Implementation Guide

Vitae's 360° Assessment

vitae

AN INNOVATION OF IFC International Finance Corporation WORLD BANK GROUP

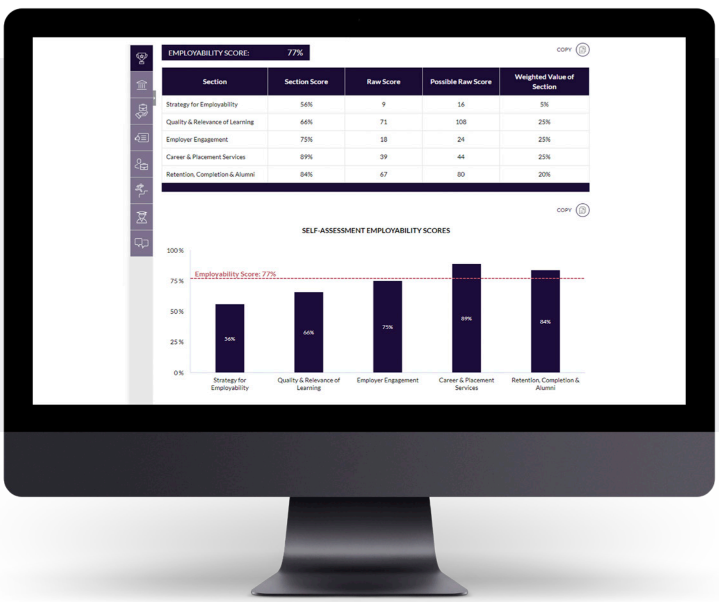
Introduction

This guide explains the process and methodology behind Vitae's 360° Assessment. The assessment helps higher education institutions understand how well they're preparing graduates for the job market. This guide includes a description of the quantitative and qualitative research components, 10 steps to ensure a successful engagement, and what to expect post-assessment.

About Vitae's 360° Assessment

The 360° Assessment uses a mixed-method approach that includes a self-assessment, stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The objective is to help higher education institutions deliver best-in-class employability support to their students, by providing a comprehensive appraisal of the institution's employability policies, practices and outcomes, and sharing the resulting insights and recommendations with the institution. The entire process takes approximately 10 weeks.

The 360° Assessment questionnaire examines institutional processes, performance, and outcomes through five dimensions covering 70 questions.



The Vitae App

For the convenience of clients, Vitae offers a one-stop shop web application for self-assessment and data gathering for student and alumni surveys.

Assessment Process

The components of the 360° Assessment culminate in an Employability Diagnostic Report:

Quantitative

The quantitative components of the assessment are offered via the Vitae App and include the following:

- An institutional self-assessment questionnaire* with:
    - An examination of the processes and factors within the institution that support employability outcomes
    - A measurement of institutional metrics such as retention, graduation, and placement rates

