Situational analysis

Informing your school’s improvement journey in learning, teaching and leading
**What is a situational analysis?**

A situational analysis is an authentic and rigorous assessment of your school's current state and is used to inform your school’s improvement journey in learning, teaching and leading. It is a key component of the School Excellence cycle and is an essential step in the development of a Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) that will effectively prioritise your school’s identified areas for growth.

Conducting a situational analysis allows your school to develop a rich and highly contextualised understanding of your school’s current situation. As part of this situational analysis, every school collects qualitative and quantitative data, collates evidence, collaborates widely and engages with research. The process outlined below is the suggested option available to schools.

Through a process of ‘looking inward’, ‘looking outward’ and ‘looking forward’, a situational analysis answers the questions:

- ‘Where are we now?’
- ‘Where do we want to be?’
- ‘How good can we be?’
Looking inward, looking outward, looking forward

By ‘looking inward’, ‘looking outward’ and ‘looking forward’, your school gains the clarity to envision and map your future directions in the next phase of the School Excellence cycle. A situational analysis enables your school to develop a context-specific SIP that answers the questions:

• Where do we need to go now?
• How will we get there?

### Looking inward

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looking inward</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What data do we have and what does it tell us?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have we considered the views and feedback of staff, students and parents/carers about where the school is now and where it needs to be?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Using professional judgement, have we considered what has been done, how well has it been done, and what happened as a result?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do we know?</td>
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<td>• What evidence do we have?</td>
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### Looking outward

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<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Looking outward</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have we considered current educational priorities and our school’s system-negotiated targets?</td>
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<td>• What does reliable and relevant research tell us about effective strategies for school improvement that are relevant to our current context?</td>
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<td>• What are the opportunities within and beyond our professional learning network that are contextually relevant?</td>
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### Looking forward

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<td><strong>Looking forward</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Which current practices or initiatives will we decommission (stop doing)?</td>
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<td>• How can we consolidate, adapt and improve on our current high impact practices and initiatives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What new, innovative practices or initiatives should we adopt in our next SIP?</td>
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Features of a situational analysis

Each and every school, including yours, is a complex, student centred and diverse learning community.

While unique trends, features and future directions may be revealed about a learning community through a situational analysis, the process of conducting the analysis is likely to be similar in each school.

Key features of the situational analysis process are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A situational analysis is:</th>
<th>A situational analysis is not:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an identification of the needs of your students, your teachers and your school</td>
<td>anecdotal</td>
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<tr>
<td>underpinned by relevant and reliable data</td>
<td>developed in isolation by a small group or individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>a process to establish a common understanding of where your school is at</td>
<td>a submission for funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>a consideration of your school’s performance in relation to its targets and improvement measures</td>
<td>a public-facing document</td>
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<tr>
<td>inclusive of the learning needs of your teachers and leaders as well as your students</td>
<td>a list of wants or desires</td>
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<tr>
<td>collaborative and consultative</td>
<td>focused upon a small but vocal section of the school or community</td>
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<tr>
<td>a process that engages all staff in looking forward and determining future directions for the school.</td>
<td>a top down approach.</td>
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Notes:

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Process workflow

A five step process guides the development of your situational analysis. Use the process on the next page as you step through the process. More detail is available on the School Excellence in Action website.
Process for completing a situational analysis using SPaRO

Review and analyse School dashboard and financial data

- Access School dashboard within Scout:
  - When reviewing finances, also consider eFPT & School Overview Report.

Reflect on SEF S-aS and EV

- Review annual School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey (SEF S-aS):
  - previous results within the current cycle
  - elements and themes.
- Review external validation findings:
  - executive summary
  - future directions
  - next steps
  - panel report.
- Identify focus areas within the SEF that will need to be considered when developing the Strategic Improvement Plan.

Review and analyse internal school data, research and literature

- Analyse internal student learning and wellbeing measures.
- Consider current school plan and annual report, including the school’s reflections about future directions.
- Review relevant educational priorities, research sources and professional literature.
- Consider views and feedback from the whole school community.
- Gather suggestions for action from stakeholders as they emerge.

Consider all the evidence

- Determine the implications for future directions and planning.
- Determine potential future strategic directions.

