

Needs Analysis in Higher Education: Including a Broad Group of Stakeholders



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Background

What is a needs analysis?

- A strategy for gathering qualitative and quantitative information prior to launching a project
- Ensures that the project is appropriate for the problem, identifies specific goals (or learning objectives), and clarifies the needs, audience, and stakeholders of the project
- Should include multiple stakeholders and occur at multiple levels
 - The university/organization (future employers)
 - Program/department
 - Person (student, faculty)
 - Skills/tasks

Internship program

- Develop a plan for launching a business psychology internship project for undergraduates at Kansas State University
- Specifically, identify:
 - Policies and procedure
 - Pre-assessments
 - Student and employer evaluations
 - Final project and offboarding procedures

Methods

- Identify stakeholders and information sources
 - K-State Psychological Sciences faculty member, subject matter expert on developing psychology internship program (clinical focus)
 - Current K-State undergraduate students (one junior with interests in business and psychology, one senior who has participated in an internship previously)
 - Current K-State graduate student (expertise in assessing employee and organization attitudes)
 - Conference panel of program coordinators, internship supervisors, and former interns (with shared experiences in workplace psychology)
 - Identify information gathering techniques
 - Structured questions given to undergraduates
 - Unstructured interview with faculty member
 - Content related conversations with graduate student
 - Observation and notes from conference panel
- all qualitative sources grouped together into key themes (content analysis)

Note. Surveys, archival data, and other quantitative approaches can be incorporated as well.

Findings

Source	Policies and Procedures	Intake Process	Evaluation	Final Project and Offboarding
Faculty	X	X		X
Graduate Student			X	
Undergraduate Students		X		X
Conference Panel	X	X	X	X

Table 1. Source Comparison

2. Intake system and pre-assessments (sources used: Faculty, Conference panel, undergraduates)

- Student
 - Interest form
 - Interest and communication skills interview
 - In-box activity to assess written communication
 - Information gathering activity to assess critical thinking, stakeholder engagement, and data competency
 - Policy agreement,
 - Enroll in credits
- Employers
 - Informational interview, goal clarification
 - Information form,
 - Policy agreement

3. Assessments and evaluations (source used: graduate student)

- Student – mid-internship
 - Job characteristics/fit
 - Attitudes toward job
 - Attitudes toward organization
- Student end-of-internship
 - All of the above
 - Stay intentions
- Organization – mid-internship
 - Student performance
 - Student work behaviors
 - Concerns
- Organization end-of-internship
 - All of the above
 - Overall experience and value
 - Student fit to organization

1. Policies and Procedures (sources used: Faculty, Conference panel)

- Students
 - Complete intake process
 - Identify internship match
 - Log hours, participate in Canvas course, complete mid-internship evaluation (more below)
 - Complete learning assessment
 - Complete offboarding process (including post-assessment, resume writing)
- Employers
 - Complete intake process (
 - Identify intern match
 - Complete mid-internship evaluation
 - Complete end of internship evaluation and exit interview

Focus	Select Questions	Responses
Social impact	I feel others appreciate my work	1-7 agreement
	I feel other people value my contributions	1-7 agreement
Role overload	I am given enough time to do what is expected of me	1-7 agreement
	I often feel I have too much work for one person	1-7 agreement
	The performance standards of my position are too high	1-7 agreement
Perceived Organizational Support	The organization cares about my well-being	1-7 agreement
	The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible	1-7 agreement
	Help is available from the organization when I have a problem	1-7 agreement

Table 2. Selected Evaluation Questions

4. Final project and offboarding (sources: Faculty, Conference panel, undergraduates)

- Presentation to internship group reflecting on:
 - General experience
 - Explanation of the organization, their role, and specific projects
 - List of skills and competencies developed
 - Recommendations to K-State and the organization
- Resume workshop
 - Collaborate with internship advisor and other interns to thoughtfully incorporate the experience into resume or CV

Other Applications

Application 1: Course redesign

- Potential stakeholders
 - Program or department (how does this affect the degree or other classes)
 - Colleagues (instructors of other sections)
 - Students
 - Alumni
 - Potential employers or career center
- Potential questions
 - What are my learning objectives for this course? How do they connect to the program, broadly? How do they support the skills students need after graduation?
 - What activities and assessments can I use to ensure my LO's are being met? What is the expected level of interest and engagement in them?
 - How will these changes affect other classes in the program or other instructors of this course?
- Information gathering techniques
 - Interviews with colleagues
 - Focus groups with current students
 - Surveys to current students
 - Archival TEVAL comments (if relevant)
 - Interview with career center or potential employers

Application 2. Curriculum Redesign

- Potential stakeholders
 - Entire program or department (how does this affect the degree or other classes)
 - Current students
 - Alumni
 - Potential employers or career center
- Potential questions
 - What are the goals of this program or degree? What are the foundational knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes we want students to develop?
 - How will different courses compliment and scaffold one another to support these goals?
 - Where do our students go after graduation? How can we ensure they leave ready for success? What are they currently lacking that we can better develop?
 - How will the redesign affect current students? Will it change requirements? When will these changes go into place? Can older students be grandfathered in to existing requirements?
 - How will this affect alumni of our program? How can we continue to make them feel included and hold consistency? What do our alumni wish we had done differently? What did they value about our program that we should keep in place?
 - How will this affect potential future students to our program? Does it help our program with recruitment and retention?

Want to know more?

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