

SFA Security Policy

Task Overview

The request to develop a new SFA Security Policy came as a result of the direct need by systems, system owners, and system security officers, to clearly understand SFA's position on numerous security issues. While a substantial need for operational guidance remains, the foundation to develop this guidance must begin with clearly articulate security policy. To create this policy, we drew upon numerous Federal, Departmental, and even International guidance and standards documents. Although the effort was extensive, the value of the final product for SFA will be significant and far-reaching.

Task Details

The effort to create the new SFA Security Policy began with a bang. As soon as we understood the pressing need for clear security policy within SFA, we assembled our entire team and focused on defining an acceptable approach with an unambiguous path to lead us. Our approach was to employ existing guidance found in several security documents in the Federal government, the Department of Education, and international guidance as well. We chose NIST Special Publication 800-18, the NIST Self-Assessment Guide, the International Standard (an adaptation of the British Standard 7799), and the Department of Education's Information Security Policy. From this guidance, we extracted nearly every applicable suggestion the documents postulated. Each extracted statement was annotated, placed on a 'sticky note,' and then categorized on our conference room wall. The exercise allowed the team to easily view multiple forms of guidance and consolidate the findings into robust policy statements.

The next step in the effort was to tailor the policy to conform to SFA's business and security approach. We reviewed each policy statement using the following criteria:

- Appropriateness for SFA
- Accuracy of the statement
- Appropriate level of detail
- Correct location within the outline
- Redundancy and verbosity
- Policy vs. procedures statements
- Consistency in wording (i.e., shall, would, will, must, etc.)

The resulting policies should provide a solid baseline for SFA to build their information security foundation.

Task Status

Beginning the week of October 1, 2001, the SFA Security Policies documents will be distributed to the SFA community for comments. The intended audience should be SSOs, contractor representatives, operational and technical personnel, and SFA Management. The document, as it stands currently, is in draft form. The input from the SFA community will be a welcome addition to the policies document, and will only aid in the improvement of SFA security.