



Session 12

Controlling the Quality of Verification: Verifying a Sample of ISIR Records

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Questions

- Are you looking forward to your next program audit?
- Do you relish explaining your institutional verification procedures to students who ask “why me?”
- Are you sure all of your non-verified ISIR data are accurate?



Questions

- Would you like to maintain a solid empirical basis for your institutional verification practices?
- Would you like to know what types of students your current institutional verification may be missing?
- Would you like to identify efficient means of improving your institutional verification efforts?



Session 12

- Review of Sampling Principals
- A New Approach to Sampling in the QA Program



Sampling Principals

- What is a sample?
 - A portion of a larger group called a population
- What makes a good sample?
 - Representative
 - Reflects Target Population
 - Random



Why Sample?

- Efficiency
- Cost
- Focus



How is sampling relevant in a financial aid context?

- Schools are accountable for the aid they disburse.
- Institutional verification efforts target the groups thought to be most prone to error
- No way to know about the accuracy of non-verified ISIR information
- Confirming the accuracy of data in a sample of ISIRs would allow you to more fully assess your verification procedures



Possible Sampling Strategies

- Simple Random Sampling
- Stratified Random Sampling
- Systematic Sampling



Simple Random Sampling Steps

1. Sampling frame – list of population members
2. Determine population size
3. Determine sample size
4. Determine sampling probability ($\#3 \div \#2$)
5. Generate a random number for every case
6. Select cases with random numbers less than or equal to the sampling probability



Sampling Theory Demonstration

- Sample of 5 blue cards
 - population = 45 cards
 - cards range from 3 to 7 (nine each)
 - Population average = 5
- Sample of 5 yellow cards
 - population = 45 cards
 - cards range from 1 to 9 (five each)
 - Population average = 5



New Approach To Sampling in the QA Program

- Background
- Why do I have to sample?
- What do I have to do?
- When do I have to do it?



Background

- Participants in the QA Program have regulatory relief from following the Secretary's (CPS) verification edits
- These schools develop their own institutional verification criteria based on analysis of their own data



QA Program Methodologies

- Old methodology
 - October “documented” sample
 - Readings-based software
- Current methodology
 - ISIRs generated during normal processing
 - ISIR Analysis Tool (PC-based)



QA Program Monitoring

- New methodology
 - Biannual verification of a sample of least 350 ISIRs prior to disbursement
 - Biannual analysis of ISIRs generated during normal processing
 - ISIR Analysis Tool (Web-based)



Why Do I Have to Sample?

- You cannot know the accuracy of ISIR information that is not verified
- Analysis using data from normal aid processing can identify ways to make verification more efficient
- Analysis using data from normal aid processing cannot identify ways to make verification more accurate



What Do I Have To Do?

New Activities

- Complete Sampling Plan Worksheet online at <http://ifap.ed.gov/qualityassurance>
- Randomly select at least 350 non-duplicate ISIRs from your aid applicant population
- Compel each sampled student to complete a federal verification worksheet by placing a hold on their aid disbursement
- Submit ALL changes to ISIR information stemming from the sample through the central processor



What Do I Have To Do?

Continue Current Activities

- Import data and apply institutional verification profiles in the online version of Tool
- Analyze changes in ISIR information detected in sample
- Apply results of analysis to improvements in institutional verification profiles.



When Do I Need to Do It?

Activity	Deadline
Sampling Plan Worksheet	January 15
Draw sample of ISIRs	July 31
Collect verification worksheets	In time to disburse aid on time
Submit all ISIR changes to CPS	In time to disburse aid on time
Import data and apply verification profiles	November 30
Analysis of changes to ISIR data	December 15
Apply results of analysis	Start of 2005-06 verification



Complete Sampling Plan Worksheet

- Online planning tool on QA website
- Email reminders (nagging)
- FSA will use to monitor collective progress and identify assistance needs
- Timeframe: November 2003 – January 2004
- Deadline: January 15, 2004



Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

- At least 350
- Why more?
 - attrition
 - statistical power
- The online ISIR Analysis Tool will have a limit of 500 pairs
- You can use the Tool to draw a sample, but not until June 27, 2004



Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

- Population of interest – aid recipients – is “emerging”
- If practical remove
 - applicants who are not admitted
 - applicants who decline admission
 - applicants who decline financial aid



Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

- Rolling admissions
 - > 20% apply for aid after fall disbursement
 - Spread 350 cases in sample proportionally across the year
 - Deadlines apply only to fall cases



Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

Simple Random Sample Steps

1. Sampling Frame – list of SSNs and first two characters of last name for aid applicants with “potential” to receive aid
2. Determine Population Size – if need be estimate for whole sampling window
3. Determine Sample Size – 350 or more
4. Determine sampling probability ($\#3 \div \#2$)
5. Generate a random number of every case
6. Select cases with random numbers less than or equal to the sampling probability



Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

Final Product

- Electronic list(s) of SSN and first two characters of last name of applicants selected into sample
- “Optional” transaction number – important for paid on transaction
- Keep track of initial institutional verification status in a separate file



Consider the Following in Deciding When to Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

- When does institutional verification begin?
- What information does institutional verification confirm?
- Is it possible to integrate sample verification with existing verification efforts?
- When will admission and acceptance decisions be known?



Randomly Sample 350 ISIRs

- Timeframe: January through July
- Online Tool sampling component available June 27, 2004
- Deadline: July 31, 2004



Complete Federal Verification Worksheets

- Most labor intensive part of sampling
- Pilot schools spent between 2 to 6 FTE weeks completing this process
- Must be done before aid is disbursed
- Make the process as seamless to students as possible



Complete Federal Verification Worksheets

- Timeframe: January through August
- Deadline: In time to disburse aid on time



Submit All Changes through CPS

- Usually only submit changes to ISIR information if Pell eligibility is affected
- But data used in analysis needs to reflect all changes
- Only way to get the right ISIRs in the data mart is to submit all corrections
- Keep track of transaction number of corrected ISIRs!



Submit All Changes through CPS

- Timeframe: January through August
- Deadline: In time to disburse aid on time



Import Data and Apply Verification Profiles

- FSA Data Mart will make finding the right ISIRs much easier
- Schools only need an SSN file and have the option of specifying a specific transaction number
- Attend Data Mart Session if possible for more detail



Import Data and Apply Verification Profiles

- Apply verification profiles to data
 - Set institutional verification flag
 - Write queries that mirror your criteria
 - Check off
 - Contact regional representative if you have difficulty doing this
- Timeframe: October and November
- Deadline: November 30, 2004



Analyze Changes to ISIR Data

- Richer, “what did we miss” analysis with sample data
- Enhanced analytic capacity of the online version of the ISIR Analysis Tool
 - Predefined reports
 - Drill-down capacity
- Set aside staff time for analysis



Analyze Changes to ISIR Data

- Timeframe: October 17 - December
- Deadline: December 15



Apply Results to Institutional Verification

- What groups of students (if any) are your institutional verification missing?
- How can you efficiently expand your institutional verification profiles to target these students?
- What groups of students (if any) can you stop verifying?



Apply Results to Institutional Verification

- Timeframe: November and December
- Deadline: Start of 2005-2006 institutional verification



Technical Assistance

We appreciate your feedback and comments. We can be reached at:

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