

*Council for the Advancement of Standards
in Higher Education*

CAS Self-Assessment Guide for
Financial Aid Programs



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THE ROLE of STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

***CAS* Standards Contextual Statement**

According to the American Council on Education, there are three major sources of student financial aid: the federal government, state governments, and colleges and universities. The U.S. federal government is the largest single provider, underwriting 69 % of all financial aid available, mostly through loans. In the 2001-02 academic year, U.S. federal education loans accounted for three-quarters of all federal student aid and more than half of aid from all sources, or over \$41 billion. In addition, the 2003 status report on Pell Grants stated that the Pell Grant program provides approximately \$11 billion in assistance annually to one-quarter of undergraduates (American Council on Education, 2006). Private sources of aid, such as scholarships from companies and loans from nongovernmental organizations, also are available. In total, approximately \$89 billion in financial aid was provided to students in 2001-02, including federal and nonfederal loans, federal and state grants, and institutional grants (American Council on Education, 2006). The mission of the financial aid office focuses on service to students and stewardship of funds. Practically speaking, the financial aid office assumes primary responsibility on behalf of the institution for compliance with government requirements.

An effective and comprehensive aid program must be supported by leaders at the institution who understand the increasing administrative and operational responsibilities, obligations, and the potential liabilities that accompany participation in federal aid programs. It also requires that leaders be aware of the challenges and conflicts imposed on the administration of aid and the delivery of quality services to their students. Leaders can take several steps to ensure that the financial aid program advances the goals of the institution without compromising service quality or program integrity. The consistency between institutional goals and those of the aid program can be evaluated by examining the level of commitment of internal resources, the composition of aid packages, the levels of unmet need, and the extent of commitment to need-based aid.

The establishment and support of goals and measures that ensure high-quality financial aid operations should be a high priority for all institutions. Of equal importance is the leaders' responsibility for educating the institution's community about its goals and mission and the role of financial aid in defining and meeting them. Communicating the importance of financial aid to both internal and external constituencies is critical. Presidents, trustees, and others must understand and support the policies of their financial aid programs and serve as effective advocates at the institutional and governmental levels. These advocacy efforts should:

- Provide opportunities for representatives from all academic and administrative areas of the institution to discuss and help formulate institutional goals
- Coordinate with the financial aid office to develop mission statements and strategic goals that consider its relationship with other offices and present its philosophy, purpose, goals, and strategies, and the principles governing financial aid awards; disseminate these statements to demonstrate the leadership's support of them and their complementary relationship to broader objectives of the institution
- Provide forums to make known the impact of pending federal and state developments on the institution and the financial aid office
- Communicate widely the criteria by which financial aid policies are defined and evaluated, and create opportunities to highlight program successes and the positive impact they have on students and the broader community

Institutions committed to these strategies draw upon tools provided by the government, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), and other non-governmental entities.

References, Readings, and Resources

American Council on Education. (2006). [Online]. *Paying for College*. Available <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/CIP/>

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (1995). *Federal regulations affecting higher education*. Washington, DC: Author.

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CAS

Financial Aid Programs Self-Assessment Guide (SAG)

Introduction and Instructions

I Purpose and Organization of the Guide

This *Self-Assessment Guide* (SAG) translates the *CAS Financial Aid Programs Standards and Guidelines* into a format enabling self-assessment. Educators can use this *Guide* to gain informed perspectives on the strengths and deficiencies of their services and programs and to plan for improvements. Grounded in the self-regulation approach to quality assurance in higher education endorsed by CAS, this SAG provides institutional and agency leaders a tool to assess programs and services using current generally accepted standards of practice.

The *Introduction* outlines the self-assessment process, describes how to put it into operation, and is organized into four sections. These include I Purpose and Organization, II Self-Assessment Process, III Rating Examples, and IV Formulating an Action Plan. The introduction is followed by the *Self-Assessment Worksheet*, which presents the *CAS Financial Aid Programs Standards and Guidelines* and incorporates a series of criterion measures for rating purposes.

SAG Worksheet Format. CAS standards and guidelines are organized into thirteen components.

- Part 1. Mission
- Part 2. Program
- Part 3. Leadership
- Part 4. Organization and Management
- Part 5. Human Resources
- Part 6. Financial Resources
- Part 7. Facilities, Technology, and Equipment
- Part 8. Legal Responsibilities
- Part 9. Equity and Access
- Part 10. Campus and External Relations
- Part 11. Diversity
- Part 12. Ethics
- Part 13. Assessment and Evaluation

A rating scale designed for assessment purposes is displayed following the standards and guidelines along with a series of criterion measures to be rated. Making performance judgments by applying the rating scale to individual items (criterion measures) facilitates an initial assessment of the program.

II Self-Assessment Process

CAS self-assessment procedures involve several steps, including:

- A. Establishing the self-study process and review team
- B. Understanding the CAS Standards and Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Guide
- C. Compiling and reviewing documentary evidence
- D. Judging performance
- E. Completing the assessment process

Step A: Establish and Prepare the Self-Assessment Review Team

The first step is to identify an individual to coordinate the self-assessment process. Once a leader is designated, members of the institutional community [e.g., professional staff members, faculty members, and students] need to be identified and invited to participate. Whether a sole functional area or a full

division is to be reviewed, the self-study team will be strengthened by the inclusion of members from outside the area(s) undergoing review.

As a group, the review team should examine the standards carefully before implementing the study. It may be desirable for the team, in collaboration with the full staff, to discuss the meaning of each standard. Through this method, differing interpretations can be examined and agreement generally reached about how the standard will be interpreted for purposes of the self-assessment. Whatever procedures are used to arrive at judgments, deliberate discussions should occur about how to initiate the rating process and select the optimal rating strategy. In such discussions, it is expected that disagreements among team members will occur, and that resulting clarifications will inform all participants. It is important that the team achieve consensual resolution of such differences before proceeding.

Step B: Understanding the CAS Standards and Guidelines

CAS *Standards* represent best practices as formulated by representatives of multiple professional associations concerned with student learning and development in higher education. CAS *Guidelines*, on the other hand, are suggestions for practice and serve to elaborate and amplify standards through the use of suggestions, descriptions, and examples. Guidelines can often be employed to enhance program practice. Following a long-standing CAS precedent, the functional area standards and guidelines published in *The CAS Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education 2006* and presented in this SAG are formatted so that standards (i.e., essentials of quality practice) are printed in **bold type**. Guidelines, which complement the standards, are printed in slightly smaller, light-face type. Standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” while guidelines use “should” and “may.”

In this SAG, the CAS Standards and Guidelines, presented in boxed text format, have been translated into multiple criterion measures for rating purposes. Each criterion measure focuses on a particular aspect of the standard. For each of the 13 component parts, there is a series of numbered criterion measures that team members may rate. If the assessment team decides to incorporate one or more of the guidelines into the review process, each guideline can be similarly sub-divided to facilitate the rating process.

