



Evaluation self-assessment tool

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10th November 2021

Plan for the session

- Background to the self-assessment tool
- Overview and content of the tool
- Discussion on the categorisation & scoring
- How to develop tools further for practice?

Background to the self-assessment tool

- Builds on Standards of Evaluation (University of Warwick) (phase 1)
 - Defined three Levels of Evaluation
 - Standards of evidence (NESTA)
- Phase 2 involved working with eight providers to develop the standards of evidence to support evaluations
 - Examples of different types of practices
 - Lessons for evaluation development and use of standards
 - Development of guidance outputs

Key issues to be addressed

- General lack of evidence of impact of outreach
- Variation across a diverse sector
- Accountability for impact of expenditure
- Best use of resources
- Increasing critical use of evidence to improve practice, ongoing development of provision
- Sharing of results on what works well, what is not working and what is uncertain

Use of standards in evaluation

- Standards of evaluation of outreach
 - Refers to research design
 - Type of evaluation
 - What you can say from evaluations
- Standards of evidence
 - Refers to evaluation practice
 - Rigour and reliability of results

Purpose of the self-assessment tool

- There is evidence that self-assessment can drive continuous improvement in organisations
- To drive up the quality of evaluation approaches leading to better evidence (& better interventions)
- Support learning from and sharing evaluation results
- To improve how OfS assess evaluation through the A&P plan process

What did the tool aim to do?

- A development tool
 - Enable providers to assess their performance and set a baseline from which to make improvements
 - Enable providers to identify where improvements are needed
- A benchmarking tool
 - Enable OfS to benchmark different types of providers and identify where and how we can target support
- Guidance
 - Enable OfS to set out expectations on evaluation practice in a transparent way

Proportionality to activities

	Standard of evaluation practice		
Type of outreach activity	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Long-term or multi-activity intervention	A	A	B
Summer school or other HE-residential programme	A	A	C
Mentoring	A	A	C
Campus visit or open day (cross department)	A	B	n/a
One-off subject-specific taster session or masterclass	A	B	n/a
HE fair	A	B	n/a

Code: A = Expected; B = Commended; C = Highly Commended. n/a = not applicable.
Reference: Evaluation of Outreach Phase 1.

Issues

- How to capture practice 'in general' across diverse programmes?
- What should be the 'minimum' expected?
- Which practices should be considered to be more advanced?
- How to encourage providers to complete the tool honestly and openly?
- How to take account of quality of plans/developments/improvements?

Overview



- Providers score themselves against a set of criteria
- Providers receive a score based on completion of tool
- Space for self-reflection
- Action plan

Tool dimensions



Focus on the scoring/benchmarking

- Designed to take account of
 - Type(s) of evaluation being undertaken
 - Type 1: Narrative
 - Type 2: Empirical
 - Type 3: Causal
 - Coherence across A&P programmes
 - ‘Embeddedness’ of evaluations
 - Mechanisms for learning from evaluation to improve
 - Sharing evidence/contribution to understanding

Matrix – three ‘tiers’

Quality of evaluation strategy, delivery & learning	Good	Advanced	Advanced	iii. Well-developed evaluation practices in place
	Good* Requires improvement**	Good	Good	ii. Minimum delivery factors are in place with mechanisms for improvement
	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	i. Evaluation practice weakly developed and minimum delivery factors not in place
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	

Categorising providers

- Generic categories
 - *Emerging*: i.e. Below a 'minimum' in terms of expected evaluation practice
 - *Good*: Evaluation being undertaken effectively (at least Type 1), plus there is effective mechanisms for learning.
 - *Advanced*: Evaluations taking place (Type 2 or above with well-developed conceptual and methodological practices), plus embedded mechanisms for learning and strategic level support for a coherent cross-institutional approach to evaluating
- For higher education institutions 'good' practices would be more well-developed, compared to small specialist institutions and HE in FE providers with smaller programmes

How should the tool be developed for practice?

- Range of staff need to be involved in completing the self-assessment tool
- Use of the tool to change/enhance practice (how/why are we evaluating?)
- Self-assessment an iterative process (continual improvement)

NESTA Standards of Evidence

- 5 levels



Discussion?

- Is there anything that was not clear about using the self-assessment tool or what's expected?
- Is there anything in the tool that surprised you?
- Is there something missing that you would expect to see?
- How difficult is it to complete the tool?
- Which aspects or questions are particularly hard / why?
- Have you thought about these questions already?