REVIEW OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION STANDARDS, 3rd EDITION

Emma Espel, Brandie Ward, & John Sutton
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Strengthening the quality of the MSP project evaluation and building the capacity of the evaluators by strengthening their skills related to evaluation design, methodology, analysis, and reporting.
Website at [http://teams.mspnet.org](http://teams.mspnet.org)
- Online Help-Desk for submitting requests
- Document Review
- Webinar series of specific evaluation topics
- Communities of practice
- Consultation and targeted TA
- Instrument review and sharing
Getting to Know *The Program Evaluation Standards, 3rd Edition*

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**Moderator:**
- John Sutton, RMC Research Corporation, TEAMS Project PI
Webinar Objectives

- Introduce the JCSEE and the purpose of The Program Evaluation Standards
- Overview the five Program Evaluation Standards
- Explore in depth the Utility Standard and its eight subcomponents
- Resources & Tools
Webinar Objectives

Introduce the JCSEE and the purpose of The Program Evaluation Standards

Overview the five Program Evaluation Standards

Explore in depth the Utility Standard and its eight subcomponents

Resources & Tools

Material used for this presentation was taken from this book, including direct excerpts.

Page numbers appear at the bottom of each slide when direct excerpts were used.
The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation

Established in 1974

Supported by 17 organizations

“Develop and implement inclusive processes producing widely used evaluation standards that serve educational and social improvement.”
Purpose & Principles of the Standards
Identify and define evaluation quality and guide evaluators and evaluation users in the pursuit of evaluation quality. Pg. xxxii-xxxiii
Not “laws” but voluntary, consensus statements.
Requires adaptive, responsive, and mindful use.
All five standards are equally critical.

pg. xxxii-xxxiii
In depth understanding is required for using the standards effectively.

pg. xxxii-xxxiii
What is Evaluation?

According to JCSEE, program evaluation is...
Systematic investigation of the quality of programs, projects, and their subcomponents...

pg. xxv
JCSEE and Purpose of the Program Evaluation Standards

... for purposes of decision making/judgments/new knowledge in response to the needs of identified stakeholders...
JCSEE and Purpose of the Program Evaluation Standards

... leading to improvements or accountability...

pg. xxv
...ultimately contributing to organizational or social value.
Program Evaluation is...

The systematic investigation of the quality of programs, projects, subprograms, subprojects, and/or any of their components or elements, together or singly;

For purposes of decision making, judgments, conclusions, findings, new knowledge, organizational development, and capacity building in response to the needs of identified stakeholders;

Leading to improvement and/or accountability in the users’ programs and systems; and

Ultimately contributing to organizational or social value.
Why do we need standards?

To clarify technical terms and make otherwise vague definitions fully operational and useful. pg. xx

To help consider the many different roles that stakeholders and groups of stakeholders play in program development, implementation, and evaluation. pg. xxi - xxii

To help recognize and improve evaluation quality. pg. xxvii
Webinar Objectives

Introduce the JCSEE and the purpose of The Program Evaluation Standards

Overview the five Program Evaluation Standards

Explore in depth the Utility Standard and its eight subcomponents

Resources & Tools
Overview of the five Program Evaluation Standards

Feasibility

- **F1**: Project Management
- **F2**: Practical Procedures
- **F3**: Contextual Viability
- **F4**: Resource Use
Overview of the five Program Evaluation Standards

Propriety

- P1 Responsive & Inclusive Orientation
- P2 Formal Agreements
- P3 Human Rights & Respect
- P4 Clarity & Fairness
- P5 Transparency & Disclosure
- P6 Conflicts of Interest
- P7 Fiscal Responsibility
Overview of the five Program Evaluation Standards

Accuracy

A1 Justified Conclusions & Decisions
A2 Valid Information
A3 Reliable Information
A4 Explicit Program & Context Descriptions
A5 Information Management
A6 Sound Designs & Analysis
A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning
A8 Communication & Reporting
Overview of the five Program Evaluation Standards

Evaluation Accountability pg. 225

- EA1: Evaluation Documentation
- EA2: Internal Metaevaluation
- EA3: External Metaevaluation
Overview of the five Program Evaluation Standards

- **U1** Evaluator Credibility
- **U2** Attention to Stakeholders
- **U3** Negotiated Purposes
- **U4** Explicit Values
- **U5** Relevant Information
- **U6** Meaningful Processes & Products
- **U7** Timely & Appropriate Communicating
- **U8** Concern for Consequences and Influences
QUESTIONS?

