

# Getting Started

Most programs, degrees, certificates, and co-curricular programs have national organizations that provide insight into discipline-specific assessment ideas. If your program has external accreditation, the accreditor will have standards you follow as part of the accreditation process. For programs without external accreditation, an excellent place to begin is with a recognized national professional organization. Their web sites, conferences, and workshops will have information on how to apply assessment concepts to your discipline. Student affairs and other non-academic units also have national organizations and standards that include ideas about assessment.

This document takes you through eight steps that will help you with your assessment, no matter where you are. If you are just starting, begin with Step 1. If you have results and want to use them, skip to Step eight. Even if you have a robust assessment process, you should skim through all the steps. Assess your assessment process to make it inclusive and designed to get results you can use. Also, be mindful of the time spent on assessment and make choices that fulfill your needs in the easiest, most meaningful way possible.

## Mission Statements

Assessment begins with a mission statement. Program mission statements align to the institutions and provide a simple framework for developing your assessment plan. Many programs developed mission statements in recent years as part of the planning process. If you don't have a program mission statement you can always use the institutional mission or contact us at [assessment@isu.edu](mailto:assessment@isu.edu) for help developing one.