

Collecting High Quality Outcome Data Developing a Data Collection Schedule

Key Points – Definitions

A **data source** is any person, group, or organization that has information on whether the intended output or outcome occurred.

A **method** is a process or set of steps one follows to systematically collect performance measurement data.

An **instrument** is a paper or electronic form used to record information from a data source.

Reliability is the ability of a method or instrument to yield consistent results each time. Reliability is strengthened by using well-designed instruments and by providing data collectors and respondents with clear instructions on how to administer and complete instruments.

Validity is the ability of a method or instrument to accurately measure what it intends to or what it is supposed to measure. Measurement is valid when it produces results addressing the specific outcome you wish to measure. Valid measurement collects data on all relevant aspects or dimensions of an outcome. Validity is also supported when the results produced by an instrument are corroborated by information from other sources. For example, the validity of a math test is supported when students who score high (or low) on the test also perform well (or poorly) at solving math problems in class and on homework assignments.

Results are **biased** when they are systematically skewed or distorted. Results can be biased due to the over- or under-representation of particular groups in the dataset, and due to question wording that tends to encourage or discourage particular responses. The timing of data collection can also systematically bias results.

Exercise

A data collection schedule or plan describes how you will measure performance and what information will be collected. The schedule or plan identifies the instruments that are to be used to measure specific outputs or outcomes, methods, data sources, and data collectors. A data collection schedule provides a framework for implementing data collection by specifying when data collectors will be trained, and when data will be collected, how often, and by whom, as well as when data need to be analyzed in time to be used for reporting and program improvement.

Use the blank data collection schedule on the next page to plan data collection for your program

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Program Name: _____

Program Director: _____

Data to be collected	Schedule for Training Data Collectors and Collecting Data	Data Analysis Schedule	Report Due Dates	Reflection (discuss findings and ideas for program improvement). Meeting Dates and Attendees
Instrument: _____ Output/ Outcome: _____ Method: _____ Data Source: _____ Data Collectors: _____	Training Date(s): _____ Data Collection Dates: Date (1) : _____ Date (2) : _____ Date (3) : _____	Date (1) : _____ Date (2) : _____ Date (3) : _____ Date (4) : _____		
Instrument: _____ Output/ Outcome: _____ Method: _____ Data Source: _____ Data Collectors: _____	Training Date(s): _____ Data Collection Dates: Date (1) : _____ Date (2) : _____ Date (3) : _____	Date (1) : _____ Date (2) : _____ Date (3) : _____ Date (4) : _____		