Step C: Compile and Review Documentary Evidence

Collecting and documenting evidence of program effectiveness is an important step in the assessment process. No self-assessment is complete without relevant data and related documentation being used. It is good practice for programs routinely to collect and file relevant data that can be used to document program effectiveness over time.

Documentary evidence often used to support evaluative judgments includes:

- *Student Recruitment and Marketing Materials*: brochures and other sources of information about the program, participation policies and procedures, and reports about program results and participant evaluations
- *Program Documents*: mission statements, catalogs, brochures and other related materials, staff and student manuals, policy and procedure statements, evaluation and periodic reports, contracts, and staff memos
- *Institutional Administrative Documents*: statements about program purpose and philosophy relative to other educational programs, organization charts, financial resource statements, student and staff profiles, and assessment reports
- *Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Data*: needs assessments, follow-up studies, program evaluations, outcome measures and methodologies, and previous self-study reports
- *Staff Activity Reports*: annual reports, staff member vitae; service to departments, colleges, university, and other agencies; evidence of effectiveness; scholarship activities, and contributions to the profession
- *Student Activity Reports*: developmental transcripts, portfolios, and other evidence of student contributions to the institution, community, and professional organizations; reports of special student accomplishments; and employer reports on student employment experiences

Having a variety of evidence assists raters to make judgments about the wide range of program expectations articulated in the standards. Whatever is determined appropriate under given circumstances, multiple forms of evidence used should be reviewed and reported in the narrative section of the SAG worksheets. The self-study rating process may identify a need to obtain additional information or documentation before proceeding to lend substance to judgments about a given assessment criterion. Support documentation should be appended and referred to in the final self-assessment report.

Step D: Judging Performance

Assessment criterion measures are used to judge how well areas under review meet CAS Standards. These criterion measures, provided in the *Work Form* section of the SAG, are designed to use a 4-point rating scale. In addition to the numerical rating options, *Not Rated* (NR) and *Not Done* (ND) ratings are provided. This rating scale is designed to estimate broadly the extent to which a given practice has been performed.

CAS CRITERION MEASURE RATING SCALE

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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Under rare circumstances, it may be determined that a criterion measure used to judge the standard is not applicable for the particular program (e.g., a single sex or other unique institution that cannot meet a criterion measure for that reason). In such instances, a ND rating can be used and the rationale for excluding the practice reflected in the criterion measure presented in the self-study report. The NR response can be used when relevant data are unavailable to support a judgment. When either the ND or the NR ratings are used, an explanatory note should be entered. NR items should generate careful group consideration and follow-up action as appropriate.

Program leaders may wish to incorporate additional criterion measures, such as selected CAS Guidelines or other gauges, into the rating procedures before the self-assessment process begins. Such practice is encouraged and space is provided to incorporate additional criterion measure *yardsticks* for judging the program. In such instances, additional pages to accommodate the additional criterion measures may be required.

Step E: Completing the Assessment Process

A two-tiered (individual and group) judgment approach for determining the extent to which the program meets the CAS Standard is suggested. First, self-assessment team and functional area staff members individually should rate each criterion measure using separate copies of the *CAS Self-Assessment Guide*. This individualized rating procedure is then followed by a collective review and analysis of the individual ratings.

When the individual ratings have been reviewed and translated into a collective rating, the team is ready to move to the interpretation phase of the self-assessment. Interpretation typically incorporates considerable discussion among team members to assure that all aspects of the program were given fair and impartial consideration prior to a final collective judgment. At this point, persistent disagreements over performance ratings may call for additional data collection. After the team review is completed, a meeting with concerned administrators, staff members, and student leaders should be scheduled for a general review of the self-assessment results. The next step, including discussion of alternative approaches that might be used to strengthen and enhance the program, is to generate steps and activities to be incorporated into an action plan.

III Rating Examples

Rating Standard Criterion Measures

All CAS Standards, printed in **bold type**, are viewed as being essential to a sound and relevant student support program and include the verbs “**must**” or “**shall**.” Likewise, many standard statements incorporate multiple criteria that, to facilitate more precise judgment, have been subdivided into measurable parts for rating purposes. Consequently, a single standard statement may require several criterion measure statements that allow raters to judge it part by part rather than broadly. This approach often requires multiple judgments concerning a specific standard statement, but facilitates accomplishing

a more precise assessment. Using a “Program” standard as an example, the following illustrates how several criterion measures are used to assess a single standard statement:

Part 2: Program

Programs must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.

	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
	Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated
Criterion Measures						Rating Scale
2.1 The program promotes student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
2.2 The program has identified student learning and development outcomes that are relevant to its purpose	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
2.3 The program provides students with opportunities designed to encourage achievement of the identified outcomes	ND	1	2	3	4	NR

Using Guidelines to Make Judgments about the Program

The CAS Standards are often accompanied by guidelines. Because many guidelines can provide additional evidence of good practice, program leaders may wish to include selected guidelines to be rated along with the standards. To accomplish this, criterion measure statements must be written for the guidelines selected. The self-study team can readily create statements to be judged as part of the rating process. Programs generally considered as being in compliance with the standards can benefit especially by using guidelines in this way because guidelines typically call for enhanced program quality. The following “Human Resources” program guidelines rating example illustrates the process.

Part 5. Human Resources

The program must employ qualified professional, technical, and support staff members who have the ability to provide well-maintained facilities, services, and programs that are responsive to student development goals, student input, and student participation inherent in its mission.

Desirable qualities of staff members should include: (a) knowledge of and ability to use management and leadership principles, including the effective management of volunteers; (b) skills in assessment, planning, training, and evaluation; (c) interpersonal skills; (d) technical skills; (e) understanding the program’s mission; (f) commitment to institutional mission; and (g) understanding of and ability to apply student development and learning theories.

	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
	Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated
Criterion Measures						Rating Scale
Guideline 5: Staff members possess knowledge and skills to:						
5a manage volunteers	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5b train volunteers	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5c evaluate volunteers	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5d apply student development theory	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5e apply learning theories	ND	1	2	3	4	NR

Not all programs under review will incorporate guidelines to be rated as part of its self-study. Even though the guidelines are optional for rating purposes, raters are strongly encouraged to read and review them as part of the training process. When CAS Guidelines or other criterion measures are rated, they should be treated as if they were standards.

IV Formulating an Action Plan

Typically, the assessment process will identify discrepancies between the program and the standards. Action planning designed to overcome program shortcomings and provide program enhancements must then occur.

