

# ATS seeks feedback on public draft of revised Annual Report Form

BY DEBORAH H. C. GIN

*ATS is requesting feedback from its membership on the public draft of the comprehensively revised Annual Report Form (ARF) before its final implementation this fall.*

## **What you can do**

**Review the public draft.** If the full set is overwhelming, review the form(s) that are most relevant for your work at your school, keeping in mind that the draft is annotated with rationale for changes. We welcome your feedback on the public draft.

**Do a reset.** Think of this ARF revision as an opportunity to reset your data. It is critically important to collect accurate and complete data. Without quality data, **peer comparisons** would be compromised, and decisions based on the data may be flawed. With quality data, other schools can look to you as a peer **exercising good citizenship** within a membership organization (e.g., salary data that includes all segments of administrators). With complete data, **research-related questions** can be better addressed. With accurate and updated data, **your people will be included** in lists of invitations to participate in ATS events, projects, and accrediting visits, as well as sitting on ATS committees and boards.

## **Goals of the comprehensive revision**

The project has taken a principle-based approach:

1. Focus on *why* data collection is important before engaging in conversation about *what* data are collected or *when*.



2. Find the “Lowest Common Multiple,” which emphasizes inclusion of items that allow all schools to account for their basic categories, but not all their categories.
3. Streamline as much as possible the reporting schools are required to do to their various entities. Where relevant, parallel existing surveys and data collection processes with which schools already engage.

The revision project began in 2019 with database architecture restructuring to prepare for changes related to the redevelopment of the *Standards of Accreditation*. Like the new *Standards*, it is a once-in-a-generation project—the ARF was last comprehensively revised in the 1990s or earlier. With this revision, we went from 75 pages of forms and instructions to 45 pages of forms and instructions—a 40% reduction. The need for this overhaul is timely, given the increased use of ATS data among schools and researchers and the increased work required of schools as they report their data to multiple entities.

To ensure the outcome is relevant to the schools and the industry, several layers of input were collected, including

from the ATS Board of Commissioners, two advisory committees, focus groups and interviews of school administrators, 12 accrediting agencies, and multiple ATS staff. In all, the project has involved representatives from

two-thirds of the 280 ATS member schools. Read this recent [article](#) for more information on the most significant changes.



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