Planning your evaluation report - Suggested Framework for Reporting evaluation studies

Section	Item	Tips on what to include:	Some Reflective questions:
Title		Ideally, the title should be a concise description of the evaluation study.	Does the title reflect your study, the main topic and the approach taken?
Executive Summary		Many readers will want an 'evaluation lite' version – so it's good to include a summary of the main parts of the report. This is usually based on extracts from the full report (below), typically summarising: purpose, methods, background, results, and conclusions.	Are you clear on the key messages you want to communicate?
Introduction	Purpose or research question	It's useful to start out by specifying the purpose of the evaluation and any specific objectives or research questions that you are seeking to address.	Have you established what the evaluation was trying to find out?
	Description of the intervention being evaluated and rationale	You should set out details of the activities that are being evaluated, being as specific as possible. Show the rationale for delivering the activity in this way. Make sure you include any inclusion criteria.	What type of support was delivered? How much and how often? Delivered by who? (type of skill set e.g. teacher, coach, student ambassadors). Why was this important?
	Background and Context	Describe the setting for the activity. It's also useful to specify the timeframe for the evaluation (e.g. what time periods data is for etc). Anyone reading the description of the intervention and context should be able to see under what conditions the results apply (and whether the evaluation results are transferable to their own context).	What target group(s) are involved, in what settings? Any other relevant contextual factors?
Methodology	Approach	It's useful to set out your overall approach/model for doing the evaluation (e.g., realist evaluation, Kirkpatrick, (e.g., realist evaluation, Kirkpatrick, ethnography, grounded theory approach etc).	Can the reader see what theoretical perspective you are coming from and any principles underpinning the evaluation approach?
	Data to inform the evaluation	Set out what data was used, and why, to inform the short, medium and long terms outcomes (as appropriate to the evaluation) and	What data have you collected to understand the intervention(s)? How does the data help to inform your desired outcomes and impact? How does the data

Section	Item	Tips on what to include:	Some Reflective questions:
		processes/mechanisms involved.	help you to understand what works best?
	Data collection methods	Set out how data was collected, any procedures involved, and whether there was any modification of data collection procedures over the course of the evaluation. Acknowledge any gaps or issues in the data collection methods and procedures.	Have you specified the instruments used to collect data (e.g. surveys, interview scripts, technologies such as audio recording of interviews)? Did the instruments change over the course of the evaluation? What were the strengths and weaknesses in your data collection?
	Sampling strategy	Describe who the data relates to, and why data was collected on these participants (e.g. criteria for deciding who to include in your research sample). Make sure you include information on the sample size you have data on, attrition rate (and how the sample relates to the overall number of participants).	Are you clear on who the data pertains to? Have you specified your reasons for this approach to collecting data? Can the reader assess how representative the sample is? Was there a group you weren't able to collect data from? Is the sample biased towards a particular group?
	Ethical and data security issues	It's important to briefly establish whether there was any use of ethnical approval, or not, and how the confidentiality and data security issues were dealt with.	How were the ethical and any security issues dealt with? If not, why were these not needed?
	Data analysis	You should describe the processes involved in the analysis of the evaluation data, how you made inferences, and organised the themes. Include details of any data processing (e.g. checking/verification, coding of data, de-identification processes etc).	How was data analysis undertaken? What were the precise steps involved which led you to your conclusions? How did you seek to dis-entangle the impact of the intervention or control for independent and extraneous variables? Are there alternative explanations for the observed effects?
	Type of evaluation	Specify the type of evaluation being undertaken (Type 1: Narrative; Type 2: Empirical Enquiry; Type 3: Causality).	Where does the evaluation sit in terms of the Office for Students evaluation typology? What are the implications for drawing conclusions?
	Trustworthiness and limitations of the research	You should be transparent about any limitations. These include data limitations – for example having lots of missing data, or unrepresentative samples, decreases the trustworthiness. Another key problem is	Are you clear on the limitations that apply to your evidence? Have you acknowledged any factors that may influence the research? Did you put in place techniques to enhance the trustworthiness and

