8   Evaluating Programmes and Projects

Audience and function for this Guidance

This guide is intended to help staff to evaluate any development programme and project. The guide summarises planning for evaluation, undertaking the evaluation, and using the data obtained.

Funded development programmes and projects

Development programmes and projects include departmental teaching enhancement schemes, teaching development funds, mini projects, special-interest groups and general development funds. A programme, such as a teaching development fund, may embrace several individual projects.

The common feature of such programmes and projects is that the unit provides funds for development work to be done within or across universities or departments.

Background

This guidance makes suggestions on how a unit can plan, deliver and evaluate projects. This guide is part of a broader evaluation framework and additional guides are available for evaluating other academic or academic related product or service products and activities.

Why evaluate programmes and projects?

To see:

1. Whether each programme, and each project within each programme, achieved what it was intended to achieve and contributed to the unit's overall goals.

2. How the programme and projects achieved what they achieved.

3. How future such programmes and projects could be even more successful.

There may be other reasons for conducting a particular evaluation of a programme or project:

- To see what future programmes and projects should be funded;

- As a basis to compare the cost effectiveness of programmes and projects with other approaches to achieving a unit's goals, such as events and publications, and

- Any other reasons particular to the unit and to the programme or projects.

 As well as using standard evaluation tools such as those here, a unit should always be willing to ask particular evaluation questions that are interesting and important to the unit.

Some different evaluation methods are needed for programmes as a whole and for projects undertaken within programmes – these are indicated.

The evaluation framework for funded programmes and projects

There are three quite distinct sets of evaluations to be undertaken for funded programmes and projects:

- Evaluation of the programme as a whole, including colleagues who do not apply for funding.

- Evaluation with respect to staff who do apply for funding, undertake projects, and hopefully apply the results to the benefit of their teaching and to the benefit of the learning of their students.

- Evaluations with respect to staff who hear or read about particular projects and, again, hopefully apply the published results to the benefit of their teaching and to the benefit of the learning of their students

The use below of the framework concentrates on the first two – programmes as a whole, and staff who undertake funded projects. The effects of the development project on those who heard or read about the results of a particular project will hopefully be identified through the evaluation of a unit's events and publications.

Level	Label / evaluation topic	Typical questions about the programme as a whole (some of these questions are for those who did not apply for funding)	Typical questions about undertaking a project mainly for those who did undertake a project	Timing and method
1	Awareness and knowledge of the programme (or other funding opportunity)	What methods did the unit use to publicise the programme (or other funding opportunity)?		At the start of the programme, from a unit's records
		How did participants find out about the programme?		At application, from the application form
		Were the criteria for funding clear?		
		Were application targets – not met – met – exceeded?		When funding decisions are made
		What proportion of applications met the published criteria for funding?		
		What other suggestions do those who heard about the programme but did not take part make – about how the programme could have been publicised? – about how such programmes could be publicised in the future?	What other suggestions do participants have – about how the programme could have been publicised? – about how such programmes could be publicised in the future?	Whenever convenient during the programme
		What changes should the unit make to how it publicises such programmes and funding opportunities?		By analysis of answers to questions above
2	Reactions to the funding opportunity	Why did non-applicants not apply?	Why did applicants apply?	*Non-applicants* – via small sample surveys after applications have closed. Or as part of general unit user surveys.
			What did applicants hope to gain from taking part (beyond of course, getting funding for their work)?[1]	
		What do those who	What did applicants think –	

---

[1] This gives baseline data for later questions about what participants actually get from their project. It also helps to focus participants' attention on what they learn from their project as well as on what they do during the project.

			heard about the programme but did not take part think – about the programme, the guidance to applicants, the judging criteria, the funding decisions made & etc?	about the programme, the guidance to applicants, the judging criteria, the funding decisions made, the guidance on undertaking the funded work, the support from the unit, the opportunity to network with others undertaking similar projects & etc?	*Applicants* - at the end of the project, as part of the final report, or by telephone interview
			How could each of these things be done better in future programmes?		By analysis of answers to questions above
3	Engagement with the work of the unit[2]			What other unit activities, products and services have colleagues undertaking a project previously used or been involved in?	By asking at application or by analysis of a unit's records
				What other unit activities, products and services may colleagues use or be involved in following this funding opportunity?	By asking after the project is complete
			How can the unit continue to engage with and support colleagues who have undertaken funded projects, including through disseminating work done in the project?		By analysis of answers to questions above
4	Learning from the project	The results of development programmes and projects will normally be disseminated through events and publications. It is suggested that these final three evaluation topics should be addressed through the normal evaluation of events and publications.		What did colleagues learn or otherwise gain from undertaking the project? Did they gain what they hoped to gain? [3]	At the end of the project, as part of the final report.
				What use may colleagues make of what they learned or otherwise gained from undertaking the project?	
5	Using the learning from the project			What use have colleagues made of what they learned from undertaking the project?	At an agreed time, probably a few months later, by email or telephone
6	Effects on student learning of applying the learning from the project			What effects has their changed practice had on the learning of their students?	
			What are the implications of these answers for future unit development programmes and more broadly for the work of the unit?		By analysis of answers to questions above

[2] Answers to these questions should help units to build up a richer picture of the nature and shape of individual academics' engagement with the various activities, products and services of the unit.

[3] Agreeing to answer these and subsequent questions should be a condition of project funding.

Meta data

The following table describes information about this resource (meta data) which is also used to locate the resource using search tools. Please note the terms and conditions of use under the Creative Commons licence associated with the use of this resource.

Author (s)	David Baume
Owner (s)	David Baume
Title	Evaluating Programmes and Projects
Keywords	Academic practice, development, evaluation, project, Higher Education Academy
Description	One of a series of guides on the evaluation of academic practice, academic development units, resources, events, activities and services.
	This guide, like the others in this series, is modified from an evaluation framework produced for the six Higher Education Academy Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Subject Centres in 2009. These Subject Centres consist of Biosciences, Engineering, Information and Computer Science, Materials Science, Maths Stats and OR and Physical Sciences.
	The author, Dr David Baume, adbaume@aol.com, is happy to be contacted for advice and support on using this evaluation tool and others in the series.
Creative Commons license (url)	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/
Language	English
File size	91Kb
File format	Word 2007