GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) conducts annual assessments at the program-level to document support of **SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation Section 8: Student Achievement**.

> Student learning and student success are at the core of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its educational programs.
>
> **Standard 8.2**:
> The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvements based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
> > **Standard 8.2.a**:
> > Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.

Resource Links:
- SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement* (adopted December 2017 and effective January 1, 2018).
- Resource Manual for the *2018 Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*

IMPORTANT UPDATES

A. **Due Dates**: The due date for all 2021-22 program-level assessment reports has been extended to **September 1, 2022**. All fall 2021 and spring 2022 data, and all supplemental documentation (e.g., program analysis, action plans, etc.), must be entered into WEAVE and a completed report submitted by September 1, 2022. If a program needs to request an extension for a valid reason (e.g., program measures summer data or complex assessment methods due to accreditation requirements), please send a written request to Kathryn Lowery (Kathryn.Lowery@usm.edu) and Houston Ernst (Houston.Ernst@usm.edu).

B. To ensure continued compliance with **SACSCOC Standard 8.2**, all program-level assessment projects must have at least five (5) outcomes: **four (4) Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)** and **one (1) Program Objective**. Program objectives must focus on student achievement measures such as enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification. At least two (2) measures and targets are required for each SLO and at least one (1) measure and target is required for Program Objectives.

C. **Licensure Programs**: Teacher licensure programs may combine assessments, provided appropriate distinctions are made within the report. These distinctions include at least one separate student-learning outcome for licensure and at least two student achievement objectives, with one for licensure (Praxis).

D. **En Route Programs**: Graduate programs that offer en route degrees may combine assessments, provided appropriate explanation is provided within the report. An en route degree is a degree option for students pursuing a doctoral degree (e.g. EdS/PhD, MS/PhD). This combined assessment should be explained in the assessment plan/report.

E. To ensure continued compliance with **SACSCOC Standard 9.6, *Post-baccalaureate program rigor and curriculum***, student learning outcomes must show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit and graduate program. Student Learning Outcomes and measures must demonstrate: 1) knowledge of the literature of the discipline; and 2) ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.

F. **Program Inventory Review**: The supplemental documents (i.e., annual program and action plan analysis) will now include a section on program relevance/program inventory review. All programs included on the IHL inventory **must** report data on number of graduates and students enrolled over the most recent three-year period. If multiple emphasis areas report in one WEAVE report, the requested information will need to be collected for each emphasis area and attached in separate documents to the combined report in WEAVE.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT PLAN AND REPORT GUIDELINES

ACADEMIC PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT PLAN GUIDELINES:
1. All USM degree programs on the IHL Academic Program Inventory assess student-learning outcomes at the program level.
2. Separate assessment plans are encouraged at the emphasis level.
3. Licensure programs may choose to assess within one plan. These plans must have a minimum of one student-learning outcome and one student achievement objective focused on licensure.
4. Programs that offer separate online emphasis areas or distinct emphasis areas at different sites assess separately.
5. Programs with two degrees at the same level in the same subject can choose to assess within one plan or separate plans. Graduate programs that offer en route degrees may combine assessments.

6. Program-level assessment plans must have a minimum of five (5) outcomes. At least four (4) outcomes must be Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and at least one (1) outcome must be a Program Objective focused on student achievement. Student achievement includes enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, and licensure and certification rates.
7. SLOs must show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.
8. Graduate program SLOs and measures must demonstrate: 1) knowledge of the literature of the discipline; and 2) ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.
9. Each SLO must have two (2) measures and targets; one (1) must be a direct measure. At least one (1) measure and target is required for program objectives.
10. Overall course grades are **NOT** acceptable measures, direct or indirect.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT REPORT GUIDELINES:
Programs offered at multiple teaching sites or by multiple delivery modes must report their findings by site and include all sites and/or modes in the findings analysis.