Prepare for community consultation

- Summarise relevant data that will inform the development of the vision statement, school context and strategic directions.
Unpacking each stage of the process

1. Review and analyse School dashboard and financial data

The School dashboard data in Scout is used as the starting point for your school’s situational analysis. It provides you with a snapshot of your school with links to relevant applications in Scout.

System-negotiated targets are accessible through the School dashboard. A critical component of the situational analysis is considering the baseline, current progress and range for each of your system-negotiated targets.

The School dashboard is separated into 5 sections. You can reflect on each of these sections as part of your situational analysis in SPaRO:

- Wellbeing
- Student Performance (contains agreed system-negotiated targets)
- Human Resources
- Enrolment
- Finance.

Note: when reflecting on finance, also review your use of consolidated (6100) and school and community (6300) funds through the analysis of the SBAR, eFPT & School Overview Report.

The School dashboard in Scout
2. Reflect on School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey and External validation

The School Excellence Framework (SEF)
The School Excellence Framework (SEF) is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. The SEF identifies quality practice across the three key domains of education — learning, teaching and leading — to help schools plan and monitor strategies for ongoing improvement.

The SEF is evidence-based and identifies explicit school practices that are directly related to continuous, school-wide improvement and enhanced student outcomes.

As part of the ongoing School Excellence cycle, your school annually self-assesses its practices using the elements of the SEF across each of the three domains.

School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey (SEF S-aS)
The SEF S-aS captures your ‘point-in-time’ judgement using the SEF. You will complete the SEF S-aS annually in SPaRO. The statements of excellence in the SEF are central to guiding your school’s reflection on each element.

Where your school’s practices are not described by ‘Delivering, Sustaining and Growing or Excelling’ statements, you should select ‘Working Towards Delivering’.

External validation (EV) process
Once during the School Excellence cycle, your school undertakes an EV of the evidence of your school’s self-assessment. As part of this process, your school engages in discussions with an external panel and has your school’s self-assessment validated using the SEF.

The executive summary, next steps and future directions of your school’s external validation may also be available in SPaRO to reflect upon when developing your situational analysis.

Notes:
School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey (SEF S-aS) and external validation (EV) reflections

Your school will be able to access the last two years SEF S-aS results and the EV panel report findings in SPaRO. As part of your analysis of these results, you will be able to identify focus themes relevant to your planning for the new Strategic Improvement Plan.

This can be seen in the following example outlining the SEF domains and elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Excellence Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Element</strong></td>
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<td>----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
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<td>Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student performance measures</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective classroom practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data skills and use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leading</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>School planning, implementation and monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>School resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management practices</td>
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</table>

Legend: WTD (working towards delivering), D (delivering), S&G (sustaining and growing), E (excelling)

Notes:
3. Review and analyse school data, research and literature

This section provides an opportunity to add any other analysis of data that could inform your Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP).

It is important to consider the quality, reliability and relevance of your evidence. Opinions hold more weight if they are supported by evidence, particularly when this is triangulated with evidence from complementary data sources, for example qualitative and quantitative sources.

Evaluation in the school improvement cycle should be focused on continuous improvement, learning from experience and determining the best possible next step(s). Only include information that helps inform future planning.

Internal student learning and wellbeing measures

Considering data around student learning and wellbeing provides an opportunity to add any other evidence that could inform your SIP. This section will depend on your school’s context, including schools for specific purposes and those in unique settings.

You are likely to consider some of the following:
- internal assessment data, for example SWANS, GAS, ACER PAT, PM, ASDAN and progressions, focus groups, stakeholder surveys etc.
- formative and summative assessments
- learning progressions and PLAN 2
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) data
- Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs)
- data walls
- consistent teacher judgements
- school-developed assessment tools
- work samples, analysis of student portfolios or observations
- internal wellbeing data e.g. suspensions, PBL, support referrals
- surveys and focus group feedback
- NCCD data on adjustments.

Note: Only include information that helps you inform future planning as the primary purpose of the situational analysis is to draw together school information relevant to determining future directions.

Notes:
Consider current school plan and annual report:
• build on knowledge of progress towards achieving improvement measures
• develop insights into why improvement measures have or have not been achieved
• consider evidence of impact on student learning and the quality of the processes
• enable understanding of school priorities within the current school context
• reflect on those successful, high impact initiatives that can be consolidated and further developed
• identify those initiatives and associated activities perceived as unnecessary burdens that need to be decommissioned
• inform next steps and future directions
• include any additional relevant data and analysis not already considered.

