

Program Review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. How often can an institution expect to be selected for a program review?

A.1. Institutions are selected for program review in accordance with Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) Administrative Rules, 23 Illinois Administrative Code:

Section 2700.60 Audits and Investigations:

ISAC shall audit participating institutions of higher learning. All postsecondary institutions participating in ISAC gift assistance programs shall be audited for compliance with ISAC administered gift assistance programs on a schedule that is determined based on a risk assessment and the availability of ISAC resources. The factors used to determine when a review will be scheduled may include, but are not limited to, the following: dollar amounts awarded to the school for ISAC gift assistance programs, time elapsed since the last ISAC review, the institution's external or internal audit findings in the area of financial aid administration, ED findings or issues noted, results of investigations conducted by parties such as Inspectors General or Attorneys General, substantial increases in students awarded ISAC gift assistance, evidence that the institution is experiencing difficulty meeting the requirements of ISAC's rules or federal regulations, or issues in past audits conducted by ISAC. Secondary institutions may be audited when ISAC has a complaint indicating an audit is appropriate. Audits shall usually be announced, but ISAC reserves the right to make unannounced audits.

Q2. How are institutions notified of an upcoming program review?

A2: The Program Review Announcement is communicated via e-mail to the Director of Financial Aid; the Monetary Award Program (MAP) contact or other contacts listed on the GAP Access application; and the institution's president. The GAP Access contact information is updated based on information provided to the School Services Department by the institution. The e-mail is sent as a high priority with return receipt and delivery confirmation. The announcement is e-mailed at least 30 days in advance of the date the review is scheduled to begin.

Q3. Can a program review be rescheduled, if requested by institutional staff?

A3. Program reviews must be completed in compliance with the schedule required under ISAC Administrative rules and the Illinois Higher Education statutes.

Q4. Where should questions regarding the program review announcement e-mail be directed?

A4. All questions are to be sent to the following e-mail address: isac.programreviews@illinois.gov

Q5. Will ISAC provide assistance with securing required documentation?

A5. The institution is accountable for ensuring due diligence is maintained for review integrity. Institutions cannot enlist ISAC staff to provide specific step-by-step guidance related to the requested program review documents. The institutions are responsible for providing the requested program review documents.

Q6. How will the selected program review samples be provided to the institution?

A6. The selected program review samples [student name, Social Security number (SSN) and other pertinent program details] will be provided to institutions through one of two means: File Transfer Protocol (FTP) or e-mail as encrypted documents. Those institutions participating in FTP will receive the program review sample information via upload to the institution's FTP folder. Instructions to access the samples will then be provided through an e-mail to the institution.

Institutions not participating in FTP will receive the encrypted samples via e-mail. A separate e-mail will be sent with instructions to access the encrypted samples.

It is recommended that institutions contact their IT department to ensure there are no e-mail security restrictions for attachments and encrypted documents.

Q7. Will a finding be assessed if any of the requested documentation (items on the Program Review Materials Listing) is inadvertently omitted from the initial document submission?

A7. Institutions are encouraged to ensure that all required documents (as indicated on the Program Review Materials Listing), as well as all pages of documents, are copied or scanned and included in the submission to ISAC.

A written statement numbered with the item number referenced on the Materials Listing is acceptable for the items that are not applicable to the institution's administrative process. This will be reviewed to confirm the not applicable status.

Q8. Are paper copies of students' MAP award letters required if financial aid award announcements are provided electronically?

A8. Institutions that notify their students of award packages through electronic means will be expected to provide the specific student notifications related to the program review samples.

Additionally, regardless of whether the institution provides students with a financial aid award letter electronically or via paper, MAP grants must be clearly identified, and the award notification must include the specific language required for the award year in question. Required school issued award letter language for each academic year is provided via the [MAP Award Announcements](#) page of the isac.org website.

Q09. What are the top program review findings?

A09. The top findings are as follows.

- MAP award announcement: award notification not in compliance with the ISAC requirement and/or copies of students' award notifications are not provided.
- Verification incomplete: missing verification worksheets, required tax documents and missing signatures or dates.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) student notification: student notification cannot be validated or confirmed. Missing appeal documentation.
- Enrollment hours – payment requests: flat rate tuition with no accountability for the MAP paid credit hours maximum eligibility calculations.
- Payment requests – overbilling/underbilling: enrollment hours reported on academic transcripts and account statements are not the same as the hours reported for the payment request.
- Illinois residency policies and procedures: no policies or procedures provided for the program review. Illinois residency policies and procedures state requirements for independent students to provide proof of residency for 12 continuous months prior to the start of the institution's academic year.
- MAP reconciliation policies and procedures: documentation does not include student-by- student term or year-end reconciliation processes.
- Payment Certification - course withdrawal: institution is unable to provide documentation of students' withdrawal dates for verification of tuition and fees incurred after the add/dropperiod.
- Military Programs (IVG/ING) – benefit certification errors, course withdrawal reporting, actual enrollment hours on academic transcript are not the same as being certified, errors posting benefits on student account records.