

**Improving Administration in
Your**

Financial Aid Office

SFA's Tools for Success



Quality

How Do We Get There from Here?

Session Objectives

- Introduce SFA's Tools for Success
- Review the SFA Title IV Assessment Tool
- Review the Quality Analysis Tool
- Share Institutional Perspectives on the Tools and How They Can Help All Schools

“Attain”
Tools for All
(on the
Web)

“Sustain”
Tools for All
(on the
Web)



“Advance” Tools
for Approved QA
Member Schools

Thinking Out of the Box

... by providing all Title IV Schools with tools to succeed ...

- ✓ Available for all Case Management referrals involving specific assistance
- ✓ Most recent assessments online:
<http://qaprogram.air.org>

SFA Assessment Tools

- Enhance the work of SFA and schools
- Help schools by providing guidance on key questions about their Title IV stewardship

Benefiting Schools, Students, SFA

- Partnership in compliance
- Better technical assistance
- Enhanced administration of Title IV Program
- Better service to institutions requiring more comprehensive assistance
- Better service to students

What is Self Assessment?

Assessment Forms



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- Conferences and Workshops
- Chat Room

Title IV SFA Self Assessments

The SFA Self Assessments are designed around the concept of self-assessment. An institution looks at its aid delivery system to identify strengths and to fix weaknesses in the system.

The SFA Self Assessments are the starting point for any institution's quality improvement initiatives. The Assessments can be used to evaluate

A:

Can you
ensure your
school's
eligibility
for Title IV?

Assessment A: Institutional Participation

Assessment Forms

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Assessment A. Institutional Participation: To be eligible to participate in the Title IV federal student aid an institution must meet eligibility requirements outlined in SFAH Regulations, [600.1 – 600.32](#) and [668.1 – 668.48](#). Also see guidance in SFAH, Institutional Eligibility and Participation Reference, Chapters 1 – 3 (pages 1-52), Chapter 7 (pages 155-192), Chapters 9-10 (pages 205-235) and Chapter 12 (pages 261-269).

Variables to be considered for Institutional Participation are:

- Program Participation Agreement
- Accreditation and State Approvals
- Administrative Capability Requirements
- Financial Responsibility
- Consumer Information
- Written Arrangements Between Schools
- Program Eligibility/Academic Year Requirements
- Reporting Changes to Title IV application data

Assessment A: *Continued*

Name of Institution: _____

Requirements	Results of Assessment
<p>§ Program Participation Agreement (668.14, 1999-2000 SFAH, Institutional and Program Eligibility Section, Chapter 2, pages 23-26)</p> <p>A program participation agreement conditions the initial and continued participation of an eligible institution in any Title IV, HEA program upon compliance with the provisions of <u>668.14</u>, the individual program regulations, and any additional conditions specified in the program participation agreement that the Secretary requires the institution to meet. Your institution's program participation agreement applies to</p>	<p>1. Can your institution ensure that it is in compliance with all requirements outlined in <u>668.14</u> concerning the institution's continued eligibility for participation in the Title IV programs? ()Yes ()No ()Management Enhancement Needed.</p> <p>In order to completely answer this question, it would be helpful to click on the link to 34 CFR 668.14 to ensure that your institution meets all requirements in this section of the Regulations. For those that are found to be out of compliance, please make note of those areas in the notes section below for further action and place a check next to the "Management Enhancement Needed" box above.</p>

B:

Do you need
help
coordinating
fiscal
procedures?

Assessment B: Fiscal Requirements

- A sound fiscal system includes rules and procedures for requesting, maintaining, disbursing and otherwise managing funds under Title IV
- Variables to consider:

Establishing Accounting Systems

Cash Management Procedures

Disbursement Policies

Coordinating Specific Funds

C:

Are your
students
eligible?

Assessment C: Student Eligibility

- All students must meet eligibility requirements outlined in 668.130-139
- Select a small sample of student files to assess your school's current procedures for determining recipient eligibility.
- Take note of missing, inadequate, and/or conflicting documentation

D:

Are you
awarding aid
to the right
students?

