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FoEtec® Software Platform Security
Mechanisms and Protocols

Introduction

Security of institutional data, intellectual property, and personal information is a matter of great importance to the Gardner Institute, to you, your institution, and your faculty, staff, and students. This section provides an overview of the multi-step layers employed by the Institute to provide security to the FoEtec platform. We hope that it helps you feel confident that the Institute employs robust efforts to maintain the security and integrity of the FoEtec Software Platform and, in the process, your data. An overview of these efforts follows.

Integrity of Data and Service Interruptions

The FoEtec system employs multiple levels of protection to the data and its services. These protection levels and approaches include the following:

- Secure Sockets Layer protocol is used to encrypt data in transit between clients and servers.
- Database encryption is employed in the FoEtec tables.
- Multiple physical security protocols are in place to control employee access.
- Environmental controls and power to the data center are redundant and frequently tested.
- Upon request, data can be stored at redundant physical locations in the US and can be quickly expanded to global data centers. Extra fees may apply for this service.

Additionally, the FoEtec Software Platform will generally be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except for:

- Planned downtime. During planned downtime, the Institute will provide your institution with at least 24 hours notice via the FoEtec Software Platform and/or via e-mail to your FoE Liaisons. Additionally, the Institute will schedule such downtime to the extent reasonably practicable during weekend hours; or
- Downtime caused by circumstances beyond the Institute’s reasonable control, including acts of God, acts of government, flood, fire, earthquakes, civil unrest, acts of terror, strikes, or other labor problems not involving the Institute’s employees, computer or telecommunications failures or delays involving hardware or software not within the Institute’s possession or reasonable control, and network intrusions or denial of service attacks, but only to the extent unavailability results notwithstanding the exercise by the Institute of reasonable care and due diligence to avoid or mitigate the same in anticipation of or in response to such causes.

FERPA and Confidentiality

The Gardner Institute and your institution have agreed that any personally identifiable information that is subject to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will be kept confidential and will be handled in accordance with the requirements of FERPA. Institutions participating in the Foundations of Excellence process will upload certain student-level data to the FoEtec Software Platform for purposes of analysis, generating reports, and being able to take advantage of other FoEtec software.
platform functionalities. Student-level data will be uploaded by using an anonymous query ID for which only the institution will hold a key. The purpose for sharing this anonymized student data is directly associated with educational improvement and has educational benefit for the institution and its students.

The Gardner Institute has no interest in collecting any social security numbers, driver’s license numbers, credit card numbers, or other highly sensitive information associated with any individual student, staff, or faculty member participating in any of this work. For this reason, the Institute highly recommends that institutions refrain from using any such information as an identifier for any of its students, staff, or faculty. The Gardner Institute provides security features and protocols to protect your institution’s data and the privacy of those who study and work there. It is your institution’s responsibility to adhere to these protocols.

Please direct any questions you may have about the FoEtec software platform’s security and/or the FoE process privacy protocols to Mr. Rob Rodier at rodier@jngi.org or 828-449-8050.

**Accessing FoEtec**

Once your campus FoE Liaison has added you as a contact in FoEtec you will receive an email from the system providing you a link to set-up your password. After you have established your password you may access FoEtec by going to www.jngi.org.

Clicking Login at the top of the page will take you to a page where you can select Foundations of Excellence as your institution’s focus. Enter your email address and password, if you forget your password click the Forgot Password link and you will receive a link to set a new password.
The FoEtec Software Platform and Landing Page/ “Home Tab”

Home Tab

When you log into the FoEtec software platform, you land on the home screen. This is also the “Home” tab. The FoEtec tabs make it easy to move between sections of the platform. FoEtec platform with view of Tabs:

![FoEtec platform with view of Tabs](image)

Below are examples of the Administration section of the Home tab views for different user roles. These roles include: liaison, liaison assistant, steering committee member, dimension committee chair, dimension committee member and read only members. Note that the example Home screen for Liaisons includes a special notification. The Home tab is the place to quickly see the progress in the Current Practices Inventory and Dimensions.

![Example of Home tab Administration view for liaisons and liaison assistants](image)

Example of Home tab Administration view for other task force members.

![Example of Home tab Administration view for my info](image)

All users can access the “My Info” section from the Administration box on the Home tab. It allows you to manage your FoE profile.

Selecting the My info link allows you to change your first and last name, email address, telephone number, title, and password.