Notes:

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Reflect on relevant and reliable research and professional literature
• Your situational analysis is likely to consider both the needs of your school and the most effective or appropriate initiatives for addressing these needs. Drawing on the evidence is critical when considering the future directions of your school.
• When considering your evidence and research base, quality and reliability are key. The Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) provides useful support for schools when engaging with research, literature and evidence.

Notes:
Reflect on the department’s recommendations and support materials
Department resources schools may consider to guide the effective use of funding and resources include:
• Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation (CESE)
• Teaching and learning in NSW public schools
• High Impact professional learning
• Supporting improvement in literacy and numeracy
• Excellence in wellbeing for all students
• Excellence for students from low socio-economic backgrounds
• Excellence for students learning English as an additional language or dialect
• Excellence for all Aboriginal students
• Excellence for students with disability and additional needs
• Excellence for Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs)
• Excellence for high potential and gifted students.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and you may add to it depending on your school’s context.

Notes:

Consider views and feedback from the whole community
Reflecting on your community engagement practices enables you to consider the range of community feedback that you have collected and its effectiveness. This may include feedback from: focus groups, community events, volunteer programs, the sharing of expertise, use of facilities, quick polls and other opportunities for open communication.

Notes:
Gather suggestions for action from stakeholders as they emerge

During the situational analysis, your school is engaged in a process of considering what has worked well, how it could be better and what works less well. Ideas for improvement will naturally emerge. As they do, implementing processes that enable the contribution of ideas for future action and collecting these ideas without judgement is important. This can be a positive step towards developing effective initiatives in your SIP and building whole school engagement.

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4. Consideration of all of the evidence

In considering all evidence collected in the situational analysis, your school will make judgements as to which areas need improvement. These considerations should be used to determine your school’s strategic directions.

Note: This is not a place to prove the worth of what your school has achieved but rather an opportunity to focus on determining the best next steps to maximise effective classroom practice and student performance and wellbeing.

Notes:
5. Prepare for community consultation

Schools develop planning processes that facilitate authentic, inclusive, whole school community consultation by looking inward, looking outward and looking forward. This analysis can reveal further opportunities for improving student learning and wellbeing outcomes through community engagement initiatives, as well as providing insights into current and emerging community issues.

Although the situational analysis does not result in a public document for review by your school community, the information gathered and the conclusions reached are critical to informing consultation with the school community and the development of your school’s SIP, which is a publicly available document.

Your school can prepare for community consultation by summarising the relevant data from the situational analysis that will inform the development of both your vision and context statements. Similarly, evidence and suggestions gathered during the situational analysis can be summarised to support the process of formulating strategic directions in consultation with the community.

For more detail and information about reviewing and amending your school’s shared vision and context statements, and determining the school’s strategic directions in collaboration with your community, refer to your SIP.

Notes:
Reflective questions

Looking inward

☐ Have we considered Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) and Index of Community Socio Educational Advantage (ICSEA) along with significant trends?
☐ Have we analysed the current enrolment profile?
☐ Have we considered our staffing profile?
☐ Have we considered a wide range of internal and external student performance data?
☐ Have we reflected on our wellbeing, equity and attendance targets?
☐ Have we considered the views of our staff, our students and our community in the analysis?
☐ Have we considered the elements and themes from the SEF S-aS?
☐ Are facility upgrades required to support curriculum delivery and programs?
☐ Have we considered the current SIP and annual report evaluations?
☐ To what extent did we achieve our improvement measures outlined in the previous school plan? How do we know? What barriers existed and how did we overcome them?
☐ Did we collect, analyse and extensively evaluate a range of qualitative and quantitative data?

Looking outward

☐ Have we considered the views of our wider community in the analysis?
☐ Have we considered like school and state comparisons of student performance data?
☐ Have we reviewed current research and literature into best practice?

Looking forward

☐ Has this analysis identified our next steps and future directions?
☐ Are we ready to develop our vision and context statements in collaboration with our community?
☐ Do we need to continue on the improvement journey with our current strategic directions? (What initiatives can we further develop, refine or scale up?)
☐ What do we need to stop doing (decommissioning initiatives)?
☐ Has our data analysis posed questions and generated ideas for future directions?
☐ Are we ready to consult with our community regarding these findings and the prepared situational analysis?

Notes: