



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

December 22, 2005

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Honorable John P. Higgins, Jr.  
Chairman, PCIE Audit Committee  
Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Chairman Higgins:

I am pleased to inform the PCIE Audit Committee that the IGATI Curriculum Review Board (ICRB) has completed a review of the IGATI course titled Introduction to the Federal Information Systems Controls Audit Manual (FISCAM). Based on our analysis of student evaluations and our classroom observations, the course is generally effective in meeting its objectives in providing students an understanding of the FISCAM that can be applied on the job. We noted, however, several areas where the course could be improved. The IGATI Director agreed to implement our recommendations.

Enclosed is a copy of our final report prepared by the Department of Education  
OIG.

If you have any questions, please call me on (202) 927-6516.

Sincerely,

/s/  
Marla A. Freedman  
Chair, ICRB

Enclosure

cc: Helen Lew, Chair  
Federal Audit Executive Committee

Danny L. Athanasaw, Director  
Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

December 21, 2005

Marla A. Freedman  
Assistant Inspector General for Audit  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Ms. Freedman

The enclosed report reflects the results of the Inspector General Auditor Training Institute Curriculum Review Board. Our objective was to determine whether the Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute's course, Introduction to the Federal Information Systems Controls Audit Manual (FISCAM), provides training that is useful to the Federal audit community. This report was reviewed and the recommendations were concurred by Ms. Helen Lew, Assistant Inspector General for Audit Services, Department of Education, Office of Inspector General.

If you should have any questions please call me at (202) 245-6917.

Sincerely,

David P. Cole  
Director, Information Technology Audits  
Information Technology Audits and Computer  
Crimes Investigations

Enclosure

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**Review of the Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute  
Course: Introduction to the Federal Information Systems Controls  
Audit Manual (FISCAM)**

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**December 16, 2005**

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## **Final Report of ICRB IGATI Course Review August 8-10, 2005**

### **Course Title**

Introduction to the Federal Information Systems Controls Audit Manual

### **ICRB Review Completed**

October 17, 2005, by Department of Education, Office of Inspector General

### **Background**

The PCIE ICRB was engaged to perform an assessment of IGATI Information Technology audit related courses. The Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, sent staff members to attend and observe the course. This memorandum represents the review of the IGATI course on the Financial Information Systems Control Audit Manual (FISCAM).

### Course Objective:

The course is designed for auditors with little or no financial or information systems audit experience. The course is intended to provide students with a general understanding of what is FISCAM; who should use FISCAM; and how FISCAM relates to the Financial Audit Manual (FAM). The goals of the course are to prepare the students upon completion to be able to describe:

- the criteria and FISCAM forms;
- the FISCAM audit methodology;
- the process of planning an audit using FISCAM;
- the critical internal control elements of a general control audit, including entity wide security programs, access controls, application software development, system software, segregation of duties, and service continuity; and
- how a weakness in information systems internal controls affects the financial statement audit.

Cost and CPE Credits: \$645 and 24 CPE credits

### **ICRB Assessment**

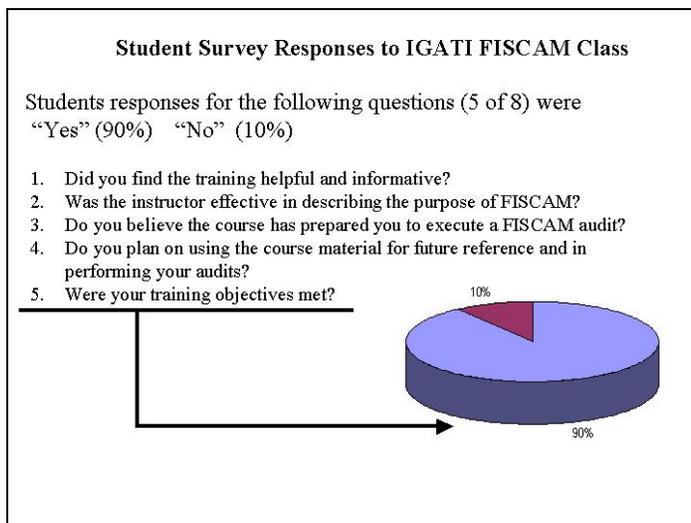
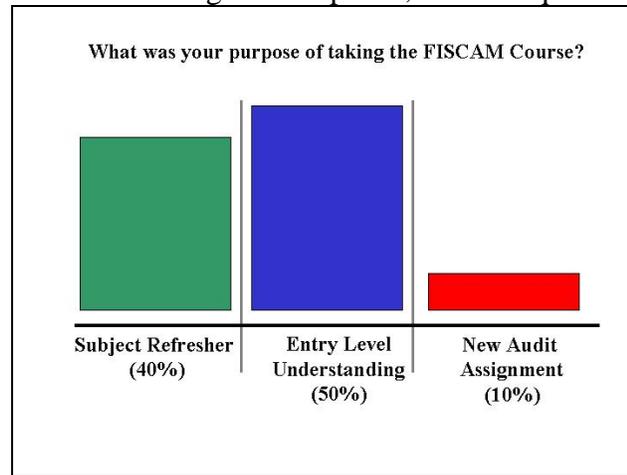
The methodology used to review the IGATI FISCAM course included a review and assessment of the course material, student survey questionnaires, class observations, IGATI instructor feedback, and post course student and supervisor survey. Highlights and significant comments resulting from this methodology follows.

