

FAQs for the AISL OPMS Baseline Survey

These Frequently Asked Questions are organized by the seven sections that comprise the Baseline survey. They address common questions about how to complete the Online Project Monitoring System (OPMS). If you have a question that is not answered here, please contact your Westat contact person or email AISLhelp@westat.com. For information on how to navigate the survey, see the PowerPoint “Navigating the Survey.”

Section A: Project and Lead Organization

What information does Section A collect? This section asks for your project title; a project abstract; the lead organization name; the lead organization’s division/department name; organization and division/department type; whether the PI and Co-PI had prior AISL and NSF support; the name, location, and type of each project venue; and the contact information for the primary point of contact for the person completing this survey.

How long is this section? This section has eight questions. Some of the information has been pre-filled to reduce your burden.

What is my project title? The project title you enter into the OPMS should match the project title on your proposal to AISL.

What should go in an abstract? The abstract should be a brief description of your project that program officers can share with stakeholders who request information about the types of initiatives that are supported by the AISL program. Topics that can be covered include: (1) the primary goals of your project, (2) the audience that will be targeted by your project, (3) the design of your project—e.g., major deliverables or activities to engage your intended audience, and (4) anticipated impacts on the public or professional audiences.

Can I have an international lead organization? No. NSF grants only go to lead organizations located within the United States. However, you may enter key personnel and organizational partners who are located internationally in sections B and C.

How should I report that a PI or co-PI served in a non-PI capacity on a previous AISL or NSF project? This question only asks if a PI or a co-PI was the PI or co-PI on a previous AISL or NSF project.

It does *not* ask whether a PI or co-PI worked on a previous AISL or AISL project in another capacity (e.g., as an exhibit designer or curriculum developer).

I have multiple co-PIs, and only one of them served as a PI or co-PI on a previous AISL or NSF project. How do I answer Question A6? Answer “Yes” for the relevant question if *any* co-PI served as a PI or co-PI on a previous AISL or NSF project.

What is a venue? A venue is the physical public setting where a public and/or professional audience will participate in an AISL-related product, program, or experience. For example, if your project includes a traveling exhibit, each museum where the exhibit is displayed would be a venue. Providing the names and locations of venues will help NSF track and report on the geographic reach of the AISL program.

Can I add/change/remove venues in the future? Yes. If you do not yet know where all of your venues will be, you can add more venues in the Annual and Closeout surveys. In future years, you will also be able to note if any venues are no longer being used.

Section B: Key Personnel of the Project Team

What information does Section B section collect? This section requests information about each of the key personnel on your project. For each individual, you will enter that person's name, organization (if applicable), organization and division/department type, primary and secondary project roles, the name and contact information for the primary point of contact at the organization.

How long is this section? This section has four questions for *each* key personnel member that you add.

Who should be listed as key personnel? Key personnel include (1) the PI, (2) co-PI, (3) advisors named in your proposal to NSF, (4) key team members, and (5) consultants who will make a substantial contribution to your AISL project and who have an ongoing relationship in the development of project deliverables. Key personnel make meaningful contributions and dedicate a significant amount of time to the project. They may be individuals who run the project, develop specific components of the project, or implement key parts of the project (e.g., a program manager, an exhibit designer, a participant recruiter, or an educator). Key personnel can either work at the lead organization, in a partner organization, in a non-partner organization, or as an independent consultant.

What if I need to add, remove, or change information for an individual in the future? In Annual and Closeout surveys, you will have the opportunity to add new key personnel and delete those who are no longer active. You will also be asked to review and update their information.

Can I have international key personnel? Yes. The OPMS allows you to enter key personnel with international email addresses, telephone numbers, and zip codes.

Section C: Organizational Partners

What information does Section C collect? This section requests information about each organization who works on your AISL project. For each partner, you will provide the organization name, the division/department name (if applicable), the organization and division/department type, a description of the role this organization will have on your project, and the name and contact information for the primary point of contact at the organization.

How long is this section? This section has five questions for *each* organizational partner you add.

Who should be listed as an organizational partner? You should list project partners, sub-awardees, and co-funders (who provide at least 10 percent of the total project budget). Organizational partners are organizations other than the lead organization which have devoted significant amounts of time and made meaningful contributions to the project. If you added individuals from organizations other than the lead organization in Section B, you can include their organizations here. You should also include venues that could be considered “organizational partners.” These venues would be ones that help develop deliverables or otherwise engage in planning or developing your project (rather than being ones that simply distribute a deliverable to the public—e.g., a movie theater that shows your project’s film).

What if I need to add, remove, or change information for a partner in the future? In Annual and Closeout surveys, you will have the opportunity to add new organizational partners and delete ones that are no longer with the project. You will also be asked to review and update information on each previously-entered partner.

Can an organization be listed in Section C, and individuals from that organization listed in Section B? Yes. If you added individuals from organizations other than the lead organization in the Key Personnel section, we encourage you to include their organizations in Section C. Also, if there are important individuals with whom you work at a partner organization, you may want to include those people in the Key Personnel section as well.

Section D: Products, Programs, and Experiences for Public Audiences

What information does Section D collect? This section obtains information about each deliverable (i.e., product, program, or experience) that your project will develop for a *public* audience. For each deliverable, you will identify the deliverable type, the delivery method(s), the number of people you expect to reach with each delivery method, a description of the deliverable, whether the deliverable is a primary or secondary focus of your AISL project, the STEM content focus, the anticipated geographic reach, the description of the deliverable’s target audiences, the anticipated project impacts, and information about how you will evaluate project impacts.

How long is this section? This section has ten questions for *each* deliverable you add. The deliverable section is more extensive than the other sections and has several pages of questions for *each* deliverable.

What is a deliverable? A deliverable is a product, program, or experience developed for self-directed learning in an informal setting. There are many types of deliverables, including audio and video; exhibits; programs, events, and activities; resource materials; infrastructure (e.g., a database); games and other communication technologies; and project websites.

I have a smaller deliverable embedded within a larger one (e.g., a scavenger hunt within a museum exhibit). Should I enter these pieces as two separate deliverables or as one? This decision is up to you. If you enter these project components as two separate deliverables, you will have to answer the entire set of deliverable questions for both components. However, if you enter these project components as a single deliverable, you may lose the opportunity to draw attention to an innovative or significant project activity.

I’m confused about the difference between a deliverable, a deliverable type, and a delivery method. What information do I provide for each question? The *deliverable* is the actual product that your project is producing (e.g., “Exploration of the Moon exhibit” or “Discovery program”). You will enter

the name of your deliverable in the Deliverable List. The *deliverable type* is the broad category into which your deliverable falls (e.g., permanent exhibit or after-school program). You will select this type from the list in question D2; the list is also available through the “Click here” link on the main deliverable page. The *delivery method* is the way or ways that you will present your deliverable to your audience. You may have one or several delivery methods (e.g., DVD, television, and commercial theater). You will select the delivery method(s) from a list in D3 that is specific to the type of deliverable you selected in D2.

How do I know if my deliverable is for a public or professional audience? Public audience deliverables are those aimed at the general public, and not at any profession. Professional audience deliverables are those geared toward individuals who develop, provide, or communicate science learning and experiences to others.

Do I have to enter a public audience deliverable? Your project must have at least one public or professional audience deliverable. If you do not have a deliverable targeted at a public audience, check “No” for D1.

How many public audience deliverables can I enter? You can enter as many public audience deliverables as necessary to cover the products, programs, and experiences that are being provided by your AISL project to public audiences.

Some deliverables are already entered. Where did these come from? Westat reviewed your project’s AISL proposal and identified the deliverables that your project includes. To reduce the time you have to spend on the OPMS, Westat used this information to pre-enter your deliverables and select the deliverable type. If you disagree with Westat’s categorization of a deliverable, if you want to delete a deliverable, or if you would like to add any other deliverables, please do so. Pre-filling this information is only meant to decrease your burden; you have the final say over all information in the OPMS.