The My info section also includes a box you can use to add or remove yourself from the general FoE update mailings. Please be aware that by participating in FoE, you will receive certain mailings and Gardner Institute communications.
Administrative Functions for Liaisons or Liaison Assistants

Billing Contact Information (Liaisons and Liaison Assistants)

The Home tab for FoE Liaisons will mirror their Administration tab. Liaisons or liaison assistants will enter billing contact information to aid in managing the business components of the system. For the contact, provide: first name, last name, title, phone number, email address, mailing address, city, state, and zip code. There is a check box at the bottom of the contact information page, "Send invoices via email." Place a check mark in the box if invoices can be sent via email instead of postal mail. If the billing contract information has not been completed, the Administration box will have a highlighted link for Liaisons and liaison assistant to follow and complete; the highlighted box will disappear when the information is completed. If the information has been completed, it can be change from within the Administration area by following the "Billing contact" link.

Managing roles and views (Liaisons and Liaison Assistants)

One link in the liaison Administration tab is to the “Manage roles and views” section that provides an area for adding users and pre-populating their profiles. Selecting this link gives you a view of all current users. On this page you can add, edit or remove current users.

Adding/Editing Members

The All Users page provides Liaisons with tools for adding and removing members of the task force, editing member profile information, and setting individual access right.

Adding Users (two options)

Option one: Select the Add User button above the user list. Enter the user’s email address. If the users have an account in FoEtec, their information will automatically be pulled to populate their profile. If the users do not have an email address associated with FoEtec, the system will present you with a page to add information for their profile. All information is required in the form.
Option two: Select the “Import users” button from above the users list to access a page with instructions on how to use a .CSV file to upload multiple users at one time. To start the process you can download a sample user import file with the correct column headers. Populate the file with the new users; all of the information is required except role. If the role is known, you may use one of the active role codes. If the role is unspecified the role “Institutional User” will be assigned. When you are ready to upload the .CSV file, click the “Choose File” button. Select the file and click “Submit.” The next screen will ask you to confirm the import.

After new users are created, an email is sent to the user/all users. A link is provided in this email so the users can set their password.

Setting User Roles

Liaisons can assign roles to the institution members of the task force. Until an individual added to your list of users is assigned to a role on the task force they have the designation of Institution User; a person with this designation can see the CPI, Resources, and Evidence Library, but does not have access to Dimension pages.

Each of the following roles has different permissions:

Liaisons: Full Read/Write Access + Administrative Access
Liaison Assistant: Full Read/Write Access + Administrative Access
Steering Committee Members: Full Read/Write Access
Dimension Committee Chairs: Full Read/Write Access to their assigned Dimension + Read-only Access to the other Dimensions + Limited Administrative Access
Dimension Committee Members: Full Read/Write Access to their assigned Dimension + Read-only Access to the other Dimensions
WESS Administrator: Full Read Access
Read-only Members: Access is limited at set up
Individual access: Contact your advisor or Rob Rodier for exceptions to the provided roles.

To change the user’s role click on their name. Use the dropdown menu to select one of the available task force roles. If the role selected is Dimension Committee Chair or Dimension Committee Member a second dropdown box will appear so that you can select the Dimension.
Manage Announcements (Liaisons and Liaison Assistants)

You can add institution specific announcements which will appear on the Home screen of FoEtec. Some institutions have used the announcements to post a message from the president, to provide information about meeting dates, and to announce campus events. The manage announcement link in Administration opens a page which allows you to enter text and control when the message will be viewed.

Set Institutional Definitions (Liaisons and Liaison Assistants)

The liaison or liaison assistant who will be obtaining data from the student information system to upload for the Current Practices Inventory will need to set institutional definitions. The institution definitions will need to be entered prior to the data upload for the program to interpret the codes used by your institution and appropriately display data in the Current Practices Inventory.

Institutional definitions are required for:

Terms: Include information for each academic term in the previous academic year.
Instructor designations: Include name and codes the institution uses for all instructors, e.g., adjunct, instructor, assistant professor, etc.
Grade equivalencies: Grades in the system are defined as A, B, C, D, F, W, I, and P. Your institution may use numbers or may include variations such as B+, B, B-.
Student classifications: This is the minimum number of credits to be classified as a sophomore, junior, or senior.

Set Dimension Due Dates (Liaisons and Liaison Assistants)

When the timeline for Dimension reports to be due has been determined the liaisons can enter the dates in FoEtec. These dates show next to the Dimension name on the Home and Dimension/PI tab and serve as a timeline reminder for the task force members. Liaisons can set the dates from the link on the bottom of the Dimension/PI tab or from the Configure Dimensions link in Administration.
The section on Configuring Dimension Performance Indicators on page III.13 describes the final FoEtec administrative set-up task for liaisons. Configuring the PIs should be done as soon as the Current Practices Inventory is completed. Configuring the PI's will be necessary for some of the Dimension Committees to do their work.

