

Ten Steps to Analyzing Your Results

Steps	Explanation	Reason
1. State the question	What do you want to learn from the data? Refer to your assessment plan, learning outcomes	Prevents wild goose chases
2. Gather and aggregate data	Tabulate and aggregate data across students	Aggregation permits analysis at program level
3. Do basic, descriptive analyses	Keep it simple. Compute frequencies (# and % of students falling into each category), mean, median, range	Permits initial “does this make sense?” review
4. Describe patterns	What do you see? Does it make sense, given what you know of your students? If not— what are alternative explanations for results?	Permits double-check on validity, reliability
5. Compare to your standard	Compare your results to your target, baseline or benchmark	The bottom line
6. Highlight program strengths and weaknesses	In what areas do students perform very well? In what areas not so well?	May help guide curricular decision-making; may add useful information
7. State confidence in results	Describe your confidence in your results and limitations of the assessment	Guides decision-making regarding assessment and curricula; if not fully confident, how to increase certainty? Is more information needed?
8. Interpret results	What do the results mean for your program?	Change needed? What kind? Or is more information needed?
9. Document process and results	Write it down: your process, procedures, decisions, analyses, results, and actions	When it’s time for your Program Review self-study, you’ll be glad you did. Prevents reinventing the wheel during next iteration of assessment.
10. Pose new questions for next time	Did this analysis raise new questions about student learning? Refine existing questions?	Getting the question right underpins the whole assessment