To complete the process, a final summary document that (1) explains the mission, purpose, and philosophy of the program; (2) reviews available data; and (3) recommends specific plans for action needs to be prepared. Following is an outline of recommended steps for establishing a comprehensive

plan of action using the CAS self-assessment worksheets. Space is provided in the SAG for recording relevant information.

Step 1. Answer Overview Questions (In the Instrument)

- a. Respond, in writing in the space provided, to the *Overview Questions* (A., B., C., etc.) that immediately follow the rating section of each of the 13 components.
- b. Use answers to the Overview Questions to stimulate summary thinking about overarching issues, to facilitate interpretation of the ratings, and for development of the self-study report.

Step 2. Identify Areas of Program Strength (Work Form A)

- a. Identify criterion measure ratings where *excellent* performance or accomplishment (i.e., program exceeds criterion and is viewed as excellent or exemplary) was noted.
- b. identify criterion measures in which performance was found to be *satisfactory or good* (acceptable practice).

Step 3. Identify Areas of Program Weakness (Work Form A)

- a. Identify criterion measures where program weaknesses (i.e., program shortcomings that fail to meet criterion measures and/or rating discrepancies among raters of two points or more) were noted.
- b. Identify criterion measures viewed as being *Unsatisfactory* by one or more reviewer.

Step 4. Describe Practices Requiring Follow-up (Work Form A)

- a. Note criterion measure numbers deemed less than satisfactory and describe practice shortcomings that need to be strengthened.

Step 5. Summarize Actions Required for the Program to Meet Standards (Work Form B)

- a. List each criterion measure and/or related practices that the self-study process identified as being "Not Done," "Unsatisfactory," or wherein rater discrepancies were noted. Be specific when noting the rationale for each shortcoming identified.
- b. List *specific actions* identified in the self-study that require implementation
- c. Prioritize the list by importance, need, and achievability of the desired change.

Step 6. Summarize Program Enhancement Actions (Work Form C)

- a. List each specific action identified in the self-study that would enhance and strengthen services.
- b. Establish specific priorities for the action plan.

Step 7. Write Program Action Plan

- a. Prepare a comprehensive action plan for implementing program changes.
- b. Identify resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) that are essential to program enhancement.
- c. Set dates by which specific actions are to be completed.
- d. Identify responsible parties to complete the action steps.
- e. Set tentative start-up date for initiating a subsequent self-study.

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Part 1: MISSION

Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must incorporate student learning and student development in its mission. The program must enhance overall educational experiences. FAP must develop, record, disseminate, implement, and regularly review its mission and goals. Mission statements must be consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and with the standards in this document. FAP must operate as an integral part of the institution's overall mission.

FAP shall develop, review, and disseminate financial resources to students to assist them in achieving their educational goals from pre-enrollment through graduation. Many aspects of financial aid are mandated by federal and state entities that define the parameters within which institutional programs must operate. In a manner consistent with the goals of the institution the mission and goals of FAP must address the following:

- **students in transition**

Such students move from secondary to postsecondary education, from one postsecondary institution to another including undergraduate to graduate school, and return from a period of non-enrollment to formal learning or re-enrollment in the institution.

- **awarding practices**

Such practices establish, promulgate, and implement financial aid criteria that accurately represent the financial needs of the applicant pool, set priorities within this group, and respond with funding to the extent possible.

- **financial counseling**

Such counseling provides high quality services to students for (a) the purpose of providing better understanding of financial aid, (b) financial guidance, (c) individual review of situations that may require special consideration, and (d) guidance in academic and financial matters especially as they relates to satisfactory academic progress.

- **goal integration**

Goals should be consistent with the mission, goals, policies, procedures and characteristics of the institution and be compatible with the ability of the institution to provide adequate resources to meet the needs and educational goals of the students.

- **review of goals**

Institutional goals for financial aid should be developed and reviewed regularly. Such goals should be consistent with statements of good practices articulated by relevant and appropriate professional associations such as the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and the Canadian Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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PART 1. MISSION <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	Rating Scale
1.1 A program mission and goals statement is in place and is reviewed periodically.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.2 Student learning, development, and educational experiences are incorporated in the mission statement.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.3 The mission is consistent with that of the host institution and the CAS standards.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.4 The program functions as an integral part of the host institution's overall mission.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.5 The mission addresses:	
1.5a students in transition	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.5b awarding practices	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.5c financial counseling	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.5d goal integration	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
1.5e review of goals	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 1: Mission Overview Questions

A. What is the program mission?

The Financial Aid Office is to make a degree financially possible for every USU student. Financial resources are awarded to students based on federal law, state law, and university priorities in accordance with its land-grant mission to promote access to higher education. Services include:

- Student Employment and Work-Study
- Community Service and Outreach
- Financial Counseling.

In order to fulfill its mission, policies and procedures must be continually evaluated to ensure prompt, efficient service in compliance with law. Evaluations include: satisfaction surveys, annual audits, and management review.

B. How does the mission embrace student learning and development?

The FAO's primary task is to allow students to focus on their academic efforts without being distracted by financial concerns. Service must be as efficient as possible under federal constraints, and sound professional judgment employed to ensure individual circumstances are taken into account. Several services offered by the FAO directly promote learning and development: student employment, outreach, and America Reads.

C. In what ways does the program mission complement the mission of the institution?

As a land-grant institution, Utah State is committed to preserving access to higher education to all qualified students. FAO programs enhance access and support the university's mission of community service and teaching.

Part 2: PROGRAM

The formal education of students consists of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, and must promote student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic. Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.

Relevant and desirable outcomes include: intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, and achievement of personal and educational goals.

FAP must provide evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes.

The table below offers examples of evidence of achievement of student learning and development.

Relevant, Desirable Student Learning and Development Outcomes	Examples of Evidence of Achievement
Intellectual Growth	Produces personal and educational goal statements; Employs critical thinking in problem solving; Uses complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience and observation to form a decision or opinion; Obtains a degree; Applies previously understood information and concepts to a new situation or setting; Expresses appreciation for literature, the fine arts, mathematics, sciences, and social sciences
Effective Communication	Writes and speaks coherently and effectively; Writes and speaks after reflection; Able to influence others through writing, speaking or artistic expression; Effectively articulates abstract ideas; Uses appropriate syntax; Makes presentations or gives performances
Enhanced Self-Esteem	Shows self-respect and respect for others; Initiates actions toward achievement of goals; Takes reasonable risks; Demonstrates assertive behavior; Functions without need for constant reassurance from others