Can I add or change information for a deliverable in the future? You will have the opportunity to add new deliverables and/or update information about existing deliverables in the Annual and Closeout surveys.

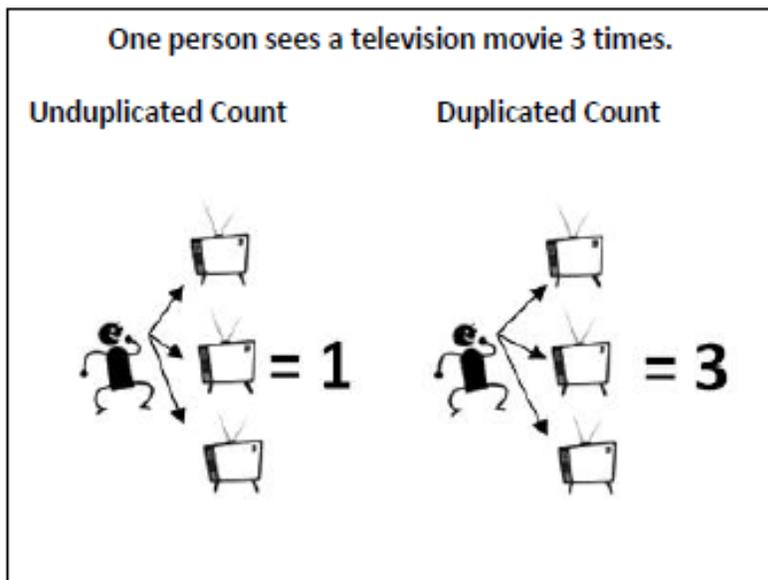
Can I delete a deliverable in the future? No, you cannot delete a deliverable. However, if the deliverable has been suspended or canceled you will be able to indicate this in the Annual and Closeout and you will not need to answer questions about the deliverable in any subsequent surveys.

Why can I only choose one deliverable type? Each deliverable should be a single element of your project. The intent is to develop a comprehensive inventory of the products, programs, and experiences that are to be made available to public audiences. Thus, a project with an exhibit and website would enter both of these deliverables and provide information about each. If you have any questions about how to determine your deliverable type, please contact your Westat contact person or email AISLhelp@westat.com.

What is a delivery method? A delivery method is the means through which a deliverable will be presented to the audience.

What is the difference between an unduplicated count and a duplicated count? An unduplicated count refers to estimates in which individuals are only counted *once* regardless of how many times they are exposed to the medium within the delivery method. As shown in the graphic below, a duplicated count refers to estimates in which an individual is reached (and therefore counted) more than once by the same medium. For example, if a television show has multiple episodes, a duplicated count would count a

person each time he sees an episode, while an unduplicated count would count each person who has seen any number of episodes from that season.



What if my anticipated count is wrong? Anticipated counts are rough estimates of the number of individuals you expect to reach. These counts allow the AISL program to generate yearly estimates of the number of people its funded projects are expected to reach. However, you will have the opportunity to use the Annual and Closeout surveys to provide a more accurate count of the number of people your project actually reached in each year and over the course of the entire AISL grant. There is no penalty for having an anticipated count that is different from your actual count.

What is the difference between a primary and secondary deliverable? A primary deliverable is one which constitutes at least 25 percent of a project's budget and/or time. A secondary deliverable will use less than 25 percent of the projects budget and/or time. Generally, a primary deliverable is a crucial means through which a project will convey its content to an audience, while a secondary deliverable will supplement the primary deliverable(s).

My deliverable is a computer game. Should I select "Computer and Network Systems" for the STEM content? The STEM content question asks about the specific subject area your deliverable is teaching audiences. If your computer game teaches audiences about computer and network systems, or builds their capacity to use such systems, then that is an appropriate STEM content to select. If, however, your game teaches audiences about ecosystems and biodiversity, and happens to be a computer game, then the "Computer and Network Systems" focus would not be appropriate.

