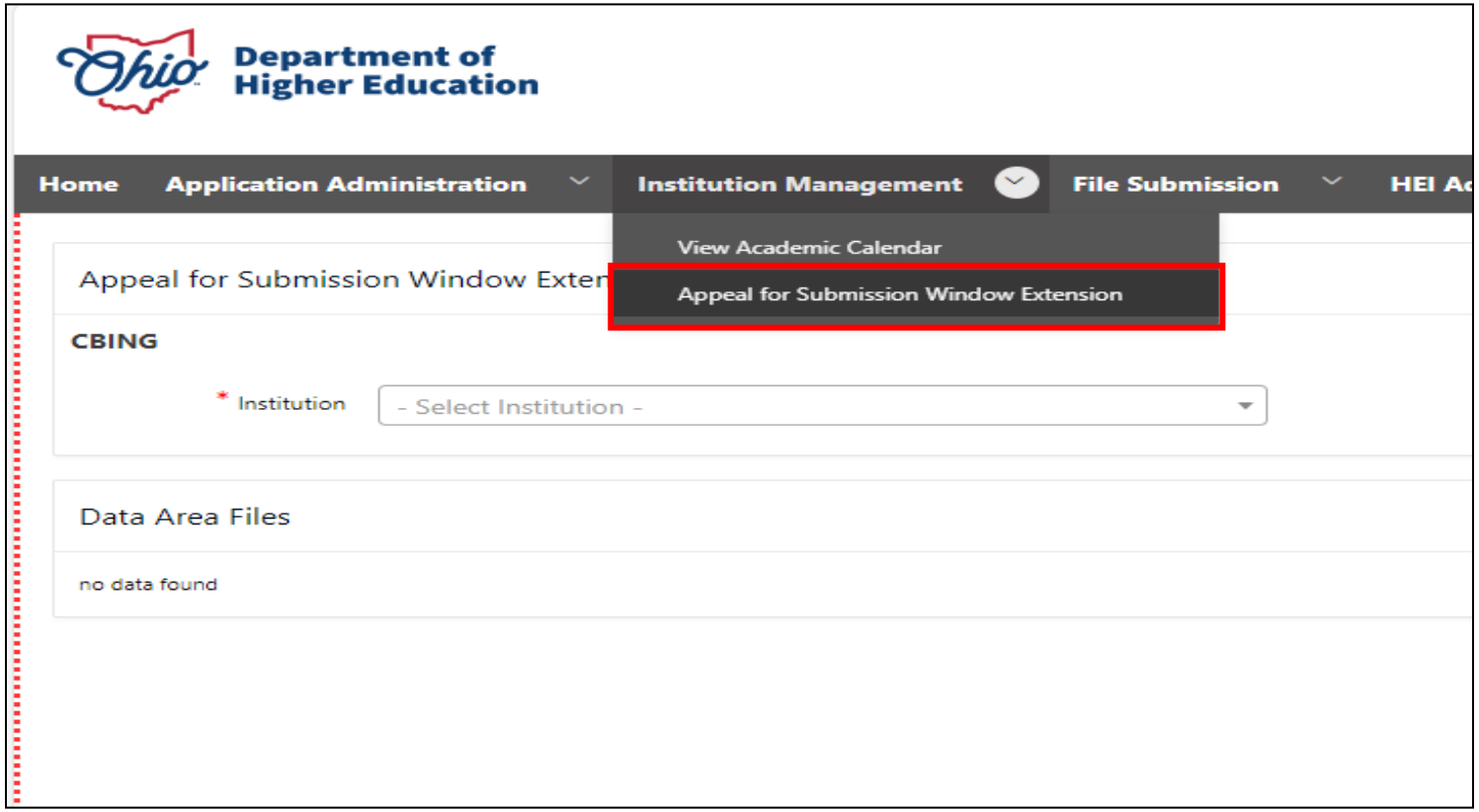


Use the **Edit** option to complete the **Term Type**, **Start Date** and **End Date** (using the calendar icon as needed).

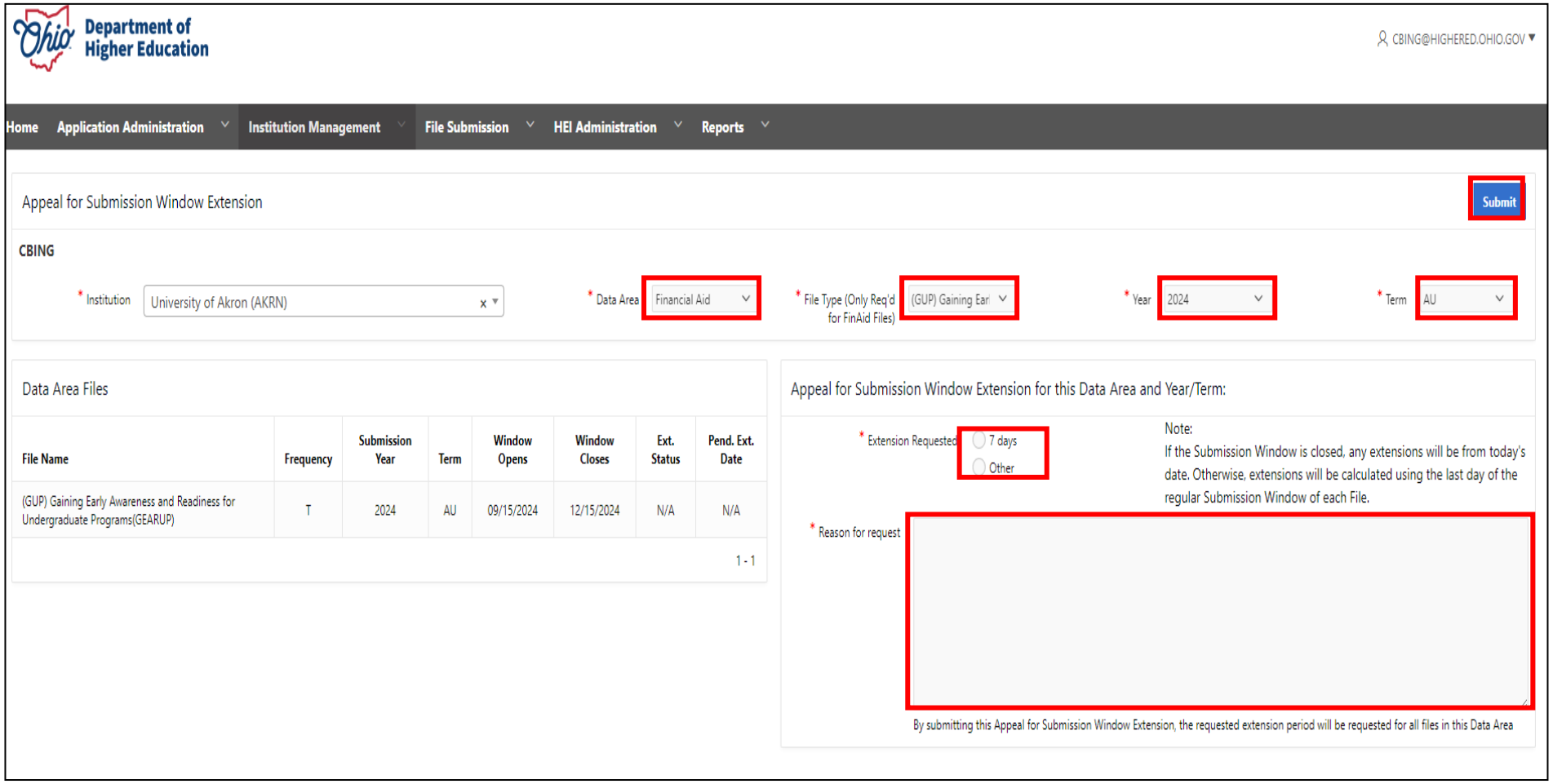
Then select **Save**, your academic calendar is then set for that term.

Institution Management- Appeal for Extension

Select **Appeal for Submission Window Extension** from the drop down.