**FoEtec Resources**

Members of the Gardner Institute staff have provided information in the Resource tab of FoEtec to support the work of the FoE Task Force. Webinars takes you to links to register for process webinars.

**Document Library**

The Document Library contains many resources for the task force. We will continue to add documents that we feel will be useful resources for the task force. To facilitate finding the information you may be looking for you can narrow the search by selecting a label or by typing a keyword into the filter box.

Some of the documents that you may find useful as you begin your work are associated with these labels:

- Task Force Resource
- Process Webinars
- FoE Survey
- Promotional Materials
- Guidebooks
- Example Dimension Reports
- Example Final Reports

**Evidence Library**

The Evidence Library exist as a place within the platform that institution specific evidence and resources may be posted and shared. All members of the FoE Task Force can add documents to the Evidence Library. The institution’s Liaisons may consider adding documents they feel will be useful to any of the committees to start the process. The Dimension committee members are encouraged to add evidence they cite as they do their work. The Dimension Committees may also want to keep minutes of their meetings and
upload them to the Evidence Library. As in the Resource tab, labels and filters can be to make it easier to find information in the Evidence Library.

The standard labels for the Evidence Library are the Dimension names, so that materials relevant to a particular Dimension may be identified easily. The FoE Task Force members can also create additional labels by clicking the manage labels link.

Current Practices Inventory

The Foundations of Excellence Steering Committee will oversee preparation of the Current Practices Inventory (CPI). The inventory is both a process and template for conducting a comprehensive, institution-wide inventory of student demographic information as well as all policies, practices, and programs, both curricular and co-curricular, affecting new students. Information collected in the CPI serves as a factual knowledge basis for the task force members as they evaluate the institution’s level of achievement of the nine Foundational Dimensions.

Clicking on the year will take you into the CPI. Several sections will depend on an upload of student data from your institution’s database. Inventory upload specifications for the data files can be downloaded from the Inventory section of FoEtec by going to “Upload Student and Course Data.” The student data sections will appear grayed out until the data has been successfully uploaded into the system. The remaining sections will be entered by the Liaisons, Steering Committee, and other Task Force members as they identify missing information.
The Current Practices Inventory is divided into nine sections (A - I). Each part is briefly described below.

**Part A. General Information:** Provides general information about your institution and contains basic information regarding the first-year student cohort. This information is based on the students who met the criteria as first-year students in the previous academic year.

**Part B. Student Cohort Information:** The tables in this part will show breakdowns of the cohort by various student demographic characteristics. These characteristics include gender, age, race/ethnicity, and other personal information.

**Part C. Inventory of First-Year Student Academic Background:** The tables in this section will provide information on the academic experiences and skills that first-year students have as they enter the institution.

**Part D. New Student Retention Status:** The tables in this part provide both the overall retention rate and the retention status of various subpopulations of the first-year cohort.

**Part E. Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions:** The task force will identify the major programs/interventions that, by design or circumstance, have a unique impact on first-year students.

**Part F. Inventory of Committees and Councils:** The task force will identify the committees and councils that have responsibility for aspects of the first year and describe each.

**Part G. Inventory of First-Year Policies:** The task force will inventory policies that are either solely aimed at first-year students or that particularly shape the experience of first-year students.

**Part H. Inventory of Courses:** This section shows the courses with the highest enrollments of first-year students. It also shows the DFWI rates in these critical courses. Table H1 will be of special interest to the Learning Dimension. Table H2 will show courses with smaller enrollments of new students, but have high DFWI rates.

**Part I. Data and Assessments Related to First-Year Students:** The task force will inventory data sources and past assessment efforts that have been conducted over the past three years that are focused on the first year of college. Please note that the task force may wish to use these data at some point, but for the purposes of the CPI, the task is simply to determine what sources of data exist and where they are located. If there is data or related reports that you wish to provide to the task force upload it to the Evidence Library.

### Assessing and Responding to Dimensions and Performance Indicators

Each Dimension Committee is charged with evaluating the institution’s performance on their assigned Dimension(s). To facilitate this evaluation of the broad Dimension there are a number of Performance Indicators (PI) associated with each Dimension; the committee will address each PI associated with the assigned Dimension. The evaluation must be based on sources of evidence. Some of that evidence will come from the Current Practices Inventory. Other evidence will come from the Foundations of Excellence Faculty/Staff and Student Surveys. Additional forms of evidence will come from other assessments and evaluations.
that the institution has conducted, as well as from the knowledge of the Dimension Committee members themselves.