The following components are required for a complete assessment plan/report:
1. **Program Description**: A brief – one to two paragraph – description of the program.
2. **Outcomes:**
    a. **Student Learning Outcomes**: A statement regarding knowledge, skills, and/or traits students should gain or enhance as a result of their engagement in an academic program. SLOs should complete the sentence, "*When students complete our program, they will be able to…*" A program does not need to state all possible outcomes, but it should articulate those that are fundamental. SLOs should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA/BS, MA/MS, PhD, etc.).
    b. **Program Objective**: A statement focused on student achievement measures such as enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensure, and/or certification.
3. **Measures and Targets**: A measure identifies evidence and methods used to determine achievement of expected outcomes. Measures should be detailed and specific. Targets are the criteria for how success will be measured. Measures can be direct (i.e., directly measure/evaluate a student's work – exams, papers, portfolios, projects, etc.), or they can be indirect (i.e., methods that reflect on students' learning – interviews, surveys, etc.). Each SLO must be assessed using at least two (2) measures, at least one (1) being a direct measure. At least one (1) measure is required for program objectives. Measures and targets should show progressive distinction between degree levels. Please label your measures as either "direct" or "indirect."
4. **Findings and Analysis of Findings**: Separate by site/mode, if applicable. Findings are the results of a program's measures and targets and should be analyzed to demonstrate student learning and provide direction for continuous improvement. An analysis of each findings statement is a new requirement in the 2020-21 assessment report template.
5. **Action Plans**: A new action plan is required at least every other year OR if a target is NOT MET.

CERTIFICATE AND MINOR ASSESSMENT PLAN AND REPORT GUIDELINES

