



Internal Audit Strategies for Evaluating Enrollment Management in Higher Education



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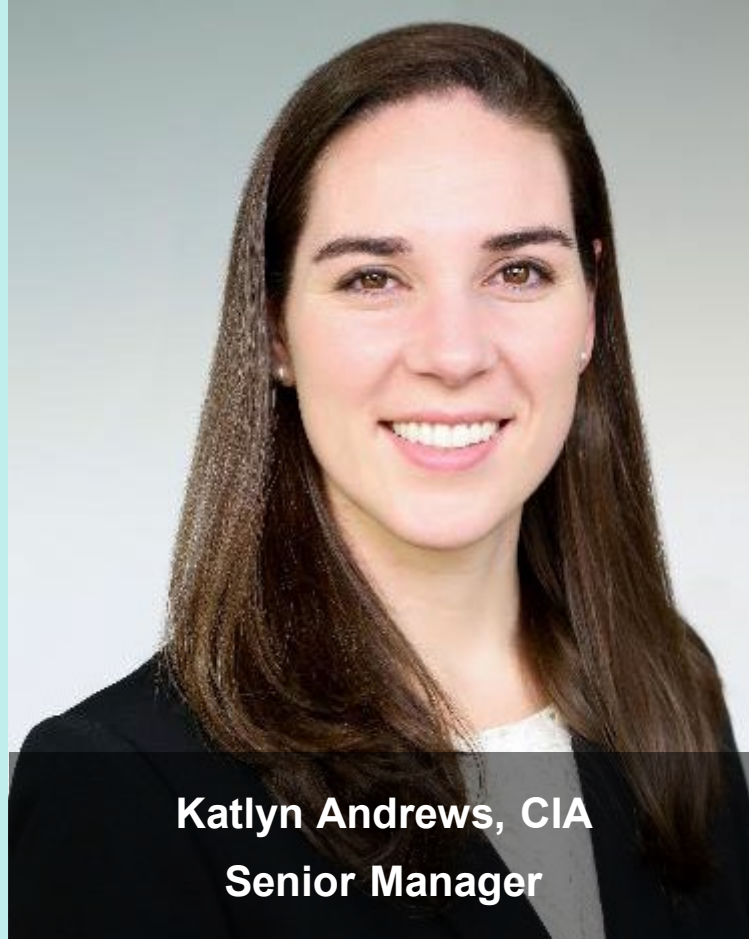


Internal audit strategies for evaluating enrollment management in higher education

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Today's presenters



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Agenda

- Identify the various components of enrollment management, from admissions processes to student support services
- Explore the unique risks associated with enrollment management, including demographic shifts, economic factors and regulatory challenges, and discuss how internal audit can effectively identify, assess, and mitigate these risks
- Discuss real-world examples and case studies illustrating successful internal audit initiatives in enrollment management, including approaches and tools to leverage during your next enrollment management audit

Polling Question #1

Have you conducted an enrollment management audit or advisory review in the last two years?

