
Clearance Documentation

Documentation for the Generic Clearance of Customer Service Satisfaction Collections

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: RESEARCH AND EVALUATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

**SURVEY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOCUS GROUP
 SOFTWARE USABILITY TESTING**

DESCRIPTION OF THIS SPECIFIC COLLECTION

BACKGROUND

Under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which covers the administration of U.S. federal student financial aid programs, Federal Student Aid (FSA) administers the following programs: Pell grants, Stafford loans, PLUS loans, and the “campus-based” programs including Federal Work Study, Perkins Loans, and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants. Federal regulation requires schools to have written policies and procedures for the administration of the Title IV student assistance programs. To ensure institutional regulatory compliance, FSA provides training and technical assistance for financial aid administrators, institutional leaders, and other institutional support staff nationwide via its Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) website and the School Experience Group (SEG). The SEG’s mission is to identify the unique service needs of all post-secondary education institutions and provide them with tailored resources to meet those needs. Within SEG, the Minority Serving and Under Resourced Schools Division (MSURSD) is responsible for providing support, assessment, and training specifically targeted for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

MSURSD is currently working to enhance the services and resources they provide to the MSIs, with the dual goals of increasing MSI compliance rates and of assisting MSI’s in improving student performance outcomes such as increased student retention and graduation rates. Previously, Windwalker mapped MSURSD’s business process and has used the results to formulate a Performance Enhancement Pilot (PEP) program. In addition, a segmentation analysis was conducted, which was followed by a benchmarking study in order to compare variables across different segments of MSI’s. This helped to identify the unique challenges faced by MSI’s in different segments. Finally policy impacts were analyzed to determine the best management tools to be used for adapting to future policy shifts. Following these studies, Windwalker was tasked with assessing the impact of policy changes on institutions in order to identify best practices that help schools respond to shifts proactively and effectively. The specific goals of the study include:

1. The extent to which MSIs understand the education policy shifts,
2. The updated reporting requirements necessary to address the shifts,
3. The personnel and business process shifts that have impacted the financial aid offices, and
4. The extent to which the shifts directly affect the students at MSIs..

The findings from the survey will be used to investigate further through an interview protocol, practices implemented by institutions that “proactively and effectively” respond to policy shifts as well as identifying best practices occurring at these institutions to provide a roadmap for other institutions in need of additional support.

INTENDED PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE COLLECTION

MSURSD has contracted Windwalker Corporation to examine the extent to which MSIs understand the educational policy changes and the impact of these changes on MSIs and students. Additionally, Windwalker will identify best practices that help schools respond to policy shifts proactively and effectively to provide a roadmap for other institutions in need of additional support.

This current phase of the research will involve a survey administered to MSIs in the following clusters; Historically Black Colleges and Universities, (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH), and [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions Program](#) (AANAPISI), with a follow up phone interview administered to a small selection of participants for more in-depth examination of the issues. The survey will be sent to 614 institutions. The survey protocol contains 17 questions to gather the desired information and will take about 25 minutes to complete. Specifically, the survey will ask respondents questions on the following policies:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Early Submission
- Gainful Employment
- Enrollment Reporting
- User-selected Federal Student Aid Identification (FSA ID)

The results from the survey will be presented in a report that will help inform a later meeting with MSURSD and other FSA Subject Matter Experts. In addition, a follow up interview with selected institutions will be conducted as part of the same task.

The follow up interview will be given to 8 selected MSI institutions that were part of the initial survey sample group. These institutions will be selected based off the results of the survey, results of previous research, and input from MSURSD to determine institutions that continuously respond to policy changes in a proactive and effective manner. The interview protocol will utilize root cause analysis, to help identify underlying factors that contribute to organizational success or failures. Results from the interview protocol, survey protocol, and a meeting with FSA subject matter experts will be used to inform a final report to be submitted to MSURSD.

COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The web-based survey will be developed using Survey Monkey, a survey platform and data analysis tool. Using this platform allows for the development of a computer-based survey of varied question types (e.g., questions using Likert scales and open-ended questions) to be administered to respondents via the delivery of a web link through an email message. Both closed- and open-ended items are included in the survey to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. Specifically, 10 items are close-ended, 1 item is open-ended [for selecting a date], and an

additional 6 items have both close-ended and open-ended components. The survey is expected to take respondents approximately 25 minutes to complete.

Once the survey is finalized and ready to deploy, FSA will provide Windwalker a list of names and email addresses, for Financial Aid Directors, University Leadership, and possibly financial aid staff from selected institutions to which the survey link will be sent. Each participant will receive an email from an FSA point of contact via surveymonkey.com with an invitation to complete the survey. The email invitation will include details on the purpose of the survey, the anticipated length of time to complete the survey, and the survey deadline date. The survey will remain open for three weeks, and reminder emails will be sent subsequent to the launch email to participants who have not yet completed the survey. The first reminder will likely be sent five business days after the survey launch, and a second reminder will likely be sent a few business days before the survey closes.

Once the survey has closed, Windwalker will begin data analysis. Data will be captured by the Survey Monkey tool, allowing for download into SPSS program- a statistical analysis software program for social sciences. Open-ended responses will be analyzed qualitatively using emergent thematic analysis. Specifically, open-ended responses will be coded by theme and the frequency counts for comments by theme will determine the themes provided in the final report (see the “Planned Use of Data” section).

The phone-interviews will be conducted following closure of the survey and after data analysis of the survey responses is completed. The interview protocol contains 11 open-ended questions meant to facilitate discussion about the practices and processes at MSI institutions that help or hinder their ability to respond to policies changes. The participants will be selected out of the larger survey sample by MSURSD and Windwalker. The participants (financial aid directors, financial aid staff, and institutional leadership) will be asked to give consent by email if they are able and willing to participate in the phone interview.

The interview itself will take no longer than 90 minutes to complete and will be conducted over the phone. For an institution to be considered for participation, at least one financial aid staffer, the director of financial aid, and at least one member of university leadership should be able and willing to participate. The interviews will be recorded in order to keep an accurate account of the data. Qualitative analyses will be conducted to extract common themes and strategies utilized to respond to policy changes.

DATES, LOCATIONS, AND PARTICIPANTS

The proposed timeframe for the survey launch will be between September 6, 2016 and September 23th, 2016, and will be conducted entirely online. Following the completion of the survey and data analysis, the phone interviews will be scheduled for November 2016. No payments, stipends, or incentives are proposed. This timeline meets the contractual requirement that the survey be administered and the final report be made available to MSURSD by January 31, 2017. The survey will also be shared with MSURSD/FSA leadership for approval.

PLANNED USE OF DATA

The survey will provide MSURSD insight into the impacts of policy changes on MSIs and the interview results will help determine best practices used by successful MSI institutions. The

survey will provide both quantitative and qualitative responses, while the interview will provide in-depth qualitative responses. This enables Windwalker to obtain general attitudes regarding policy impacts, while allowing respondents to provide insight into their responses and decision making process. A report to be delivered by the end of January 2017 to FSA will include a summary of findings from the survey and interview.

AMOUNT OF ANY PROPOSED STIPEND OR INCENTIVE

Not applicable.

BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION (Number of responses (X) estimated response or participation time in minutes (/60) = annual burden hours).

SURVEY			
Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Financial aid directors	368 (based on a 60% response rate)	25 min	153 hours
Financial Aid Staff	736 (based on a 60% response rate)	25 min	307 hours
Institutional Leadership	368 (based on a 60% response rate)	25 min	153 hours
Survey Totals	1472	25 min	613 hours
PHONE INTERVIEWS			
Institutional Leadership	8	90 min	12 hours
Financial Aid Staff	16	90 min	24 hours
Interview Totals	24	90 min	36 hours

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

We expect a 60% response rate for the survey (614 Institutions with a 60% response rate = 368 institutions) which is typical for surveys disseminated online. The numbers for the financial aid staff are doubled since more than one staffer from each institution may respond. We expect 100% response rate for the phone interviews.

REQUESTED APPROVAL DATE: 10 business days past submission date

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