Realistic Self-Appraisal	Articulates personal skills and abilities; Makes decisions and acts in congruence with personal values; Acknowledges personal strengths and weaknesses; Articulates rationale for personal behavior; Seeks feedback from others; Learns from past experiences
Clarified Values	Articulates personal values; Acts in congruence with personal values; Makes decisions that reflect personal values; Demonstrates willingness to scrutinize personal beliefs and values; Identifies personal, work and lifestyle values and explains how they influence decision-making
Career choices	Articulate career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills and abilities; Documents knowledge, skills and accomplishments resulting from formal education, work experience, community service and volunteer experiences; Makes the connections between classroom and out-of-classroom learning; Can construct a resume with clear job objectives and evidence of related knowledge, skills and accomplishments; Articulates the characteristics of a preferred work environment; Comprehends the world of work; Takes steps to initiate a job search or seek advanced education
Leadership Development	Articulates leadership philosophy or style; Serves effectively in a leadership position in a student organization; Comprehends the dynamics of a group; Exhibits democratic principles as a leader; Exhibits ability to visualize a group purpose and desired outcomes
Healthy Behavior	Chooses behaviors and environments that promote health and reduce risk; Articulate the relationship between health and wellness and accomplishing life long goals; Exhibits behaviors that advance a healthy community
Meaningful Interpersonal Relationships	Develops and maintains satisfying interpersonal relationships; Establishes mutually rewarding relationships with friends and colleagues; Listens to and considers others' points of view; Treats others with respect
Independence	Exhibits self-reliant behaviors; Functions autonomously; Exhibits ability to function interdependently; Accepts supervision as needed; Manages time effectively
Collaboration	Works cooperatively with others; Seeks the involvement of others; Seeks feedback from others; Contributes to achievement of a group goal; Exhibits effective listening skills
Social Responsibility	Understands and participates in relevant governance systems; Understands, abides by, and participates in the development, maintenance, and/or orderly change of community, social, and legal standards or norms; Appropriately challenges the unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior of other individuals or groups; Participates in service/volunteer activities
Satisfying and Productive Lifestyle	Achieves balance between education, work and leisure time; Articulates and meets goals for work, leisure and education; Overcomes obstacles that hamper goal achievement; Functions on the basis of personal identity, ethical, spiritual and moral values; Articulates long-term goals and objectives
Appreciating Diversity	Understands ones own identity and culture. Seeks involvement with people different from oneself; Seeks involvement in diverse interests; Articulate the advantages and challenges of a diverse society; Challenges appropriately abusive use of stereotypes by others; Understands the impact of diversity on one's own society
Spiritual Awareness	Develops and articulates personal belief system; Understands roles of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors
Personal and Educational Goals	Sets, articulates, and pursues individual goals; Articulate personal and educational goals and objectives; Uses personal and educational goals to guide decisions; Understands the effect of one's

	personal and educational goals on others
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FAP must be (a) intentional, (b) coherent, (c) based on theories and knowledge of learning and human development, (d) reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population, and (e) responsive to needs of individuals, special populations, and communities.

FAP must assist students by addressing financial issues that may serve as barriers to the achievement of educational goals.

FAP must:

- **comply with federal and state law, provincial statutes, and institutional policies**
- **promote and maintain integrity, accuracy, and timeliness in the delivery of financial aid**
- **provide adequate information for students and parents to make informed decisions regarding the financing of their education**
- **promote and provide equal access to eligible students interested in pursuing an education at the institution**

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 2. PROGRAM <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	Rating Scale
2.1 The program promotes student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.2 The program has identified student learning and development outcomes that are relevant to its purpose.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.3 The program provides students with opportunities designed to encourage achievement of the identified outcomes.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.4 The program provides evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes in the domains checked <i>List student learning and/or developmental outcomes in spaces provided</i>	
2.4.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Growth <u>Students are monitored to ensure they are making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree.</u>	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.4.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Effective Communication	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
2.4.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Self-Esteem	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
2.4.4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Realistic Self-Appraisal <u>Students not making satisfactory progress are invited to discuss their case and appeal their suspension, outlining a course of action they will take that will enable</u>	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

<u>them to succeed.</u>		
2.4.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Clarified Values	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
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2.4.6	<input type="checkbox"/> Career Choices	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership Development <u>Students participating in America Reads are trained to supervise other students and direct outreach efforts.</u>	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.4.8	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Behavior	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.9	<input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful Interpersonal Relationships	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.10	<input type="checkbox"/> Independence	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.11	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Responsibility <u>Students in America Reads work with children of underrepresented groups to improve their chances to pursue higher education.</u>	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
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2.4.13	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfying and Productive Lifestyle	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.14	<input type="checkbox"/> Appreciate Diversity	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.15	<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Awareness	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
<hr/>		
2.4.16	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and Educational Goals <u>Students must set personal and educational goals in order to make satisfactory progress and continue to receive aid.</u>	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
<hr/>		
2.5	Program offerings are intentional, coherent and based on theories of learning and human development	ND 1 2 3 4 NR

2.6 Program offerings are designed to meet the developmental needs of relevant student populations and communities	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.7 The program must:	
2.7a comply with federal and state law, provincial statutes, and institutional policies	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.7b promote and maintain integrity, accuracy, and timeliness in the delivery of financial aid	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.7c provide adequate information for students and parents to make informed decisions regarding the financing of their education	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
2.7d promote and provide equal access to eligible students interested in pursuing an education at the institution	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 2: Program Overview Questions

A. What are the primary elements of the program?

The primary purpose of the FAO is to support students financially enabling them to earn a degree. Some activities of the office also provide direct learning experience. American Reads directly provides community service experience and tutoring opportunities, preparing students for careers in teaching. Work-Study employment provides students employment that helps prepare them for work after college.

B. What evidence exists that confirms the program contributes to student learning and development?

Students earn degrees and are gainfully employed. Students report that America Reads and other community service projects directed by or funded through our office are satisfying, promote confidence, and prepare them for careers in fields such as education and social services.

C. What evidence is available to confirm program goals' achievement?

The university is regularly accredited to determine it meets acceptable higher education standards. FAO exceeds federal guidelines for community service.

Part 3: LEADERSHIP

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. Institutions must appoint, position, and empower leaders within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions. Financial Aid Programs (FAP) leaders at various levels must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, relevant professional credentials, as well as potential for promoting learning and development in students, applying effective practices to educational processes, and enhancing institutional effectiveness. Institutions must determine expectations of accountability for leaders and fairly assess their performance.

FAP leaders must exercise authority over resources for which they are responsible to achieve their respective missions.

FAP leaders must:

- articulate a vision for their organization
- set goals and objectives based on the needs and capabilities of the population serve
- promote student learning and development
- prescribe and practice ethical behavior
- recruit, select, supervise, and develop others in the organization
- manage financial resources
- coordinate human resources
- plan, budget for, and evaluate personnel and programs
- apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes
- communicate effectively
- initiate collaborative interaction between individuals and agencies that possess legitimate concerns and interests in the functional area

FAP leaders must identify and find means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement.