How do I know if my deliverable targets an international audience? A deliverable targets an international audience if there are specific steps that your project expects to take to reach an international audience (e.g., conducting presentations in foreign countries, advertising a website in international publications).

Some of my audience members are people from one of the target groups in the list (e.g., people from an inner city). Should I list them as a specific target group? The purpose of the Target Group question is to obtain information about those groups a deliverable is making a concerted effort to reach.

This question is not asking for the composition of the people reached by a deliverable, but rather the people that the deliverable is specifically tailored to reach. For example, a museum exhibit open to the general public may not be targeted toward a specific public audience. However, if that museum exhibit hosts a special event for girls, the project could use the OPMS to report that the exhibit was designed to target women/girls.

What is an impact? An impact is a broad goal that an AISL project deliverable intends to achieve with professional and/or public audiences. Please see this PowerPoint for more information about impacts.

What will I have to do with impacts in the future? In each Annual survey, you will review each impact and note any changes in the evaluation design or data collection methods. In the Closeout survey, you will review this information and indicate the degree to which this deliverable has or has not achieved the impact. You will also be asked to provide a brief explanation of the evidence you have to support your statement.

What if I have new impacts as my projects progresses? In each Annual and Closeout survey, you can add new impacts.

What if I need to delete an impact in the future because it no longer pertains to my project? In each Annual survey, you can deactivate impacts that your project has chosen not to pursue. In the Closeout, you can indicate the change in the impact status and explain why the impact is no longer applicable to your project.

Section E: Products, Programs, or Experiences for Professional Audiences

What information does Section E collect? This section obtains information about each deliverable (i.e., product, program, or experience) that your project will develop for a professional audience. For each deliverable, you will identify the deliverable type, the delivery method(s), the number of people you expect to reach with each delivery method, a description of the deliverable, whether the deliverable is a primary or secondary focus of your AISL project, the STEM content focus, the anticipated geographic reach, the description of the deliverable's target audiences and organization types, the anticipated project impacts, and information about how you will evaluate project impacts.

How long is this section? This section has ten questions for each deliverable you add. The deliverable section is more extensive than the other sections and has several pages of questions for each deliverable.

What is a deliverable? A deliverable is a product, program, or experience developed for self-directed learning in an informal setting. There are many types of deliverables, including audio and video; exhibits; programs, events, and activities; resource materials; infrastructure (e.g., a database); games and other communication technologies; and project websites.

I have a smaller deliverable embedded within a larger one (e.g., a training video within a website). Should I enter these pieces as two separate deliverables or as one? This decision is up to you. If you enter these project components as two separate deliverables, you will have to answer the entire set of deliverable questions for both components. However, if you enter these project components as a single deliverable, you may lose the opportunity to draw attention to an innovative or significant project activity.

I'm confused about the difference between a deliverable and a deliverable type. What information do I put for each question? The *deliverable* is the actual product that your project is producing (e.g., “Exploration of the Moon Curriculum” or “Discovery program training”). You will enter the name of your deliverable in the Deliverable List. The *deliverable type* is the broad category into which your deliverable falls (e.g., curriculum or workshop). You will select this type from the list in question E2; the list is also available through the “Click here” link on the main deliverable page.

How do I know if my deliverable is for a public or professional audience? Public audience deliverables are those aimed at the general public, and not at any profession. Professional audience deliverables are those geared toward individuals who develop, provide, or communicate science learning and experiences to others.

Do I have to enter a professional audience deliverable? Your project must have at least one public or professional audience deliverable. If you do not have a deliverable targeted at a professional audience, check “No” for E1.

How many professional audience deliverables can I enter? You can enter as many professional audience deliverables as necessary to cover the products, programs, and experiences that are being provided by your AISL project to professional audiences.