Assessment D: Award Requirements

- For evaluating the effectiveness of awarding procedures
- Use a sample of five student files
- Variables to consider: *Program specific eligibility, Institutional Award Allocations (CB), Institutional Awarding Policies (Packaging), Program Specific Award Rules, Minimum and Maximum Program Award Amounts, and Award Notification Requirements*

E:

Is the money
reaching the
recipients?

Assessment E: Disbursement Requirements

- For evaluating the effectiveness of disbursement procedures
- Use a sample of 5 student files
- Use the Student Financial Aid Handbook in addition to Title IV regulations to review disbursement procedures

F:

Can you
balance
your books?

Area F: Reconciliation and Reporting

- For assessing reporting and reconciliation procedures
- Select 10 random student files
- Verify that your school's reporting and reconciliation policies are carried out on a student-specific basis



G:

Can you
show that
automated
procedures
are working?

Assessment G: Automation

- To help determine if your school is in compliance, locate a copy of your policies and procedures related to automation.
- [To be considered administratively capable to participate in the SFA Programs, a school must participate in all electronic processes required by the Department]

H:

Do you need
help with other
management
issues?

Assessment H: Administrative Practices

- For assessing institution-specific management operations
- Assessment worksheet topics:
NCAA, FERPA, Drug Free Schools and Campuses, etc.

Work in Progress

- New Web-based & interactive modules under development
- Unveiling at EAC's in Nov/Dec '01
- Most problematic areas: RT24, SAP, and Recertification



Sustaining Quality

- Promote greater sharing of information between Title IV institutions
- Share Effective Practices information with:
 - *the entire Title IV community*
 - *SFA leaders – to facilitate change*

Effective Practice Reports

- Online form for sharing practical knowledge:

Your colleagues need your insights.

For more than 15 years, the Quality Assurance Program has promoted student financial aid practices that work, in part by relaying accounts of problem solving efforts that schools have devised and implemented. In advance, we thank you for again sharing your practical knowledge with your student financial aid colleagues. Your partnership in this continuing information effort will help all concerned to further the goal of putting America's students through school.

Advancing Quality

- Flexibility to pilot alternative management approaches in administering Title IV aid
- Schools must volunteer and be approved for participation in the QA Program.
- Coming: A Federal Register Notice inviting schools to apply to participate in QA.

Quality Analysis Tool

- Available to all schools in '02-'03
- Analyze FAFSA application/ISIR data
- Generate reports showing effect of data element changes on EFC/Pell Grant eligibility
- Improve/customize verification program
- Data to suggest future changes in federal verification selection criteria

Locally Designed Verification

- Focuses on local sources of error
- Identifies changes to FAFSA fields that have an impact on awards

What are the benefits of school-designed verification procedures?

The Power of Data

- The QA Tool allows schools to conduct in-depth analysis of applicant data
- A series of reports can be constructed using custom formats, selected fields and queries to extract specific information about your applicant population

QA Tool Reports –

Fine Tuning Verification Procedures

- Corrected Records in EFC Range
- Custom Reports
- Field Change Report
- Field Range Report
- Pell Corrected Records Report
- Student Listing with Verification Flags
- Transaction Comparison

What We've Learned So Far

- Improve FAFSA instructions for and/or education efforts regarding estimating income and tax information
- Incorporate tax “estimators” into verification profiles
- Use - but don't overly rely on student/family income level when deciding who to verify
- Consider collecting information on the cost of verification.

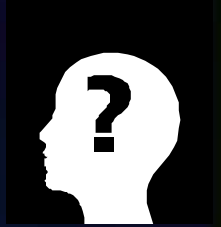
Institutional Perspective

Craig Cornell –

Associate Director of Financial Aid
Kent State University



2001 Winner
The Quality Assurance
Program - **Model of Quality**
Award



- If you have questions, more information can be found online at:
<http://qaprogram.air.org>
- Thank you for your interest