FAP leaders must promote campus environments that result in multiple opportunities for student learning and development.

FAP leaders must continuously improve programs and services in response to changing needs of students and other constituents and evolving institutional priorities.

The institution should designate a well-qualified senior administrator with appropriate financial aid experience and training to effectively lead the financial aid program staff.

The senior financial aid administrator must be able to advocate for and to represent the financial needs of students, the operation and staffing of the financial aid program, and the institution.

The senior financial aid administrator must ensure the development of:

- a set of policies and procedures that includes descriptions of the administrative processes
- clearly stated criteria used in the decision making process for financial aid and the source of authority for the criteria employed
- steps for appealing evaluating, or revising policies and procedures
- a statement of the institution's mission, goals, and objectives for the financial aid programs
- an effective system to manage the programs, services, and personnel of the financial aid program
- an assessment plan for its programs and services
- means for coordinating the financial aid program with other institutional agencies
- develop criteria for selecting qualified staff and ensuring adequate opportunities for staff development

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 3. LEADERSHIP <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	Rating Scales
3.1 The host institution has selected, positioned, and empowered a program leader.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.2 Program leaders at all levels are qualified on the bases of education, experience, competence, and professional credentials.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

3.3 Program leaders apply effective practices that promote student learning and institutional effectiveness.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.4 Clearly defined leader accountability expectations are in place.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.5 Leader performance is fairly assessed on a regular basis.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.6 The leader exercises authority over program resources and uses them effectively.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.7 The program leader:	
3.7a articulates an organizational vision and goals that include promotion of student learning and development based on the needs of the population served	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.7b prescribes and practices appropriate ethical behavior	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.7c recruits, selects, supervises, instructs, and coordinates staff members	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.7d manages fiscal, physical, and human resources effectively	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.7e applies effective practices to educational and administrative processes	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.8 Communicates effectively and initiates collaborations with individuals and agencies to enhance program functions.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.9 The leader deals effectively with individuals and environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.10 The leader encourages campus environments that promote multiple opportunities for student learning and development.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
3.11 The leader strives to improve the program in response to evolving student needs and institutional priorities.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
3.12 The leader assures the development of:	
3.12a policies and procedures	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12b criteria used in decision making	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12c procedures for revising policies and procedures	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12d statement of the mission, goals, and objectives of the program	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12e system of management of programs and services	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12f assessment plan	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12g procedures for coordinating the program with other units of institution	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
3.12h effective staffing practices	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 3: Leadership Overview Questions

A. In what ways are program leaders qualified for their roles?

Program leaders have many years of successful management in financial aid and other fields.

B. In what ways are program leaders positioned and empowered to accomplish the program mission?

FAO is given goals and allowed the flexibility to determine the best means to meet those goals.

C. How are program leaders accountable for their performance?

FAO is audited annually. The Director meets regularly with the Vice President to review performance.

D. What leadership practices best describe program leaders?

Constant innovation, search for best practices, attracts talented staff

Part 4: ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT

Guided by an overarching intent to ensure student learning and development, Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must be structured purposefully and managed effectively to achieve stated goals. Evidence of appropriate structure must include current and accessible policies and procedures, written performance expectations for all employees, functional workflow graphics or organizational charts, and clearly stated service delivery expectations.

Evidence of effective management must include use of comprehensive and accurate information for decisions, clear sources and channels of authority, effective communication practices, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures, responsiveness to changing conditions, accountability and evaluation systems, and recognition and reward processes. FAP must provide channels within the organization for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 4. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION (<i>Criterion Measures</i>)	Rating Scale
4.1 The program is structured purposefully and managed effectively.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
4.2 Written policies, procedures, performance expectations, workflow graphics, and clearly stated delivery expectations are in place.	ND 1 2 <u>3</u> 4 NR
4.3 Effective management practice exists that includes access to and use of relevant data, clear channels of authority, and viable communications, accountability, and evaluation systems.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
4.4 Channels are in place for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 4: Organization and Management Overview Questions

A. What are the institutional organizational structures that define, enable, or restrain the program?

FAO coordinates with Registrar, Admissions, Bursar, and other student service offices through regular consultation. FAO performance is monitored by senior management to ensure high standard of performance is maintained.

B. What protocols or processes are in place to insure effective management of the program?

Regular audits, regular FAO meetings to review procedures, weekly training, regular oversight by VP

Part 5: HUMAN RESOURCES

Financial Aid Program (FAP) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. Within established guidelines of the institution, the program must establish procedures for staff selection, training, and evaluation; set expectations for supervision, and provide appropriate professional development opportunities. FAP must strive to improve the professional competence and skills of all personnel it employs.

Continued training is essential for all financial aid staff. It is imperative to be alert to change within the field and to be able to integrate changes into daily practice.

Every financial aid staff members should be

- familiar with federal, state/provincial, and institutional regulations, policies, and practices regarding the awarding of financial aid funds
- willing to seek out and implement new ideas
- able to translate new ideas into practical methods for improving the overall operation of the financial aid program
- respectful of the confidential nature of the profession
- willing to seek out and use new conceptual frameworks and equipment that bring information to students more clearly and effectively
- aware of relevant developments in the higher education and be able to incorporate these developments

Financial aid staff members should have knowledge and understanding of the mission, programs and services of the institution. Institutional training should be provided for all staff members to include

- a thorough tour of the campus
- familiarization with publications, academic programs, admission policies, and services of the institution
- rights and responsibilities as an employee of the institution

Job descriptions with the duties and responsibilities for each staff member should be developed.

Professional FAP staff members must hold an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

Suggested formal training in preparation for professional financial aid employment include such fields as business administration, computer sciences, information systems, college student personnel, higher education administration, counseling and other human behavior disciplines; course work may include computer literacy, research and statistical methods, counseling, legal issues of higher education, and leadership and management.

Professional staff members should be competent to provide assistance to students that May include but not be limited to, the following:

- careful and concerned analysis of each student's need
- knowledgeable guidance and counseling on all financial aid issues and concern
- explanation of federal and state, and, if appropriate, provincial statues of Canada
- interpretation of institutional policies and procedures

Degree or credential-seeking interns must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience. These individuals must be trained and supervised adequately by professional staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of assistance to qualified staff members and have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing staff development.

Student employees and volunteers should be trained in public relations, referral techniques, peer counseling, and dissemination of information. They should be knowledgeable in their individual job assignments and understand the confidential nature of their positions.

FAP must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish its mission. Staff members must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training. The level of staffing and workloads must be adequate and appropriate for program and service demands.

Support staff members should be skilled in interpersonal communications, public relations, referral techniques and dissemination of information. Support staff members with higher technical responsibilities should possess the academic background and experience for effective performance. Support staff members should understand the confidential nature of their job.