Dimension Committee members should discuss the various forms of evidence associated with each PI. In this regard, the PIs serve as discussion prompts about a range of issues related to the Dimension that is being considered. At the conclusion of the discussions, the Dimension Committee should rate the institution’s performance on each respective PI using the radio buttons found in the FoEtec platform.

To further assist you in your PI rating effort, the FoEtec platform includes note-taking and evidence-linking tools for each PI. It is important to capture the core elements associated with your specific PI related discussions as well as the sources of evidence you considered while discussing each PI using these tools. These notes and evidence sources will be used when you write your Dimension report and recommendations.

Clicking on the short title of the PI will present the committee with one or a series of questions to address. The committee will gather evidence related to each question and discuss their findings. The committee should record their major discussion points in the Current Situation text box and note sources of evidence in the resources / evidence text box.

The text boxes expand as needed. After deliberation the committee should strive to reach consensus on the institution’s performance and note it by selecting the appropriate radio button.
The final step in considering each performance indicator is to develop recommendations. Clicking the “Add recommendation” button located below the “Summarize institutional resources / evidence” text box will open a screen where the committee can add a recommendation. Committees may add as many recommendations for each PI that they deem appropriate. The recommended action items will be automatically numbered as they are added. The committee should add a name for the recommendation /action item which will give a sense of the recommendation. The committee can add a detailed description of the action item which includes the intended goals of the recommended change. The committee should indicate their sense of the recommendation’s priority by selecting High, Medium or Low from the Priority drop down box. Submit will save the recommendation to a listing of all of the recommendations for this Dimension. The final recommendations for all of the Dimensions will roll into a list that the Steering Committee can use as they develop the final action plan.

The following examples of recommendation “names” would make it easy to identify related recommendations so they may be grouped in categories.

- Advising: provide faculty development on advising syllabus
- Advising: provide an on-line advising manual
- Orientation: Establish Faculty Meeting time with families/parents
- Orientation: Distribute a guidebook on Helping New Students Succeed

When analysis of all performance indicators has been completed the Dimension Committee will write a narrative report of findings and recommendations. All of the responses to the PIs, current situation notes, and sources of resources / evidence will roll into a document that can be downloaded as a starting point for the committee’s report. The committee will be
able to see and edit their list of recommendations from all of the PIs. A report template can also be downloaded. It is an RTF document with suggested report sections and some content from the platform already inserted for your report.

Configuring Dimension Performance Indicators from CPI Data (Liaison and Liaison Assistants)

Several Dimensions have Performance Indicators that rely on institution specific data that has been entered into the CPI. Once the CPI has been completed the Liaisons should meet with the Steering Committee to review the CPI and to select which elements to include in the PIs to guide the work of the Dimension Committees. Until the set-up is complete Task Force members will see “Your Liaison has not yet provided this information.” The FoEtec set-up requires selection of five of each of the following:

- Policies that have an impact on first-year students from section G of the CPI for consideration by the Organization Dimension Committee under PIs 2.7 and 2.8.
- Courses that enroll a high a percentage of first-year students from section H of the CPI for consideration by the Learning Dimension Committee under PI 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.
- Programs or Interventions that have the most significant impact on first-year students from section E of the CPI for consideration of the Improvement Dimension Committee under PI 9.1 and 9.2.

When the Liaison is ready to enter the information they can go to the Configure dimensions section in Administration or to the Dimension PI of interest and click on the highlighted statement. An Improvement Dimension example illustrates the process.

Dimension Report Features

Once the Dimension Committee evaluated the institution’s performance on their assigned Dimension(s) Performance Indicators (PI) they will develop a Dimension report. The liaisons
and Steering Committee will be charged with synthesizing the content from the Dimension reports and developing the Comprehensive Report and Action Plan.

The FoEtec Dimension report tools are found in the Reports and Recommendations box found on the Dimension/PI and Home tabs just beneath the list of Dimensions.

The Dimension reports link opens a page that allows access to the report template and to download of PI responses current situation discussions, and recommendations for each Dimension.

