



SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Self-assessment tools help leaders learn more about their personalities, interests, and skills, as well as their preferences for risk-taking, management roles, and teamwork situations. These instruments encourage both professional and personal development by building participants' awareness of their own working styles and preferences, as well as the working styles of others. Self-assessment tools can assist with leadership development planning by attuning individuals to their unique leadership style, strengths, and development needs.

By definition, self-assessment tools are self-directed instruments that do not require administration by a separate party. The cost of most popular instruments typically ranges from \$15-\$50 per person. Self-assessments can be completed in a group setting, followed by a facilitated discussion, in order to build participants' understanding of team dynamics and various work and management styles.

Using Self-Assessments in Academia

Because they come from research backgrounds, faculty members are often inclined to question the validity and usefulness of self-assessments. When selecting a self-assessment tool that will be used with a higher education audience, program administrators are advised to select tools that have been developed through rigorous study. Administrators may also find it helpful to discuss upfront any data that supports the validity and reliability of the assessment tool being used.

The instruments listed below were strongly recommended by research contacts at higher education institutions and have also been used widely outside of academia.

Selected Self-Assessment Instruments:

- [The Birkman Method](#) (interest, personality and values inventory)
- [DISC Assessment](#) (personality inventory)
- [Riso-Hudson Enneagram Type Indicator](#) (personality inventory)
- [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#) (personality inventory)
- [Strengths Finder](#) (skills and strengths inventory)

360° ASSESSMENT AND 360° ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS: COMPREHENSIVE FEEDBACK FROM A RANGE OF RESPONDENTS

In human resources, 360° feedback—or multi-rater feedback—is feedback on employee's strengths and development needs which has been gathered from multiple perspectives—supervisor, peer, direct report, former colleague, or even contacts outside of the organization. 360° feedback may also include a self-assessment component. Because feedback is collected from multiple respondents, 360° feedback offers a more complete picture of a participant's strengths and development areas when compared with self-assessments or top-down reviews.

Gathering 360° feedback involves administering assessments to multiple stakeholders and then synthesizing the respondents' feedback into a summary report. 360° assessments are usually administered to respondents via an online survey instrument, and 360° assessment tools are typically based on pre-defined leadership competencies that are specific to the management level of the individual being assessed (e.g. frontline manager, mid-level manager, senior executive).

Using 360° Assessments with Academic Leaders

360° Assessment Best for Development Purposes, Not Performance Evaluation—360° assessment results are best used for the purposes of planning training and development, and not for evaluation. Separating 360° feedback from the performance evaluation process ensures that all parties involved view the exercise as developmental, not evaluative. If assessors know that their input on a 360° assessment will be factored into performance appraisals, their responses may be influenced, providing inaccurate information on the development areas important for the individual being reviewed to target.

Trained Facilitator Critical Component of 360° Assessment Delivery— Institutions should not provide participants with their feedback results without also providing a trained facilitator to deliver results. Facilitators of any 360° feedback session should know both the assessment tool and the culture of higher education well, and facilitated discussion should include information on the 360° assessment purpose, structure, and next steps. Because 360° assessment results contain feedback from an array of respondents, receiving the assessment results constructively is often difficult for participants, especially if areas that they perceive as strengths are reported by others as places where development is needed. The use of a skilled facilitator ensures that 360° feedback is delivered in a highly-structured, tightly-managed session, with participants guided through an active reflection and individual planning process.

Not an Annual Exercise—Because 360° assessments can cost upwards of \$350 per participant to administer (not including the costs associated with the facilitated feedback session), it is not practical to administer 360° assessments every year to every academic leader. Administrators should also consider the time required to administer 360° assessments; selecting and notifying each participants' review team, administering the survey, and post-assessment follow-up can span multiple weeks. And because advanced management skills develop over years, not months, 360° assessments are best repeated every few years at most, so that the participant has had enough time to make meaningful progress in between assessments.

Feedback Session Beginning of Overall Development Process—Institutions should not view delivery of 360° feedback results as the end of the development process; instead, the 360° exercise should be treated as the beginning of an individualized training and development process for faculty and staff leaders. Feedback sessions should provide participants with guidance on working individually—or with their supervisor or executive coach—on activities designed to leverage their strengths and elevate their performance on development areas highlighted by the 360° assessment. 360° feedback should inform the next steps of an individual's development process, rather than signaling the end of it.

Selected 360° Assessment Instruments:

- [The Center for Creative Leadership](#)
- [The IDEA Center](#) (focused on department chairs)
- [The Leadership Circle](#)
- [Performance Programs Inc.](#)