Salary levels and fringe benefits for all FAP staff members must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.

FAP must institute hiring and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. The program must employ a diverse staff to provide readily identifiable role models for students and to enrich the campus community.

FAP must create and maintain position descriptions for all staff members and provide regular performance planning and appraisals.

FAP must have a system for regular staff evaluation and must provide access to continuing education and professional development opportunities, including in-service training programs and participation in professional conferences and workshops.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 5. HUMAN RESOURCES <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>		Rating Scale
5.1	The program is staffed adequately with personnel qualified to accomplish its mission.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.2	Procedures are in place for staff selection, training, evaluation; supervision, and professional development opportunities.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.3	The program strives to improve the professional competence and skills of all staff members.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.4	Professional staff members hold either a relevant graduate degree or possess an appropriate combination of formal education and related work experience.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.5	Degree or credential-seeking interns are qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience and are trained and supervised by professional staff members with appropriate credentials and work experience.	<u>ND</u> 1 2 3 4 NR

5.6	Student employees and volunteers are carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated and have access to a qualified supervisor for guidance when exposed to situation beyond their training.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.7	Student employees and volunteers are provided precise job descriptions, pre-service training, and continuing staff development.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.8	Technologically trained and proficient staff members who are knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology are in place to carry out essential program functions.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.9	Staffing and workload levels are adequate and appropriate to meet the demands placed on the program by students and other constituents.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.10	Staff member compensation is commensurate with those in comparable positions in comparable institutions and situations in the relevant geographical region.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.11	Hiring and promotion practices are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.12	A diverse program staff is in place that provides readily identifiable role models for students.	ND 1 2 <u>3</u> 4 NR
5.13	Position descriptions for all staff members are in place and used for performance appraisal and planning purposes.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.14	The program has a system for regular staff evaluation.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
5.15	The program provides staff members with continuing education and professional development opportunities including in-service programs and professional conferences and workshops.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 5: Human Resources Overview Questions

A. What is the strategic plan for staffing the program?

Hire the most skilled people possible. Ensure structure utilizes, not impedes staff talents. With increased automation, staff size is reduced, but cross-training, redundancy is increased.

B. In what ways are staff members' qualifications insured and their performance judged?

Hiring is rigorous with outside searches. Annual performance reviews are complemented by peer-reviews, and regular, face-to-face interaction between leadership and staff.

C. In what ways does the program train, supervise, and evaluate staff members?

Staff members are given responsibility and held accountable for management of program areas and/or segments of the student population. Senior leadership meets with entire staff in functional groups at least weekly. Training is ongoing, with weekly meetings in each functional area and one general staff meeting per week. Staff all participates in peer reviews.

Part 6: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must have adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals. Funding priorities must be determined within the context of the stated mission,

goals, objectives and comprehensive analysis of the needs and capabilities of students, and the availability of internal or external resources.

FAP must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols.

Funding for the financial aid program should cover staff salaries; purchases and maintenance of office furnishings and equipment, including state of the art technology; purchases of supplies and materials; telephone, fax, electronic communication and postage costs; printing and media costs; institutional membership in appropriate professional organizations; relevant subscriptions and necessary library resources; attendance at professional association meetings, conferences, workshops and other professional development activities. In addition to institutional commitment of general funds, other funding sources maybe considered including state appropriations, federal resources, student fees, fines, donations and contributions.

The FAP budget must be properly prepared, clearly detailed and defined, continually monitored, and adequately funded for full program support.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	Rating Scale
6.1 The program has adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
6.2 Funding priorities are determined within the context of program mission, student needs, and available fiscal resources.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
6.3 The program demonstrates fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
6.4 The program budget is well defined and monitored for adequate funding.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 6: Financial Resources Overview Questions

A. What is the funding strategy for the program?

FAO receives university funding that covers approximately 60% of expenses. The remainder is covered by federal and state administrative cost allowances.

B. What evidence exists to confirm fiscal responsibility and cost-effectiveness?

Staff size has decreased over the past 14 years. FAO has not required budget increases from the university, even though studentbody size and award funding have increased. There have been no significant audit deficiencies. Most importantly, student satisfaction – as measured by a scientific survey – has increased dramatically over the same period.

Part 7: FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT

Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must have adequate, suitably located facilities, adequate technology, and equipment to support its mission and goals efficiently and effectively. Facilities, technology, and equipment must be evaluated regularly and be in compliance with relevant federal, state, provincial, and local requirements to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

The program should have facilities or have access to

- private office or space for confidential counseling, interviewing, and other meetings
- office, reception, and storage space and security sufficient to accommodate assigned staff, supplies, equipment, library resources, and machinery
- conference room or meeting space

The financial aid program should be readily accessible, included on campus maps, and have highly visible signage.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 7. FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT (<i>Criterion Measures</i>)	Rating Scale
7.1 The program has adequate, suitably located facilities, technology, and equipment to support its mission.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
7.2 Program facilities, technology, and equipment are evaluated regularly.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
7.3 Facilities, technology, and equipment are in compliance with relevant legal and institutional requirements that ensure access, health, safety, and security of students and other users.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 7: Facilities, Technology, and Equipment Overview Questions

A. How are facilities, technology, and equipment inventoried and maintained?

Equipment is inventoried and maintained according to university procedures.

B. What evidence exists to confirm facilities, technology, and equipment access, health, safety, and security for all who are served by the program?

Facilities are inspected by fire marshal for safety and university designers for access. FAO has assigned fire and security coordinator. Identifiable information is locked every night. Data is backed up off site weekly.

Part 8: LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Financial Aid Programs (FAP) staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective responsibilities. Staff members must inform users of programs and services and officials, as appropriate, of legal obligations and limitations including constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; mandatory laws and orders emanating from federal, state/provincial and local governments; and the institution's policies.

FAP staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents. Staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.

The institution must provide access to legal advice for FAP staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

The institution must inform FAP staff and students in a timely and systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 8. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES (<i>Criterion Measures</i>)	Rating Scale
8.1 Program staff members are knowledgeable about and response to laws and regulations relevant to their respective responsibilities.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
8.2 Staff members inform users and officials of legal obligations and limitations associated with implementing the program.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
8.3 Staff members use informed practice to limit the liability exposure of the institution and its personnel.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
8.4 Staff members are informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
8.5 Legal advice is available to staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
8.6 Both staff and students are informed in systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 8: Legal Responsibilities Overview Questions

A. What are the crucial legal issues faced by the program?

FAO must deal with FERPA compliance, protection of personal data, compliance with federal and state law and regulation.

B. How are staff members instructed, advised, or assisted with legal concerns?

Instruction is incorporated into weekly training sessions as appropriate. University legal counsel is available for consultation in extraordinary cases.

