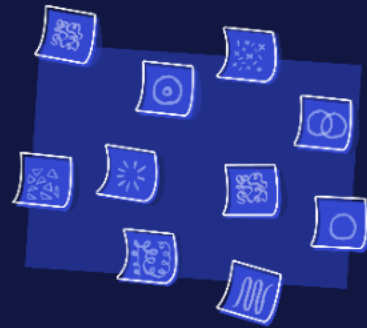


# Data Use Toolkit



## Purpose

Guide supporting pre-initiative problem exploration, effective data collection and use, and assessment

## Who this is for

- Project Leads
- Team Members (use for research, data management, or evaluation)

## When to use

Identifying problems

Considering renewal or scaling

Researching and learning

Assessing the initiative

Closing the initiative

Introduction

Data Exploration Guide

Data Collection Guide

## Introduction

### Why is this toolkit important?

It provides a structured approach to effectively using data at every stage of a student success initiative. By considering and integrating data from the outset, you ensure that targets are clearly defined, key project indicators (KPIs) are accurately measured, and the initiative's impacts can be communicated effectively. Additionally, the toolkit supports your initiative assessment and ensures that the data collected is relevant to fulfilling compliance criteria set by your institution or external funders. This proactive approach to data use helps make informed decisions and continuously improves and adapts the initiative to better serve students.

### Key actions

- Speak to data people in the planning phase of your initiative to avoid bumps down the road. Reach out to Institutional Research (IR) if you don't have data capacity on your team
- Consider your own data needs and the data relevant to different stakeholders to effectively track outcomes and support the initiative's communication and impact goals

## How to use this toolkit

This toolkit supports multiple phases of the initiative's lifespan and is crucial for setting up expectations around data early on to avoid complications and gaps later. It accelerates the initiative process and helps project leads effectively delegate – but not abdicate – responsibility for data use.

If used during initiative planning, the toolkit helps explore and define the problem based on existing data and feedback, leading to the initiative's [Purpose Statement](#). It also identifies relevant data to track, ensuring a clear understanding of the issues and the metrics needed for success.

As the initiative progresses, the toolkit aids in establishing protocols for consistent and reliable data collection, defining what data should be collected, how often, and how it will be used to **assess the initiative's impact**. This structured approach ensures the data gathered is relevant, timely, and aligned with the initiative's goals.

At the end of a project or at key renewal milestones, the toolkit also serves as a vital resource for communicating the initiative's impact, helping to clearly present outcomes and guide decisions on future directions.

## Tools overview

There are 2 tools in this toolkit. They can be used together or individually.

### Data Exploration Guide

The data exploration guide helps with problem identification and understanding. Anecdotal observations, student feedback, or existing data can drive problem identification.

[Go to tool →](#)

### Data Collection Guide

The data collection guide is a tool for helping plan your project approach and methodology. Creating a plan for collecting data to track during an initiative is critical.

[Go to tool →](#)

## Related

### Next steps

- Incorporating student perspectives ensures your initiatives are truly student-centered and responsive to their needs. Learn how to bring student voices into the conversation here: [Bringing a Student Voice Into the Room](#).
- Drawing inspiration from other institutions can spark innovative ideas and approaches to enhance student success in your own context. Discover how to gather initiative inspiration here: [Initiative Inspiration](#).