Institution Management- Appeal for Extension



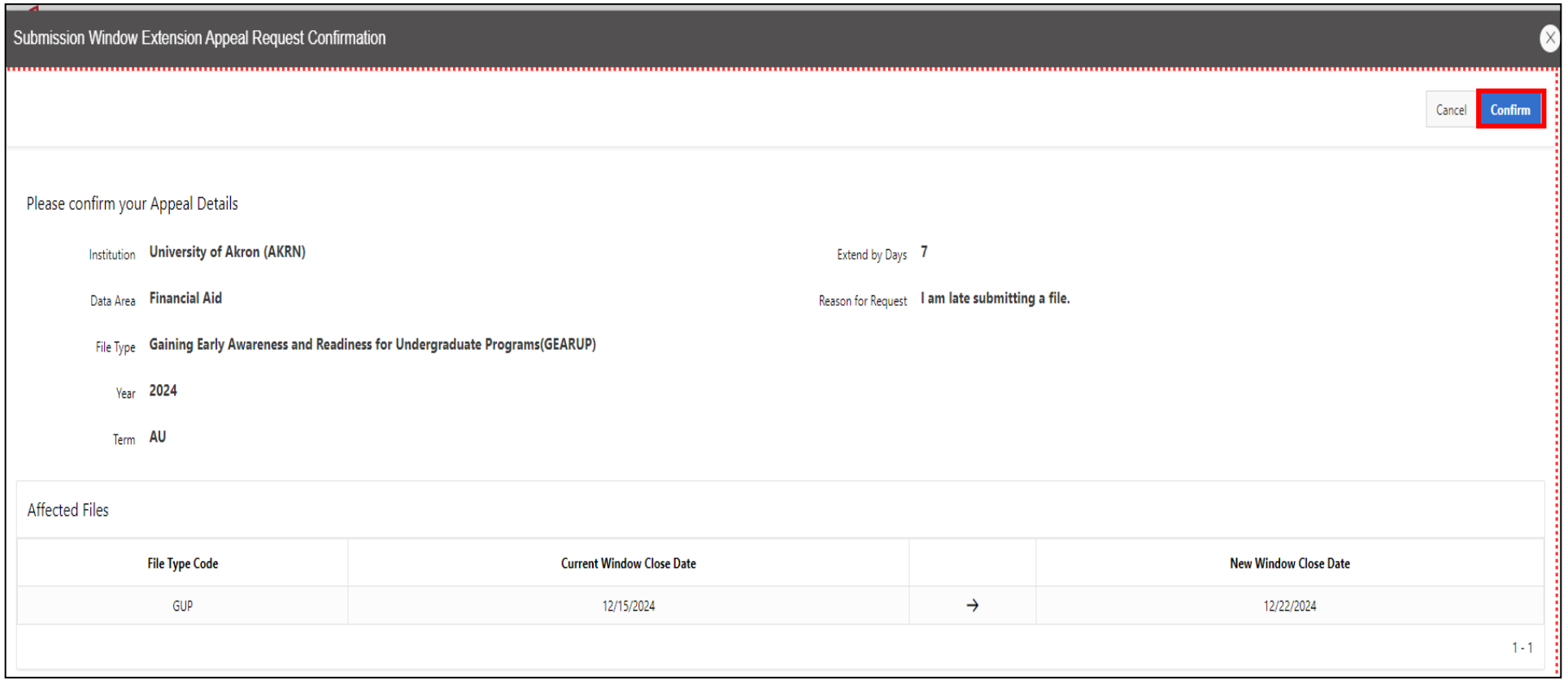
Select the **Data Area**, **File Type**, **Year,** and **Term**.

Select the length of the extension request and reason.

Click **Submit**

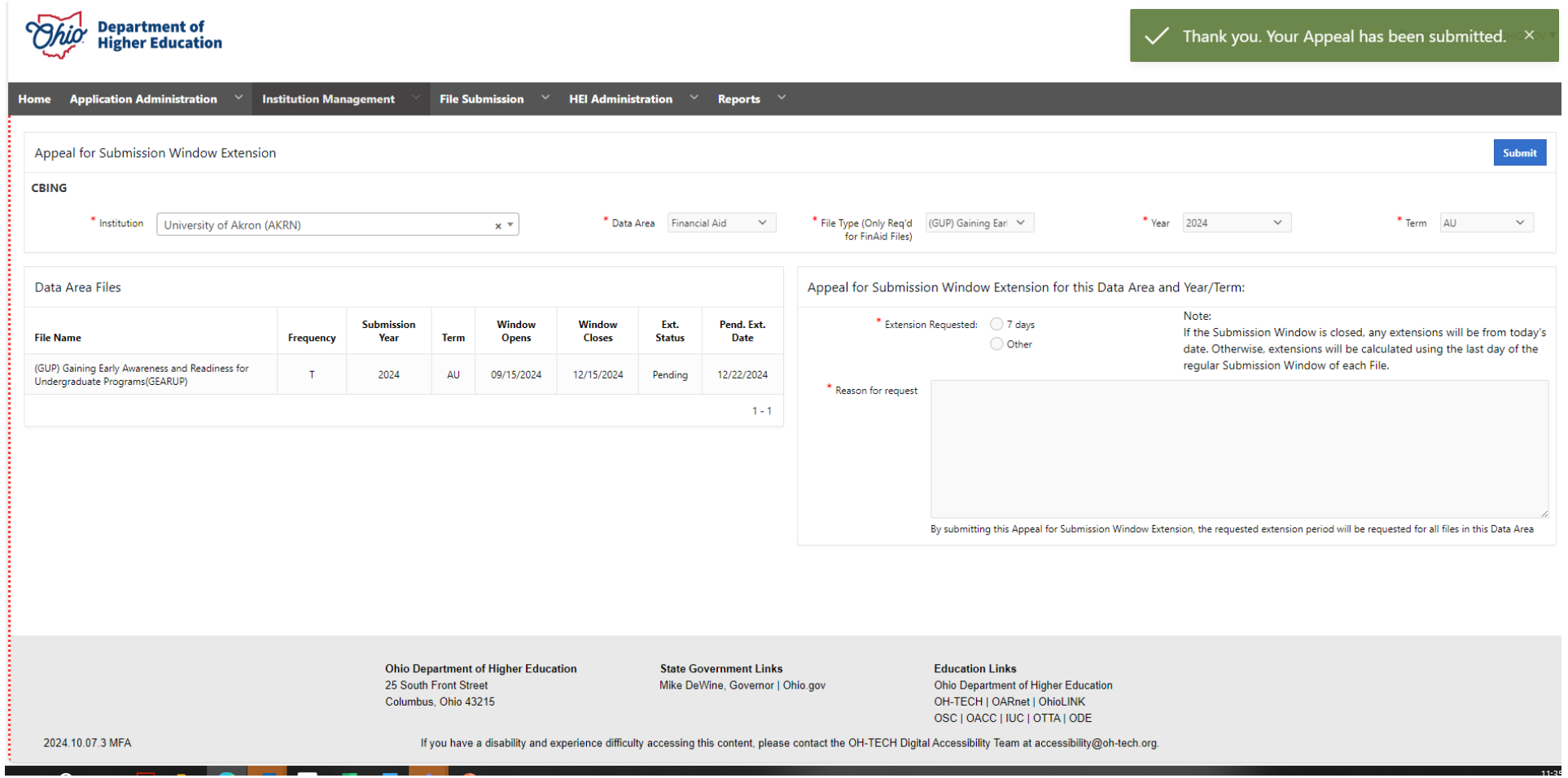
Institution Management- Appeal for Extension

Next you will see a confirmation page, ensure all information is correct, and select **Confirm**.



