

## Structured Form for Identifying and Challenging Analytical Assumptions

Every intelligence assessment rests on assumptions — things we believe to be true but cannot fully verify. Unchecked assumptions are one of the most common causes of analytical failure. This form forces you to surface, test, and document the assumptions underpinning your analysis before finalising any product.

### What Is a Key Assumption?

A key assumption is...	A key assumption is NOT...
Something believed true that drives your conclusion	A well-established fact supported by multiple sources
A gap-filler where evidence is absent or incomplete	A minor detail that doesn't affect your conclusion
A judgement about how an actor will behave	Something that can be directly observed or measured
A belief about context, intent, or capability	A hypothesis you are actively testing

### Part A — Product Details

**Product Title / Subject** \_\_\_\_\_

**Analyst Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Check** \_\_\_\_\_ **Classification:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessment Type**     Strategic  Operational  Tactical  Warning

### Part B — Assumption Register

List every assumption your assessment relies on. Be specific. Vague entries like 'the group is hostile' are not useful — 'the group retains the capability and intent to conduct attacks within 90 days' is.

#	Assumption Statement	Impact if Wrong	Confidence	Tested?
1	_____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Med <input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Mod <input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

#	Assumption Statement	Impact if Wrong	Confidence	Tested?
2	_____ _____ _____	■ High ■ Med ■ Low	■ High ■ Mod ■ Low	■ Yes ■ No
3	_____ _____ _____	■ High ■ Med ■ Low	■ High ■ Mod ■ Low	■ Yes ■ No
4	_____ _____ _____	■ High ■ Med ■ Low	■ High ■ Mod ■ Low	■ Yes ■ No
5	_____ _____ _____	■ High ■ Med ■ Low	■ High ■ Mod ■ Low	■ Yes ■ No
6	_____ _____ _____	■ High ■ Med ■ Low	■ High ■ Mod ■ Low	■ Yes ■ No

## Part C — Challenge Questions

For each HIGH-IMPACT assumption identified above, work through the following challenge questions.

### What is the source of this assumption?

- Is it based on evidence, inference, or habit?
- Has it ever been explicitly stated and validated, or is it implicit?
- Would a different analyst make the same assumption?

### What would it take for this assumption to be wrong?

- What single piece of evidence would immediately invalidate it?
- Under what conditions could the opposite be true?
- Has that evidence been actively sought — or just not found?

### What happens to the conclusion if this assumption fails?

- Does the entire assessment collapse, or just weaken?
- Is there an alternative conclusion that emerges if the assumption is wrong?
- Has the consumer been warned about this dependency?

### Has this assumption been tested against the evidence?

- Has disconfirming evidence been actively sought?
- Has a colleague reviewed this assumption independently?
- Has it held up under a red team or devil's advocate challenge?

## Part D — Final Disposition

Assumption #	Status	Action Taken / Notes
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Flagged <input type="checkbox"/> Removed	_____ —
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Flagged <input type="checkbox"/> Removed	_____ —
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Flagged <input type="checkbox"/> Removed	_____ —
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Flagged <input type="checkbox"/> Removed	_____ —
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Flagged <input type="checkbox"/> Removed	_____ —
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Flagged <input type="checkbox"/> Removed	_____ —

Analyst sign-off: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer sign-off: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Need a Different Format?

- A Word (.docx) fillable version is available on request.
- Email: [info@theintelanalystacademy.com.au](mailto:info@theintelanalystacademy.com.au) — Subject: 'Key Assumptions Form — Format Request'