### Course Material Review

A review of the course material determined that the material is directly from the core FISCAM paragraphs. It is important that the students recognize the audit manual language and its interpretation. While examples and exercises were presented in the training material, the student feedback indicated that additional exercises and examples would improve the material. A general FISCAM audit program with audit steps for each pertinent FISCAM area would be beneficial to the students when they return to their jobs.

## Student Survey Response

A survey questionnaire was developed and presented to the students at the completion of the class. The survey was composed of 8 Yes and No questions, 1 multiple choice, and 1 general comment section. The class had 10 students. Only one (Yes/No) question had a single no response, all other questions had 100% student responses. The following charts depict the students survey responses. As the chart illustrates, half of the students who enrolled into the class (60%) were entry level or entering into a new assignment. Comments from the students indicated that the course would benefit from more interaction with the students. The students acknowledged that the instructor was knowledgeable of the course, but it would be beneficial if there were more class participation and audit exercises.



Overall, 90 percent of the students responded favorably that the class is helpful and effective in providing them with an understanding of FISCAM and using what they learned in the training back in the office. Comments received included a lack of class participation, the instructor's approach was strictly lectures, and the course slides were straight out of the class binder. Also, one student stated that the objectives were not met. Survey responses did not include the student's names; therefore, no follow up was performed. Eighty percent of the students stated that they would recommend the course to their peers.

All students stated that the course was relevant to their responsibilities and that they believed they would be able to apply the course concepts back in their offices and plan a FISCAM related audit assignment.

## Class Observations

ED OIG sent some individuals to observe and participate in the class. They generally found the instructor to be knowledgeable and felt the instructor provided very pertinent examples. The examples, discussed in the class, were not in the course binder/manual but were very relevant, tying the course concepts to real life situations. The instructor also spoke word-for-word from the slides in the class material. This teaching approach may not be effective for some students, as indicated by one student in the survey. Also, it might be worthwhile to discuss how FISMA requirements relate to FISCAM and how they compliment each other.

## Student Instructor Feedback

The majority of the students stated that the instructor was very knowledgeable of the subject and provided helpful examples throughout the class. Some students stated that the instructor gave good examples of control checks that they plan to use in developing their audit programs. Greater class participation and fewer lectures based on straight from the slides could improve the class. Other comments to improve the class included more in-depth discussion on systems security and security testing for students with an IT background.

## IGATI Student Class Surveys

IGATI student feedback for the current and the most previous FISCAM class based on a scale from 1-5 where 5= Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

<u>IGATI Survey Questions</u>	<u>Composite Scores for Current and Past Classes</u>	
	August 8-10, 2005	July 13-16, 2004
Instructor		
Organized and Prepared	4.50	4.70
Knowledge of Subject Matter	4.80	4.90
Communicated effectively	4.30	4.80
Displayed enthusiasm and interest	4.10	4.60
Encouraged class participation	4.20	4.50
Responsive to students needs	4.50	4.80
Class time effectively used	4.70	4.60
<b>Instructor Average</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>4.70</b>
Course/Module		
Achieved objectives	4.30	4.50
Subject content organized	4.40	4.70
Course material relevant/useful	4.20	4.70
Course will help job performance	4.10	4.20
Overall, course was valuable learning experience	4.00	4.60
<b>Course/Module Average</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.54</b>
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.63</b>