A – Yes

B – No

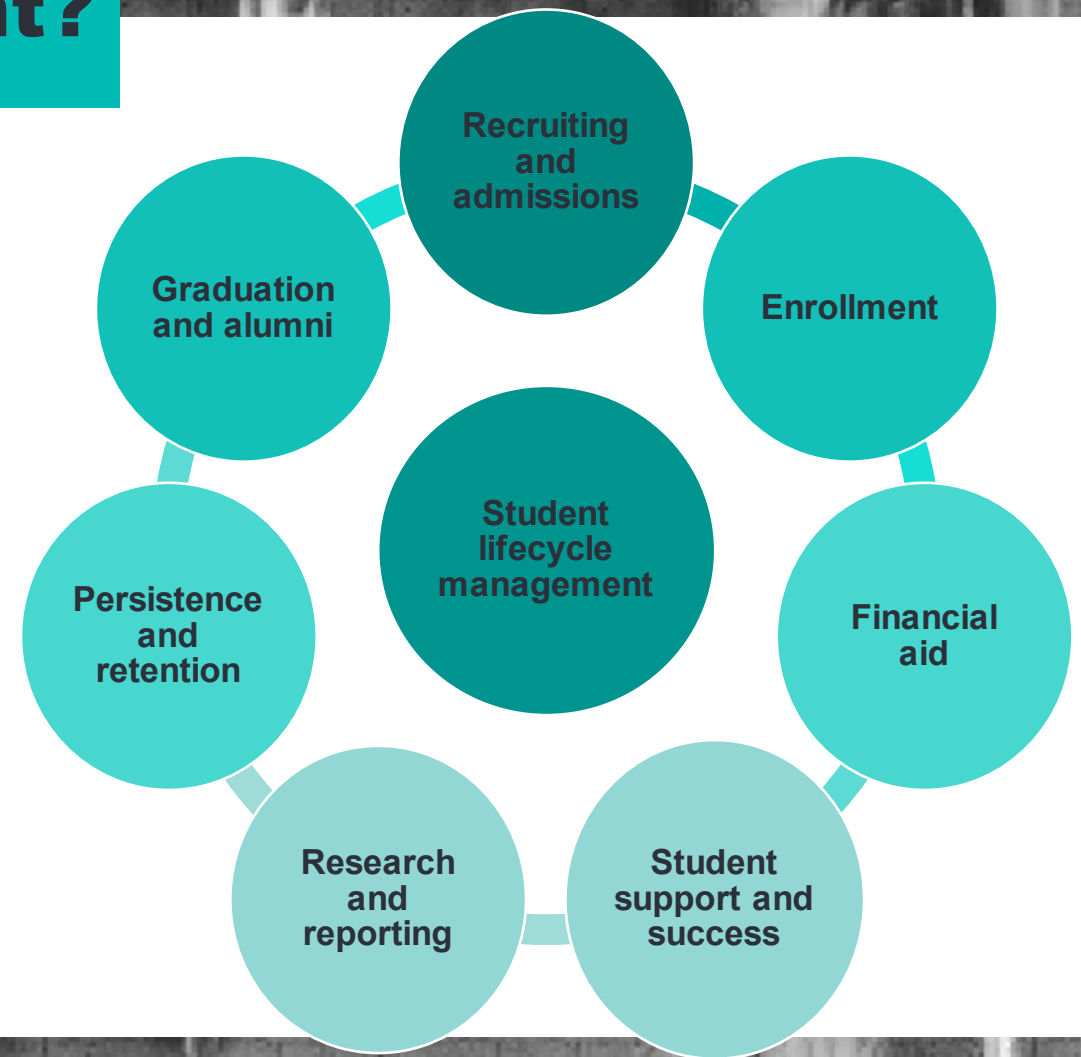
C – Unsure or other

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**What is enrollment
management?**

What is enrollment management?

Enrollment management is a comprehensive process for achieving optimal institutional outcomes for student recruitment, retention and graduation. For students, emerging models of enrollment management aim to provide a seamless experience for individuals who engage with the institution from application through graduation. **Strategic enrollment management benefits institutions by providing comprehensive channels for effectively and strategically blending campus operations** that traditionally would likely have been conducted in relative isolation.



Components of enrollment management

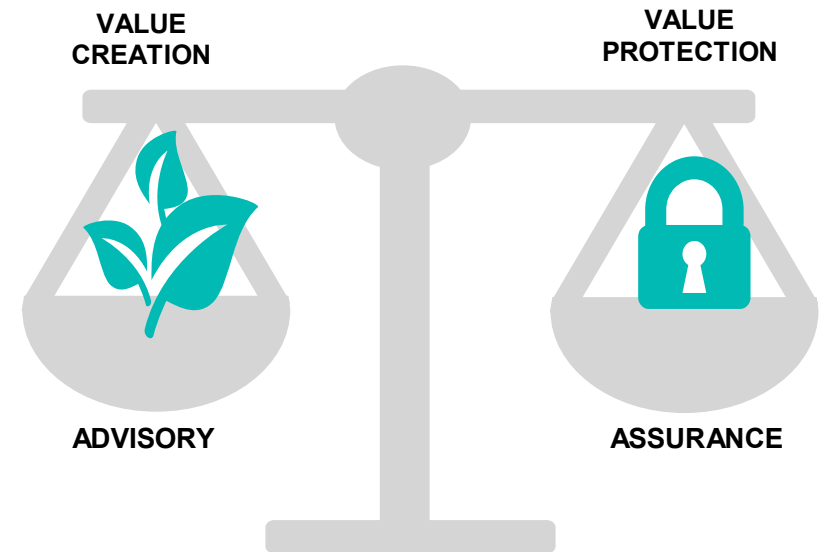
Enrollment management consists of several interconnected components that work together to create a seamless experience for students and schools. These key components include:

Component	Purpose
Recruiting and admissions	Coordinating efforts to advance and track students from visitors and prospects to enrolled students, including application and admission processes.
Enrollment	Enrolling students in academic programs and registering students for courses.
Financial aid	Strategically allocating financial resources to ensure accessibility and affordability for students.
Student support and success services	Offering academic advising, counseling and other resources to help students succeed and thrive during their time at the institution.
Research and reporting	Collecting and analyzing data on internal and external factors affecting enrollment, student success, and the school's image to inform decision-making.
Persistence and retention	Focusing on maintaining and re-enrolling students from year to year, ensuring a strong reputation and stability for the school.
Graduation and alumni	Graduating students and maintaining connections with alumni.