Institution Management- Appeal for Extension

The request will then be placed in queue to be approved by the Program Manager

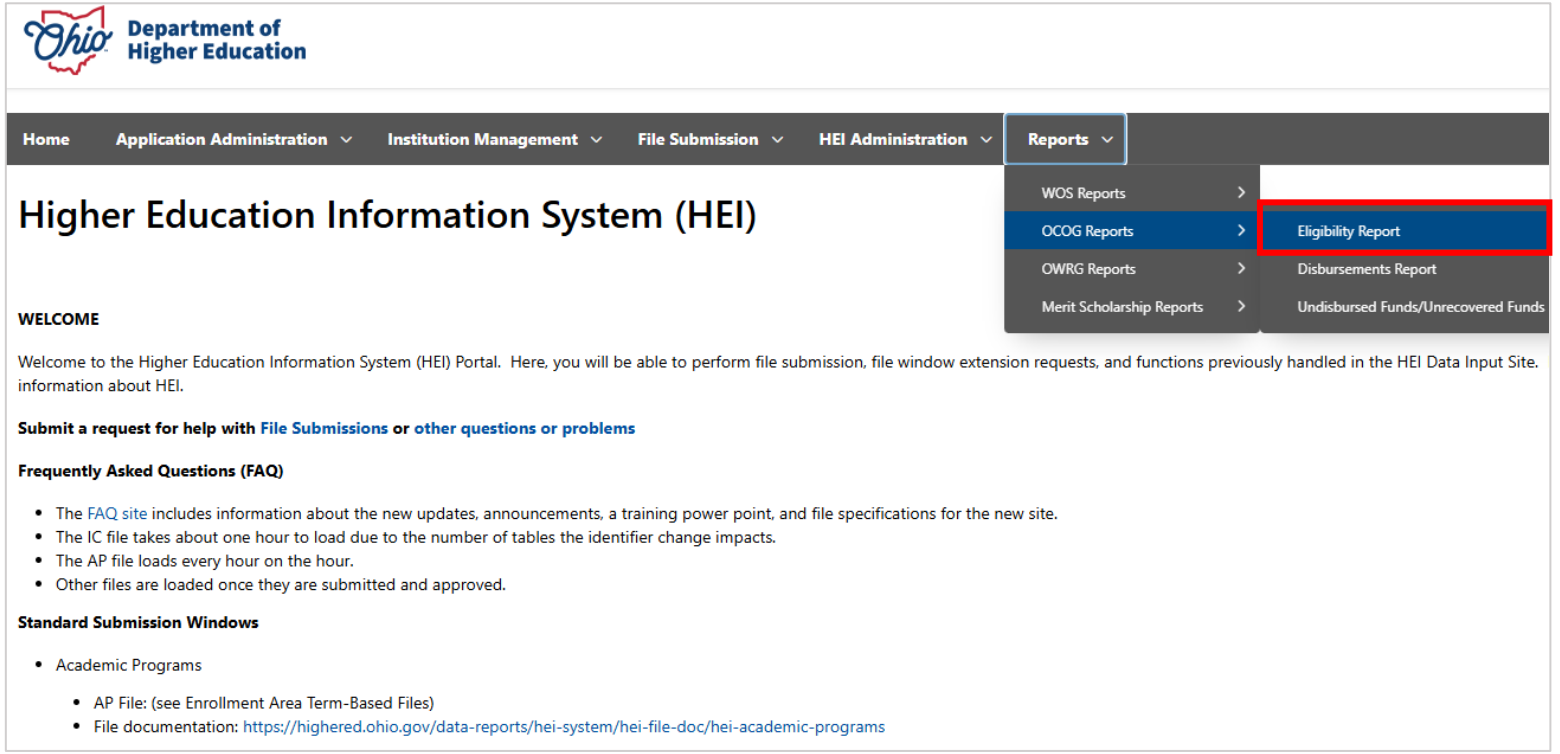


OCOG Eligibility Report

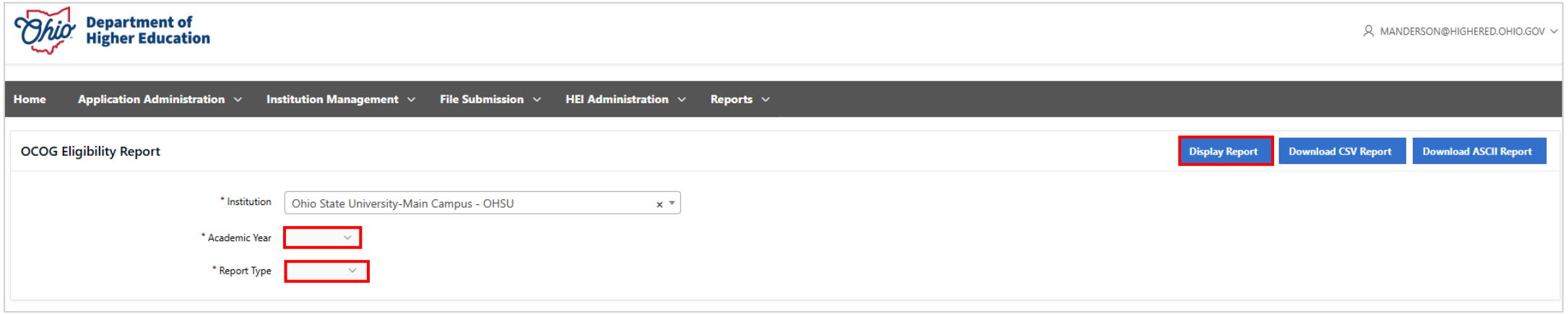
The OCOG Eligibility Report is available in the HEI File Submission Site: https://hei.ohiohighered.org/

From the HEI home page:

- Select the **Reports** tab
- In the dropdown menu, choose **OCOG Reports**
- Select **Eligibility Report**



OCOG Eligibility Report



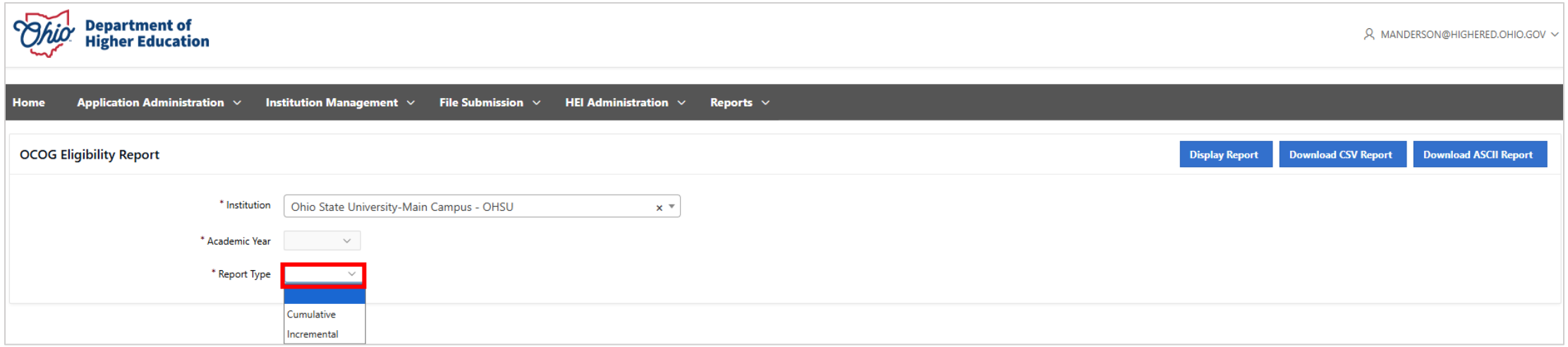
Institution will populate with your school's name

