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Program Reviews

How to Survive and Thrive During Your Program Review

Program Reviews

- What is a Program Review?
- Program Review Priority
- Timelines and Tips
- Request for Information
- Planning for Arrival
- Entrance Conference
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- Questions and Conversation



What is a Program Review?

A method of oversight to ensure FSA programs are administered properly

Evaluates compliance with Title IV, HEA statute and regulation through:

- Examination of financial aid, fiscal and academic records
- Interviews conducted with institutional staff and students
- Review of Consumer Information requirements

Identifies errors in compliance and liabilities owed

Used as a tool to improve future institutional capabilities

Reference: FSA 2015, Session 37, Program Review Essentials and the Top 10 Compliance Findings.
<http://www.southwestern.edu/2015sessions.html>

Program Review Priority







The law specifies that the Department gives priority in program reviews to schools that:

- Have a high cohort default rate or dollar volume of default,
- Have a significant fluctuation in Pell Grant awards or FSA loan volume that is not accounted for by changes in the programs,
- Are reported to have deficiencies or financial aid problems by the appropriate state agency or accrediting agency,
- Have high annual dropout rates,
- or the Department determines you may pose a significant risk of failing to comply with the administrative capability or financial responsibility requirements. 20 USC 1099c-1(a)(2)

Reference: FSA Handbook 2016-2017, Volume 2, Page 2-158
<https://fap.ed.gov/fahandbook/attachments/46377SAHBVol2CH8.pdf>

Timeline

Expert Tips

- 7/5/16: Call from the Department of Education.  Breathe, take notes.
- 7/12/16: Official Notification Letter arrived.  Work with your mail department to ensure they look out for it. (5-14 day timeline*)
- 8/5/16: Student sample arrives via email.  Organize materials.
- 8/8/16: Department Arrives.  Plan and prepare physical space.
- 11/15/16: Delivery of the PRR, "Preliminary" Program Review Report.  Most of this you will already know from the exit interview. You have 75 to respond
- 8/15/17: Delivery of FPRD Final Program Review Report. No variation from the PRR.  Celebrate, its over!

Request for Information

14 Day Timeline to Respond – See Announcement Letter for full details.

1. Consumer Information- This was the biggest thing required initially. *5 days to return to Department. [See the Online Consumer Info Template.](#)
2. Begin communication with other departments. [See the Announced Onsite Enclosure.](#)
3. Request the Program Review Report from CTS. [See the Recipient Data Spreadsheet.](#) This is how they determine student sample.
4. Request access from CTS for Department Reviewers in PS.

Planning for Arrival

- Organize requested student files. Should receive an official list approximately 3 days prior to arrival.
- Arrange physical space for the Department reviewers to work. They will require a printer of their own.
- Create an agenda for your campus to reference on arrival day.
- Prioritize your tasks and work with your staff to assist.

Expert Tips

- We used blue and purple folders to identify each of the 2 aid years requested.
- Close proximity to your office is best. We provided a key for easy access. We also provided water.
- Prep your President in advance.
- You will be busy! Making copies, clarifying information.

Entrance Conference

On Site Program Review

Introductions – At WSC we included our President, CFO, Director for Admission, Campus Security, Vice President for Student Affairs, Financial Aid Director

Reason for Program Review – General Assessment, Focused Review, or Compliance Assurance Review.

Scope of Work

Overview of the PR Process – Including schedule of required interviews.

Schedule the Exit Interview – Typically will arrive on a Monday and try and complete by Thursday afternoon. They reserve Friday for the exit interview if they are not finished.

Off Site Program Review

Completed via Conference Call – Limited Scope of Work

Scope of Work

Review of Institutional Processes and Data	Review of Student Level Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catalogue/ Brochures/ Handbooks Policies and Procedures Forms, Applications, Worksheets Institutional Eligibility Administrative Capability Consumer Information – Online/ Publications Campus Security – Annual Security Report Cash Management – FISAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility Attendance Cost of Attendance Credit Balances Enrollment Status Dependency Overrides/ PJ Return of Title IV SAP Verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Records Reviewed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission • Academic • Financial Aid • Student Account Comparison to Department Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSLDS • COD • CPS

Findings

Financial Aid Office

- 1. Exit Counseling Deficiencies
- 2. Student Status- Inaccurate/Untimely
- 3. R2T4 Made Late
- 4. Pell Under Award
- 5. Verification Violation
- 6. Under award of Unsubsidized Loan
- 7. FISAP Deficiencies

Campus

- 1. Consumer Information
- 2. Clery - Campus Safety
- 3. Federal Funds Not Identified on Bank Accounts

Questions & Conversation

How long was your interview and did they interview anyone else in your office?

Was there anything that you changed as a result of the review?

How many reviewers were there?

Was there anything about the process that was surprising?

What was the final outcome of your review and how long did it take to receive the final outcome?

Did they tell you why they chose to come to WSC?

Did you agree with the findings and if not did you have a chance to respond?

Was there anything you learned from the review process that you didn't know was a priority before the review?

Was there financial liability as a result of the review?

References

Handouts

Announcement Letter- Details of the initial request for information. Includes the scope of work, as well as important dates.

Announced On-Site Enclosure- Request for Records and Documents needed at start of review. Includes the Scope work involving other departments.

Online Consumer Information Template- Required to be completed and returned in 5 days.

Recipient Data Spreadsheet- Used to select student sample. Completed via PS report.

External Sources

Federal Handbook- FSA Handbook 2016-2017, Volume 2, Page 2-158 <https://ifap.ed.gov/isahandbook/attachments/1617FSAHbkVol2Ch8.pdf>

FSA Presentation- 2015, Session 37, Program Review Essentials and the Top 10 Compliance Findings. <https://fsaconferences.ed.gov/2015sessions.html>

Upcoming! RMAFAA's Ashlee Dutton is interviewing Josh North from Highland Community College in KS.
