100 Series Advisor Survey Summary

The 100 Series Advisor Survey Summary captures the input of subject matter experts regarding the creation of courses and resources for new financial aid professionals. It ranks the critical issues and topics about which knowledge is required and ranks existing courses and materials according to their benefit to new financial aid professionals. Other feedback elaborates upon areas including training time, professional expectations, and performance assessment. Collectively, these suggestions form the basis for packaging the courses and materials most useful to new financial aid professionals, creating the "100 Series."

ISSUES/TOPICS

	Categories	Rank
1	Student eligibility and processing issues	1.74
2	General administrative issues	2.58
3	General fiscal issues	3.21
4	Electronic processing issues	3.21
5	Reporting issues	4.58
6	Software issues	5.40
7	Other	6.44

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

	Existing Courses	Rank
1	Fundamentals of Title IV Administration (formerly Precert/New FAA – 4.5 days)	1.44
2	Coach (web-based self instruction)	2.07
3	FISAP on the Web (web-based self instruction)	3.46
4	Common Origination and Disbursement (web-simulation self instruction)	3.64
5	Other	3.67

	Existing Resources/Materials	Rank
1	Student Financial Aid Handbook	1.13
2	New School Guide	2.31
3	FSA Assessment Tool	2.50
4	Other	4.00

100 Series Advisor Survey Summary

ISSUES/TOPICS	Other related topics	Recommended Delivery Methods	Average Rank
1 ***General administrative issues:***			**2.58**
Roles and responsibilities of the institution Laws and regulations Policies and procedures	How to read the law Documentation	Self-instructional (on-line) Printed materials Classroom	
2 ***Student eligibility and processing issues:***			**1.74**
Understanding FAFSA and ISIR COA, Verification Determining awards	SAP NSLDS ATB INS & other data matches PINs and SARs PIN web site FAFSA on the web	Classroom Self-instructional (on-line)	
3 ***General fiscal issues*** **:**			**3.21**
Cash management Disbursement Reconciliation R2T4 Over-awards and overpayments.	Audits GAPS SAIG Overview of how systems work together	Classroom Self-instructional (on-line)	
4 ***Electronic processing issues:***			**3.21**
FSA's web-based products and software (Portals, IFAP, NSLDS, COD)	FAA Access to CPS Why they need to check these sites EDExpress PIN web site CPS SAIG enrollment	Classroom Self-instructional (on-line)	
5 ***Reporting issues:***			**4.58**
How to complete required reports and meet deadlines	Master Calendar of reports and deadlines FISAP Reconciliation	Self-instructional (on-line) Printed materials	

100 Series Advisor Survey Summary

6 ***Software issues***			**5.40**
	Backing up Upgrading Getting needed resources Electronic correspondence with students EDExpress Must learn software packages	Classroom Self-instructional (on-line)	
7 ***Other Issues/Topics*** (not covered above) include			**6.44**
Funds management SAIG enrollment Creating policies and procedures from scratch Understand how all the systems work together Professional judgment Professional ethics Financial Aid programs Student eligibility and SAR c codes Need analysis Basis of tax return information Stand-alone program modules How to use the resources FSA provides		Classroom	

DELIVERY METHODS	
A. Classroom (in-person, group training)	E. Printed information (Handbook, checklists, forms)
B. Self-instructional (on-line)	F. Regular sessions at state or regional meetings
C. Self-instructional (CD-ROM)	G. Peer Support (coaching)
D. Videoconference	H. Other

RESOURCES/MATERIALS		Average Rank
Existing courses for new financial aid professionals:		
1	Fundamentals of Title IV Administration (formerly Precert/New FAA – 4.5 days)	**1.44**
2	Coach (web-based self instruction)	**2.07**
3	FISAP on the Web (web-based self instruction)	**3.46**
4	Common Origination and Disbursement (web-simulation self instruction)	**3.64**
5	Other:	**3.67**
●	Instruction/overview of the entire IFAP website -- taught without other websites mentioned	
●	EDExpress Basics -- web-based	
●	EDExpress -- all modules	
●	Professional Judgment, SAP, RT4 and verification	
●	How to use the web-based DOE school applications	
●	We need to find a practical way to keep from dumping it all on them at once	
Existing resources/materials for new financial aid professionals:		
1	Student Financial Aid Handbook	**1.13**
2	New School Guide	**2.31**
3	FSA Assessment Tool	**2.50**
4	Other:	**4.00**
●	Knowing that the Program Review Guide is available on the IFAP website	
●	I can't comment as I haven't ever SEEN the New School Guide	
●	For DL schools, the DL 101 on-line course was great, but mysteriously disappeared and is not longer available for download	
●	I'm not familiar with the New School Guide or FSA Assessment Tool	
●	A chart of reports that are required by the DOE and approx the dates when they are due	
●	Student Guide is helpful for getting the big picture first	