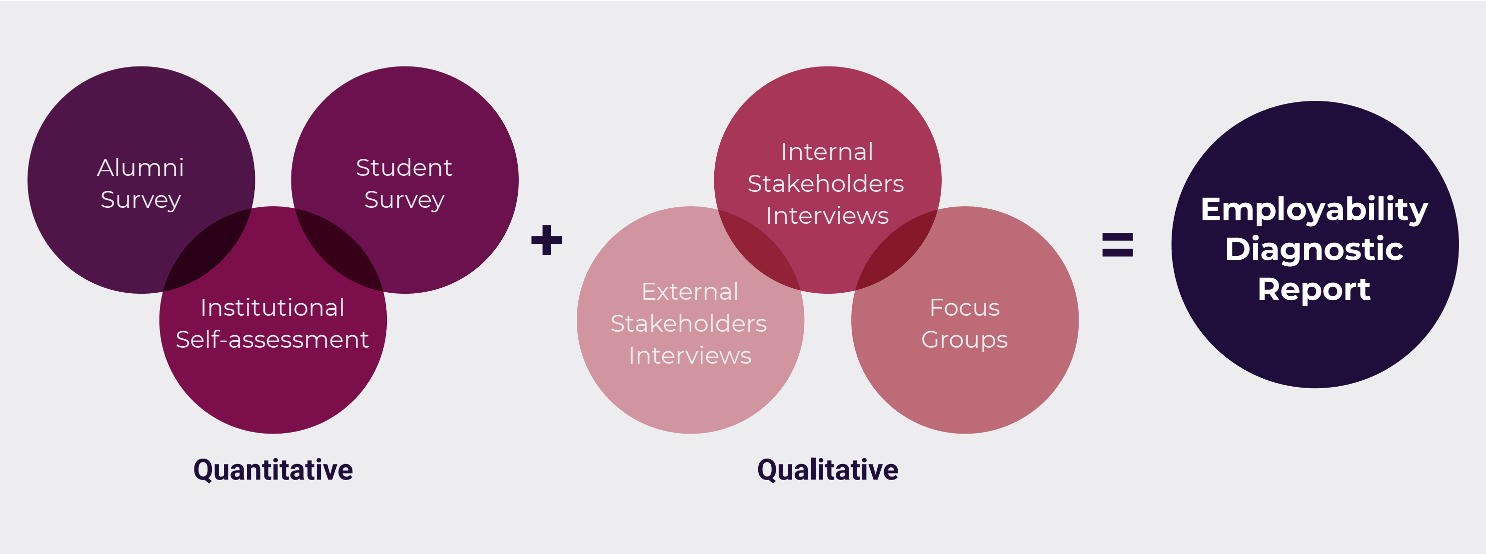
**The self-assessment can be completed over several sittings as information will be sourced from a variety of units.*

- Student and alumni surveys with:
    - A survey of final-year students (targeting 100% of the cohort)
    - A survey of recent alumni up to three years post-completion (targeting 100% of the cohort)

Qualitative

The qualitative data gathering takes place once the self-assessment and survey data have been submitted and preliminary data review has taken place. The qualitative process includes:

- One-hour interviews with:
    - Deans of faculties participating in assessment
    - Faculty and/or administrative staff responsible for alumni office, career services, industry engagement, work-integrated learning, etc.
    - Three to five employers selected by the institution
- Focus group discussions with:
    - Final-year students and/or student leadership, with six to ten participants
    - Recent alumni (up to three years post-completion) with six to ten participants



Role of the Institution

Due to the comprehensive nature of the assessment, it's recommended that the overall authority and responsibility for driving the process be vested in a senior institutional leader or the senior management team.

Data assembly and completion should be assigned to an "Operational Lead" who typically works in a cross-functional unit such as the Office of the President or Office of Institutional Research. Information for completing the assessment will come from across functions and units. The Operational Lead should have access to institutional databases as well as staff and faculty with information on curriculum development, data on admissions, retention, and matriculation, who are knowledgeable about various campus services. The Operational Lead should have an adequate level of technical/computer expertise and sufficient time to devote to the project. Operational Lead responsibilities can be split among two to three staff when relevant.

The institution is expected to:

- Select a campus and/or faculties for assessment. The Vitae team can provide advice on considerations for selection.
- Identify senior member(s) of the management team to sponsor the project, help build buy-in of faculty and staff, participate in the assessment debrief, and receive the employability report. Senior staff member(s') time commitment: 3 days over 10 weeks.
- Assign an Operational Lead for the project. The Operational Lead will gather information to complete the online self-assessment, launch the stakeholder surveys, and support logistics for interviews. The Operational Lead must have access to information held by various departments, as the information required will be distributed across units. Operational staff member time commitment: 10-15 days over 10 weeks.
- Complete the 70-question self-assessment for the institution/campus selected (1-2 weeks, led by the Operational Lead). The questionnaire is completed online.
- Distribute IFC's student and alumni questionnaires to students and alumni. Surveys are online completion/mobile accessible.
- Arrange staff and faculty participation in interviews of 1 hour each. A total of approximately 10 interviews will be held. Participants include management, academic deans, career services, alumni office, heads of entrepreneurship, student services, etc.
- Identify 3-5 employers, 6-10 students, and 6-10 alumni for 1-hour interviews and focus groups. Arrange participation at these sessions.

