



Top Tips for Writing an SIA

1. Provide a strategic narrative

The SIA provides reviewers with an executive-level summary of enhancement, including setting the scene of your specific institutional context. Operational details and comprehensive data can be included in the broader evidence base.

2. Take a team approach

Share the writing between several colleagues, reviewing each other's work so everyone is familiar with the whole document. This approach increases the sense of ownership and avoids a single point of failure, though it can be beneficial to have a project lead to make final editorial decisions and ensure consistency.

3. Reflect rather than describe

Avoid long descriptions of processes and initiatives. Instead, reflect honestly on what has changed and the impact of these changes. Including a short reflective summary at the end of each section can help both writers and reviewers identify the key points of evaluation.

4. Use evidence with context

Direct reviewers to the wider evidence base, explaining what it shows and why it matters. Use a broad range of evidence from across programmes and levels, including student feedback, rather than relying solely on KPIs.

5. Make it navigable

Use clear headings, short sections, and working links. Consider tables to highlight key points and break up the text. Infographics may also be helpful, but be mindful of the 20-page limit.

6. Involve students meaningfully

Include students in the writing process and show how student feedback shapes enhancement. Where possible, go beyond surveys and have students, particularly student representatives, involved in the writing process itself.

7. Be honest and balanced

Avoid overly positive, promotional language. Identify strengths and challenges, explaining how you are addressing them. Similarly, avoid overly negative language by focussing on development opportunities rather than simply describing what's not working.

8. Use a critical friend

Share drafts with staff and students outwith the writing team. Internal colleagues can offer

valuable institutional context, while external colleagues can catch any assumed knowledge. Previous reviewers will offer particularly valuable insights.

9. Build on previous SEAPs

Avoid repeating existing content. The SIA acts as an overarching reflective piece which draws on the institution's available Self-Evaluation and Action Plans (SEAPs). Build on existing materials by providing links or references to previous SEAPs, the wider evidence base, or the institutional website (keeping in mind that any links must remain live throughout the duration of the review).

10. Keep it concise

Aim for clarity over length. Reviewers appreciate concise, evaluative SIAs that fit within the 20-page limit.

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