Select **Academic Year**

Select **Report Type**

Select **Display Report**

OCOG Eligibility Report



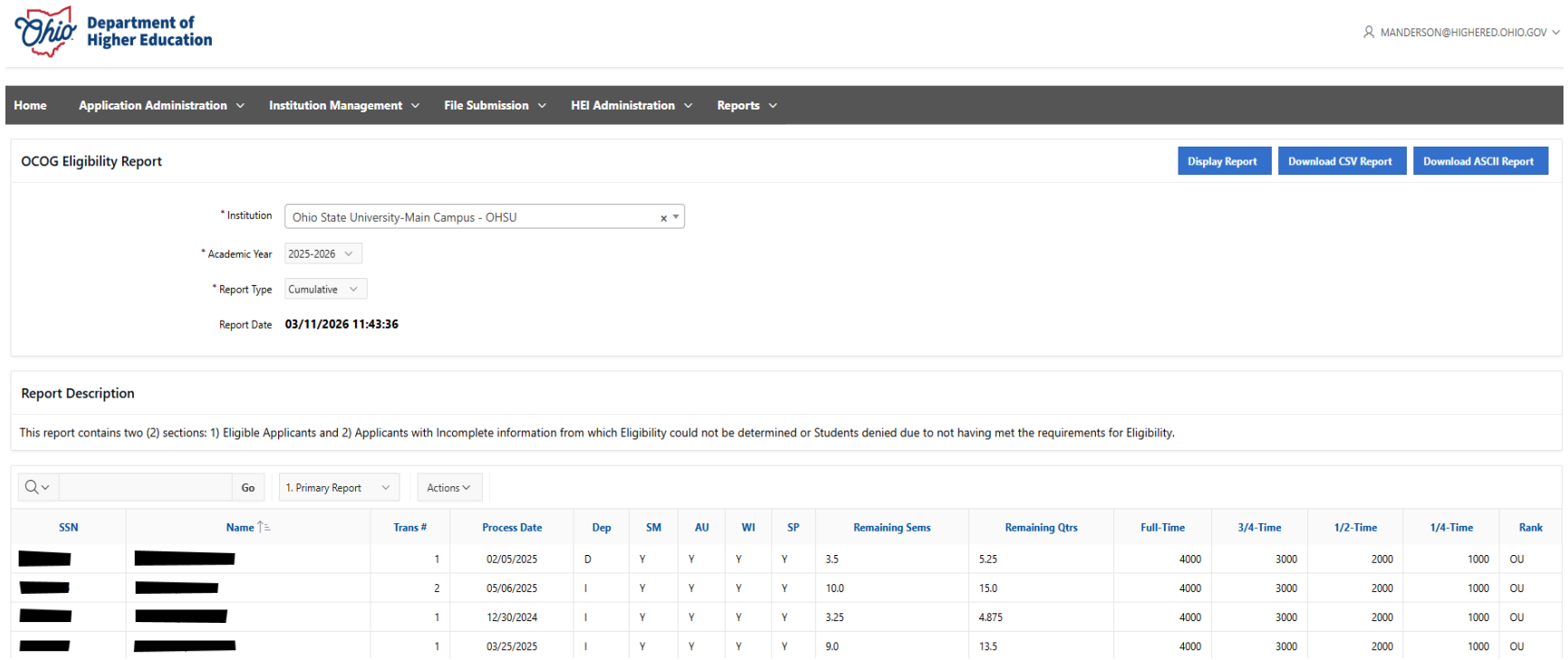
Report Type:

Cumulative Report: all students for the academic year

- Should be run when packaging a student's financial aid award and before requesting funds each term

Incremental Report: only students with changes to their ISIR since the last cumulative report was run

OCOG Eligibility Report



SSN	Name	Trans #	Process Date	Dep	SM	AU	WI	SP	Remaining Sems	Remaining Qtrs	Full-Time	3/4-Time	1/2-Time	1/4-Time	Rank
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	02/05/2025	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	3.5	5.25	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	2	05/06/2025	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	10.0	15.0	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	12/30/2024	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	3.25	4.875	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	03/25/2025	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	9.0	13.5	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU

After selecting **Display Report**, the results populate directly below.

The report contains two sections:

- Eligible Applicants
- Applicants with Incomplete Information

OCOG Eligibility Report

Report Description

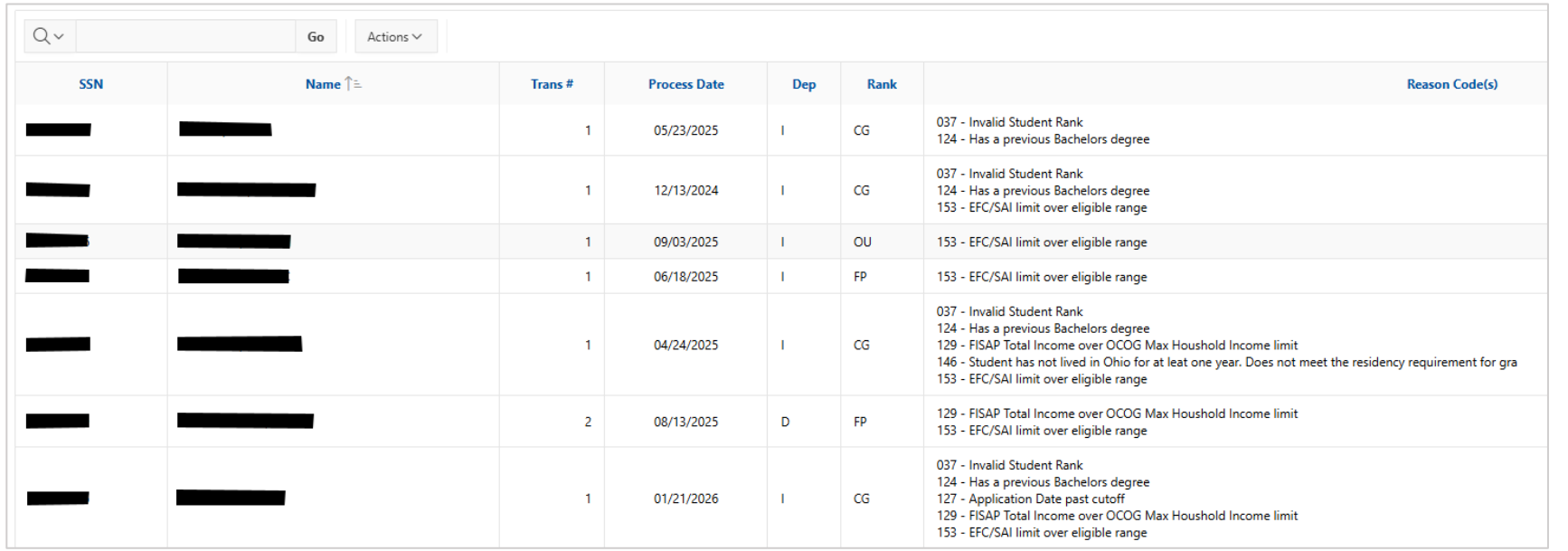
This report contains two (2) sections: 1) Eligible Applicants and 2) Applicants with Incomplete information from which Eligibility could not be determined or Students denied due to not having met the requirements for Eligibility.

Go | 1. Primary Report | Actions

SSN	Name	Trans #	Process Date	Dep	SM	AU	WI	SP	Remaining Sems	Remaining Qtrs	Full-Time	3/4-Time	1/2-Time	1/4-Time	Rank
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	01/22/2025	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	7.333	11.0	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	2	01/15/2026	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	10.0	15.0	4000	3000	2000	1000	SO
[redacted]	[redacted]	2	09/05/2025	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	10.0	15.0	4000	3000	2000	1000	FP
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	02/25/2025	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	9.0	13.5	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	2	02/12/2026	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	8.25	12.375	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	4	01/15/2026	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	10.0	15.0	4000	3000	2000	1000	OU
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	12/31/2024	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	5.5	8.25	4000	3000	2000	1000	SO
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	12/19/2024	I	Y	Y	Y	Y	10.0	15.0	4000	3000	2000	1000	SO

Eligible Applicants Report: Indicates eligibility based on ISIR information received from the U.S. Department of Education for anyone lists Ohio as their state of residence

