

**Office of the Chancellor  
Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education  
Procedures and Standards for University Operations**

**Procedure/Standard Number 2024-59**

**Undergraduate Recruitment and Financial Aid Optimization Annual Assessment**

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 10/10/2024

History: N/A

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Related Policies, Procedures or Standards: N/A

**Additional References:**

RESOLUTION 2023-02 Exercising the Fiduciary Responsibility of the Board of Governors for Efficient, Effective, and Financially Sustainable Universities

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**I. Introduction**

This Procedure and Standard provides guidance on the development and adherence to Undergraduate Recruitment and Financial Aid Optimization Annual Assessment practices and a common system-wide methodology for self-assessments. The methodology will enable self-assessments to be conducted in a meaningful and recurring timeframe and assumes universities comply with requirements set forth in applicable federal and state regulations.

This document describes the elements pursuant to which the State System intends to:

1. Establish a framework for which universities can conduct a self-assessment against a set of best practices in marketing, admissions operations and projections, financial aid strategies, and research.
2. Establish a process to allow the results of the self-assessments to prioritize annual strategic initiatives and investments for continuous improvement.
3. Improve and strengthen universities' financial optimization strategies with alignment to the Comprehensive Planning Process.
4. Establish a process to allow universities to request peer reviews of the self-assessments in whole or in part.
5. Identify and allow for System intervention in accordance with the Policy. This Procedure and Standard is limited to undergraduate activities; however, nothing precludes a university from conducting a broader assessment if they so desire as part of continuous improvement efforts.

This Procedure/Standard is intended to be utilized in conjunction with any institutional

policies and procedures that may be required pursuant to federal and state laws and regulations.

**II. Definitions – For the purposes of this Procedure and Standard the following definitions will be used.**

1. Admission management & operations: The organizations, processes, and technology used within a university to coordinate efforts to advance and track students from prospects to enrolled students, including application and admission processes.
2. Research & reporting: The organizations, processes, and technology used within a university to collect and analyze data on internal and external factors affecting enrollment, student success, and the school's image to inform decision-making within the university.
3. Marketing: The organizations, processes, and technology used within a university to promote the university by highlighting its strengths and unique offerings and matching them to the needs and interests of prospective students and their families.
4. Financial aid: The organizations, processes, and technology used within a university to strategically allocate all financial resources to ensure accessibility and affordability for a diverse student population within a financially sustainable model.

**III. Scope**

This Procedure and Standard applies to all State System Universities.

**IV. Procedure/Standard**

**A. Undergraduate Recruitment and Financial Aid Optimization Annual Assessment Framework**

1. The State System will work collaboratively with subject matter experts at the universities to establish a best practice framework as the baseline for the assessment. This framework should be used by the universities as guiding principles for their enrollment management programs and assessments for continuous improvement.

The framework consists of the following areas:

- i. Marketing
- ii. Admissions Management
- iii. Financial Aid
- iv. Research

2. Assessment instructions will be communicated by the Office of the Chancellor to the universities for an anticipated completion in the early Spring semester prior to the institutional budget review and submission of the CPP.
3. The assessment framework will be reviewed and revised every three years to address changes in the market and associated best practices.

**B. University Undergraduate Recruitment and Financial Aid Optimization Annual Assessment Process**

1. Assessments are to be performed annually and conducted using a standard template provided by the Office of the Chancellor. The template will include the categories defined above. Universities are expected to complete the scoring and written questionnaire as part of the assessment.
2. Upon completion of the assessments, universities are expected to establish a sign-off process internally to enable cross collaboration.
3. Upon completion of the assessments, universities are expected to collaboratively review the results and create action plans based on the areas deemed as high-risk.
4. Universities are expected to monitor the completion of the action plans to track trends in assessment results.

**C. University Peer Review Process**

1. At any time, universities may reach out to other System universities or third parties for assistance in a peer review of their assessment results inclusive of organization, process and technology.
2. Entities conducting peer reviews are expected to provide written recommendations of the findings related to the peer review. Peer reviews should be completed within an agreed upon timeframe defined between the parties.
3. In accordance with Procedure 2019-40A University Financial Sustainability, as part of the review process conducted by the CAOs and CFOs, the results of an assessment can be requested and recommendations for peer review can be provided as input to the Chancellor.

**D. System Review Process**

1. If, as part of the assessments, or if financial or operational circumstances dictate the need for immediate action, the chancellor/designee, in consultation with the Presidents, may require additional assessment, external assistance and actions.
2. In the event that a university submits a tuition proposal in accordance with Policy 1999-02-A Tuition, an assessment summary may be provided to the Board to aid in its decision-making process.

**V. Resources**

See the associated SharePoint site

**VI. Implementation**

This Procedure and Standard is effective immediately.