Please use your chat box to submit questions for Emma Espel or Brandie Ward
Webinar Objectives

Introduce the JCSEE and the purpose of The Program Evaluation Standards

Overview the five Program Evaluation Standards

Explore in depth the Utility Standard and its eight subcomponents

Resources & Tools
As we explore the Utility Standard, we will

- review each subcomponent;
- present a scenario;
- ask what you might do; and
- provide recommendations and hazards.

Let’s explore our different perspectives!
U1 Evaluator Credibility:
Evaluations should be conducted by qualified people who establish and maintain credibility in the evaluation context.
U1: Evaluator Credibility Scenario

Your proposal was selected to conduct an evaluation of an MSP. During the first in-person meeting, you sense some hesitancy from the project leadership team (who has never met some of the evaluation team members). You want to establish credibility and a trusting working relationship among all team members.

What would you do to establish credibility and/or a trusting working relationship?
A. Invite project leadership to draw an animal that, to them, represents evaluation to start a discussion.

☐ R7: Building good working relationships, and listen, observe, and clarify.

☐ R9: Keep evaluations moving forward while maintaining sensitivity to stakeholders’ concerns.
B. Share with project leadership your qualifications and past experience with MSP projects (e.g., CV, past reports, etc.)

R4: Include a statement in proposals and reports describing qualifications and experiences relevant to the program to be evaluated.

H2: Taking on an evaluation project believing that all the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct it effectively can be learned along the way.
C. Bring in a full evaluation design to the first meeting to show that you are well prepared.

R10: Become methodologically versatile and match methods to questions rather than restrict the evaluation to a limited methodological comfort zone.

H1: Assuming that significant experience in a program is sufficient qualification to be an evaluator in that field.
U2 Attention to Stakeholders: Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program or affected by the evaluation.

pg. 23
U2: Attention to Stakeholders Scenario

You have established credibility as an evaluator with your client. As you begin to thinking about the evaluation design, it is time to identify and engage stakeholders for the MSP evaluation.

What might you initially do to identify and engage stakeholders?
A. Invite project leadership to create a stakeholder map listing all individuals they interact with for the MSP.

R3: Develop strategies for probing the program context for important and less visible stakeholders.

H4: Assuming that the values of decision makers reflect those of program personnel and program users.
B. Email your plans for the evaluation to the identified stakeholders and request partnership information from them.

R5: Create conditions for stakeholder engagement that are safe, comfortable, and contribute to authentic participation.

H1: Recognize individuals, groups, and communities as stakeholders, collecting data from them, and then failing to communicate further with them.
C. To meet evaluation goals, you’ve identified stakeholders and presented it to project leadership and the advisory board.

R2: Let the processes supporting the determination of the evaluation purposes help identify stakeholders.

H4: Assuming that the values of decision makers reflect those of program personnel and program users.
**U3 Negotiated Purposes:** Evaluation purposes should be identified and revisited based on the needs of stakeholders.
U3: Negotiated Purposes Scenario

The project leadership team is interested in a summative assessment. However, the course instructors for the MSP would like a more formative assessment (e.g., how they are doing, how they could improve).

What can you do to negotiate evaluation purposes (e.g., goals and design), while attending to the needs of the stakeholders?
A. Hold a meeting with stakeholders to create a logic model to identify short and long term project goals.

R4: Before or during early strategies of the negotiation of evaluation purposes, clarify the nature of evaluation work using tools such as needs assessments, program descriptions, logic models, and evaluability assessments.

R7: Help stakeholders understand the feasibility and value of addressing specific evaluation purposes at specific times in the program life cycle.
B. Conduct a needs assessment.

R5: Clarify any ambivalence that may exist about reasons for conducting the evaluation.