1. Select the Dimension.
2. Then the Dimension Committee members can download a file that contains the committee’s response to each of the Performance Indicators, the current situation discussion notes, sources of evidence, and recommendations.
3. The recommendations link can be used to download a list of all of the recommendations the committee made to all of the PIs for the Dimension. Once the committee has reevaluated their recommendations and determined which ones to include in the Dimension report, they can enter the recommendations link to edit recommendations and select them to appear in the report template. To edit or select a recommendation for inclusion in the report click the name of the recommendation. Click the box by “show in report template” at the bottom of the page to select the action item. This step will also be important to ensure that the selected Dimension recommendations appear "starred” in the list for consideration of final recommendations.
4. The committee should discuss how their institution measures-up to the aspirational Dimension standard and select a Dimension grade; the grade serves a short evaluation of the institution that can be compared with the assessments of the institution’s performance on the other Dimension standards. The grades are for internal use only.
5. Once the committee has completed the selection of edited recommendations and edited the grade they are ready to download the report template and begin writing the report. The report template serves as a suggested report format and is pre-populated with committee member names, grade, recommendations, and sources of evidence that the committee has entered into FoEtec. The committee will write the report content using their word processor of choice and may include elements from template as they wish.
6. Once the report is final it should be uploaded in the Dimension reports section of FoEtec. The upload of a report will trigger the appearance of a Request Feedback button under the word Feedback. Pressing the button will automatically send an email message to your institution’s Gardner Institute Advisor and to your liaisons letting them know that a report is ready for feedback.

Dimensions and Performance Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension Reports</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upload report</td>
<td>Download template</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No dimension reports have been uploaded for this dimension.
Comprehensive Report Features

The culminating activity for the Foundations of Excellence self-study process is the production of a comprehensive report and action plan. The comprehensive report will include the major findings of the Dimension Committees and make a convincing case for the action plan.

The Comprehensive Report and Plan section of FoEtec provides easy access to the work of the Dimension Committees and to feedback from the Gardner Institute Advisor. The report template contains suggested sections for inclusion in the report and provides a way to download some information from FoEtec for easy inclusion in the report. Ultimately the Steering Committee should create a report structure that will best meet your institution’s needs. In fact, the Steering Committee may determine that there should be multiple versions of the report to meet the needs of different audiences.

**Step 1: Prioritized Action Item List**

The Liaisons and Steering Committee may want to start the process by determining their process for evaluating and refining the recommendations from the Dimension reports. It is common for the total number recommendations from the Dimension reports to be around one hundred. These recommendations may fall into several categories and may be somewhat overlapping.

If the Dimension Committees used the recommendations features in FoEtec to enter action items and select recommendations for their report, the Recommendations link can be used to access a listing of all the Dimension Committees recommendations (All Items) or just the recommendations they selected for their reports (Starred). You may want to confirm the “starred” recommendations match the one that the Dimension Committees included in their reports. The recommendations can be exported to a file and formatted for best use in your prioritization process.

Once the recommendations for inclusion in the action plan have been determined you can use the Final Recommendations link to select items from the “starred” list for the final action plan. If action items from the starred list have been rewritten they may be edited in the system by clicking on the title of the item. Alternatively, a list of the final recommendations may be imported as a CSV. A sample import file is available to download. Items added as final recommendations will roll into the report template and if your institution is doing the
formal Foundations of Excellence Implement process to the Implement summary of major action items.

Step 2: Review and Edit Assigned Grades

Dimension Committees will have assigned grades as a part of the development of their report. The grades reflect the evaluation of the institution’s overall achievement of the Dimension. The nine recommended grades can be reviewed by the Steering Committee and modified if needed to indicate the institution’s current performance relative to the Dimension standards. A finalized Report Card is included as a part of the comprehensive report template. The Report Card contains the full language of each Dimension along with the assigned grade.

Step 3: Report Template

The comprehensive report template contains section headers to suggest components for the final report. Some components of the template are populated with information currently in the system; all components can be edited to fit your needs.

- Executive Summary: write a brief overview of the major findings and action plan.
- Task Force: tables are populated listing the Liaisons, Steering Committee members, and Dimension Committee members
- Narrative on General Situation: the report body should include the major findings of the Dimension Committees and provide evidence to support the action plan
- Foundations of Excellence Report Card: populated with Dimension language and the nine grades
- Recommendations for Action: populated with action items from the final recommendations section
- Sources of Evidence: populated with items from the Evidence Library used by the Dimension Committees.

Step 4: Upload Comprehensive Report

Once your report is completed upload the report in the Comprehensive Report and Plan section and request feedback from your Gardner Institute Advisor. The request feedback button appears when a report has been uploaded.