

Updated Computer-Based Training on Financial Aid Management Available from ED

During the past award year, we hope you've had the opportunity to get acquainted with the 36-lesson SFA COACH, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) free computer-based introductory training course on student aid management.

Now, the **updated, second edition** of the entire 36-lesson SFA COACH course will be ready for downloading from www.ifap.ed.gov/sfacoach in the next few weeks.

- ◇ Remember, you can download the updated curriculum to any computer that meets the specifications for use with other SFA electronic products and that has 160 MB of available disk space.
- ◇ Some schools report that they are able to make the course accessible to a large number of work sites by installing it on their internal networks, so you might want to consider doing that.

This second edition of SFA COACH is based on rules and procedures for the 2000-01 award year. In addition to a thorough updating of each lesson, this edition also features a comprehensive review of new regulations on "hot" topics. For instance, SFA COACH includes:

- ◇ A revised Module 6, Lesson 3, Treatment of Title IV Funds When a Student Withdraws, that includes the new regulations that went into effect July 1, 2000. and
- ◇ A revised Module 6, Lesson 5, Reporting a Student's Financial Aid History, that discusses ED's new "interim" policy on paper financial aid transcripts (FATs).

The computer-based training is designed as a detailed overview of Title IV financial aid programs for the "neophyte" financial aid administrator, but there are many lessons that can serve as "refresher" courses for more experienced staff. For example, the SFA COACH lesson, Student Consumer Information, is an interactive lesson that details all the new dissemination requirements, with the user frequently accessing applicable regulations directly on ED's Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site.

So, what do you think?

The second edition (2000-01) of SFA COACH is about to be released. ED is currently developing the third edition (2001-02). And ED wants your input...

Information on how you use the course, your suggestions for improvements, your preferred delivery methods, and your ideas for other Web-based training programs are wanted to help update SFA COACH and to provide additional training options from ED. Please email your comments and recommendations to sfacoach@ctsmc.com. (If you need some help downloading the course, you can also request help from that address.)

SFA COACH gives you a great "backbone" to get started in the field of financial aid. It describes the basic concepts behind financial aid and gives some practical exercises to emphasize the most important points. Each lesson is self-paced and is followed by a short quiz. Lessons are in such areas as:

- ◇ student-application process,
- ◇ federal financial aid programs,
- ◇ awarding aid,
- ◇ reporting and data-keeping requirements,
- ◇ history of financial aid programs, and
- ◇ compliance with HEA and regulations.