R8: Communicate the purposes and goals of the evaluation and the needs these purposes are intended to serve in ways that are understandable and meaningful to all stakeholders.
C. Formalize the evaluation design and scope of work with feedback from the project leadership team.

H1: Assuming that program stakeholders have ratified the purposes expressed in a formal request for evaluation.

H2: Agreeing to conduct an evaluation where the needs and purposes established by stakeholders conflict with the evaluator’s standards of practice.
U4 Explicit Values: Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning the evaluation purposes, processes, and judgments.
U4: Explicit Values Scenario

You and the project leadership team agreed that the evaluation would involve collecting data from different stakeholder groups through interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

You’ve tried contacting various stakeholder groups multiple times but response rates have been quite low. After another attempt you receive an email from a teacher saying that her principal excused her from engaging in evaluation activities, so that her time could be spent elsewhere. She ended the email by saying that she and the principal are excited to see the findings.

You are concerned this might be an issue across several schools and want to meet with the project team to discuss.

How might you first approach this issue with the project team to help the evaluation move forward?
A. Go through the evaluation plan, asking the project team to remember evaluation goals and the process through which they were going to meet them.

R1: Learn what stakeholders value about the program, how strongly these values are held, and the degree to which these values converge or conflict.

R2: Reflect on the implications of specific, strongly held values for evaluation processes and activities.
B. Tell the project team they need to meet with all of the principals to explain how important collecting data is to the project.

⚠️ H1: Imposing your own values on the project, like around selecting data, interpreting information, and generating recommendations.

⚠️ H2: Ignoring strong negative reactions to proposed evaluation activities.
U5 Relevant Information: Evaluation information should serve the identified and emergent needs of intended users.
You have been working with your client for the past six weeks and are now considering data sources for answering the program evaluation questions. You notice that the client only wants to include sources which appear to highlight only the positive aspects of the MSP program.

What arguments might you make to help the MSP leadership team understand that positive information about the program is not the same as relevant information?
A. Revisit the goals of the MSP and evaluation with the leadership team to ensure you are meeting them objectively.

R1: Keep the selection of information bounded by the evaluation purposes and the stakeholders focused on the specific questions but be open to renegotiation as needed.

H2: Treating all information as equally useful: Evaluators must work with stakeholders to weight the relevance, scope, and accuracy of information.
B. Review stakeholder lists to brainstorm those who may be missing from the evaluation design.

R2: Remain open to unexpected but pertinent sources of information from a variety of sources.

H3: Selecting information based on the pressures applied by different stakeholders: Stakeholders, especially those sponsoring the evaluation may have a preconceived notion of what data should be collected to answer their questions.
C. Discuss rationale for the project choosing certain information sources over others.

✅ R2: Remain open to unexpected but pertinent sources of information from a variety of sources.

⚠️ H1: Trusting that a single authoritative source of information can provide all the needed information.
U6 Meaningful Processes & Products: Evaluation activities, descriptions, findings, and judgments... should encourage use.
U6: Meaningful Processes & Products Scenario

You are beginning to pilot an end-of-course survey developed by you and the leadership team. Surveys contain questions about participant demographics, course content and logistics, and the influence of the course instructors.

4 course instructors administered the surveys after receiving a handout with written instructions. To your dismay, the first 17 surveys returned were only partially completed with very little feedback on the open responses. You notice that the same 2 volunteers had administered the returned surveys.

How might you first handle this situation, so that you can engage the project staff in a meaningful process to create a useful product (i.e., a valid survey)?
A. You set up a meeting with course instructors to discuss the survey and its administration.

R1: Evaluators who make the effort to learn about how various stakeholders view and contribute to the program and what are considered challenges and successes within the program are better positioned to build meaningful processes and products.

H4: Proceeding without understanding how stakeholders are thinking about or reacting to the evaluation.
B. In order to give course instructors more time, you decide to shorten the survey.

R2: Implement processes that are worth the investment of time and resources needed to support them.

H3: Not preparing for and providing the time, resources, or experiences necessary to make meaningful participation feasible.
C. You explain to course instructors and others the survey purpose, and continue moving forward.