OTHER FEEDBACK

How much time is the average new financial aid professional provided to attend training outside the school during the first year? Where is this most likely to take place?

- One week -- Notice Training NASFA workshop
- Depends on the school type and their budgets. They, I would think, usually attend the Department of Education's training and/or school type professional organization.
- Hard to determine an average with so many configurations of schools, large and small. Thinking of fully staffed offices at schools with more than 2 people, perhaps 5 days total.
- 2-3 days. State Meeting or required pre-cert training
- It depends! Most are sent to as much local training as the school can afford in both time and resources.
- The average new professional is given 1-2 days to attend outside training if it is free, and does not require excessive travel funds. Given this, it is most likely to take place in their state, or neighboring state.
- 80 hours. State or Regional Meetings
- 3 weeks -- Closest major metro-city
- Depending on the employees duties and responsibilities will determine how much training time out of the office will be necessary. A clerk will not need as much training as an Associate Director.
- My guess is 1-2 weeks. In the case of small schools this is often just precert. The rest is on the job.
- 1 Week -- Association Related Meetings\Department of Ed workshops
- I think the answer to this question will relate to the level of the new financial aid professional as well as the size of the financial aid office. There will be staff who will not be allowed any training outside of the office because of their rank within the office. There will be other instances when staff will be allowed to attend outside training if it is in an easily accessible location (ie requiring no overnight stay) – I would estimate potentially 5 days; and then there will be staff that it is so important they be appropriately and adequately trained that even the cost of lodging and food will need to be undertaken by the institution and this person might be allowed from 5 to 7 days.
- One to two weeks. Fundamentals workshop(regional office or professional organization)

How much time is provided for the average new financial aid professional to devote to self-instructional training in the first year?

- Zero
- I do not know.
- This could also vary widely, but let's guess at 40 hours
- Very Little. New administrators , especially at smaller schools are usually left to their own resources and self-study.
- Very little in most offices.
- Eighty hours.
- Varies by institution
- Little or None
- 2 weeks
- Approx one hour a month
- Most aren't given specific time -- they're just thrown in.
- Depends on the aid professional
- My experience is that very little time is allowed in the office for self instruction. Most new aid administrators (if at the highest level) are expected to use the day for their clients and use their own non office time for learning the job.
- Four weeks

At the end of the first year, what are the expectations of a new financial aid professional's knowledge?

- Knowledge of federal programs and eligiblity requirements
- To understand the financial aid programs and how to maintain Titale IV integrity.
- Capable of determining basic student eligibility. Understand the basic requirements of the Title IV programs and program specific requirements related to student eligibility for each of the programs. Capable of submitting disbursement information to COD for Pell and DL disbursements (this capability is dependent on how staff responsibilities are assigned and the size of the office)
- Depends on the size of the department
- They should have a good general understanding of the regulatory and award/disbursement process as wellas the mechanisms(software and systems) necessary to accomplish those processes They should also have a good understanding as to what resources and tools are available to help them.
- It depends!
- At the end of the first year, a new financial aid professional should be able to understand the challenges of overlapping cycles. They should be able to verbalize what they do not understand and have a pretty good idea where to find the answer. They should also be familiar with the various mentoring professional organizations available to them.
- Will vary depending on job assignment
- Understand the aid process, need analysis, Cost of Attendance, verification and how to determine a student's financial need
- Understand verification process, student eligibility and processing using the schools software package, able to utilize NSLDS, and again this would depend on the employees duties and responsibilities.
- Based on my experience, most schools have a high turnover rate so financial aid professionals are expected to learn quickly and know everything within the first week of their start date.
- Depends on setting. If in a large school, less is needed/expected. If a 1 or 2 person office, expectations/needs are much higher.
- Baseline knowledge of the General Provisions, especially student eligibility rules
- Varies by job. In a small office (1-5 people), a person would be expected to handle all aspects of determining a student's eligibility, program eligibility and if appropriate, handle the reporting requirements. In a larger office (6-20 people), the staff member might be expected to know all aspects of determining student eligibility but little about program eligibility and nothing on reporting requirements.
- They would be expected to be able to package and counsel students.

