

Tips for Implementing the Framework: Analytic Best Practices Module



In this Module:

Once you have your data in hand, it's time to dive into an analysis to determine key findings. This Module includes tips for analysis, how these indicators are meant to be interpreted, and suggestions for subsequent surveys and trend analysis.

Recommended analytic best practices

When looking to implement the tools included here, an overarching recommendation is to contact your Institutional Research (IR) office as they might be able to provide support in preparing and launching the data gathering processes and in analyzing and reporting results.

1. Look for trends in the data. This could be reflected in responses coming from specific industries, types of organizations, or regions. Are there clear differences between these groupings? Could some of these differences be explained by the grouping categories or could there be other explanations?
2. Additional variables, such as industry category, organization size, location, etc., might be needed in order to run comparisons and additional analyses of the data collected using this impacts framework. Some sample variables are detailed in the survey samples (host organizations and PSIs) and include:
 - a. Industry type
 - b. Organization type
 - c. Organization size
 - d. Respondent's role in their organization
 - e. Geographical locations where the organization hires WIL students
 - f. Paid vs unpaid programs
 - g. Time they've been a WIL host organization
 - h. WIL types
3. When there are no evident explanations to a particular trend in the data, it might be a good idea to follow up with interviews or focus groups (see qualitative data tools) and include follow-up questions about why your host organizations might be responding to a question in a particular way.
4. These indicators are meant to be interpreted at the descriptive level, i.e., describing the characteristics of your data/respondents as opposed to inferring or generalizing findings to a broader population. These tools will help you understand how your employers (or colleagues at your PSI) are perceiving the impact of your WIL programs. In other words, this will give you a sense of what your current employers think, with the caveat that it is a description of current respondents, not a general assessment of an industry/sector.

5. With a large enough number of responses (this could range from 15 to 100 responses, but there is no 'magic' number as it depends on the analysis chosen and on the data collected), statistical methods could help in the interpretation and validation of your findings. Nonetheless, data-driven decisions should be accompanied by strong background and historical knowledge, good data collection processes, and robust understanding of the statistical analyses used.
6. Visualizations go a long way in aiding data storytelling to promote insights. They should be paired with context and potential implementations informed by data-driven insights. This can be a strong way to provide a narrative that associates your data insights with potential program goals and benefits.
7. Some tools that are useful for analyzing and/or visualizing your data include: Excel, SPSS, NVivo, Qualtrics, and Canva.
8. For comparability purposes and to assess the progress in performance of indicators, it is recommended to implement these measurements periodically – e.g., every time a student completes a WIL experience or every year.
9. Finally, multiple domains can be measured at the same time with a single survey ([for host organizations](#) as well as [for PSIs](#)).