

Define ethical and quality evaluation standards

For any evaluation there needs to be clarity about what will be considered a quality and ethical evaluation.

In some organisations there is agreement about using particular evaluation standards and/or ethical guidelines to guide the evaluation and to evaluate it.

Many organizations have guidelines which address issues of quality and ethics together. For example, the [UNDP](#) (United Nations Development Programme) Norms for Evaluation state that evaluation in UNDP should be:

- Independent — Management must not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. Evaluators must be free of conflict of interest.
- Intentional — The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions to be based on it should be clear from the outset.
- Transparent — Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is essential for the credibility and utility of the evaluation.
- Ethical — Evaluation should not reflect personal or sectoral interests. Evaluators must have professional integrity, respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, and be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments.
- Impartial — Removing bias and maximizing objectivity are critical for the credibility of the evaluation and its contribution to knowledge.
- Of high quality — All evaluations should meet minimum quality standards defined by the Evaluation Office
- Timely — Evaluations must be designed and completed in a timely fashion so as to ensure the usefulness of the findings and recommendations
- Used — Evaluation is a management discipline that seeks to provide information to be used for evidence-based decision making. To enhance the usefulness of the findings and recommendations, key stakeholders should be engaged in various ways in the conduct of the evaluation.

Different evaluation associations have articulated what is expected of members in terms of conducting ethical and quality evaluations, for example, the [American Evaluation Association](#)'s five guiding principles are:

- Systematic Inquiry: Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated.
- Competence: Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.
- Integrity/Honesty: Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.
- Respect for People: Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.
- Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare: Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

Methods

- [Cultural competency](#)

Evaluators may come across situations where they have to work in a cultural context other than their own. It is essential that this work is carried out safely.

- [Ethical guidelines](#)

A number of organisations have developed ethical guidelines to cover the conduct of evaluation, including the responsibilities of those conducting and managing evaluations.

- [Evaluation standards](#)

Evaluation standards identify how the quality of an evaluation will be judged.

They can be used when planning an evaluation as well as for meta-evaluation (evaluating the evaluation).

- [Institutional review board](#)

Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are committees that are set up by organizations to review the technical and ethical dimensions of a research or evaluation project.