Part 9: EQUITY and ACCESS

Staff members must ensure that Financial Aid Programs (FAP) are provided on a fair and equitable basis. Facilities, programs and services must be accessible. Hours of operation and delivery of and access to programs and services must be responsive to the needs of all students and other constituents. FAP must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.

The program should ensure that its programs, services, and facilities are accessible to and provide hours of operation that respond to the needs of special populations, including traditionally under-represented, evening, part-time and commuter students.

FAP must be open and readily accessible to all students and must not discriminate except where sanctioned by law and institutional policy. Discrimination must be avoided on the bases of age; color; creed; cultural heritage; disability; ethnicity; gender identity; nationality; political affiliation; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; or social, economic, marital, or veteran status.

Consistent with their mission and goals, FAP must take affirmative action to remedy significant imbalances in student participation and staffing patterns.

As the demographic profiles of campuses change and new instructional delivery methods are introduced, institutions must recognize the needs of students who

participate in distance learning for access to programs and services offered on campus. Institutions must provide appropriate services in ways that are accessible to distance learners and assist them in identifying and gaining access to other appropriate services in their geographic region.

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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PART 9. EQUITY AND ACCESS (Criterion Measures)	Rating Scale
9.1 All programs and services are provided on a fair and equitable basis.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
9.2 All program facilities and services are accessible to prospective user.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
9.3 Program operations and delivery are responsive to the needs of all students and other users.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
9.4 All services adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
9.5 Program policies and practices do not discriminate against any potential users.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
9.6 The program acts to remedy imbalances in student participation and staffing.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
9.7 Services are conveniently available and accessible to distance learner students or arrangements have been made for students to have access to related services in their geographical area.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 9: Equity and Access Overview Questions

A. How does the program insure non-discriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment to all constituents?

Processing of aid application is blind to protected statuses. All appeals dealing with exceptional circumstances are done by committee to protect against individual biases and emotional decisions.

B. What policies and/or practices are in place to address imbalances in participation among selected categories of students and imbalances in staffing patterns among selected categories of staff members?

USU is an equal opportunity employer and actively seeks staff and students from underrepresented groups. America Reads/Outreach works to improve access for underrepresented groups.

Part 10: CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must establish, maintain, and promote effective relations with relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies.

Institutional functions and constituencies linked to financial aid typically include admissions, registration and records, athletics, business services, academic advising, counseling services, student affirmative action, outreach programs, educational opportunity programs, career planning and placement, institutional development and faculty and alumni affairs.

Financial aid documents must be accurate and their confidentiality maintained by all offices at the institution.

Financial aid and admission decisions should be made independently. However, the financial aid program should have access to appropriate information in the student's admission file to assure compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

The financial aid program should maintain relationships with interested groups within the community regarding general and institutional financial aid practices. The community may include grant and scholarship agencies, high schools, and other community outreach programs.

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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PART 10. CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	Rating Scale
10.1 The program has established, maintained, and promoted effective relations with relevant campus and external individuals and agencies.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
10.2 The program documents are accurate and confidential.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 10: Campus and External Relations Overview Questions

A. With which relevant individuals, groups, campus offices, and external agencies must the program maintain effectively relations?

FAO maintains effective relations with the Provost, Admissions, Registrar, Cashiers, Accounting, Athletics, Regional Campuses, and other student service offices, such as the Disability Resource Center and Academic Advising.

B. What evidence confirms effective relationships with program constituents?

Policy and procedure changes are subject of frequent and intense consultation. Staff members from the various offices feel free to drop in at any time to discuss issues. Staff members regularly attend staff meetings in other offices. Functional groups from several offices (such as enrollment management) meet monthly.

Part 11: DIVERSITY

Within the context of each institution's unique mission, diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must nurture environments where commonalties and differences among people are recognized and honored.

FAP must promote educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens understanding of one's own identity, culture, and heritage, and that of others. The program must educate and promote respect about commonalties and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.

FAP must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

Financial aid staff members should be particularly sensitive to the needs of traditionally under-represented students and students with special needs.

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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PART 11. DIVERSITY <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	Rating Scale
11.1 The program nurtures environments wherein commonalties and differences among people are recognized and honored.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

11.2 The program promotes experiences characterized by open communication that deepens understanding of identity, culture, and heritage.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
11.3 The program promotes respect for commonalities and differences in historical and cultural contexts.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
11.4 The program addresses characteristics and needs of diverse populations when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 11: Diversity Overview Questions

A. In what ways does the program contribute to the nurturing of diversity?

FAO directs outreach efforts and America Reads to reach underrepresented groups in community schools.

B. How does the program serve the needs of diverse populations?

FAO directs programs in mentoring, tutoring, Youth to College Day, and a scholarship competition for underrepresented groups.

Part 12: ETHICS

Students must be provided access to Financial Aid Programs (FAP) on a fair and equitable basis.

All persons involved in the delivery of FAP must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. FAP must develop or adopt and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice. The program must publish these statements and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

In the formulation of these standards, ethical standards statements adopted by the profession at large or relevant professional associations may be of assistance and should be considered.

FAP staff members must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent that such records are protected under the law and appropriate statements of ethical practice. Information contained in students' education records must not be disclosed without written consent except as allowed by relevant laws and institutional policies. Staff members must disclose to appropriate authorities information judged to be of an emergency nature, especially when the safety of the individual or others is involved, or when otherwise required by institutional policy or relevant law.

All FAP staff members must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's human subjects research policy and in other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.

FAP staff members must recognize and avoid personal conflict of interest or appearance thereof in their transactions with students and others.

FAP staff members must strive to insure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal. Staff members must not participate in nor condone any form of harassment that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.

When handling institutional funds, all FAP staff members must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures and the fiscal policies or processes of the institution.

FAP staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise, and competence. When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

FAP staff members must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

FAP staff members must be knowledgeable about and practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.

Financial aid administrators must insure timely and fair administration of policies regarding financial aid decisions and proper notification.

Publications and written communications should include a financial aid deadlines and information on opportunities for financial aid.

Financial aid must be awarded in compliance with applicable rules and regulations governing financial aid.