How are new financial aid professionals' knowledge and skills assessed?

- The are really not assessed. They learn through errors made, compliments receive and complaints received.
- Varies per school and I would believe that our audits may assess some of the aid officers skills.
- Feedback from students to the FAO, Dean or Presidents. Personal observation by supervisors. Feedback to supervisors from other staff members. Results of a program review or audit.
- From the school's perspective, by how smoothly the Title IV dollars flow
- It would depend on the school. The internal audit/compliance function is usually a good indicator. The FSA Assessment tool is another. CMO/FSA site visits to new schools are also used in the evaluation process.
- By performance on the job!
- Unfortunately, all the methods to assess whether a new financial aid professional has what it takes are rather reactive. Their abilities are tested in filing the FISAP, timeliness of reporting and the reconciliation process.
- They should have: A good command of the language of the trade, a good understanding of the tools of the trade (ISIR, FAFSA, etc.), and good time management skills.
- No formal assessment. Informally, assessment is a function of good quality productivity, interpersonal skills and the absence of substantive complaints.
- On the job performance and Level of Deficient Audits and/or Program Reviews
- Thru interactions with students, evaluations, interactions with other financial aid professionals, security (internal) reports to check validity of verification, etc.
- I don't know -- short of student stampede and office program reviews…
- Outcomes of audits, delays in processing aid for students and the ability of institutions to draw down funds
- In my office, each new person is mentored by the office manager (an Assistant Director) through their training period. At the beginning, each assignment is reviewed for accuracy and evaluation of the success of the training. After the person appears to be successful, occasional but regular monitoring is done by the mentor (usually a random selection of files are reviewed). One the person is functional, their work like the work of all the others in the office is monitored by exception reports that determine when processes are outside acceptable parameters. Feedback from other staff members within and outside the office is also sought.
- Through evaluation of their work.

How often should the different types of training be offered? How often should they be updated?

- Annually for both questions.
- Semi-Annually, and updated as regulations change and/or clarified. The reauthorization year would also have an impact on the need and types of training offered.
- Training should be held at regularly scheduled intervals with class times and places available for registration at least 6 months in advance. Various courses should be offered in smaller increments. Let's not try to cover everything in 5 days. Let's spread it out in half-day or possibly one day offerings. Give people a chance to digest what was learned, and apply it. This could work if we have a regular schedule of offering various classes once each quarter, or 2 or 3 times per year, depending on demand and need. If these are offered on a classroom style bases at regional headquarters sites, with material that is already prepared, we could manage to teach a class with only 2 or 3 people registered. Travel expenses force us to assess the value of the training against the cost to deliver the training. Offerings could include a variety of delivery methods. Some work done with self paced tutorials before attending classroom training. Perhaps some follow-up sessions with an opportunity to ask questions in a videoconference venue.
- At least annually for both offering and updates, more if budget allows.
- 2-3 times per year and updated annually.
- Updated yearly or as changes occur.
- Computer Based/on-line/CD training should be available on demand, and updated yearly. Stand up training should be available in varying geographical locations at least once every 6 months (West, Midwest, East.) Videoconference training should be available once per quarter, and downloadable afterward.
- At least annually. Updated at least bi-annually.
- Annually
- Several times a year. (A good host site is always good) Training should be in at least one state in EVERY state since many schools have restrictions on out of state travel.
- Most of the Department's training should be offered throughout the calendar year but FSAU should change the release dates of some of it's training to benefit the user: ie-delivery systems training should start before January/Packaging and Blue Book should not be offered in the summer.
- Every 2-3 months, continuously throughout the year / update when changes occur
- Annually
- Updates as the need arises so it may be that materials will last for years while other parts of the materials will need to be overhauled as the regulations are modified. Training needs to be available as often as people need it but typically at least 4 times per year for new aid administrators. If someone is the only one or the most senior person in an office, to go longer than 3 months without guidance could be disastrous.
- Offered at least twice a year, updated annually.

