



FINANCIAL AID COMPETENCY

TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH & DATA

This competency emphasizes the effective, responsible use of technology, research, and data in financial aid administration. Financial aid professionals must skillfully use systems and digital tools to improve efficiency and service, interpret data to guide decision-making, and apply research practices to enhance policy, compliance, and student outcomes, all while safeguarding data privacy and security.

Competency Statements

- Digital communication
- Electronic processing
- Leveraging technology to find efficiencies without sacrificing quality service
- Apply data to inform decisions and improve outcomes
- Use research to guide policy and practice
- Translate data insights into service enhancements

**RESOURCES, TRAINING,
AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**



Knowledge Statements

Use Digital Communication Tools Effectively

- Demonstrate proficiency in various modes of digital communication
- Create presentations, draft documents, and conduct virtual meetings using digital tools
- Maintain accurate, organized, and accessible digital records

Administer Financial Aid Through Electronic Processing

- Navigate federal, state, and institutional financial aid management systems (FAMs)
- Utilize federal systems and electronic processes for aid administration
- Manage system processes such as application review, verification, corrections, packaging, reconciliation, drawdowns, and program reporting
- Maintain technical agility and adaptability with evolving systems
- Troubleshoot system issues and understand risks and limits of technology

Ensure Data Privacy and Security

- Adhere to federal and institutional policies on data privacy, sharing, and security
- Conduct system access reviews and safeguard sensitive student data

Analyze and Apply Data

- Understand basic data analysis concepts and tools
- Interpret financial aid-related data to identify trends and inform decisions
- Recognize data limitations, gaps, and biases
- Use dashboards, visualization tools, and reports to support decision-making
- Translate data insights into service enhancements and operational improvements

Use Research to Guide Policy and Practice

- Identify reputable sources of financial aid research and data
- Apply findings from institutional, state, and federal research to policy and operations
- Participate in research or assessment efforts related to aid programs

Collaborate on Data-Driven Initiatives

- Work with campus partners to support data-informed planning and improvements
- Communicate complex data findings clearly to diverse audiences



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Task Statements

Manage Digital Communications and Records

- Respond to inquiries through appropriate digital platforms
- Conduct virtual meetings and presentations
- Digitize and organize documents using scanning/imaging tools
- Maintain and update the financial aid website, student portal, and other digital communication channels

Process Aid Through Electronic Systems

- Navigate federal, state, and institutional FAM systems for aid functions
- Check application status, process corrections, and perform verifications
- Process Pell Grants, loans, and other aid; manage aid year setup and rollover
- Reconcile records, draw down funds, and complete compliance reporting (e.g., V4/V5, ECAR)
- Manage Direct Loan processing and state/federal reporting
- Troubleshoot system failures and manage technology-related audits/accreditations

Analyze and Report Data

- Develop and run queries for standard and ad hoc reports
- Forecast trends, track spending, and develop aid-related statistics
- Reconcile funds and use reporting to support budget development
- Conduct data clean-up and validation to ensure reporting accuracy

Apply Data and Research to Practice

- Use data visualization tools to present trends and outcomes
- Collaborate on campus-wide data analysis and planning projects
- Apply research findings to improve compliance, service, and student outcomes