As noted in the two survey comparisons, the recent FISCAM class dropped approximately a third of a point (.29) overall. The difference being about equal between instructor feedback and course/module feed back (.26 and .29). Instructor organization, preparation, interest and participation represent biggest variables. According to student feedback and discussion with instructor, the course was planned to have two instructors. However, a few days before class, one of the instructor's was unable to attend. This could have contributed to the type of instructor preparation and student responses received. Regarding the Course/Module, the difference between the current and past classes is very critical. Specifically, the students did not view overall the recent course to be a valuable learning experience and the course material was not as relevant as the previous class. This is supported by the ICRB student survey comments.

Student comments: July 2004 Class. Instructor's past experience and class examples put things in perspective. Taught from a practical standpoint. Appropriate and effective technical details provided. Instructor had a wide and deep knowledge of subject. Overall, great and excellent instructor. Class slides excellent.

Student comments. August 2005 Class. Instructor gave real world examples. Good examples on controls and tests. Instructor needs more time to prepare. Meaningful examples provided. Course material should cover more information security in depth. Slides straight from FISCAM and could have been read by oneself. IGATI website not available and course catalog not available. Third day materials were duplicates from previous day. Administrative staff was great and very helpful.

Post Course Response from Supervisors and Students

As part of the course review, follow-up surveys were sent to the 10 students seeking their response to post course thoughts and their supervisors contact information. Three solicitation attempts were made and only 4 student/supervisor responses were received. The following summarizes their post course responses.

August 2005 Supervisor Survey Response	Consolidated Response from 3 Supervisors
1. What was your objective for sending your staff member to acquire from the training?	Gain an exposure to FISCAM issues. Apply FISCAM approach for FISMA and financial audits.
2. What new skills and knowledge did you expect the staff member to acquire from the training?	Gain FISCAM understanding and its impact on Department operations. Develop a risk based cost-benefit approach for planning audits.
3. Did your staff member acquire expected skills and knowledge or meet your other objectives?	Yes. Provided a good base of knowledge. Staff member was able to apply a higher degree of knowledge upon returning to the office.
4. How has your staff member applied the new skills and knowledge on-the-job?	Yes. Has been able to apply the control environment concepts. Staff was able to apply on current FISMA audit and in reviewing CPAs IT audit section.
5. What feedback did the staff member provide you on the strengths and weaknesses of the course?	Course was informative and beneficial.
6. Overall, do you feel the course was of benefit to your staff member's professional development and the needs of your agency? Why?	Yes. Increase in ability to understand how to apply concepts on future audits.
7. Do you plan to send other staff to this course" If not, why?	Not at this time. Staff development plans are focused in other subject areas for CPE requirements. Yes, other staff are planning on taking the course.
8. Do you have any suggestions on ways IGATI could improve the course content and delivery?	No.

<b>August 2005 Student Response</b>	<b>Consolidated Response from 4 Students</b>
Did you like the course?	Yes.
What did you expect to get out of the course?	Increase FISCAM knowledge.
Were your expectations met?	Yes, somewhat.
What were the course's strong points?	Instructor knew material. Instructor was a big strong point and related the information to the student needs. Good overview.
What were the course's weak points?	Too general. Course material had a lot of material repeated. No enough time to get into FISCAM for non-IT auditors.
How have you applied the skills and knowledge gained from the course on the job?	Yes, in reviewing contractor IT findings for the financial statement audit. Applied knowledge to FISMA audit. No.
If you could change two things about the course what would they be?	More details and examples. Provide more review on how FISCAM can be used by non-IT auditors and more discussions involving real world questions.

### **ICRB Recommendations**

We recommend that IGATI:

1. Update the FISCAM manual to include specific examples of FISCAM control testing procedures for discussion and illustration.
2. Request the class instructor to provide class exercises on FISCAM concepts and control testing in order to reinforce lecture.
3. Revise the class material to show how FISCAM control testing can be applied to FISMA related audits.
4. Include an instructor's biography; including point of contact—e-mail address or telephone number—for any FISCAM related questions.

### **Management Response**

The Director, Inspector General Auditor Training Institute agreed to the recommendations and plans to take necessary actions to ensure changes are implemented to the course.