Section	Item	Tips on what to include:	Some Reflective questions:
		response bias – especially where findings are based on self-report data. Confounding variables are a third issue – these are things that might affect the results but are not captured/measured in the evaluation. Issues and inconsistencies in data collection could also affect the results, along with researcher bias/conflicts of interest, prior assumptions, the qualifications/experience of the researchers, nature of interactions with participants, etc).	credibility of the data and your analysis (e.g. data checking/cleaning, running tests on the data, triangulation)? if you did the research again under the same conditions, how confident are you that you would you get the same results?
Results/findings	Description of the results of the analysis	In the first instance this should show what you actually did – e.g. facts and figures about the activities, the characteristics of the participants, the levels of participation, and the outcomes/impacts that pertain for different groups along with any information you have on the mechanisms and processes involved. You should also aim to show the outcomes achieved. This could include use of statistical analysis, and also examples of how your participants or other stakeholders experienced the outreach (e.g. using quotes or case studies).	Have you described who took part and in what ways? What outcomes were achieved? Were there any unexpected outcomes (positive or negative)? What is the evidence on the overall impact?
	Drawing inferences	This is an opportunity to describe the trends and patterns involved, and any evidence you have on the relationship between the data you have collected. This could include tentative suggestions based on observing associations in the data, as well as use of inferential statistics and data modeling techniques.	What outcomes were achieved by whom in what circumstances? Are you able to model/predict any relationship between the variables involved?
	Discussion/ Interpretation of results	It's useful to make a discussion of the results, drawing out the conditions under which the above findings might apply, and the aspects or variables which seem to make the most difference to the outcomes if you are able to identify these. It's helpful to explain how the	What are the most significant results and findings? What contribution does the evaluation make to understanding/scholarship of HE outreach? Could the results apply more generally or are they specific to your current circumstances?

Section	Item	Tips on what to include:	Some Reflective questions:
		findings and conclusions support, or contradict, your expectations or any conclusions from existing studies. You could also discuss the extent to which your results are generalisable to other contexts. You could also highlight any problems you encountered that slowed progress, stopped the outcomes happening.	
Conclusions and recommendations:	Conclusions	Restate the key questions and summarise the main points that have emerged, and why these are important, including any unexpected insights. This is also an opportunity to state any caveats to the results and findings. Make sure you report any negative (as well as positive findings) because it's important to use the evaluation to learn and improve.	What insight have you had about your outcomes and impact based on the data? Is your impact meaningful? Do you have sufficient data to know? How confident are you about the strength of your conclusions? Have you separated opinions from facts? What else do people need to know in order to improve? Are there any things that could be changed?
	Recommendations	Recommendations usually emerge from interpretation of the evidence, for example, recommendations about 'what works'? or where improvements can be made. Your recommendations are probably the most useful part of the report, and you should be specific as possible to make sure they are used. Sometimes recommendations are prioritised – either by giving a suggested time frame or indicating which you see as more essential/important to action (rather than just for consideration).	Are your recommendations supported by the evidence? Are you clear on what specific action needs to be taken? What are the recommendations for practice? Are there any recommendations for policy? How can you improve your programme design? Is it clear who your recommendations are for (practitioners, the partnership, funders, others)? Are your recommendations achievable? (making a smaller number of achievable recommendations is better than a long list of unrealistic suggestions). Are there recommendations for doing evaluation (e.g. can you improve your data collection? analysis? systems?).
Other	Further activity detail	Very detailed information on the intervention inputs and outputs could be appended e.g. expenditure/budget details, or details of arrangements between delivery partners (e.g. service level agreements)	Are the outputs and related arrangements that underpinned the activity clear?

Section	Item	Tips on what to include:	Some Reflective questions:
	Links to empirical evidence	You might want to make your detailed analysis (or even the raw dataset) available to other people if you feel this is useful to any specialist audiences.	Is there any further evidence (e.g., data tables, quotes, field notes) to substantiate the findings that are important to include but are not in the main report?
	References	A list of references can be useful to locate your report in the current literature.	Have you referenced any mention of existing literature appropriately?
	Acknowledgements	This is a chance to acknowledge contributions to the evaluation effort.	Is there anyone you want to recognise who has supported the evaluation and/or reporting?

Source: Outreach Evaluation Hub