OCOG Eligibility Report

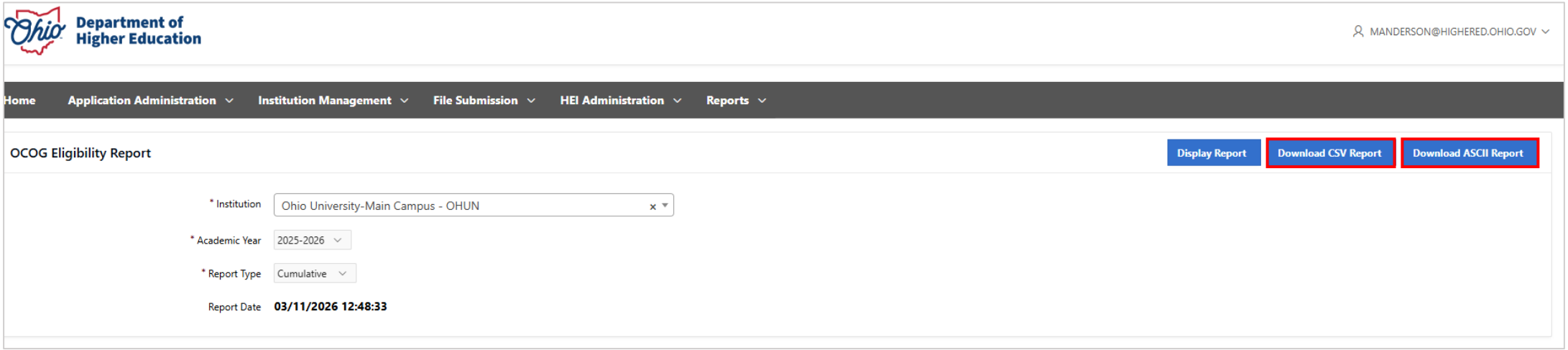


Go | Actions

SSN	Name	Trans #	Process Date	Dep	Rank	Reason Code(s)
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	05/23/2025	I	CG	037 - Invalid Student Rank 124 - Has a previous Bachelors degree
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	12/13/2024	I	CG	037 - Invalid Student Rank 124 - Has a previous Bachelors degree 153 - EFC/SAI limit over eligible range
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	09/03/2025	I	OU	153 - EFC/SAI limit over eligible range
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	06/18/2025	I	FP	153 - EFC/SAI limit over eligible range
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	04/24/2025	I	CG	037 - Invalid Student Rank 124 - Has a previous Bachelors degree 129 - FISAP Total Income over OCOG Max Houshold Income limit 146 - Student has not lived in Ohio for at leat one year. Does not meet the residency requirement for gra 153 - EFC/SAI limit over eligible range
[redacted]	[redacted]	2	08/13/2025	D	FP	129 - FISAP Total Income over OCOG Max Houshold Income limit 153 - EFC/SAI limit over eligible range
[redacted]	[redacted]	1	01/21/2026	I	CG	037 - Invalid Student Rank 124 - Has a previous Bachelors degree 127 - Application Date past cutoff 129 - FISAP Total Income over OCOG Max Houshold Income limit 153 - EFC/SAI limit over eligible range

Applicants with Incomplete information: Eligibility could not be determined or Students denied due to not having met the requirements for Eligibility.

OCOG Eligibility Report



To download the report select :

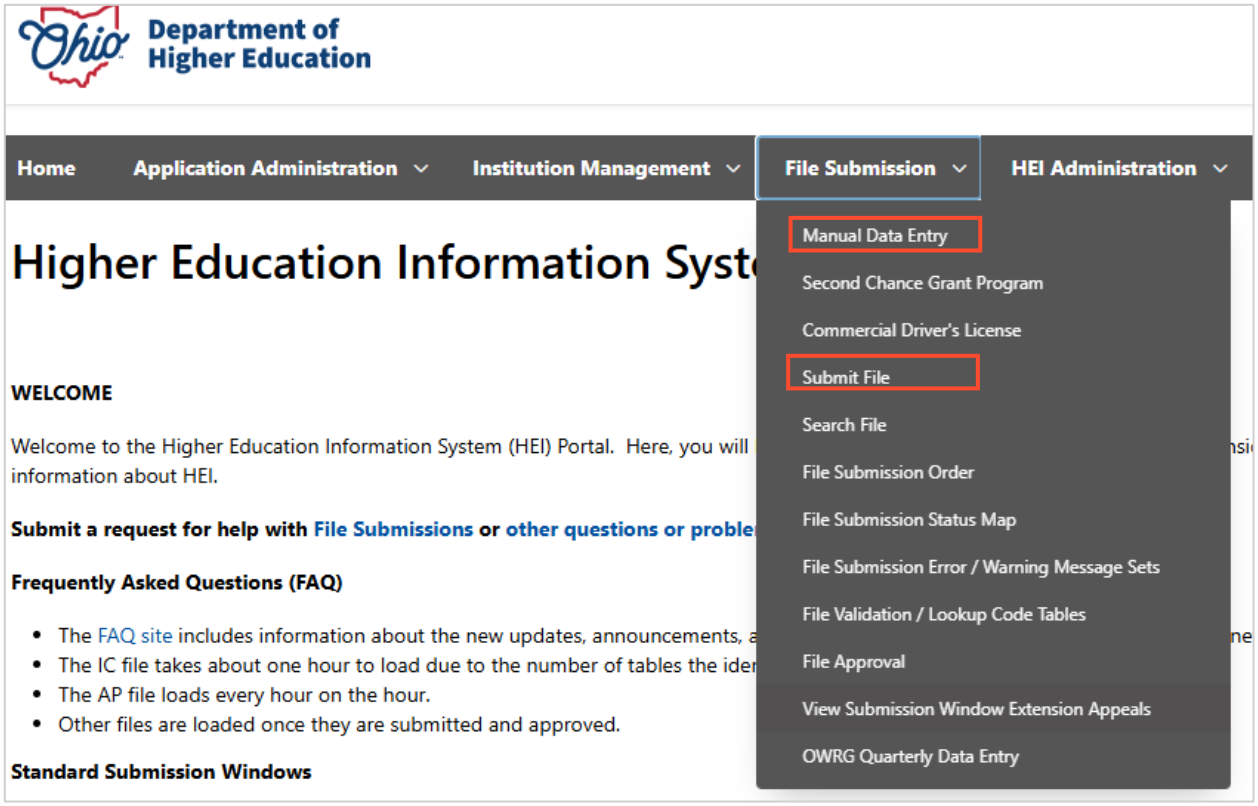
Download CSV Report or **Download ASCII Report**

The ASCII format will assist schools in uploading the student information to their financial aid systems. The ASCII file format is here: https://highered.ohio.gov/data-reports/hei-system/hei-file-doc/hei-financial-aid/hei-ocog/ocog-eligibility-query-ascii-file-format.

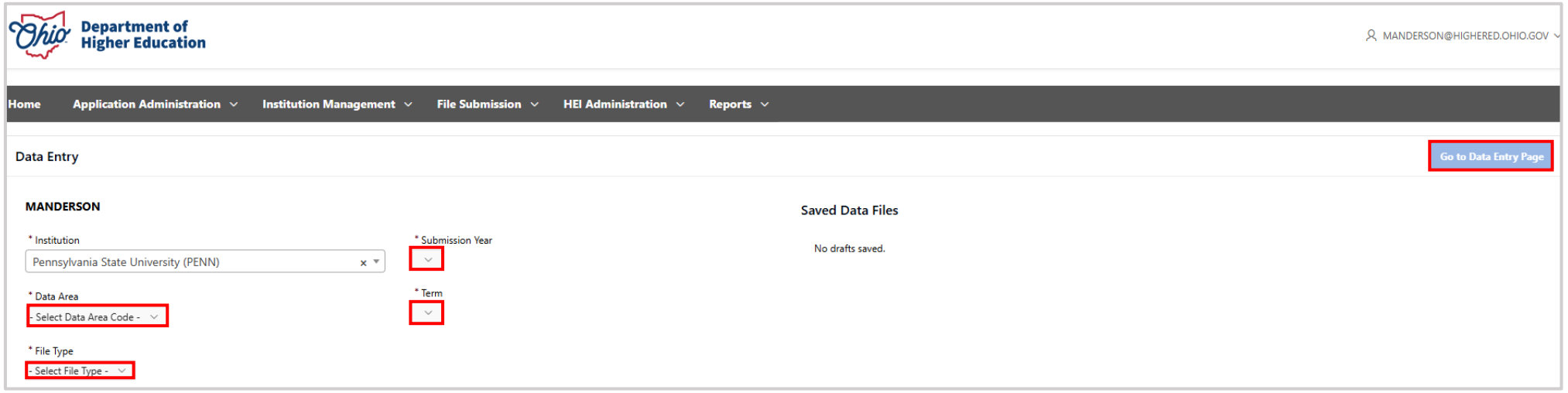
OCOG Certification & Adjustment

To certify student payments or adjustments (increases or reductions), navigate to the **File Submission** tab

