

*Council for the Advancement of Standards
in Higher Education*

CAS Self-Assessment Guide for
TRIO and Other Educational
Opportunity Programs



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August 2006

CAS
Self-Assessment Guide
Student Support Services Program
August 2006

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CAS

Self-Assessment Guide

Student Support Services Program

August 2006

Part 1: MISSION

Student Support Services is a federally funded program designed to provide support to students who are at-risk academically. The program at Utah State University is funded by a grant renewable on a four-year cycle to provide services for 190 students who meet one of the following U.S. Department of Education criteria:

- Low income, as established by the U.S. Commission of Education
- Disabled, including physical and learning disabilities
- First-generation college student, meaning that neither of the student's parents having graduated from a four-year institution.

The mission of Student Support Services is to support such disadvantaged students who demonstrate potential to meet the challenges of higher education by strengthening and developing their academic and self-management skills. Its focus is to insure that participants in the program have a realistic chance to persist in school and graduate from Utah State University. To accomplish its objectives, Student Support Services provides services to enhance students' academic success, personal skills, and social skills. Providing services in these areas corresponds to the University's mission to support students' intellectual development, personal growth, and community advancement.

To accomplish this mission, the Utah State University Student Support Services program focuses on five major goals:

- Recruit eligible students who meet program guidelines.
- Increase the retention of disadvantaged students in the University.
- Increase the academic success of eligible students by increasing their GPA.
- Increase the number and percent of disadvantaged students who graduate from the University.
- Increase the number and percent of disadvantaged students who pursue graduate or professional schooling.

Consistent with these goals, the Utah State University Student Support Services program has defined objectives and related activities to direct its efforts on behalf of the students who are eligible for the Student Support Services program.

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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Deficiencies	Action Plan
The SSS fully met the above criteria.	No action plan necessary

Sources
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 19-25

Part 2: PROGRAM

The Student Support Services program includes outlined goals and objectives and a plan of operation to ensure the proper and efficient administration of the program. A series of activities have been developed to address the program objectives, including academic advising and guidance, tutoring on an individual and group basis, course selection, reading and study skills enrichment (Psy 1750 and 1730), math instruction (Math 0900, 1010, and 1050), financial aid planning, major/career advising, and faculty/peer mentoring. These activities as described in the SSS Grant Proposal include information about resources and procedures, the personnel involved, and the evaluation criteria. A plan to monitor academic progress of students is also in practice. Each activity is designed to meet the individual needs of the participants in the program and to enhance the mission and objectives of both Student Support Services and Utah State University.

The SSS program has been successful in the past in achieving its stated objectives. Evidence of program effectiveness is documented by the Longitudinal Evaluation Study, Performance Outcomes, and the annual Student Satisfaction Survey.

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
The SSS fully met the above criteria.	No action plan necessary

Sources
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 19-25, pg 26-30, pg 30-44, pg 30
Appendix A-Longitudinal Evaluation Study
Appendix C-Spring 2006 Performance Outcomes
Appendix D-Fall 2006 Performance Outcomes
Appendix K-Student Satisfaction Survey

Part 3: LEADERSHIP

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. Institutions must appoint, position, and empower Student Support Services (SSS) program leaders within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions. SSS 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.

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

SSS leaders must:

- articulate a vision for their organization
- set goals and objectives based on the needs and capabilities of the population served
- 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

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

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

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

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
The SSS fully met the above criteria.	No action plan necessary

Sources
Appendix I-Performance Appraisal Form
Appendix R-Staff Resumes

Part 4: ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT

Guided by an overarching intent to ensure student learning and development, Student Support Services (SSS) Program 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. SSS must provide channels within the organization for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.

SSS must be placed in the institution's organizational structure to promote cooperative interaction with appropriate campus or community entities and to develop the support of senior administrators.

SSS should be positioned to assure appropriate recognition and visibility.

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
The SSS fully met the above criteria.	No action plan necessary

Sources
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 44-50

Part 5: HUMAN RESOURCES

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

SSS professional 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.

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.

SSS 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.

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

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

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

SSS 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.

Hiring and promotion practices must ensure diverse staffing profiles.

SSS professionals must possess a combination of knowledge and experience in working with individuals who are traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education.

Professional staff members should possess:

- effective oral and written communication skills
- an understanding of the culture, heritage, and learning styles of the persons served by the program
- leadership, management, organizational, and human relations skills

Student employees and volunteers from groups traditionally under-represented in higher education should be used and assigned responsibilities that are within the scope of their competencies.