R3: Adapt essential processes and products in ways that address diverse stakeholders’ needs while not compromising the primary purposes of the evaluation.

H5: Allowing participants to attribute their learning to the authority of the evaluator rather than to the evaluation process, leaving them poorly positioned to be able to use or adapt the findings.
U7 Timely & Appropriate Communicating & Reporting: Evaluations should attend in a timely and ongoing way to the reporting and dissemination needs of stakeholders.

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You check your messages and you see that the project leadership emailed asking if you could put together a summary of the findings, thus far. The project is meeting with their advisory board for their mid Year 2 meeting, scheduled to take place in two weeks. This request surprises you because it is not listed in the negotiated scope of work. Because you think it is an opportunity for the evaluation to make a significant contribution to helping the project move forward you agree to help.

What might you find to be most helpful in this situation?
A. Send last year’s technical evaluation report to use. It doesn’t include any preliminary findings from Year 2 yet, but it is a complete record of Year 1.

R5: Plan time for explaining technical language in reports, for follow-up discussions and activities, and for helping with interpreting findings and applying them to decisions.

H4: Assuming without confirmation that distributed reports are read and understood.
B. Because you’ve been analyzing data as it’s come in and emailing the project updates on findings regularly as part of your communications plan, pulling together a brief is easy to do.

R3: Supplement formal with informal and interactive communications as part of a carefully designed communications plan.

R6: Make written reports functional and responsive to decision makers’ needs for relevant evaluation information without overwhelming them.
C. Ask the project team if you should attend the advisory board meeting to help with interpreting findings.

R4: Be sensitive to the broader social implications of the evaluation by planning when and how to interact with community members, social networks, and the media.

H6: Assuming that evaluators should do all or most of the communication and reporting.
U8 Concern for Consequences & Influences: Evaluations should promote responsible & adaptive use while guarding against unintended negative consequences and misuse.
U8: Concern for Consequences & Influences

Scenario

While reporting results from the evaluation (Year 1 of 3), you recognize that the MSP program overall as been implemented with fidelity, incited positive changes, and is viewed favorably by stakeholders. However, there was no statistically significant difference found in participants’ scores on the content knowledge assessment from pretest to posttest. The project leadership is concerned that the sponsor will cut funding for the program based on this result.

What could you have done throughout the evaluation to ensure that no intended consequences are incurred from the evaluation’s findings?
A. Consider multiple sources of influence and be sure to triangulate findings.

R3: Be assertive and appropriately engage stakeholders who appear to be sabotaging the evaluation.

H5: Failing to examine the relationship between one’s habitual evaluation approaches and the underlying contributions these may or may not be making to evaluation use.
B. Check work throughout to ensure accuracy.

R3: Be assertive and appropriately engage stakeholders who appear to be sabotaging the evaluation.

H5: Failing to examine the relationship between one’s habitual evaluation approaches and the underlying contributions these may or may not be making to evaluation use.
C. Remind the project leadership that the goals of the MSP evaluation include the documentation of change.

R2: Assess formally and informally the consequences of evaluation activities for stakeholders as soon as possible after they are completed.

H1: Losing sight of the negotiated purposes for evaluation and the needs these purposes are intended to serve, so that consequences and influences are negatively affected.
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Resources & Tools
### Purpose of the Evaluation

- The project description clearly states the project goals and objectives.
- The description provides a rationale for the project by clearly identifying the issue(s) or problem(s) the project is designed to address.
- The description provides a concise theory of action that describes how the project will address the issue(s) or problem(s). This theory of action may also be stated in terms of a testable hypothesis.

### Evaluation Design & Measurement

- The project intervention is clearly described in terms of activities, events, professional development, scope, type, purpose, etc.

### Target Population(s)

- The project’s proximal target population(s) (those directly subject to the intervention) is/are clearly defined in terms of role, grade level, subject, etc.
- The project’s distal target population(s) (those who indirectly benefit from the intervention) is/are clearly defined in terms of role, grade level, subject, etc.

### Generalizability, Representativeness, Utility

- The logic model clearly states the expected outcomes and impacts.