Certificate Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines
All certificate programs must identify a minimum of two (2) SLOs, and each SLO must be assessed by at least one (1) direct measure.

Certificate programs must assess annually, following similar guidelines to program-level assessment. The following components are required for a complete certificate assessment report:
1. Student Learning Outcomes
2. Measures and Targets
3. Analysis/Findings (separated by site/mode, if applicable)
4. Action Plans

Program Summary and Continuous Improvement Initiative Fields are not necessary for Certificates and Minors.

Stand-alone Minor Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines
All stand-alone minors must identify a minimum of two (2) SLOs, and each SLO must be assessed with at least one (1) direct measure.

Stand-Alone Minors must assess annually and shall follow the certificate reporting guidelines outlined above.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING WEAVE AND ENTERING AN ASSESSMENT REPORT

Login Page: You can access the link to log-in to WEAVE on the following Institutional Effectiveness webpage: https://www.usm.edu/institutional-effectiveness/weave.php.
- *Click on the "**WEAVE Log-In**" link near the top of the page. That link will take you to a WEAVE log-in page.*
- *Next, click on the link "**Access WEAVE using your institution's sign-on**" near the bottom of the page. That will take you to the institutional log-in page.*
- *On the institutional log-in page, enter "**USM**" in the abbreviation field. If your credentials have been entered into the WEAVE system, you will automatically be signed-on once you enter USM. If you have trouble logging-in to WEAVE, please contact Houston Ernst at **Houston.Ernst@usm.edu**.*
- *Once you have successfully logged-in to the WEAVE system, you will be taken to a "**Dashboard**" (example below).*
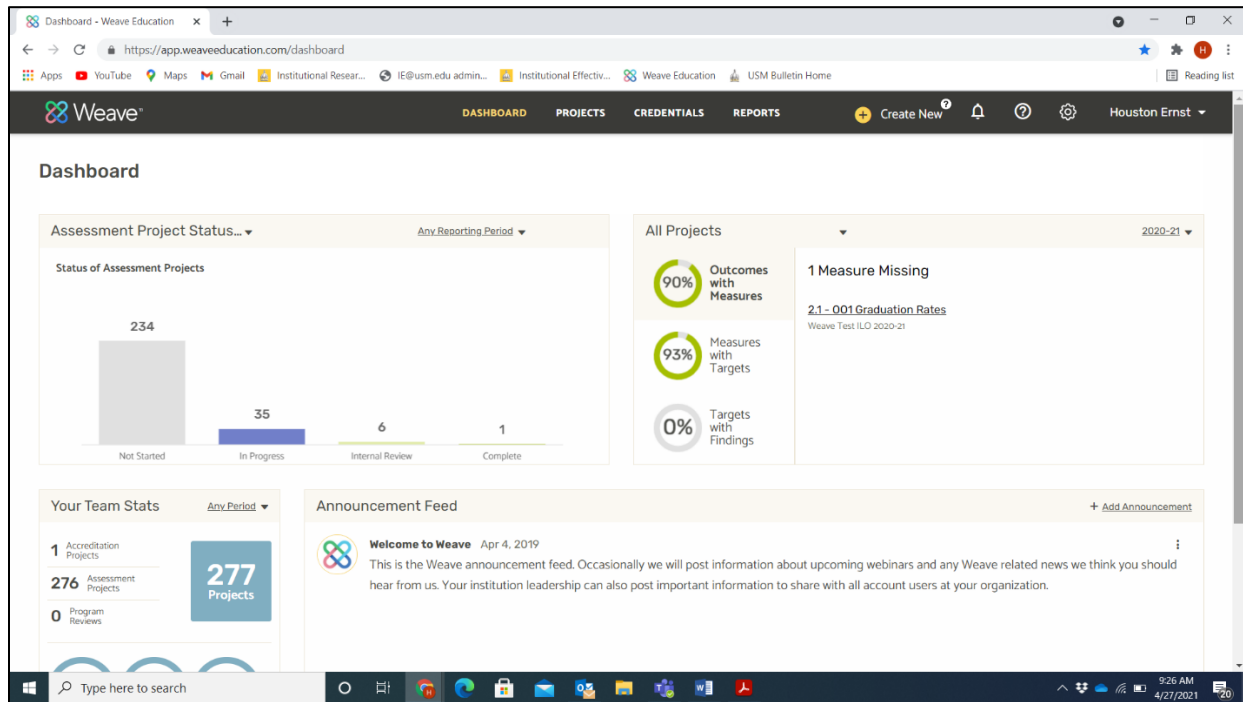
Accessing your project: On your "**Dashboard**" click on "**Projects**" at the top of the page (See screenshot below – "**Projects**" is underlined in red).

