



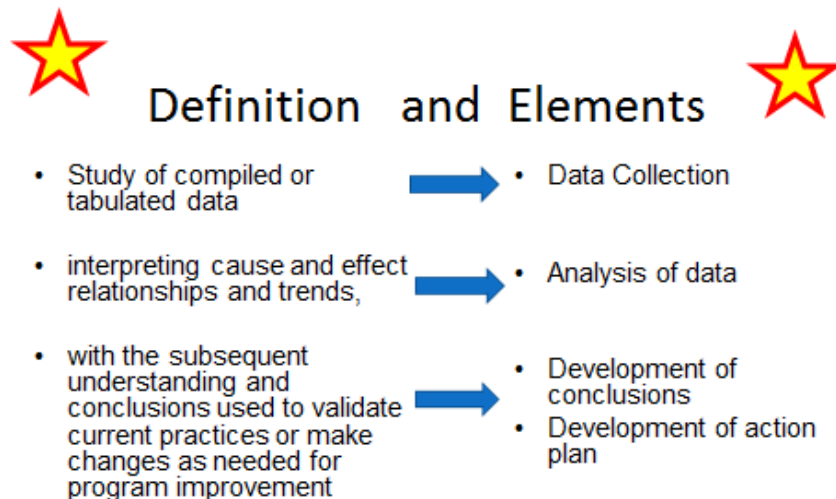
Accreditation Review Commission on Education
for the Physician Assistant, Inc.

THE ELEMENTS OF ANALYSIS and THE SELF STUDY REPORT (SSR) (9.2011)

The ARC-PA's definition of *analysis* (study of compiled or tabulated data interpreting cause and effect relationships and trends, with the subsequent understanding and conclusions used to validate current practices or make changes as needed for program improvement) involves four important elements.

1. The first element is the **collection of data**. For ease of use and interpretation, the collected data must be clearly displayed in tables and charts.
2. Second, the **analysis of the data**. This includes discussing, and interpreting the cause and effect relationships and trends relating the data to the expectations, possible explanations, or issues being examined. This is to be demonstrated in a SSR by a succinctly written narrative which highlights the cause and effects relationships and trends.
3. The third key element is the **development of conclusions** based on the study and discussion of the data. These must be succinctly stated in the SSR.
4. The fourth element is the **development of an action plan** to operationalize the conclusions. Actions plans, too, must be succinctly stated in the SSR.

The slide below captures the ARC-PA definition of analysis on the left, with the elements of data analysis on the right.



THE NEW SSR FORMAT

Within the new SSR format, found largely in Appendix 13 of the accreditation application, programs are asked to provide data by either completing ARC-PA developed templates or by creating their own data tables as indicated in application Appendix 13.

Most tables are associated with two questions, as indicated below.

Provide Narrative about the **analysis** (interpretations and conclusions) based on data collected as displayed above.

The first question (above) is asking programs to accurately and succinctly write about its analysis of the presented data by providing information about the interpretations of cause and effect relationships as they relate to the data. Further, programs are to accurately and succinctly describe the conclusions to which they arrive based on the interpretative analysis of the data.

Provide Narrative detailing the **actions** (modifications or non-modifications supported by the analysis) taken.

In the second narrative, programs are to accurately and succinctly write about the actions taken, or not taken, based on and supported by the analysis of the data.

HOW MUCH NARRATIVE?

Standard C2.01 indicates that “The program *must* prepare a self-study report as part of the application for continuing accreditation that *accurately and succinctly* documents the process and results of ongoing program self-assessment.”

The word succinctly is defined by the ARC-PA as “marked by compact, precise expression without wasted words.”

Succinctness and clarity are essential to a well written SSR. Programs that present narratives which refer to scattered pieces of data or that are not presented in a coherent manner run the risk of the readers not being able to connect these fragments into a coherent understanding of compliance. The obligation of demonstrating compliance, in part by authoring a well written narrative, rests with the program and the author/s of the submitted application materials, not with the ARC-PA site visitor or commission reviewers.