

IOWA

Division of Student Life

GUIDE ON HOW TO REPORT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

This guide provides a structured approach for effectively reporting assessment results. Clear reporting ensures that findings lead to informed decision-making, continuous improvement, and alignment with institutional goals. Whether sharing results with colleagues, leadership, or external stakeholders, this resource outlines key steps and strategies.

Prepare Your Data for Reporting

- Organize data clearly and verify data accuracy. Separate qualitative and quantitative results.
- Summarize findings using frequencies, percentages, and means for quantitative data. Identify key themes and compelling quotes for qualitative data.
- Contextualize the assessment by describing the purpose of the assessment, learning outcomes measured, and the population assessed.

Focus on Key Messages

- Tell a “story” with your data.
- Highlight major findings
 - What did the data reveal?
 - Which findings confirm success?
 - Which findings indicate areas for improvement?
- Prioritize usability. Present findings that are actionable and relevant to stakeholders

Use Clear and Audience-Friendly Formats

- Tables and charts
 - Use graphs or tables to visually present key statistics
 - Select simple, readable formats (bar charts, pie charts)
- Narrative summary
 - Write brief, non-technical summaries
 - Explain how findings answer the original assessment questions

Connect Results to Decisions and Actions

- Apply the “What, So What, Now What” model
 - What? Present the data findings
 - So What? Interpret what these findings mean for practice or policy
 - Now What? Recommend changes or next steps
- Use action-oriented language. Frame results to support improvement, accountability, and strategic planning.

Tailor Reports to Stakeholders

- **Internal stakeholders (staff, students, departments)**
 - Focus on program improvement and learning
 - Use plain language without jargon

- Highlight practical takeaways and how results will inform daily work or future programming
- Share success stories or examples that resonate with student and staff experiences
- Emphasize how feedback was used to make changes
- **External stakeholders (university leadership, donors, public)**
 - Emphasize high-level outcomes, trends, and strategic impact
 - Use brief summaries supported by a few clear data points or visuals
 - Align findings with institutional priorities and mission statements
 - Highlight return on investment or evidence of accountability
 - For donors, include narratives or quotes that show the human impact of their support
 - Keep the tone formal and results-oriented

Close the Assessment Loop

- Share the results widely. Use multiple formats such as one-page reports, presentations, infographics.
- Implement changes and reassess. Note how results will influence future program changes or strategic planning.
- Document the assessment cycle by maintaining records of findings, decisions, and actions for accountability and future reference.

Example Report Outline

- Introduction
 - Purpose and context of assessment
- Methods
 - How data was collected and analyzed
- Results
 - Key findings (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Interpretation
 - What the results mean
- Recommendations/Next Steps
 - Suggested changes or actions
- Appendices (if needed)
 - Full data tables, instruments, or additional details

Sources

- Henning, G. & Roberts, D. (2016). *Student Affairs Assessment*. Taylor & Francis.
- *Student Affairs Assessment Handbook for the Division of Student Life*. studentlife.uiowa.edu/sites/studentlife.uiowa.edu/files/imports/Assessment-Handbook.pdf.

Example Internal Report

Introduction

The assessment aimed to evaluate the impact of the Fall 2025 Student Leadership Workshop Series on participants' leadership knowledge, confidence, and application of leadership skills in campus organizations.

Methods

Data was collected through pre- and post-workshop surveys (quantitative) and focus group discussions (qualitative). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed to identify key patterns in participant experiences.

Results

- 82% of participants reported increased confidence in facilitating team discussions.
- 76% applied at least two leadership strategies from the workshop in student organizations.
- Focus group themes included improved conflict management skills and increased peer mentoring efforts.

Interpretation

The workshop effectively enhanced students' leadership skills, particularly in team communication and conflict resolution. However, some participants expressed a need for additional content on managing group accountability.

Recommendations/Next Steps

- Add a new module on holding team members accountable.
- Offer follow-up coaching sessions during the Spring semester.
- Continue the current peer mentoring component, which participants found highly valuable.

Appendices (if needed)

- Pre/post survey instruments
- Full quantitative results tables
- Thematic coding summary from focus group discussions