- *All 2021-22 assessment projects have been created using a template.*
- *Individual users have been assigned to a "User Group" (your school), and all of your school's assessment contacts and projects have been linked to your specific user group. Individuals have access to read and edit all projects associated with their User Group.*
- *When you open a project in WEAVE, please minimize the "Outline View." This will make it easier to enter your assessment plan and data. (See pictures below).*
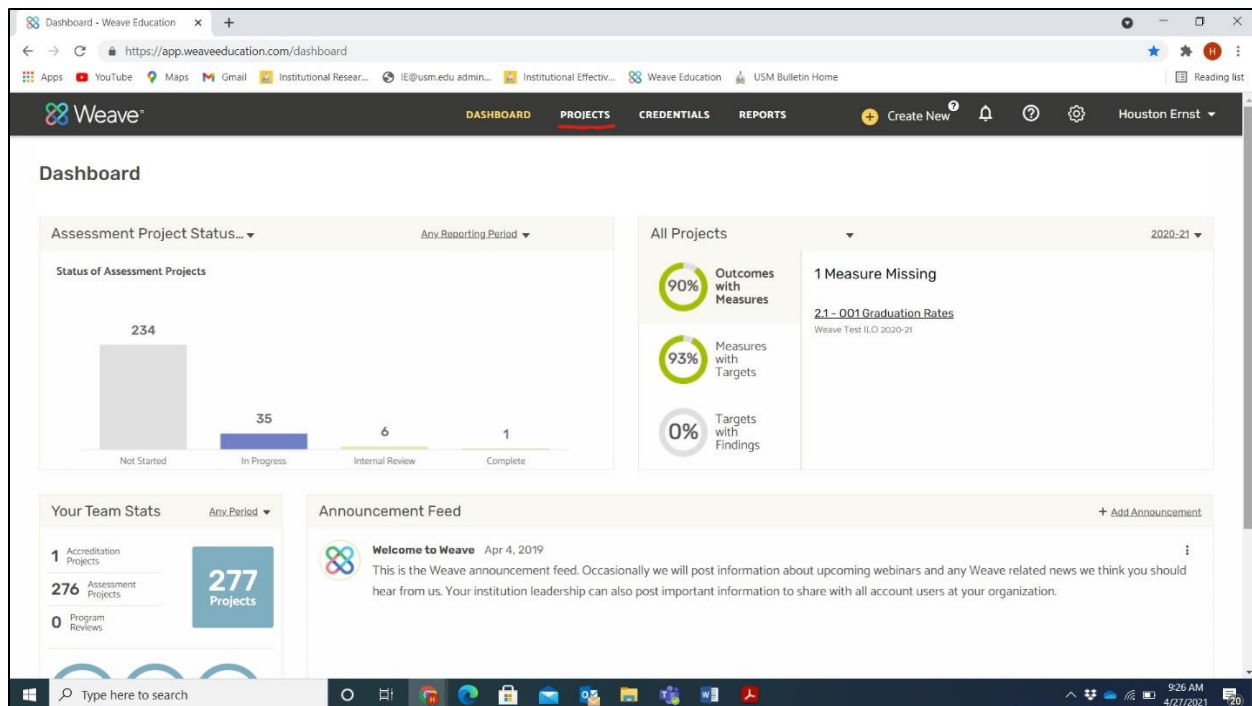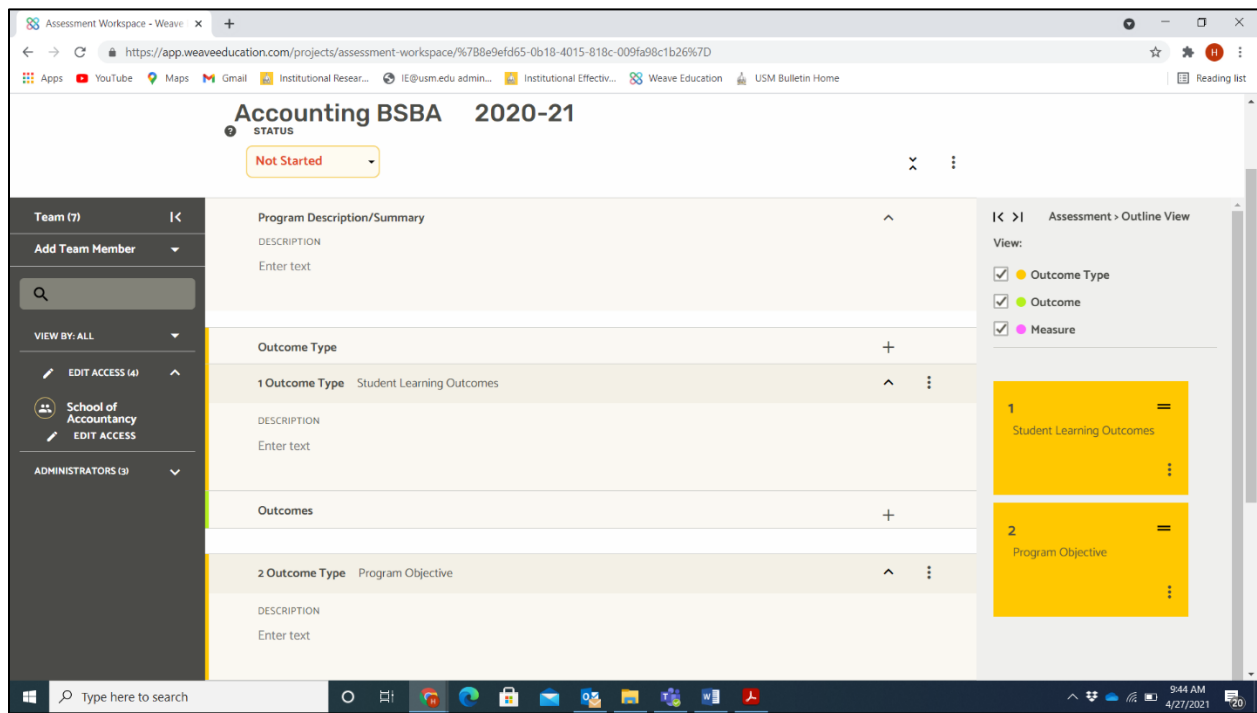
Outline View (==DO NOT WORK ON YOUR PROJECT IN OUTLINE VIEW==):
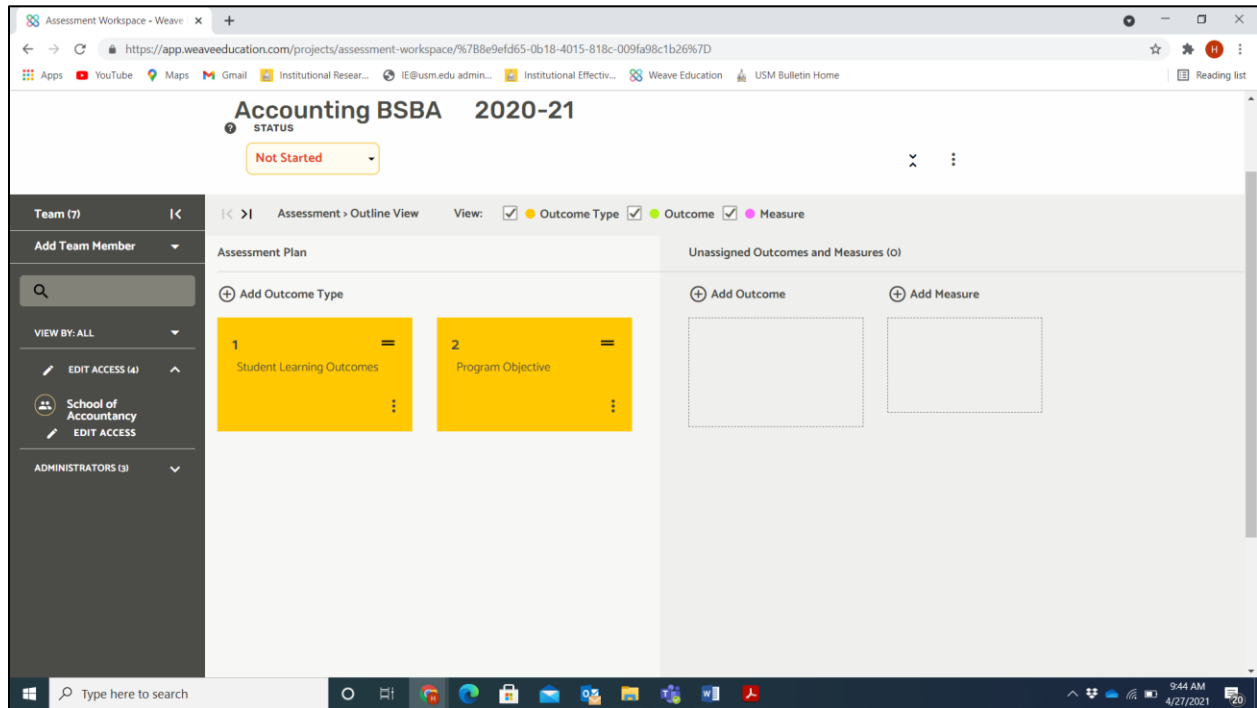
Non-Outline View (==THIS IS THE VIEW YOU SHOULD WORK IN==):
- *You can minimize the "Outline View" by clicking on the arrow next to "Assessment > Outline View" near the top of the page (under the title of your project).*

