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How Well Does Your Campus Manage Data?
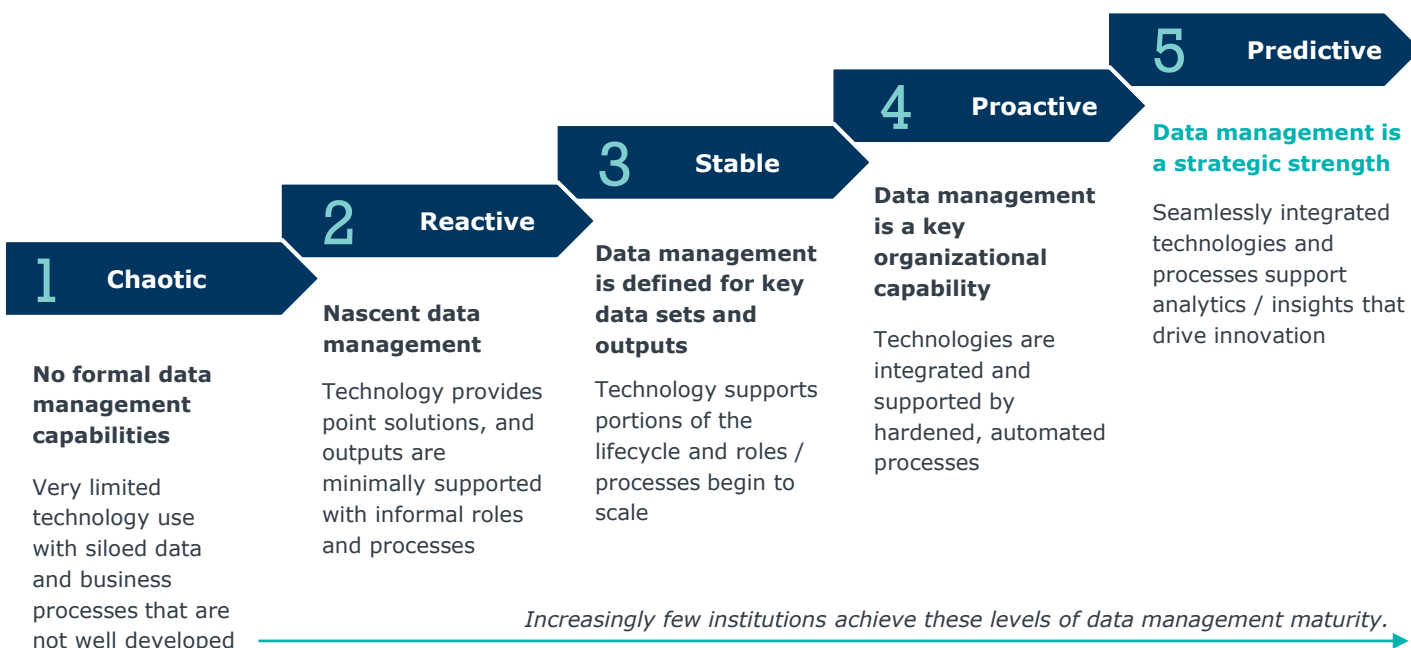
Data Governance Self-Assessment

How Well Does Your Campus Manage Data?

Why Good Data Management and Governance Matter for Higher Ed– and How You Can Improve

After decades of increasing technology investment, universities are creating and storing more data than ever before. As enrollment and financial pressures grow, institutions are increasingly turning to that data to help them improve student retention and success, grow revenue, and optimize costs. But because institutional data is usually created and stored in a complex web of systems, most people on campus can't access or analyze it easily, relying instead on a small number of experts on business intelligence teams (e.g., Institutional Research, IT). This complexity hampers strategic analytics efforts and limits the value most institutions can derive from their data.

As higher ed seeks to use data more strategically, a growing number of institutions are catching up to what their progressive peers started doing years ago: investing time, money, and cabinet-level attention in good data management. These investments help institutions develop more mature data management, evolving from a chaotic web of systems that few can navigate to predictive management characterized by streamlined data movement and easy access. Mature data management in turn leads to more sophisticated technology use across campus, enabling analytics and other data-informed strategic initiatives.

