

Assessment Design Considerations

Assessment entails efforts to “gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness” (Schuh & Upcraft, 1996, p. 18). The following questions to guide conversations about assessment are adapted from Schuh and Upcraft (2001).

Guiding Question	Response
1. What circumstances (including opportunities, concerns, and pressures) are driving our assessment?	
2. Who are the stakeholders in this project?	
3. What is the purpose of our assessment?	
4. What needs / experiences / outcomes are we interested in studying?	
5. What approach(es) best meets our assessment needs (i.e., what information do we need and what is the best way to get it—quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods)?	
6. What assessment tools / instruments best meet our needs? (If quantitative, this step includes identifying input/control and environmental variables. If qualitative, this step includes identification of interview/focus group / observation protocols. A mixed-method approach requires both.	

Guiding Question	Response
7. Who is our population for the study? How will we identify our sample?	
8. How will we collect our data? (This step includes identifying strategies for data collection as well as who will collect the data and when it will be collected.)	
9. How will we analyze our data? (This step includes identifying modes of statistical analyses and methods of qualitative analysis.)	
10. How will we evaluate the results for policy and practice implications?	
11. How will we effectively report and use the results?	

Additional Considerations

There are a host of additional questions we should consider, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Who will be involved in the assessment project? What roles/responsibilities will each of us have?
- Who must be informed of our study?
- What is our timeline? For the short term? For the long term?
- What ethical issues must we consider (e.g., access to the data, confidentiality, ownership of the data, etc.)?
- What other assessment projects are taking place? Are there any overlaps/conflicts with the assessment project?
- What quantitative data have already been collected? Would they be useful for our study? If so, do we have access to them?
- What resources are available to the project?
- What additional questions must we consider?