Enter and/or update your program description/summary: Program-level assessment projects should include a brief, one to two paragraph description/summary of the program. This section should focus on the program and provide context to a reviewer.

Entering your data: Under each of your targets you will enter your data in the "Finding" field. Academic degree programs offered on both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses, or by more than one mode (Face-to-Face, Online, etc.), **MUST** report their findings **BY SITE/MODE**. In the "Finding" field under each target, write out "Hattiesburg" (or simply "H"), "Gulf Coast or GC" and/or "Online" and then give the site/mode findings. You <u>may</u> combine all semesters, but please make sure you clearly state that all semesters are included in the data, OR if just one semester is included, please indicate which semester(s) are reported.

A quantitative finding must be entered for each measure. Findings should mirror phrasing in the target description. Begin with a numeral when possible and **include SAMPLE SIZES.** Specific numbers are essential for findings; give the actual percentage or numbers that resulted from the measures. The sample size is reported to provide context and add validity to the results. If a quantitative finding cannot be entered for the measure, please insert a detailed statement to explain why findings are not entered for that particular measure.

*Status: Once your data has been entered and your analysis has been written, you can change the status of your measure based on the results. There is a "Status" menu with the following options: **Nothing Entered, Not Reported this Period, Not Met**, **Partially Met**, **Met,** or **Exceeded**. If your target was 90% and your finding was 88%, then your target* was "Not Met." <u>Partially Met is only to be used when you have a multi-part target or if you have multiple program delivery modes.</u> (Example of a two-part target: 80% of students will score 5/10 **and** 20% will score 8/10.).

Project Attachments: There is a section to add your attachments at the bottom of your assessment plan. This is the section where you can attach your evaluation instruments (i.e., rubrics) as well as your program-level action plans and analysis.

HOW TO WRITE AN ANALYSIS OF YOUR DATA

Type your analysis in the "Analysis" field under each target. You should reflect on your findings and identify the implications for the specific outcome. Recommendations for next steps/improvement should also be highlighted here.

NEW ACTION PLANS

<u>**New Action Plans are required every other year OR if a target was NOT MET. If an action plan was not established in 2020-2021 report, an action plan is expected in the 2021-2022 report.**</u> An Action Plan is an organized activity undertaken to help programs more effectively achieve intended outcomes, or an activity developed by faculty to improve the program for the future. The results of action plans should provide evidence of continuous improvement activities. Action Plans do not contain vague phrases such as "we will look into this" or "No Action

Required." Action Plans are improvement initiatives related to Student Learning Outcomes planned for the upcoming year. *Date it* with an Established in Cycle "2020-2021."

UPDATING OLD ACTION PLANS

A complete assessment report includes updated Action Plans. This must be done every year.

The Implementation Status for Action Plans developed in previous years should now be updated. Previous Action Plans should not be in the "planned" stage.

Implementation Status should be *changed to In-Progress or Complete.* If "Complete," d*iscuss the action plan* in the Closing the Loop section of the Annual Program and Action Plan Analysis Word document. This document MUST be completed and attached in the "Project Attachments" section of your WEAVE report.

If you choose the status "In-Progress," *discuss the implementation process in the analysis and annual reporting document.*

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND PROGRAM IMPACT REPORTING

A separate Word document, which includes a list of annual program and action plan analysis questions and a request for program inventory data, will be provided to you. Additional directions on the program inventory review/program relevance request are included below. This Word document should be completed and attached to your project in WEAVE.

Program Inventory Review/Program Relevance
All majors, certificates, and stand-alone minors on the USM Active Program Inventory strive to meet the following three-year graduation criteria:

> **Undergraduate**
>> Majors, stand-alone minors, and certificates – 36 graduates over a three-year period.

> **Graduate**
>> Master's level and certificates – 30 graduates over a three-year period; doctoral level – 10 graduates over a three-year period.

The data for the following tables is accessible on the Institutional Research website (instructions below)

- Go to the website: https://www.usm.edu/institutional-research/institutional_data.php
- Click on **Faculty and Staff Data Access** (USM log-in required)
- Once logged-in, scroll down to the **Program Review** tab and click to open
- Click on **3 year Program Trends**
- Use the sort functions on the left hand side of the workbook to locate the data for a specific program

- Contact Kathryn Lowery (Kathryn.Lowery@usm.edu) or Houston Ernst (Houston.Ernst@usm.edu) with any questions.

All programs included on the IHL inventory **must** report the following information. If multiple emphasis areas are reported in one WEAVE report, please complete the tables and analysis for each emphasis area and attach separate documents to the combined report in WEAVE.

REVIEWING AND SUBMITTING REPORTS

After you have entered your data and analysis, *read* over your report to ensure all sections are complete. If your school director and/or dean must review your report before submission, please have them do so before you submit in WEAVE. Following submission, please send an email to Houston Ernst (Houston.Ernst@usm.edu).

Thank you for your efforts and commitment to continuous improvement!