The Higher Education Data Management Maturity Curve[1]

1 Chaotic

No formal data management capabilities

Very limited technology use with siloed data and business processes that are not well developed

2 Reactive

Nascent data management

Technology provides point solutions, and outputs are minimally supported with informal roles and processes

3 Stable

Data management is defined for key data sets and outputs

Technology supports portions of the lifecycle and roles / processes begin to scale

4 Proactive

Data management is a key organizational capability

Technologies are integrated and supported by hardened, automated processes

5 Predictive

Data management is a strategic strength

Seamlessly integrated technologies and processes support analytics / insights that drive innovation

Increasingly few institutions achieve these levels of data management maturity.

Five Questions to Advance Your Data Management

Effective data governance is the first step to mature data management. It requires investment in technology, business processes, and institutional culture. Before you can truly count data management as a strategic strength, you must implement foundational data governance standards. With these in place, your institution can begin to make the most of your data and technology investments.

On the next page, you'll find five questions about foundational data governance standards in data definition, access, and quality. **Follow the prompts to see how well your institution manages data and what you can do to improve.**

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1) Adapted from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's *Data Capability Toolkit* (2016).

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency, EAB interviews and analysis.

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Five Questions to Advance Your Data Management

1 **Do you have a data governance committee?**

A committee that provides both executive-level direction setting and operational execution for data governance efforts

Check one:

☐ No ☐ Partially/in progress ☐ Yes

If yes...
Does it meet these best practice standards?
- The committee has separate groups for strategy and operations
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- We have appointed data stewards to carry out policies at the unit level

If no or partially...
What needs to change on campus to create this or move the work forward?

Reflection: **What can you do to improve data governance at your institution?**

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2 **Do you have a decision framework for data definition?**

A written policy to clearly outline committee members' roles, rights, and responsibilities regarding data definition standardization

Check one:

☐ No ☐ Partially/in progress ☐ Yes

If yes...
Does it meet these best practice standards?
- The decision framework assigns committee members specific roles that determine their level of participation for data standardization
- The decision framework includes an opt-out to allow committee members to abdicate rights for a given data term

If no or partially...
What needs to change on campus to create this or move the work forward?

3 **Do you have a data dictionary?**

A central repository of data terms and definitions that is publicly accessible, comprehensive, and end-user-focused (nontechnical)

Check one:

☐ No ☐ Partially/in progress ☐ Yes

If yes...
Does it meet these best practice standards?
- The dictionary defines each data field based on a committee consensus
- The dictionary includes information about each field's metadata (e.g., source)
- The dictionary is accessible to campus partners from a single, central location
- Definitions are embedded in data sources and applied automatically in queries

If no or partially...
What needs to change on campus to create this or move the work forward?

Reflection: **What can you do to improve data definition at your institution?**

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Five Questions to Advance Your Data Management

4 **Do you have a data access policy?**

A policy to guide role-based access restrictions and protect confidential data

Check one:

☐ No ☐ Partially/in progress ☐ Yes

If yes...

Does it meet these best practice standards?
- The policy applies a data sensitivity classification framework to elevate security needs for specific data fields
- The policy assigns term-specific access rights to specific institutional roles
- Data access is granted on an automated basis
- We have scalable mechanisms to support exceptions

If no or partially...

What needs to change on campus to create this or move the work forward?

Reflection: **What can you do to improve data access at your institution?**

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5 **Do you have a data quality assurance strategy?**

A formalized process to review and remediate data errors across the data management lifecycle

Check one:

☐ No ☐ Partially/in progress ☐ Yes

If yes...

Does it meet these best practice standards?
- We actively monitor for anomalous data in campus systems, as defined by previously set data integrity parameters
- We take steps to identify and remediate underlying causes of poor data quality

If no or partially...

What needs to change on campus to create this or move the work forward?

Reflection: **What can you do to improve data quality at your institution?**

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A Solution for Every Stage of Data Management Maturity

Education Data Hub (EDH) is **higher education's first Data Management Platform**, providing an integration, governance, and analytics solution in one technology. Using a hub-and-spoke approach that incorporates internal and third-party data sources, the platform organizes data into the Quad framework, EAB's proprietary higher education data model. With Quad, data is aligned by business purpose and available via a user-friendly interface.

EDH is a configurable and open platform that will unlock data value and evolve along with the institution. EDH's capabilities, grounded in deep higher education IT expertise, mean we can help advance your data initiatives regardless of your current stage of maturity. **To learn more or request a demo, visit www.eab.com/EDH.**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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