Please provide any other suggestions for the100 Series for new financial aid professionals:

- One page bulletin "Fast Facts" for program administration and changes.
- It would be helpful if the financial aid professional had a set of case studies – depending on school type – which would take them through the entire FSA process: Initial ED application; FASFA, ISIR, COD, reconciliation, audit, FISAP, etc. Point being is that the process is given to new financial aid officers in huge doses and because it is so overwhelming that bits and pieces are retained. If they were able to process a couple of mock students throughout the entire process from initial application to the end of an audit and then program review, then they would possibly better understand what is required of them and get a better handle, up front, of what is necessary to stay within the regulatory boundaries.
- I realize FSA Coach probably does most of this but it may also be too much too soon independently. Again, I believe a few case studies would benefit new financial aid professionals if they had to go through our entire processing steps from A to Z.
- We should be able to update materials without the major time and expense of a new creation for various training series we have been doing. Update when things change rather than create new when things change. We have some really good case studies and lessons developed for our "Student Eligibility Basics" series that could be incorporated in some basic ongoing training. We could explore what it would take to update some of this material using current software (right now our case studies and exercises were based on 2002-03 EDExpress output). Even our "Fundamentals" training could be changed to conduct it over a period of one year instead of in 4 ½ days. The downside of this is the expense for participants to travel, but this could be mitigated by a variety of training delivery methods.
- I think we should keep in mind a saturation point for new professionals.   Often we attempt to teach everything up front and until they get their feet wet, some concepts are lost so early on. The most important thing we need to teach is where to get information. We should work cooperatively with national/state/regional association mentoring programs to capitalize on peer coaching.
- Get on the appropriate list serves as they are a great help and a good source of information. Perhaps a "community" list for the different list serves available (would probadly assist those in different states)
- Peer support is a necessary part of feedback about 'am I doing this right?' Peers in the new aid administrator workshops are also an excellent source of assistance for the new aid administrator. Regarding the use of Peer Support: I think that type of coaching is useful for follow up activities or to provide clarification on an issue but not as a way to learn something for the first time.
- We desperately need to find a way to separate the 1-person shop 1st, 1st time people from others.

ISSUES/TOPICS																						
Categories		Rank by Respondent																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
1	General administrative issues	2	1	4	1	1		2	6	1	2	5	3	2	1	4	1	3	1	6	3	2.58
2	Student eligibility and processing issues	1	5	1	2	3		1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	4	1	1.74
3	General fiscal issues	5	2	2	4	4		3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1	2	4	5	2	3.21
4	Electronic processing issues	3	4	3	3	2		4	2	3	3	3	2	3	4	5	3	4	3	3	4	3.21
5	Reporting issues	4	3	5	5	5		6	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	3	2	6	5	1	5	4.58
6	Software issues	6	6	6	6	6		5	4	6	5	?	6	6		6		5	6	2		5.40
7	Other	7			7			7	7		7	2		7				7	7			6.44

RESOURCES/MATERIALS																						
Existing Courses		Rank by Respondent																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
1	Fundamentals of Title IV Administration (formerly Precert/New FAA – 4.5 days)	2	1	1	2	1		1	1	2	4		1	2	X	1	1	1	X	1	1	1.44
2	Coach (web-based self instruction)	1	2	2	1	3		2	2	1	2		3	1	X	3		2	X	2	4	2.07
3	FISAP on the Web (web-based self instruction)	4	4	4	3	4		4	3	4	1		4	3	?				X	3	4	3.46
4	Common Origination and Disbursement (web-simulation self instruction)	3	3	3	4	5		3	5	3	3		5	4	?	2			X	4	4	3.64
5	Other					2		5	4				2	5		4						3.67