From the dropdown menu select either **Manual Data Entry or Submit File**



Manual Data Entry

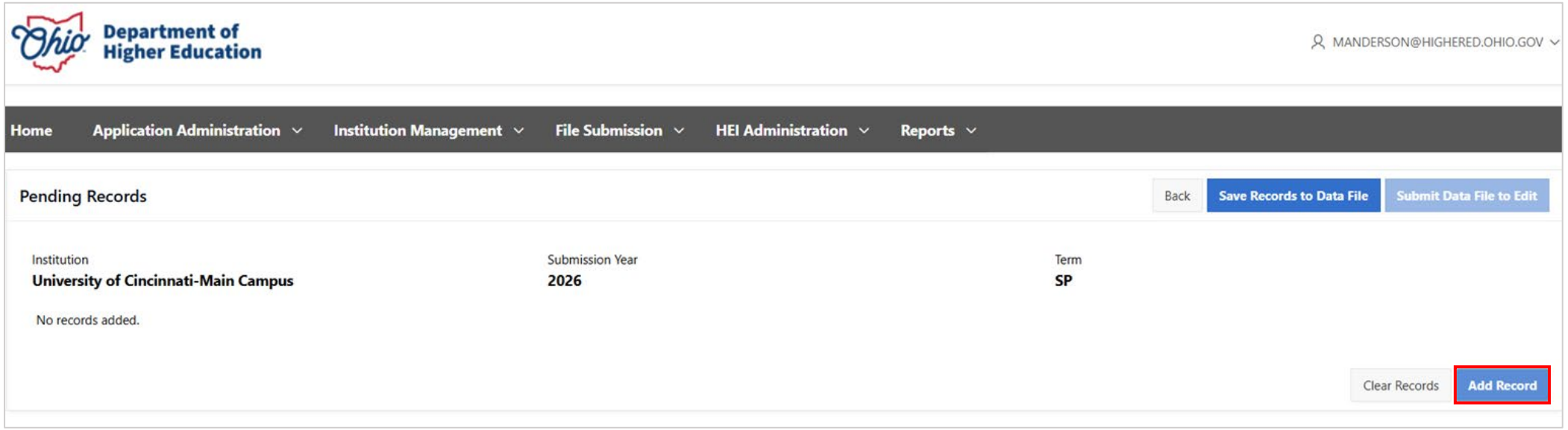


When using **Manual Data Entry**, the following fields must be populated:

- **Institution**: Auto-populated
- **Data Area**: Financial Aid
- **File Type**: (OG) OCOG Certification and Adjustment
- **Submission Year**: The academic year you want payments or adjustments applied
- **Term**: The term you want payments or adjustments applied

Once all fields are populated select **Go to Data Entry**

Manual Data Entry



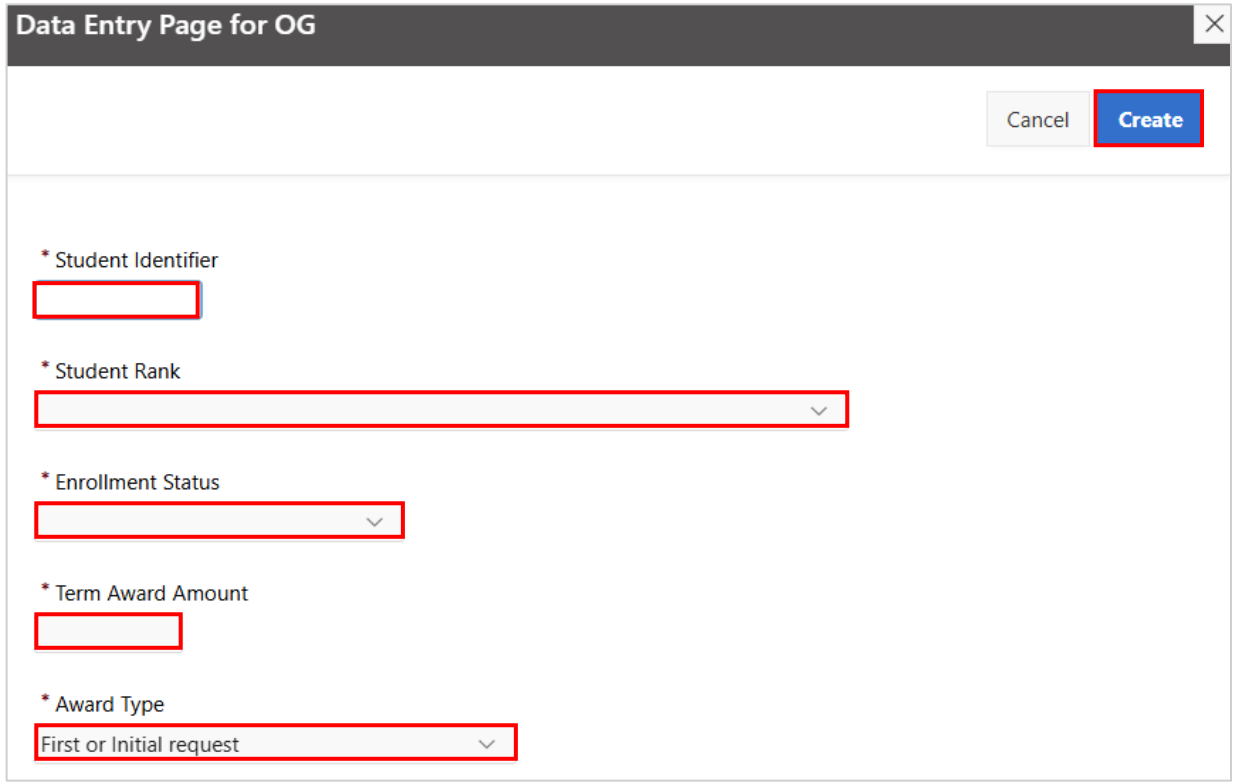
Select **Add Record**.

Manual Data Entry

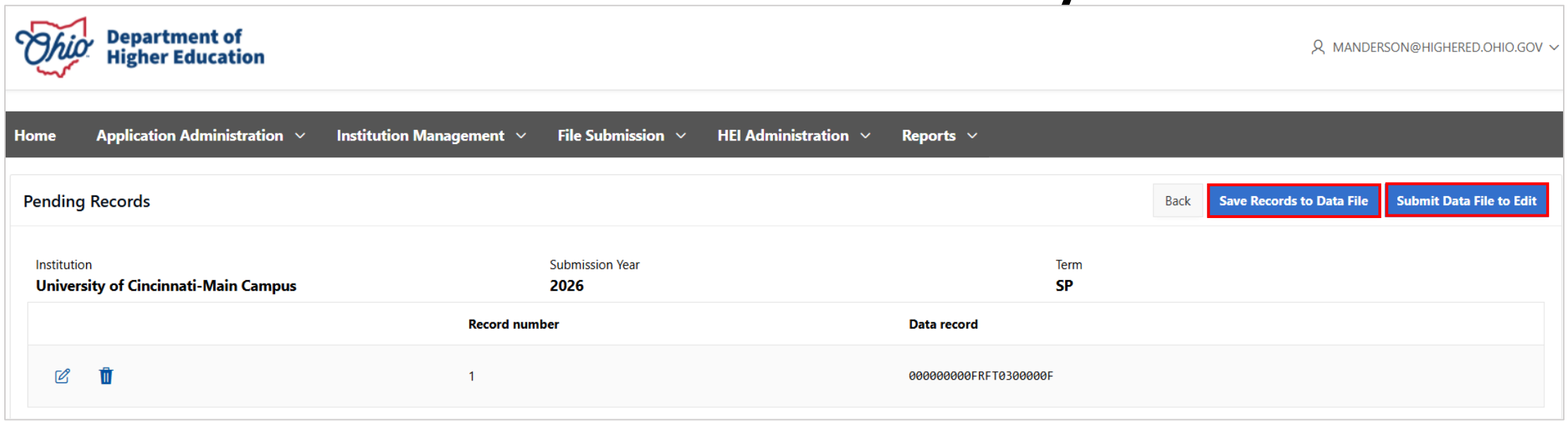
A pop-up window will appear, and the following data needs to be input for each student:

- **Student Identifier** – SSN
- **Student Rank** – year in school
- **Enrollment Status** – FT, TT, HT, QT
- **Award Type** – First or Initial request, Increase to previously requested amount, or Reduction to previously requested amount

Once all fields and populated select **Create**



Manual Data Entry



Once all information is created, select **Save Records to Data File**.

Select **Submit Data File to Edit**.

- If there are no errors, the Data Reporter will receive an email that the file is pending approval.
- If there are errors, the Data Reporter will receive an email. The file will need to be corrected and the entire file will need to be re-submitted.
- When the file has been approved, denied, or rejected, the Data Reporter will receive an auto-generated email.
- Once the file is approved, the transactions can be viewed on the Disbursement Report.