How can internal audit help?

- Assess progress against identified enrollment strategic goals, and identify action items needed to achieve goals in place
- Identify gaps in compliance with external regulations (e.g., financial aid, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA], diversity, equity and inclusion [DEI], affirmative action), as well as university-specific policies and procedures
- Evaluate the effectiveness of student support services in place



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Enrollment management risk landscape



Common risks regarding enrollment management

External risks to consider

Economic factors: economic conditions can affect families' ability to afford higher education. Economic downturns may lead to decreased enrollment as students and families face financial constraints.

Global events and crises: unforeseen global events, such as pandemics or geopolitical crises, can disrupt normal operations and have significant impacts on enrollment and international student mobility.

Policy changes: changes in government policies related to education funding, financial aid or immigration can impact enrollment patterns and pose challenges for institutions in adapting to new regulations.

Public perception and reputation: negative publicity or changes in public perception about an institution can adversely affect enrollment. Reputation management is crucial to maintaining and attracting students.



Common risks regarding enrollment management

Financial and strategic risks to consider

Competition: the higher education landscape is competitive, with institutions vying for a limited pool of students. Institutions must differentiate themselves and offer attractive programs and services to stand out.

Demographic shifts: changes in population demographics can impact the pool of potential students. Institutions must adapt to fluctuations in the number of high school graduates or shifts in the age distribution.

Financial sustainability: ensuring the financial sustainability of an institution is a constant concern. Tuition pricing, budget management and fundraising efforts all play a role in maintaining a healthy financial position.



Common risks regarding enrollment management

Infrastructure and student support risks to consider

Adapting to changing student needs: students' expectations and needs evolve, requiring institutions to continuously adapt their programs, services and facilities to remain relevant and meet the demands of a diverse student body.

Retention and graduation rates: institutions need to focus not only on attracting students but also on supporting their academic success. Low retention and graduation rates can impact the institution's reputation and ability to attract future students.

Technology changes: rapid advancements in technology require institutions to invest in digital infrastructure, online learning platforms and other tools to meet the evolving needs of students.



Polling question #2

What is your institution's top enrollment management risk?

- a) Demographic shifts
- b) Economic factors
- c) Competition
- d) Technology changes
- e) Policy changes
- f) Public perception and reputation
- g) Financial sustainability
- h) Global events and crises
- i) Retention and graduation rates
- j) Adapting to changing student needs

How does internal audit know where to focus?



Review strategic plan

- Are there any strategic goals that include a component of enrollment management?



Review results of most recent risk assessment

- Were any components of enrollment management identified as high risk?



Conduct enrollment management specific risk assessment

- Talk to members of leadership to identify areas of potential risk or concern.

What potential risk areas can internal audit focus on?

Risk	Risk description	Focus areas	Potential audit procedures
Admissions management	Coordinated efforts to advance and track students from prospects to enrolled students, including application and admission processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting• Application process• Application decisions• Admissions communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrollment data and trend analysis• Control testing against admission policies
Retention	Focusing on maintaining and re-enrolling students from year to year, ensuring a strong reputation and stability for the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration• Academic advising (think ease of knowing which courses a student needs to take)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retention data and trend analysis (e.g., across departments)



What potential risk areas can internal audit focus on?

Risk	Risk description	Focus areas	Potential audit procedures
Research & reporting	Collecting and analyzing data on internal and external factors affecting enrollment, student success and the institution's image to inform decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation• Participating in external surveys• Internal reporting requirements and capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test and/or reperform externally reported data
FERPA	Protecting student information and data and complying with Federal regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliance• Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test to effectiveness of data security policies and procedures, and/or completion of required training



What potential risk areas can internal audit focus on?

Risk	Risk description	Focus areas	Potential audit procedures
Financial aid	Strategically allocating financial resources to ensure accessibility and affordability for a diverse student population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy• Packaging• Renewing• Return of Title IV• Student advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control testing for institutional aid, aid packaging and use of gift funds
Student support services	Offering academic advising, counseling, and other resources to help students succeed and thrive during their time at the institution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic advising and tutoring• Counseling• International programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate progress against strategic plan• Test against external DEI regulations• Progression towards degree data analysis



Polling question #3

Which risk area would your IA team consider prioritizing on next year's audit plan?