When appropriate, the senior financial aid administrator and professional staff members may need to exercise professional judgment in making exceptions to established financial aid policies. These decisions should be made in a fair and objective manner with supporting documentation.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

PART 12. ETHICS (Criterion Measures)		Rating Scale					
12.1	All program staff members adhere to the principles of ethical behavior adopted, published, and disseminated by the program to guide ethical practice.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.2	The program has a written statement of ethical practice that is reviewed periodically.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.3	Privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent protected under the law and program statements of ethical practice.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.4	Information contained in students' education records is never disclosed without written consent except as allowed by law and institutional policy.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.5	Information judged to be of an emergency nature when an individual's safety or that of others in involved is disclose to appropriate authorities.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.6	All staff members comply with the institution's human subjects research and other policies addressing confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.7	Staff members avoid personal conflicts of interest or appearance thereof in transactions with students and others.	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR
12.8	Staff members strive to ensure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal and do not condone or participate in behavior that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus	ND	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	NR

environment.	
12.9 Staff members ensure that funds are managed in accordance with established institutional fiscal accounting procedures, policies, and processes.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
12.10 All staff members perform assigned duties within the limits of training, expertise, and competence and when these limits are exceeded referrals are made to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
12.11 Staff members confront and otherwise hold accountable others who exhibit unethical behavior.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
12.12 Staff members practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
12.13 Staff members insure timely and fair administration of policies	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR
12.14 Staff members award financial aid in compliance with applicable rules and regulations.	ND 1 2 3 <u>4</u> NR

Part 12: Ethics Overview Questions

A. What ethical principles, standards, statements, or codes guide the program and its staff members?

NASFAA standards are starting point. Staff does not engage in activities that give the appearance of conflict of interest.

B. What is the program's strategy for managing student and staff member confidentiality issues?

FAO has office security coordinator, who directs effort to protect data including: nightly lockdown of identifiable information. Staff is counseled about maintaining confidentiality. There has been no known complaint of breach of confidentiality.

C. How are ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest managed?

There are few, if any, true ethical dilemmas faced by staff on daily basis. Ethical questions involving student treatment or potential fraud, are promptly discussed with senior office leadership. Office policy prohibits acceptance of gifts. Awarding and appeals of staff members who receive financial aid are handled by senior staff to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

D. In what ways are staff members informed and supervised regarding ethical conduct?

Ethical standards are part of ongoing training in office.

Part 13: ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION

Financial Aid Programs (FAP) must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. The program must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes are being met. The process must employ sufficient and sound assessment measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other affected constituencies.

FAP must evaluate periodically how well they complement and enhance the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.

Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing staff performance.

Publications such as the *Institutional Guide for Financial Aid Self-Evaluation*, published by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, may be used to evaluate financial aid programs and services.

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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PART 13. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION (<i>Criterion Measures</i>)	Rating Scale
13.1 The program conducts regular assessment and evaluations and employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to determine how effectively its stated mission and student learning and development outcomes are being met.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
13.2 The assessment process employs measures that ensure comprehensiveness and data collected include responses from students and other affected constituencies.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
13.3 The program evaluates periodically how well it complements and enhances the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
13.4 Results of these evaluations are used to revise and improve the program and to recognize staff performance.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR

Part 13: Assessment and Evaluation Overview Questions

A. What is the grand assessment strategy for the program?

The hallmark of USU's Financial Aid Office is continuous evaluation. Policies and procedures are open for review at any of the weekly training meetings. Staff members are encouraged to suggest improvements. Senior leadership meet with students and answer email questions weekly to monitor service issues. FAO extracts a true random sample of students every other year for the student satisfaction survey. FAO is subject to annual audits. FAO consults regularly with VP and other related offices.

B. How are tangible, measurable outcomes determined to ensure program mission and goal achievement?

Audits and internal quality control measure compliance. Weekly meetings review effectiveness of office procedures. Annual peer reviews and performance appraisals by supervisors are complemented by timely ad hoc feedback. Student satisfaction is measured biannually on a statistically significant scientific sample. Results are published on office website.

C. How are student learning and development outcomes determined to ensure their level of achievement?

Student academic achievement is monitored every semester using federal Satisfactory Academic Progress standards.

CAS

Financial Aid Programs

Work Form A Assessment, Ratings, and Significant Items

INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form should be completed following individual ratings of the participants. For each of the 13 Parts, identify (**circle**) the criterion measure item number(s) in the column labeled for which there is a substantial rating discrepancy (two or more ratings apart). Items not circled should reflect consensus among judges that practice in that area is satisfactory. Items where judgment variance occurs need to be discussed thoroughly by team members. Follow this action by determining which practices (criterion measures) can be designated as “excellent” or “unsatisfactory” and record them in the *Step One* column. In *Step Two*, list the items requiring follow-up action including any criterion measure rated as being unsatisfactory by any reviewer.

						Step One	
Part	Items					Excellent	Unsatisfactory
1. Mission	1.1 1.5b	1.2 1.5c	1.3 1.5d	1.4 1.5e	1.5a		
2. Program	2.1 2.4.3 2.4.8 2.4.13 2.6	2.2 2.4.4 2.4.9 2.4.14 2.7a	2.3 2.4.5 2.4.10 2.4.15 2.7b	2.4.1 2.4.6 2.4.11 2.4.16 2.7c	2.4.2 2.4.7 2.4.12 2.5 2.7d		
3. Leadership	3.1 3.6 3.7e 3.12a 3.12f	3.2 3.7a 3.8 3.12b 3.12g	3.3 3.7b 3.9 3.12c 3.12h	3.4 3.7c 3.10 3.12d	3.5 3.7d 3.11 3.12e		
4. Organization & Management	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4			
5. Human Resources	5.1 5.6 5.11	5.2 5.7 5.12	5.3 5.8 5.13	5.4 5.9 5.14	5.5 5.10 5.15		
6. Financial Resources	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4			
7. Facilities, Technology, & Equipment	7.1	7.2	7.3				
8. Legal Responsibilities	8.1 8.6	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5		
9. Equity and Access	9.1 9.6	9.2 9.7	9.3	9.4	9.5		

10. Campus and External Relations	10.1	10.2					
11. Diversity	11.1	11.2	11.3	11.4			
12. Ethics	12.1 12.6 12.11	12.2 12.7 12.12	12.3 12.8 12.13	12.4 12.9 12.14	12.5 12.10		
13. Assessment & Evaluation	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4			

Step Two: List item number(s) for each Part determined to merit follow-up and describe the practice weaknesses that require attention

1.
2.
3.
4.
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7.
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12.
13.

CAS

Financial Aid Programs

Work Form C Summary Action Plan

Step Four:

This form concludes the self-assessment process and calls for action to be taken as a consequence of study results. Write a brief action plan statement in the spaces below for each Part in which action is required.

Part 1: Mission

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Part 2: Program

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Part 3: Leadership

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Part 4: Organization and Management

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Part 5: Human Resources

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Part 6: Financial Resources

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Part 7: Facilities, Technology, and Equipment

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Part 8. Legal Responsibilities

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Part 9: Equity and Access

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Part 10: Campus and External Relationships

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Part 11: Diversity

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Part 12: Ethics

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Part 13: Assessment and Evaluation

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