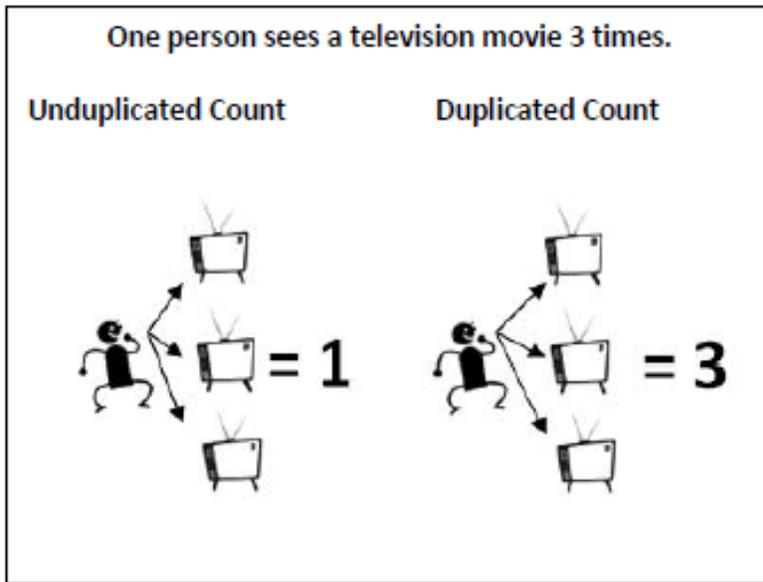
Some deliverables are already entered. Where did these come from? Westat reviewed your project’s AISL proposal and identified the deliverables that your project includes. To reduce the time you have to spend on the OPMS, Westat used this information to pre-enter your deliverables and select the deliverable type. If you disagree with Westat’s categorization of a deliverable, if you want to delete a deliverable, or if you would like to add any other deliverables, please do so. Prefilling this information is only meant to decrease your burden; you have the final say over all information in the OPMS.

Can I add or change information for a deliverable in the future? You will have the opportunity to add new deliverables and/or update information about existing deliverables in the Annual and Closeout surveys.

Can I delete a deliverable in the future? No, you cannot delete a deliverable. However, if the deliverable has been suspended or canceled you will be able to indicate this in the Annual and Closeout and you will not need to answer questions about the deliverable in any subsequent surveys.

Why can I only choose one deliverable type? Each deliverable should be a single element of your project. The intent is to develop a comprehensive inventory of the products, programs, and experiences that are to be made available to professional audiences. Thus, a project with an exhibit and website would enter both of these deliverables and provide information about each. If you have any questions about how to determine your deliverable type, please contact your Westat contact person or email AISLhelp@westat.com.

What is the difference between an unduplicated count and a duplicated count? An unduplicated count refers to estimates in which individuals are only counted *once* regardless of how many times they are exposed to the medium within the delivery method. As shown in the graphic below, a duplicated count refers to estimates in which an individual is reached (and therefore counted) more than once by the same medium. For example, if a media producer views an instructional video multiple times, a duplicated count would count that person each time he views the video, while an unduplicated count would count that person once (regardless of the number of times he viewed the video).



What if my anticipated count is wrong? Anticipated counts are rough estimates of the number of individuals you expect to reach. These counts allow the AISL program to generate yearly estimates of the number of people its funded projects are expected to reach. However, you will have the opportunity to use the Annual and Closeout surveys to provide a more accurate count of the number of people your project actually reached in each year and over the course of the entire AISL grant. There is no penalty for having an anticipated count that is different from your actual count.

What is the difference between a primary and secondary deliverable? A primary deliverable is one which constitutes at least 25 percent of a project’s budget and/or time. A secondary deliverable will use less than 25 percent of the projects budget and/or time. Generally, a primary deliverable is a crucial means through which a project will convey its content to an audience, while a secondary deliverable will supplement the primary deliverable(s).

My deliverable is a computer game. Should I select “Computer and Network Systems” for the STEM content? The STEM content question asks about the specific subject area your deliverable is teaching audiences. If your computer game teaches audiences about computer and network systems, or builds their capacity to use such systems, then that is an appropriate STEM content to select. If, however, your game teaches audiences about ecosystems and biodiversity, and happens to be a computer game, then the “Computer and Network Systems” focus would not be appropriate.

