

Evaluation Commissioning in the Ministry of Education

Research & Evaluation Team
Strategy and System Performance Group

SPEaR

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Better, ongoing interaction

Overall, a striking feature of much of the literature on ways of improving the uptake of research [and evaluation] is the common conclusion that the way forward should be to develop **better, ongoing interaction** between researcher and research users.

(Nutley, 2003)

Changing practice

- ▲ Evaluation Strategy → building evaluative capability
- ▲ Evaluation practice guidelines
- ▲ Utilisation focus
- ▲ Emphasis on getting it right from the start
- ▲ Creating conditions for effective use
- ▲ Getting evaluators on board early – before design decisions

Evaluation guidelines

Evaluability
Assessment

1. Deciding whether to evaluate
2. Focusing the evaluation
3. Engaging an evaluator and contracting
4. Scoping and designing the evaluation
5. Evaluation implementation – data collection and analysis
6. Communicating results – information exchange, and reporting during and at the end of evaluation
7. Managing evaluation
8. Meta-evaluation: the evaluation of evaluation

1 Deciding

- ▲ Describing the policy / programme / intervention
- ▲ Mapping the decision-making context
- ▲ Clarifying information needs and priorities

2 Focusing

Identifying the evaluation's:

- ▲ stakeholders and primary intended user(s);
- ▲ purpose (intended use)
- ▲ high level questions
- ▲ scope and boundaries

Commissioning implications: competency and practice

- ▲ Need ability to clearly describe and know how to assess evaluator competency
- ▲ More focus on evaluability assessment
 - ▲ Internal consultancy – before commissioning begins
 - ▲ External providers – “backtracking”
- ▲ Developing internal consultancy competency
 - ▲ Evaluation practice meetings
 - ▲ Consistent advice and guidance
 - ▲ Consistent practice across the Ministry