Submit File

When submitting student data records via the **Submit File** option, you'll first need to prepare your file.

Each file must contain a header record and all data fields must be complete and correctly formatted**.**

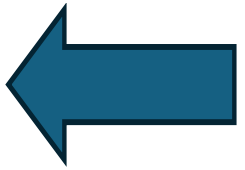
- The header record format can be found here: https://highered.ohio.gov/data-reports/hei-system/hei-data-submission/hei-file-header-record
- The file format and data field explanations can be found here: https://highered.ohio.gov/data-reports/hei-system/hei-file-doc/hei-financial-aid/hei-ocog/hei-og

Files can be saved as CSV, XLS, or TXT (Notepad or WordPad).

Notes

- *The final file should not contain any spaces or blank lines — including between the header and the first record, or between individual records.*
- *Make sure the cursor does not extend beyond the last record line. (The easiest way to confirm there are no extra spaces is to highlight the entire file.)*

Submit File

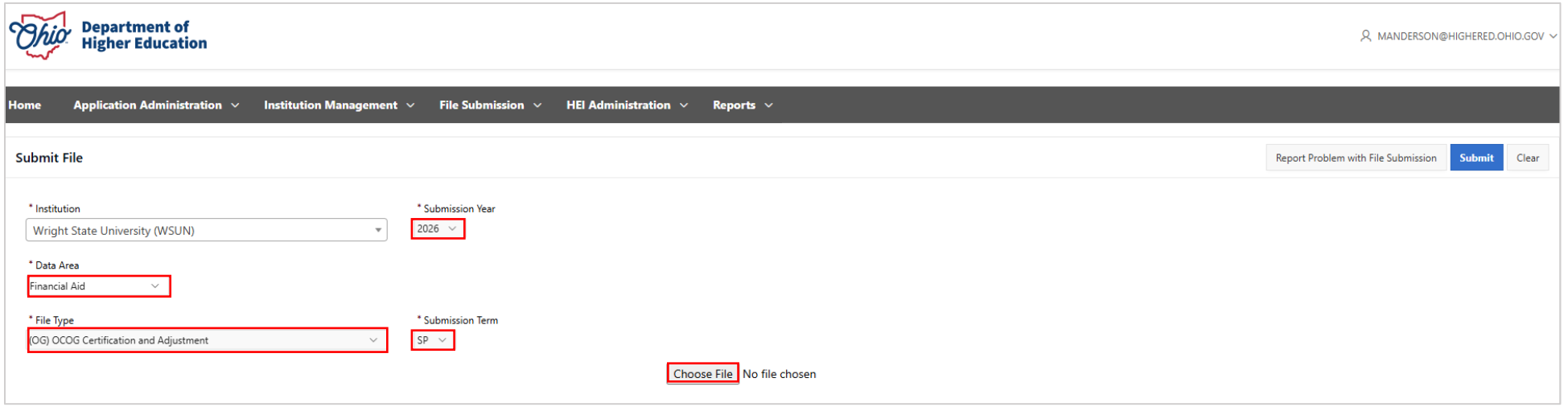
BGSUOG2026SP000003  Header

123456789FRFT0200000F

234567890SOHT00250000I

345678912FRFT0025000R

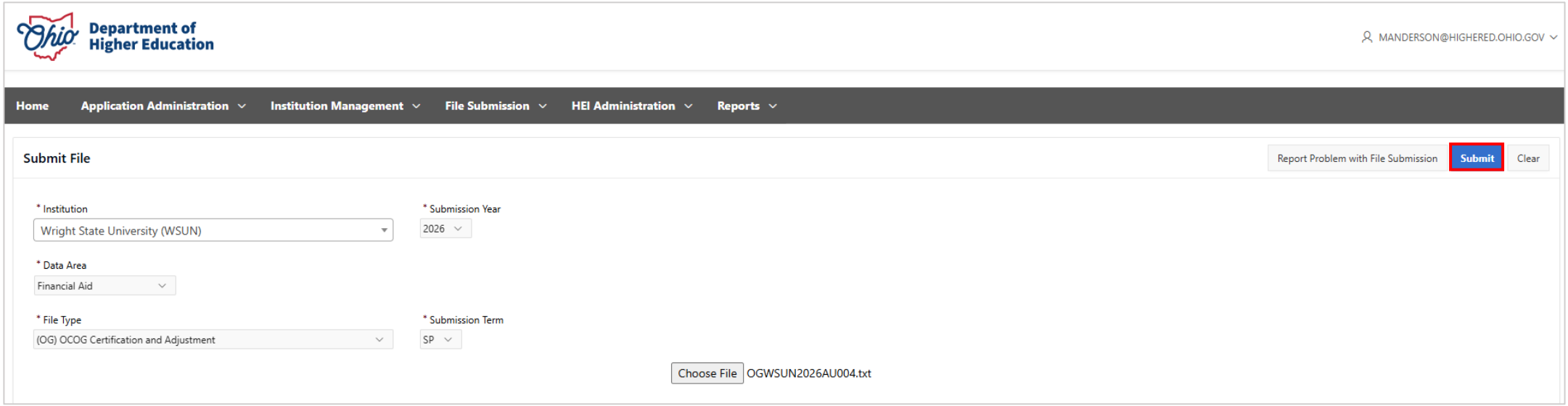
Submit File



When using **Submit File**, the following fields must be populated:

Institution: Auto-populated
Data Area: Financial Aid
File Type: (OG) OCOG Certification and Adjustment
Submission Year: The academic year you want payments or adjustments applied
Term: The term you want payments or adjustments applied
Choose File: Saved file

Submit File



Once all fields are populated select **Submit**

Submitted Files will appear below with one of the following statuses: **Pending Approval - Pending DHE Review, Failed Validations - Error(s) on File, Structural Failure**

Note

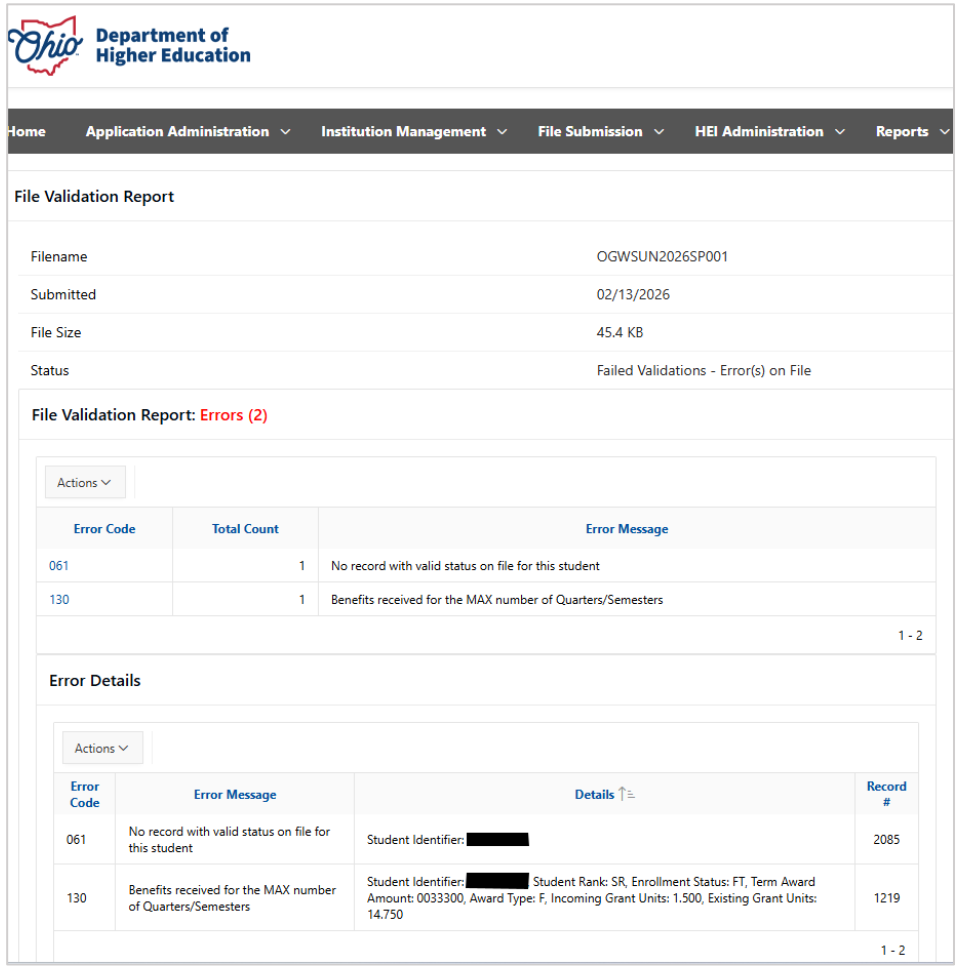
- If there are errors, the record(s) will need to be corrected, and the entire file will need to be re-submitted.
- If there are no errors the file will show "**Pending Approval**". Once approved or denied the status will change to "**File Data Load to Database Complete**"

