

# **How do you ensure the effectiveness of institutional research?**

## **Addressing WASC's revised CFR 4.5**

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# The revised CFR 4.5

The institution has institutional research capacity consistent with its purposes and objectives. Institutional research addresses strategic data needs, is disseminated in a timely manner, and is incorporated in institutional review and decision-making processes. Included in the institutional research function is the collection of appropriate data to support the assessment of student learning. Periodic reviews are conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the research function and the suitability and usefulness of data.

# Self-assessment questions for the revised CFR 4.5

What is the capacity of the institution to conduct institutional research? How is IR conducted and by whom? Is there a description of this function that is published or widely understood at the institution? Is the IR function adequately resourced to meet the needs of the institution? What data are collected and analyzed? To whom are they disseminated and how often? Is there a “culture of evidence,” i.e., is evidence used in making decisions and improvements? How is the IR function used to support the assessment of student learning assessment processes? Is the IR function evaluated periodically? Are new data collected and analyzed when needed?

## **Is there a description of this function that is published or widely understood at the institution?**

- Do members of the campus community (particularly campus leadership) understand what IR is and what it does?
- How do you describe what you do in an ‘elevator conversation’?
- Publicizing IR, outreach – e.g., to faculty (for research),
- Branding the IR product
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# How is IR conducted and by whom? IR 'turf' issues

- Student affairs
- Budget office
- Planning
- Finding allies
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# Is the IR function adequately resourced to meet the needs of the institution?

- Recognized vs unrecognized needs – what could you do to grow your enterprise?
- Current needs vs future ones – e.g., HEOA reporting, implications for resources
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# What data are collected and analyzed? Are new data collected and analyzed when needed?

- What is the knowledge most worth having?
- Reactive vs proactive IR
- How are comparison institutions determined?  
Are there others that might be useful?
- Use of census data?
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**To whom are they disseminated and how often? Is it possible to have some idea where data goes?**

- It's midnight – do you know where your data is (and who is using it)?
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# Is there a “culture of evidence,” i.e., is evidence used in making decisions and improvements? Evidence?

- Keeping track of how and when this is done, setting up feedback loops
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## Is the IR function evaluated periodically? If so, how?

- Peer vetting – for program, School, systemwide data
- Looking at IR webpages of comparable institutions
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