

# Evaluation of Research Outcomes

You are going to create an evaluation checklist for your research outcomes (similar to the Program Evaluations Summary Metaevaluation Checklist by Stufflebean and Social Impact, 2012). When you are done your thesis/dissertation, and even later when you see the effects of your thesis/dissertation, you can use it to evaluate whether your research forwarded your goals & objectives. Writing your checklist now will help you steer your research plan towards your goals by reflecting on them early, and you can also use the checklist at various points during your research to keep you on track.

Characteristics of a good evaluation checklist:

1. Specific and concrete: When you write your evaluation checklist, the items to be checked off need to be concrete enough to recognize and measure. The Stufflebean metaevaluation is not very good at this. For example, one item on the Stufflebean list is “respect diversity.” But what does that look like? Include interviews and edits from stakeholders of different classes and genders? Write in a way that allows people of different linguistic backgrounds to read the article? There are several ways to “respect diversity” and you can write a number of different evaluation measures (like the two of the ones just mentioned) to evaluate that one aspect.
2. Mutually exclusive: Each item in your checklist should not be repeated, but also each check point should only contain one thing being evaluated. So not “clearly written for a general audience and distributed to policymakers in DFO,” but “clearly written for a general audience” *and* “distributed to policymakers in DFO.”
3. Clear spectrum of evaluation: The grading or evaluation scheme should be even and clear. The one in the Stufflebean is not very good this way. They use 9-10 excellent, 7-8 Very good, 5-6 good, 3-4 fair, etc. But what is the difference between very good and good? Or good and fair? And is 3/10 really fair? Or is it not good? What kind of evaluation rubric will reflect whether you’ve done an exception, good, fair, or poor job? How will you identify between them?

Steps & Formatting:

1. What are your goals and objectives for your research (see Cox reading for definitions of goals and objectives)? Write a short paragraph explaining your overall goals and objectives at the top of your evaluation check list.
2. How can you tell if you have reached those goals and objectives? Create an evaluation section that will help you establish this. These can be quantitative and qualitative. Like the Stufflebean evaluation checklist, each subject should have several ways to evaluate it. So if your goal is to impact the quality of housing afforded to people suffering from HIV, your measurements might include whether the key decision-making people have received your report, whether your report was cited in any policy or NGO decisions or initiatives, whether your report appeared in news items likely to be read by a decision-making audience, etc.
3. Do the same for the other sections. Section must include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Specific sections about measuring your goals and objectives
  - b. Reflexivity and/or standpoint of the researcher
  - c. Ethics (this may include sections on mutual aid, human rights, disclosure and transparency, equity and fairness, conflicts of interest, fiscal responsibility, inclusivity, intellectual property and dissemination, consent, confidentiality and privacy, accountability, beneficence, and justice)
  - d. Attention to stakeholders—this will look very different if your research subjects are participants in your research (in which case it is likely to have many, many sections on

different aspects of collaboration, cooperation, power, etc), or if stakeholders just need to be accounted for or informed of your work

- e. Quality of research (see methods section handout on different aspects of data quality, as well as the metachecklist sections on justified conclusions and decisions, valid information, reliable information, information management, sound designs and analysis, and explicit evaluation reasoning)

This is worth 20% of your grade.

*Grade Rubric:* 0 = not present or barely present, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = satisfactory, 3.5 = exceptional

- \_\_\_ Goals and objectives are identified clearly in introductory paragraph
- \_\_\_ Goals and objectives can be measured by the checklist created
- \_\_\_ Section on reflexivity/standpoint shows understanding of the concept and contains good measurements in the checklist
- \_\_\_ Section on ethics shows understanding of the concept and contains good measurements in the checklist
- \_\_\_ Section on attention to stakeholders shows understanding of the concept and contains good measurements in the checklist
- \_\_\_ Section on quality of research shows understanding of the concept and contains good measurements in the checklist
- \_\_\_ Other sections show understanding of concepts, originality, thoughtfulness and contains good measurements in the checklist
- \_\_\_ Checklist items are specific and concrete
- \_\_\_ Checklist items are mutually exclusive
- \_\_\_ Evaluation scheme/grading is clear in terms of differences between evaluation types
- \_\_\_ Each topic or section has multiple ways to evaluate it
- \_\_\_ Language is clear and document well written—this could be distributed to others as an example
- \_\_\_ The overall document has logical, organizational or narrative arch that clearly shows the values of the research/er

Total:            /45.5 =            %