

# Assessment Scale for Collaboratives

## Acknowledgments

Originally published in 2004 as a tool on IHI's website, the Assessment Scale for Collaboratives was revised in 2024 to include additional descriptive information and instructions. The assessment scale itself remains unchanged.

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# Assessment Scale for Collaboratives

This assessment scale provides a template for how to objectively assess each team's progress throughout a Breakthrough Series Collaborative or other improvement initiative for which there is moderate to high degree of belief in the effectiveness of the change ideas.

## Background

The Assessment Scale for Collaboratives was developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) to assess the progress of teams participating in an IHI Breakthrough Series Collaborative. It has since been adapted to many other improvement initiatives.

The scale serves four main purposes:

- Create a monthly objective measure of progress for each team that is determined by the Collaborative Director and Improvement Advisor to help them tailor support for the teams.
- Give each team an opportunity to assess its own progress through monthly self-assessment using the same scale to understand where there might be gaps in perspective between teams and the Collaborative Director and Improvement Advisor.
- Provide an overall sense of progress for the Collaborative, which helps Collaborative staff and faculty determine the pace and content for Learning Sessions and Action Periods.
- Provide the organization running the Collaborative with a way to understand success across improvement initiatives over time.

Additional information on Breakthrough Series Collaboratives:

[\*The Breakthrough Series: IHI's Collaborative Model for Achieving Breakthrough Improvement.\*](#) IHI Innovation Series white paper. Boston: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2003.

## Directions

When planning a Collaborative or other improvement initiative, adapt the template to create the specific assessment scale you will use. For example, for the 2.5 assessment, you will need to determine the specific "key measures" noted in the definition. A careful rendering of the assessment scale makes it easier for Collaborative staff and teams to use it as a source of shared language and understanding.

Teams are typically assessed monthly by the Collaborative Director and Improvement Advisor and are given feedback on their assessment score and comments on their monthly report.

## Additional Notes

- Progress is measured in 0.5 increments on the assessment scale. There are no 0.25 or 0.75 increments.
- Assessments are progressive and all elements of a score must be satisfied to attain the score.
- Evidence for the assessment score must be documented in each team's monthly reports and/or from storyboards at a Learning Session.
- Once an assessment score is achieved, that score is maintained (or improved). The scores do not decrease.
- A team might stay at a specific score for months until the next score is attained.
- Team scores are shared with each team individually and with the whole Collaborative as part of an average. A monthly histogram of team scores (without specific teams listed) can also be a useful visual depiction. For example, a Collaborative that has an average assessment score of 3.0 where all teams have attained a 3.0 score is very different than a Collaborative that has an average assessment score of 3.0 where half the teams have attained a 2.0 score and half have attained a 4.0 score.
- In a traditional IHI Breakthrough Series Collaborative, the goal is for 80 percent of teams to attain a 4.0 on the assessment scale. Assessments of 4.5 are uncommon and 5.0 are rare.

## Assessment Scale for Collaboratives

Assessment Scale	Definition
1.0 Forming team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team has been formed</li> <li>• Target population identified</li> <li>• Aim determined</li> <li>• Baseline measurement begun</li> </ul>
1.5 Planning for the project has begun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team is meeting, discussion is occurring</li> <li>• Plans for the project have been made</li> </ul>
2.0 Activity, but no changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team actively engaged in development, research, and discussion but no changes have been tested</li> </ul>
2.5 Changes tested, but no improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Components of the model being tested but no improvement in measures</li> <li>• Data on key measures are reported</li> </ul>
3.0 Modest improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial test cycles have been completed and implementation begun for several components</li> <li>• Evidence of moderate improvement in process measures</li> </ul>
3.5 Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some improvement in outcome measures, process measures continuing to improve</li> <li>• PDSA test cycles on all components of the change package, changes implemented for many components of the change package</li> </ul>
4.0 Significant improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most components of the change package are implemented for the population of focus</li> <li>• Evidence of sustained improvement in outcome measures,</li> <li>• Halfway toward accomplishing all goals of the aim</li> <li>• Plans for spreading the improvement are in place</li> </ul>
4.5 Sustainable improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained improvement in most outcome measures</li> <li>• 75% of goals achieved</li> <li>• Spread to a larger population has begun</li> </ul>
5.0 Outstanding sustainable results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All components of the change package implemented</li> <li>• All goals of the aim have been accomplished</li> <li>• Outcome measures at national benchmark levels</li> <li>• Spread to another facility is underway</li> </ul>