OCOG Reports Overview

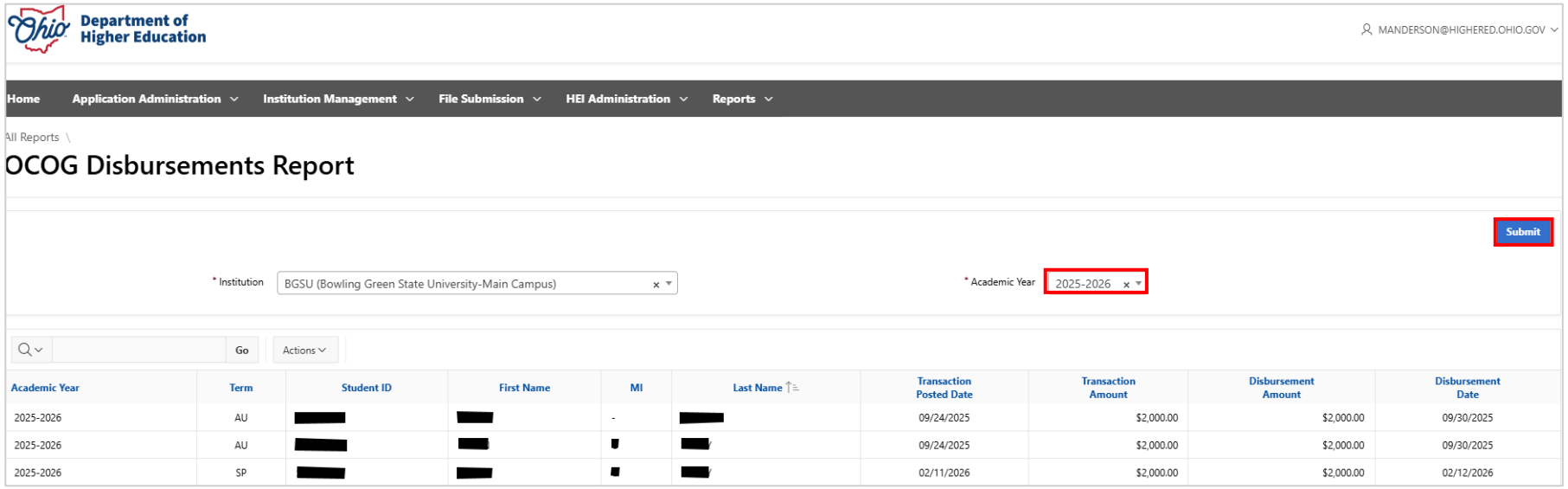
File Data Validation Report

The File Validation Report can be found by selecting, **File Submission> Submit File>File Validation Report**.

This report provide details about errored records including student identifier, error code, and error message



OCOG Disbursement Report



OCOG Disbursements Report

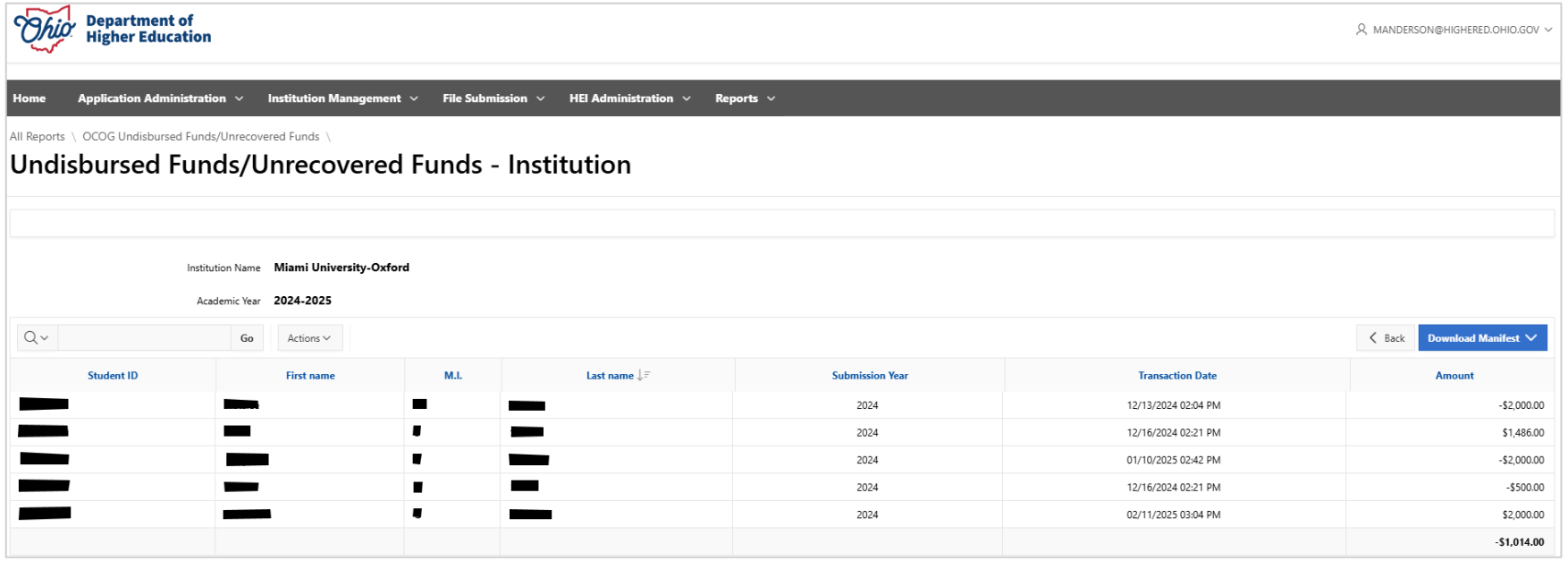
The OCOG Disbursements Report can be found by selecting, **Reports**> **OCOG Reports**>**Disbursements Report**.

After selecting **Academic Year** and **Submit** the report will populate below.

Note

- **Transaction Posted Date** reflects the date the file was approved by ODHE and **Disbursement Date** reflects the date payment was generated.

OCOG Undisbursed Funds/Unrecovered Funds Report



Undisbursed Funds/Unrecovered Funds Report

The Undisbursed/Unrecovered Funds Report can be found by selecting, **Reports**> **OCOG Reports**> **Undisbursed Funds/Unrecovered Funds**.

This report shows any undisbursed amount (funds owed to institution) or an unrecovered amount (funds owed to ODHE). A refund manifest can be downloaded for the institution to send with their refund check.

OCOG Refund Policy

- When a refund is owed for any ODHE financial aid program, a refund check must be submitted within 30 days.
- The 30-day window begins when the adjustment file is submitted in HEI or when ODHE becomes aware of the refund owed.
- The refund check should be payable to the Ohio Department of Higher Education and mailed with a copy of the refund manifest to:

  Ohio Department of Higher Education
  ATTN: OCOG Program Manager
  Office of Financial Aid, 7th Floor
  25 South Front Street Columbus, OH 43215-4183

- If the refund check is not submitted within 30 days, interest may accrue monthly at 1%.
- After 45 days, unpaid refunds will be turned over to the Ohio Attorney General's Office for collection, and the institution will be responsible for the refund plus any AG fees.

Contact Information:

Program Manager
Michelle Anderson
manderson@highered.ohio.gov
(614) 752-9199

Department of Higher Education

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