RESOURCES/MATERIALS																						
Existing Resources/Materials		Rank by Respondent																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
1	Student Financial Aid Handbook	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	2		2	1		1	1	1	X	1	1	1.13
2	New School Guide	3	2	?	3	2		?	2	2	3		1	2		3	2		X	2	3	2.31
3	FSA Assessment Tool	2	3	2	2	3		2	3	3	1		3	3		2	3	2	X	3	3	2.50
4	Other		4										4									4.00

ISSUES/TOPICS																						
Categories		Suggested Method, by Respondent																				Totals
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
1	**General administrative issues**																					
	A. Classroom		1		1	1				1					1		1	1	1		1	9
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)	1		1	1			1	1	1		1	1		1						1	10
	C. Self-instructional (CD)			1	1			1			1	1			1							6
	D. Videoconference							1								1						2
	E. Printed information			1	1			1	1				1			1	1	1		1	1	10
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings							1	1		1			1		1					1	6
	G. Peer support (coaching)																					0
	H. Other													1								1
2	**Student eligibility and processing issues**																					
	A. Classroom		1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	15
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)	1		1	1				1	1				1	1	1					1	9
	C. Self-instructional (CD)			1	1										1							3
	D. Videoconference							1														1
	E. Printed information			1	1			1						1			1	1	1			7
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings							1													1	2
	G. Peer support (coaching)			1				1			1											3
	H. Other																					0
3	**General fiscal issues**																					
	A. Classroom	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)			1	1			1	1	1		1		1		1					1	9
	C. Self-instructional (CD)			1	1			1			1	1		1								6
	D. Videoconference																				1	1
	E. Printed information			1	1			1	1					1			1	1				7
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings			1				1	1				1								1	5
	G. Peer support (coaching)							1					1									2
	H. Other																					0
4	**Electronic processing issues**																					
	A. Classroom	1	1	1	1				1	1			1	1		1	1	1			1	12
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)			1	1			1	1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1		1	12
	C. Self-instructional (CD)			1	1			1			1	1			1							6
	D. Videoconference										1	1									1	3
	E. Printed information				1									1			1					3
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings			1		1						1									1	4

ISSUES/TOPICS																						
Categories		Suggested Method, by Respondent																				Totals
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	G. Peer support (coaching)			1																1		2
	H. Other																					0
5	**Reporting issues**																					
	A. Classroom		1		1				1	1				1							1	6
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)			1	1			1		1	1	1	1				1	1			1	10
	C. Self-instructional (CD)			1	1						1	1	1					1	1	1		8
	D. Videoconference							1					1								1	3
	E. Printed information	1		1	1				1				1	1	1	1	1				1	10
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings					1			1					1							1	4
	G. Peer support (coaching)							1														1
	H. Other																					0
6	**Software issues**																					
	A. Classroom		1	1					1	1						1		1				6
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)			1				1	1	1	1					1						6
	C. Self-instructional (CD)		1	1														1				3
	D. Videoconference	1						1					1	1								4
	E. Printed information		1																			1
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings			1		1		1	1		1			1								6
	G. Peer support (coaching)												1						1	1		3
	H. Other																					0
7	**Other**																					
	A. Classroom	1			1							1						1	1			5
	B. Self-instructional (on-line)				1												1					2
	C. Self-instructional (CD)				1						1						1					3
	D. Videoconference																					0
	E. Printed information				1												1					2
	F. Regular sessions at state/regional meetings							1			1											2
	G. Peer support (coaching)							1						1								2
	H. Other																					0

	Respondent	Affiliation
1	Ron Barker	ACS
2	Tom Beckerle	
3	Linda Burkhardt	FSAU - Seattle
4	Kevin Campbell	
5	Jim Castress	
6	Marianna Deeken	
7	Marie Fitzpatrick	
8	Mark Gerhard	FSA - DL - San Francisco
9	Midge Hunt	FSAU - HQ
10	Charles Johnson	
11	Marilyn LeBlanc	
12	D. Parrott	ACD
13	Jill Rowley	FA Dr. in TX
14	Jeanne Saunders	FSA - Schools - HQ
15	Pennie Summers	FSAU - HQ
16	Fran Susman	
17	Deb Tarpley	
18	George West	
19	???	Chicago Schools rep
20	???	Chicago Schools rep