### Analysis

- The evaluation questions are clearly stated.
- The evaluation questions address all of the project goals and objectives.
- The evaluation questions address key aspects of the logic model (e.g., activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts) and the project implementation as appropriate.

### Logic Model

- The logic model includes a theory of action for the project.
- The logic model clearly shows how project activities are expected to lead to the intended outcomes and impacts.

### Evaluation Design and Measurement

- The evaluation design is based on a logic model and is addressed in the evaluation plan and reports.
- The evaluation questions address all of the project goals and objectives.
- The evaluation questions address key aspects of the logic model (e.g., activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts) and the project implementation as appropriate.

### Design and Attribution

- The logic model clearly shows how any findings derived from the evaluation can be attributed to the project interventions.
- The design addresses how any findings derived from the evaluation can be attributed to the project interventions.
- For quantitative studies, variables are clearly identified.
- The unit of analysis or change is clearly identified and corresponds to the unit of assignment to the treatment.

### Measures and Indicators

- The evaluation plan or report describes the measures and indicators used to address each evaluation question and how these relate to the expected outcomes.
- The data sources or informants (e.g., teachers, principals, students) for each measure or indicator are identified.

### Recruitment

- The evaluation plan or report clearly describes how the treatment and any comparison groups were recruited or identified.
- Any potential bias introduced by the recruitment process is addressed.

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**Related Resources**

- [http://teams.mspnet.org/index.cfm/27152](http://teams.mspnet.org/index.cfm/27152)
# TEAMS MSP Project Document Review Rubric

**Resources & Tools**

http://teams.mspnet.org/index.cfm/27153

## Instructions:
This rubric is to be used to examine the evaluation plans and reports produced by NSF- or USED-funded MSP projects. Rate the documents according to the scoring key to the right. If a trait is not applicable, rate the documents N/A. Provide a brief rationale for your rating in the rationale column and provide constructive feedback regarding how the plans or reports could be improved.

### Purpose of the Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>The project description clearly states the project goals and objectives, identifies the issue(s) or problem(s) the project is designed to address, and describes how the project will address the issue(s) or problem(s) by stating a concise theory of action.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>The project intervention is clearly described in terms of activities, events, professional development, scope, type, purpose, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Target Population</td>
<td>The proximal target population(s) for all project interventions is/are clearly defined in terms of role, grade level, subject, etc. All distal populations (those who indirectly benefit from the intervention) are also well defined in terms of role, grade, subject, etc.</td>
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</table>

### Evaluation Design and Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logic Model</td>
<td>The evaluation design is based on a logic model that includes a theory of action for the project and clearly shows why project activities are expected to lead to the intended outcomes and impacts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Questions</td>
<td>The evaluation questions are clearly stated, address the project goals and objectives, address key aspects of the logic model (e.g., activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts), and address project implementation as appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Attribution</td>
<td>The evaluation design is clearly articulated (e.g., randomized control trial, matched comparison groups, pre-post comparison, case study, etc.) and the design addresses how any findings derived from the evaluation can be attributed to the project interventions. For quantitative studies, independent, dependent, and control variables are clearly identified. The unit of analysis or change is clearly identified and it corresponds to the unit of treatment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures and Indicators</td>
<td>The measures and indicators used to address each evaluation question and how these measures and indicators relate to the outcomes are described. The data sources or informants (e.g., teachers, principals, students) for each measure are identified.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>The recruitment of the treatment and any comparison groups is described and any potential bias that could be introduced by the recruitment process is addressed.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
The Functional Table of Standards

Lists standards that may be worth considering at each step of the evaluation process, such as:

- deciding whether to & who will evaluate;
- developing evaluation questions;
- designing & managing the evaluation;
- collecting and analyzing information; &
- communicating & reporting.
QUESTIONS?

Please use your chat box to submit questions for Emma Espel or Brandie Ward
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>RMC Research Corporation, Address, Phone, Fax</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
PLEASE COMPLETE THE FEEDBACK SURVEY

URL: http://www.rmcccorp.com/TEAMS/
Username: 23569
Password: TEAMS

Thank You!