



FINANCIAL AID COMPETENCY COMMITMENT TO COLLEGE ACCESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

At the heart of NASFAA's Financial Aid Administrator Competency Framework is a commitment to college access and student success. Financial aid administrators play a critical role in expanding college access and supporting student success. This competency emphasizes the importance of inclusive, student-centered practices that remove barriers, promote equity, and improve outcomes. Administrators are encouraged to understand the diverse needs of their student populations, communicate effectively, and advocate for policies and procedures that advance affordability, access, and completion.

Competency Statements

- Impact of aid on student success
- Awareness of systemic barriers
- Cultural humility and inclusivity
- Clear, accessible communication
- Student-centered advocacy
- Ongoing learning and reflection

RESOURCES, TRAINING,
AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Knowledge Statements

Understand the Impact of Financial Aid

- Understand how financial aid policies and procedures influence access, affordability, and student success
- Recognize systemic barriers that may affect specific student populations (e.g., first-generation, low-income, undocumented, rural, adult learners)
- Identify how institutional decisions influence enrollment, retention, and completion rates

Practice Cultural Humility and Inclusion

- Demonstrate cultural humility and awareness of diverse student backgrounds and experiences
- Recognize and respect differences in beliefs, values, and customs while adapting communication and support approaches
- Understand how cultural influences may affect student interactions with financial aid processes

Task Statements

Identify and Address Barriers

- Identify and assess institutional, procedural, or policy barriers that may limit access or student success
- Recommend changes to aid policies or procedures to improve equity and outcomes for historically underserved populations

Communicate with Clarity and Inclusion

- Modify communication strategies to ensure clarity, accessibility, and inclusivity for diverse student populations
- Apply culturally responsive practices in advising and student support interactions

Collaborate to Support Students

- Partner with campus and community programs (e.g., TRIO, multicultural affairs, academic advising) to support underserved or at-risk student groups
- Contribute to institutional conversations about enrollment, access, and student support strategies

Communicate Effectively for Access and Success

- Communicate financial aid information in clear, accessible, and student-friendly ways
- Tailor communication strategies to meet the needs of diverse audiences

Advocate for Student-Centered Policies

- Advocate for policies and decisions that improve access, affordability, and student outcomes at the institutional, state, and national levels
- Incorporate student perspectives into program design and policy discussions

Engage in Ongoing Growth

- Engage in continuous reflection and professional development to better support all students
- Stay informed on access, equity, and affordability best practices

Use Data to Drive Equity

- Use financial aid data to identify equity gaps in aid distribution, retention, or degree completion
- Apply data insights to inform strategies that improve access and student outcomes

Promote Affordability and Student Success Initiatives

- Participate in or lead efforts to promote affordability, such as early FAFSA campaigns or financial literacy programs
- Support institutional initiatives that align with college access and success goals

Engage in Professional Development and Advocacy

- Seek training and learning opportunities related to equity, access, and student advocacy
- Elevate student voices by incorporating their feedback into process and program improvements