

# Better Program Management and Oversight of Postsecondary Schools Needed to Protect Students and Ensure Accountability

## Executive Summary

The postsecondary education sector is rapidly changing, with new programs and institutions emerging to meet the needs of a diverse student population. This growth has led to increased complexity in the oversight of these institutions, and there is a need for better program management and oversight to protect students and ensure accountability.



## FEDERAL STUDENT AID: Better Program Management and Oversight of Postsecondary Schools Needed to Protect Student Information (GAO - DOA) by Peggy McKee

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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This report provides an overview of the current state of program management and oversight of postsecondary schools and identifies areas where improvements are needed. The report also provides

recommendations for how to improve program management and oversight, including:

- Strengthening oversight of postsecondary schools
- Improving data collection and reporting
- Enhancing transparency and accountability
- Providing better support to students

By implementing these recommendations, we can improve the quality of postsecondary education and ensure that students are protected and have the information they need to make informed decisions about their education.

### **Current State of Program Management and Oversight**

The oversight of postsecondary schools is a complex task, involving a variety of stakeholders, including state agencies, accrediting bodies, and the federal government. Each of these stakeholders has a different role to play in ensuring the quality of postsecondary education, and there is often a lack of coordination between them.

This lack of coordination can lead to gaps in oversight, which can allow low-quality programs to operate. For example, a recent study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the Department of Education (ED) had not taken sufficient steps to ensure that all postsecondary schools were meeting the requirements of the Higher Education Act (HEA).

In addition to the lack of coordination between stakeholders, there is also a need for better data collection and reporting. This data is essential for understanding the quality of postsecondary education and for identifying areas where improvements are needed.

However, the current data collection system is fragmented and incomplete. For example, the ED does not collect data on the number of students who graduate from postsecondary schools, or on the employment rates of graduates.

## **Needed Improvements**

There is a clear need for improvements in the program management and oversight of postsecondary schools. These improvements are necessary to protect students, ensure accountability, and improve the quality of postsecondary education.

The following are some of the key areas where improvements are needed:

- **Strengthen oversight of postsecondary schools:** The oversight of postsecondary schools should be strengthened to ensure that all schools are meeting the requirements of the HEA and other applicable laws.
- **Improve data collection and reporting:** The data collection system for postsecondary schools should be improved to provide more complete and timely information on the quality of education and student outcomes.
- **Enhance transparency and accountability:** Postsecondary schools should be more transparent about their programs and outcomes. They

should also be held accountable for meeting the expectations of students and taxpayers.

- **Provide better support to students:** Students should have access to better information and support to help them make informed decisions about their education. They should also have access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education options.

## Recommendations

The following are some specific recommendations for how to improve the program management and oversight of postsecondary schools:

- **Establish a single federal agency to oversee postsecondary schools:** This agency would be responsible for coordinating the oversight of postsecondary schools, ensuring that all schools are meeting the requirements of the HEA and other applicable laws, and providing better support to students.
- **Create a national data system for postsecondary education:** This system would collect data on the quality of education and student outcomes at postsecondary schools. The data would be used to identify areas where improvements are needed and to hold schools accountable for meeting the expectations of students and taxpayers.
- **Require postsecondary schools to be more transparent and accountable:** Schools should be required to disclose more information about their programs and outcomes. They should also be held accountable for meeting the expectations of students and taxpayers.
- **Provide more support to students:** Students should have access to better information and support to help them make informed decisions

about their education. They should also have access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education options.

The postsecondary education sector is rapidly changing, and there is a need for better program management and oversight to protect students and ensure accountability. By implementing the recommendations in this report, we can improve the quality of postsecondary education and ensure that students are protected and have the information they need to make informed decisions about their education.



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