10 Steps for a Successful Assessment

Step 1

Kick-off meeting with institution's leadership team to clarify objectives and scope, review the process and key milestones, and agree on timelines and logistical arrangements. Introduction of the Vitae assessment team and the institution's Operational Lead for the project.

Step 2

The Vitae team emails the Operational Lead access to the Vitae App for the 360° Assessment, along with instructions. The Operational Lead creates a password to access the app, which will be used for the self-assessment as well as student and alumni surveys.

Step 3

The Operational Lead completes the self-assessment questionnaire through the Vitae App. This will require collection of data from multiple units within the institution over a period of one to two weeks. The Vitae team is available to provide technical assistance.

Step 4

The Vitae team emails links for the student and alumni surveys, with proposed email content to the Operational Lead. The Operational Lead sends an email with a survey link to students and an email with a survey link to alumni. The Operational Lead must have access to the email addresses of students and alumni for this step. (If the institution does not have alumni, only student surveys are distributed.)

Step 5

Surveys are open for three weeks and responses are collated on the Vitae App. Reminders can be sent during this period and incentives can be provided by the institution to increase response rates.

Step 6

The Operational Lead liaises with institution management to identify faculty, administrative staff, career services/alumni office staff, student leadership, students, alumni, and employers to participate in in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted by the Vitae team. The Vitae team provides a sample list of participants as well as questions in advance, to help prepare interviews.

Step 7

The Vitae team conducts a "site visit," virtually or on campus, consisting of 10-15 interviews with institution leadership, staff, faculty, employers, students, and alumni over several days. The Operational Lead provides logistical support to these interviews.

Step 8

The Vitae team conducts a debrief for the institution's leadership team to review the assessment process, highlight initial findings, scoring, and discuss areas for recommendations.

Step 9

Institution leadership receives the Employability Assessment Report with a complete set of findings and recommendations. The Vitae team presents the key findings and recommendations to institution leadership. The debrief includes discussion of next steps and implementation priorities, areas of specific concern or reflection.

Step 10

The Vitae team holds a follow-up meeting with the institution's leadership team at 12 months post-assessment to discuss the implementation progress.

Required Data and Information

The following is a sample of information that will be required during the assessment process:

1. **Institutional structure and operating process related to employability**
   - Career support and guidance services, internships, and work-integrated learning
   - Mechanisms of employer and industry engagement
   - Information on curriculum and program design and planning processes
   - Governance process and KPIs

2. **Annual operating budget**

3. **Average annual tuition/registration fee**

4. **Number of courses offered**
   - Accreditations
   - Lab, workshop, etc. requirements
   - Online courses

5. **Number of students enrolled *(per faculty, disaggregated by gender)***
   - Total full-time by year of enrollment
   - Total part-time by year of enrollment

6. **Number of teaching faculty *(per faculty, disaggregated by gender)***
   - Total full-time
   - Total part-time
   - Highest degree/credentials

7. **Number of administrative staff *(disaggregated by gender)***
   - Total full-time
   - Total part-time

8. **Retention, graduation, and placement rates *(per faculty, disaggregated by gender)***
   - Retention (first to second year and first to second semester)
   - Completion on time
   - Employment status

9. **Internship-related information, numbers, and process**

10. **Alumni-related information, numbers, placement results, and engagement mechanisms**

Post-Assessment

Advisory Services

The Employability Diagnostic Report includes bespoke recommendations for the institution. Upon request, the Vitae team can provide advisory services to develop an implementation road map and to provide training on how to implement changes. Advisory services are delivered in partnership with practitioners and specialists in the areas of recommendations.

Monitoring and Evaluation

IFC will contact the institution within 12 months of post-assessment regarding the status of recommendations and progress achieved, as well as any additional requirements the institution may have. This typically consists of a one-hour interview with senior leadership.

Vitae is offered in partnership with the following:

Fias THE FACILITY FOR INVESTMENT CLIMATE ADVISORY SERVICES

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

For more information, email **vitae@ifc.org** or visit **www.vitaeready.org**