Developing Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions guide the evaluation process. The questions help focus the evaluation and clarify what the evaluation will and will not address and define what data will be collected for the evaluation.

## Definitions

**Program Evaluation:** Program evaluation is the *systematic method* of collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer questions about a program or project.

**Program:** Programs can include anything from small boutique programs (e.g., student mentoring), large institutional programs (e.g., tutoring on campus), categorically funded initiatives (METRO, EOPS, and Guardian Scholars), academic programs (e.g., English department course track) and more.

**Step 1**

List program activities

## What are your program activities?

Keep your program activities in mind when deciding on evaluation questions. If your question does not align with any of your activities, the question is probably not a proper one for your program.

|  |
| --- |
| List the program activities |
| *What does your program do?*   1. Counselor enrolls students into the courses for the adult program each semester 2. Mandatory counselor meeting with each student once a semester 3. Provides after-hours tutoring over skype for students in program |

**Step 2**

Keep in mind the reason for running an evaluation

## Why are you running an evaluation?

The reason that you are running an evaluation may inform your evaluation questions.

There are many reasons to run an evaluation, such as:

* Funding requirements;
* Program improvement;
* To inform decision-making; and
* To assess if a program achieved its goals/outcomes.

*If you are running an evaluation to meet funding requirements, you may have prescribed or suggested evaluation questions to answer.*

## Brainstorm questions

**Step 3**

Draft evaluation questions

List out what questions you would like answered from the evaluation.

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| --- | --- |
| 1. Did students complete the course? | 1. Did students enroll in the next semester? |
| 1. How well did students do in their courses? | 1. Do students feel a stronger sense of connection with each other in my program? |
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*You do not have to use all of the boxes and can add additional boxes.*

## Order and group the like questions

Order and group the questions in order of importance and similar types of questions.

Very important to answer Less important to answer

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group 1  Did students complete the courses?  How well did students do in their courses? | Group 2  Did students enroll in the next semester? | Group 3  Do students feel a stronger sense of connection with each other in my program? |
| Restructure the questions if needed (combine questions into one where there is overlap). | | |
| Are students in the adult program completing their courses each semester? | Are the adult students who complete the program enrolling in the next set of courses? | Do the students feel a stronger sense of connection with each other in my program? |

## Are the evaluation questions appropriate for the program?

**Step 4**

Map questions to activities

Look at Step 1 and indicate which program activity or activities will lead to the evaluation question.

There

is NOT an activity in the program that would affect student’s connection

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Evaluation Questions (copy evaluation questions from above) | Activity |
| Are students in the adult program completing their courses each semester? | Students are enrolled in a course, students are provided tutoring |
| Are the adult students who complete the program enrolling in the next set of courses? | Students meet with a counselor to plan and understand their educational plan and are enrolled by program staff |
| Do the students feel a stronger sense of connection with each other in my program? |  |
|  |  |
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**Step 5**

Are the evaluation questions measurable?

## How will you collect data to answer these questions?

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| --- | --- |
| Evaluation Questions (copy evaluation questions from above) | Data Collection |
| Are students in the adult program completing their courses each semester? | Student grades from their courses |
| Are the adult students who complete the program enrolling in the next set of courses? | Student enrollment into the next set of courses |
| Do the adult students get jobs and become happier at home after the program? | Not possible to know |
|  |  |

Quick Evaluation Question Worksheet

1. Think about why you are conducting an evaluation.
2. Read the options in box 1 and box 2.
3. Select the box most aligned with your evaluation goals.

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| --- | --- |
| Box 1 | Box 2 |
| * Program implementation * To improve or inform changes to a program’s daily operations | * Identify the results or effects a program * Measure if program met its goals or intended outcomes |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Process Evaluation You are interested in the implementation of a program’s processes | Summative Evaluation You are interested in the outcomes of a program or the program’s effectiveness |

*Fill in the blanks*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW] is the [PROGRAM NAME] [EVALUATION PURPOSE]? | Did [PROGRAM] have a [CHANGE, EFFECT] on [OUTCOME] for [INDIVIDUAL GROUPS OR ORGANIZATIONS]? |
| *Examples* | *Examples* |
| * Are staff implementing the program as intended? * What resources are needed when implementing the program? * What are the challenges to implementing the program? * Are staff implementing the program with the target population? * What variations of implementation occur by site? * What recommendations do program staff offer for future program implementation? * To what extent are program staff receiving the required training and supervision? | * Did students did who went to the tutoring center complete their classes at higher rates than students who did not receive tutoring? * Did all students complete the program sequence for the program or are there equity gaps? * Did students persist to the next semester? |