- a) Admissions
- b) Retention
- c) Research and reporting
- d) FERPA
- e) Financial aid
- f) Student support services

Recent case studies

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Admissions case study

Potential audit objective

- Assess whether the admissions policies and practices are free from any form of illegal discrimination based on race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, or other legally protected personal characteristics
- Evaluate how admissions policies and/or practices consider an applicant's legacy status in a decision to admit and whether there are issues regarding the legality, clarity, or consistency of the use of legacy status in admissions policies and practices

Document and data to request

- Admissions policies, procedures, and guidance used within the department and/or other departments across campus
- Application workflows
- Reviewer forms or other documentation used to evidence an application reader's review
- Internal reports used to evaluate progress during admissions cycles
- Population of completed applications with an identifier to indicate the decision made

Personnel to interview

- Vice President of Enrollment Management
- Admissions Director
- Admissions Counselor(s)
- Financial Aid Director
- Advancement Director
- Athletic Director



Admissions case study

Testing, benchmarking or additional analysis to consider

- Perform analytics to identify possible trends that may indicate any forms of illegal discrimination
- Select a sample of applications and review the file to determine whether prescribed guidance was applied consistently
- Conduct research to identify leading practices related to undergraduate admissions at peer private colleges and universities after the Supreme Court's ruling

Common findings and recommendations

- Implement controls that prevent an application reader from viewing racial demographic information until after decisions have been made and communicated.
- Implement a process by which key aspects of the application review and decision process are documented.
- Reinforce the conflict-of-interest policy and the process to recuse oneself if/when a real or perceived conflict arises.



Financial aid case study

Potential audit objectives

- Evaluate processes to strategically award institutional aid as part of recruiting and admissions.
- Review internal controls and procedures related to review, approval, and disbursement of institutional aid

Document and data to request

- Institutional aid policies and procedures
- Tuition discount guidance and procedures
- Population of available institutional aid
- Admissions data export

Personnel to interview

- Vice President of Enrollment Management
- Admissions Director
- Admissions Counselor(s)
- Financial Aid Director
- Scholarship Manager

Financial aid case study

Testing, benchmarking or additional analysis to consider

- Perform data analysis on recent admissions data to identify trends in tuition discount and institutional aid awarding in enrollment status
- Perform data analysis on award population to identify unawarded aid
- Sample students who received institutional aid to confirm aid requirements were met, and the aid was applied accurately and timely
- Benchmark tuition discounts against peer institutions

Common findings and recommendations

- Increased oversight of institutional aid awarding, particularly at institutions where award decisions are made by individual departments outside of financial aid
- Use (or consistent use of) a scholarship management system for institutional aid
- Define and document exceptions during tuition discount and institutional aid awarding processes
- Identify and communicate unapplied and/or unawarded institutional aid



Polling question #4

**Are student support services
part of your institution's
strategic plan?**

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) My institution doesn't have a
strategic plan
- d) Unsure or other

Student support services case study

Potential audit objective

- Gain an understanding of the infrastructure in place to support students academically.
- Determine whether management oversight and tracking mechanisms are effective to monitor and measure the success of students who receive academic support and advising.

Document and data to request

- Office policies, procedures, or other protocol
- Sample of student progress reports
- List of academic services provided to students
- Internal reports used to measure or evaluate the success of office initiatives
- Mechanisms used to identify students at risk
- Academic standards by program

Personnel to interview

- Director of Academic Advising
- Director of Student Records
- Academic Advisors
- Academic Success Coaches (if applicable)

Student support services case study

Testing, benchmarking or additional analysis to consider

- Benchmark resources against industry frameworks (e.g., the National Academic Advising Association's recommended student to advisor ratio)
- Perform analytic procedures to identify possible trends between students who persist and those that do not (e.g., utilization of tutoring services, majors/program, etc.)

Common findings and recommendations

- Align academic resources with institutional enrollment trends
- Centralize information available regarding academic resources
- Develop clear and accessible guidance for students (and advisors) to provide a roadmap for their academic advancement
- Conduct routine degree audits and/or implement additional monitoring procedures to identify students who may be struggling academically

Questions?

Thank you!

Let's connect:

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Announcements

Upcoming ACUA Webinars

Month	Date & Time	Presenter	Topic
May	5/16/24 1:00pm EST	Wolters Kluwer	Data Analytics
June	6/20/24 1:00pm EST	Fort Hill	Subcontractor Bidding Process: Contract Controls and Auditing

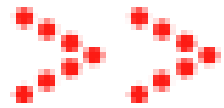


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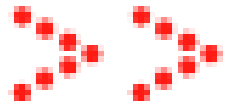


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