The size, scope, and role of the program staff depend on the mission of SSS and the populations served. Staffing should be based on the needs of the students or participants and the resources available. When possible, the staff should reflect the characteristics of the population being served.

SSS should provide continuing professional development opportunities for staff such as in-service training programs, TRiO professional training seminars, participation in professional conferences, workshops, or other continuing education activities.

SSS staff should contribute to the knowledge and practice of the profession through research and publications.

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
The SSS fully met the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix G-Budget
Appendix H-Awards
Appendix I-Performance Appraisal Form
Appendix J-Student Services Training Chart
Appendix K-Student Satisfaction Survey
Appendix M-Instructor/Course Evaluations
Appendix N-Staff Assistant and Work Study Manuals
Appendix O-Tutoring Packet
Appendix P-Hiring Procedures
Appendix Q-Human Resources Web Page
Appendix R-Staff Resumes
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal pg 28, pg 60-65

Part 6: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Student Support Services (SSS) Program 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.

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

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
The SSS has adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals.	Implement plan of operation to meet the performance objectives to obtain continuing funding.

Sources
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 53, pg 66
Appendix X-Grant Award Notification

Part 7: FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT

Student Support Services (SSS) Program 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.

As applicable, the facilities must include, or the staff must have access to, private offices or spaces for counseling, advising, tutoring, interviewing, or meetings of a confidential nature. Facilities must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

SSS facilities should be physically located to promote visibility of the programs and to ensure coordination with other campus programs and services.

SSS should have equal access to the institution's technological resources.

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS has a suitable and adequate facilities, technology, and equipment to support its mission.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 51-53

Part 8: LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Support Services (SSS) Program 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.

SSS 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 SSS staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

The institution must inform SSS 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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS fully meets the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix E-FERPA
Appendix J-Student Services Training Chart
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 51-53
Appendix T-Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)
Appendix U-TRiO Regulations
Appendix V-Utah State University Policy Manual

Part 9: EQUITY and ACCESS

Student Support Services (SSS) Program staff members must ensure that services and programs 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. SSS must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.

SSS 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, SSS 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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Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS fully meets the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 27-30, pg 28, pg 54-57
Appendix V-USU Policy Manual, Affirmative Action

Part 10: CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Student Support Services (SSS) Program must establish, maintain, and promote collaborative relations with relevant individuals, campus offices, external agencies, project area schools, community organizations, and students' families.

SSS must include a public relations component to regularly inform the institutions, communities, agencies, and schools about their mission and services.

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS fully meets the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix F-Partnership Working Wheel
Appendix K-Student Satisfaction Survey
Appendix L-Publications
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 27-28, pg 52-53, pg 58-59

Part 11: DIVERSITY

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

SSS 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. SSS must educate and promote respect about commonalties and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.

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

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS fully meets the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix F-Partnership Networking Wheel
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 56, pg 38-39, pg 41
CAS-Part 1: Mission

Part 12: ETHICS

All persons involved in the delivery of Student Support Services (SSS) Program must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. SSS must develop or adopt and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice. SSS must publish these statements and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

SSS 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. SSS 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 SSS 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.

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

SSS 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 SSS 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.

SSS 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.

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

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

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS fully meets the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix E-FERPA
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, Part VI pg 66, pg 52-53, pg 30-44, pg 28
Appendix V-Utah State University Policy Manual
Appendix T-Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)
Appendix U-TRiO Regulations
Appendix W-SSS Student Application

Part 13: ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION

Student Support Services (SSS) Program must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. SSS 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.

SSS 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.

Annual program performance reports must be conducted in accordance with federal project guidelines.

Annual evaluation reports should be made available, when appropriate, to the program's various stakeholders, such as relevant campus offices, external agencies, area schools, and community organizations.

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

Deficiencies	Action Plan
SSS fully meets the above criteria.	No action plan necessary.

Sources
Appendix A-Longitudinal Evaluation Study
Appendix B-2005-2006 Annual Performance Report
Appendix C-Spring 2006 Performance Outcomes
Appendix D-Fall 2006 Performance Outcomes
Appendix I-Performance Appraisal Form
Appendix K-Student Satisfaction Survey
Appendix M-Instructor/Course Evaluation
Appendix S-2007-2011 Grant Proposal, pg 69-73