What does the question about informal or formal learning organizations mean? Many deliverables for professional audiences are targeted at professionals who work at a certain type of organization—e.g., exhibit designers, media producers, instructors at an afterschool program. This question ascertains what types of organizations (and divisions/departments within organizations) each deliverable targets.

How do I know if my deliverable targets an international audience? A deliverable targets an international audience if there are specific steps that your project expects to take to reach an international audience (e.g., conducting presentations in foreign countries, advertising a website in international publications).

What is an impact? An impact is a broad goal that an AISL project deliverable intends to achieve with professional and/or public audiences. Please see this PowerPoint for more information about impacts.

What will I have to do with impacts in the future? In each Annual survey, you will review each impact and note any changes in the evaluation design or data collection methods. In the Closeout survey, you will review this information and indicate the degree to which this deliverable has or has not achieved the impact. You will also be asked to provide a brief explanation of the evidence you have to support your statement.

What if I have new impacts as my projects progresses? In each Annual and Closeout survey, you can add new impacts.

What if I need to delete an impact in the future because it no longer pertains to my project? In each Annual survey, you can deactivate impacts that your project has chosen not to pursue. In the Closeout, you can indicate the change in the impact status and explain why the impact is no longer applicable to your project.

Section F: Formative and Summative Evaluation Questions

What information does this section collect? This section collects the name and contact information for the person or organization conducting your formative and summative evaluations, the formative evaluation questions and evaluation designs, and the summative evaluation questions and evaluation designs.

How long is this section? This section has four questions.

What is a formative evaluation? This type of evaluation begins during program development and continues throughout the life of the program. It is designed to provide information to monitor and improve the program by assessing whether the program is being conducted as planned as well as to assess progress in meeting the program's goals. Formative evaluation is done at several points in the developmental life of a program and its activities, such as through audience testing of exhibit prototypes, alpha and beta versions of software, or pilot programs.

What is a summative evaluation? This type of evaluation assesses the program's success in reaching its stated impacts. It takes place after the program has been established and the time frame posited for change has occurred. Summative evaluation collects information about outcomes and related processes, strategies, and activities that have led to them and is an appraisal of worth, value, or merit. This type of evaluation is often used for decision-making purposes (e.g., whether to continue funding, whether to disseminate the program to other settings) and is usually conducted by an external or otherwise objective and unbiased evaluator.

What is the difference between the impacts I entered in Sections D and E, and the formative and summative evaluation questions I am adding in Section F? The impacts in Sections D and E are focused and targeted on a specific deliverable. As such, they are designed to assess progress toward a discrete outcome (e.g., were youths more interested in a given STEM topic after visiting the exhibit?). The formative and summative study questions represent the broader evaluation questions that your project is designed to address and can often be taken directly from your AISL proposal.

What if my project is conducting the formative evaluation? If your project is conducting the formative evaluation, please fill in the contact information for the person primarily responsible for this evaluation in the F1 question fields.

Can I change add, remove, or change evaluation questions in the future? Yes. You will have the opportunity to add new evaluation questions, change the evaluation designs for previously entered questions, and deactivate questions that your project no longer addresses in both the Annual and Closeout surveys.

Section G: Research Questions

What information does this section collect? This section collects information about your project's research questions.

How long is this section? This section has one table in which you enter the research questions for your project and indicate the study designs that will be used to answer the research question.

What is the difference between the impacts I entered in Sections D and E, and the research questions I am adding in Section G? The impacts in Sections D and E are focused and targeted on a specific deliverable. As such, they are designed to assess progress toward a discrete outcome (e.g., were youths more interested in a given STEM topic after visiting the exhibit?). The research questions represent the broader questions that your project is designed to address and can often be taken directly from your AISL proposal.

Can I change add, remove, or change research questions in the future? Yes. You will have the opportunity to add new research questions, change the evaluation designs for previously entered questions, and deactivate questions that your project no longer addresses in both the Annual and Closeout surveys.