ITaLI Evaluation Guide:
A starting point to help plan an evaluation for a project
1 ITaLI Evaluation Guide

This guide is designed to outline a threshold approach to evaluation for a broad range of projects, including the ITaLI Teaching Fellows, Partnership projects, or other teaching and learning projects (collectively known as “projects” from here on). It assumes that project outlines or plans have been previously developed before evaluation planning can occur. However, a summary of project considerations has been included to assist with the planning, implementation, monitoring, and finalisation of projects via the ITaLI Evaluation Matrix.

2 Project Considerations

1. In what background and context does the project exist?
2. What are the intended project/learning objectives?
3. How is the project designed to achieve its objectives? Through which activities, assessments, processes, or products?
4. What measurable goals and milestones have been specified for the project?
5. Who are the key stakeholders (students/staff/externals) and how will they engage with the project?
6. What resources have been allocated to help achieve the project objectives (human, financial, technological, time, etc.)?

Additional project management guidelines specific to the university context can be sourced from: http://www.guidelinesonuniversityprojectmanagement.com.

3 Key Principles for ITaLI Evaluations

1. Students voice is significant in Teaching and learning evaluations
2. All Teaching and Learning evaluations guide enhanced teaching practices
3. Teaching and Learning decision are based on evidence
4. Evaluations are embedded in all Teaching and Learning initiatives
5. What risks are associated with the project, and what strategies will you use to mitigate these risks?
6. How will the project team communicate with stakeholders?
7. How will the project results and lessons learnt be disseminated?
4 Evaluation Support

ITaLI provides guidance on best practice in the evaluation of teaching and learning projects and initiatives. This guide acts as a starting point for UQ Faculties, Schools, and staff to consider how to effectively incorporate evaluation into their projects and activities, and how to select the most appropriate approach for their purposes. If required, ITaLI will provide additional guidance in person or via email.

5 Evaluation Overview

Evaluation is most commonly defined as a process for determining merit, worth, value, or significance (Patton, 2008; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 1999; Scriven, 1991, 2007, 2013; Stufflebeam, 2000). Alkin and Christie (2013) argue that evaluation theories can be categorised according to three branches:

- **Use**: these evaluation theories aim to select their methodologies and methods to meet the future use and users of the evaluation results. An example is Patton’s (2008) Utilization-Focused Evaluation.
- **Methods (or methodologies)**: these evaluation theories focus on conducting evaluations using the most rigorous methodologies and methods for the project and context they are evaluating. An example is Rossi’s (1999) social program evaluation.
- **Valuing**: these theories prioritise the importance of discerning the value of the subject/s of the evaluation. Value is judged through objectivist or subjectivist methodologies for measuring or observing evaluation phenomena. An example is Scriven’s (2013) Key Evaluation Checklist.

Depending on which branch of evaluation theory is subscribed to, the evaluation methods employed will vary from project to project. Thus, project evaluation is not a one-size-fits all task (Chesterton & Cummings, 2011; McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013). The methodologies and methods used will depend on the project and its evaluations purpose. However, ITaLI adopts the view that evaluations of projects should primarily seek to determine whether they met their intended objectives, enhanced the student experience, or achieved change to stakeholder satisfaction. These objectives should be evaluated against a projects’ given resources and timeframes, under contextual factors or constraints, and through evidence of impacts or other changes. For these reasons, the evaluation planning model used in this guide adopts evaluations principles from multiple theoretical branches, as outlined by Owen (2006), Patton (2008), Scriven (1980, 1991), and Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2004). It has also considered the evaluation guidelines outlined in the *ALTC Project Evaluation Resource* (Chesterton & Cummings, 2011) in order to address the nationally-endorsed approach currently in usage in Australian higher education. Examples of other evaluations models have also been included for comparative purposes after the ITaLI Evaluation Matrix.
## 6 ITaLI Evaluation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Descriptors or indicators</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Details | | List the basic project details, such as the project name, evaluator/s, school/faculty/department, date. | **Overview**
**Project title:** SECaT Communications Plan: Student Ambassadors
**Evaluators:** Evaluation Unit, ITaLI
**Date:** January 2015 |
| Evaluation Objectives | | What did the project aim to do which requires evaluation? Based on the project’s aims, what are you seeking to discover? Describe what it is you are intending to evaluate and list questions phrased to help you to demonstrate whether the project objectives have been achieved. Include background and contextual information, if needed. | Overview
The SECaT communications plan employed student ambassadors to encourage other students to complete their SECaTs online using iPads and other mobile devices. This evaluation will review the efficacy of the SECaT communications plan after the SECaT period is over. It will evaluate the efficacy of the plan by answering the following questions:
1. How many students completed their SECaTs via the student ambassadors’ iPads?
2. How did the SECaT rates achieved by the student ambassadors compare to general SECaT rates? Was there an increase above average non-ambassador hours?
3. How did students rate the usefulness of the SECaT ambassadors in encouraging them to complete their surveys? |
| Methodology | Based on your evaluation objectives, what methodology is required for your evaluation? |
- Purpose: formative, summative, ascriptive
- Qualitative: discourse analysis, psychometric analysis, surveys
- Quantitative: statistical analysis, exams, surveys
- Mixed-methods: perceptions, behaviours, engagement, outcomes triangulation | **Methodology**
This evaluation is summative. It will be conducted after the SECaTs have closed so that it does not interfere with actual SECaT responses. This is primarily due to the delivery of the additional student survey.
The convergent parallel mixed methods methodology will be employed to analyse qualitative and quantitative data separately. The outcomes of both datasets will then be compared and interpreted for judgment against the criteria specified for the evaluation. |
| Methods | In order to determine the methods to use in your evaluation, you will need to consider your audience, participants, delivery mode, and data collection and | **Methods**

In order to determine the methods to use in your evaluation, you will need to consider your audience, participants, delivery mode, and data collection and |

Given the context provided, the above table outlines the planning phase of an evaluation, focusing on the key elements of details, evaluation objectives, methodology, and methods. Each section provides a foundational understanding of what is required to conduct an effective evaluation.
analysis strategies and tools. These considerations inform the selection of the methods to be used for your evaluation.

- Audience: Who will use your evaluation outcomes? What will they use it for? What is your communications plan for conducting the evaluation and reporting on the outcomes of the evaluation?
- Types of participants: Students (current, past and future), Staff (local peers, teachers of courses that feed into yours, yours feeds into, other disciplines, tutors, clinicians, co-teachers, etc), Self (diaries, resources, log of time, etc) or Externals (Industry professionals, teachers at other institutions, or other colleagues)
- Types of participation: informed, random, incidental, etc.
- Evaluation delivery mode: Face-to-face, online, blended
- Data collection & sources: Paper (surveys, questionnaires, exams), online (surveys, questionnaires, exams), verbal/observational (interview, focus groups, peer review, peer observation, external/expert review), sampling, existing data (Blackboard, SECaTs, Emails)
- Data analysis: inferential, descriptive, discourse analysis, statistical correlation, cluster analysis, sentiment analysis, etc.

Students will be the primary participants of the satisfaction survey. Data will be collected via:

- Google analytics: data collected will be statistically analysed to show variations in average completion times in and outside of ambassador working hours.
- Student survey design –
  
  **Email invitation to students:**
  In 2014 UQ implemented the online SECaTs for the first time. To make sure you were aware of the changes, we developed a comprehensive communications plan. Please let us know what you think by completing our survey. This survey is completely anonymous and is designed to evaluate whether our student ambassadors programs worked!

  **Survey delivered by SurveyMonkey:**
  - I saw student ambassadors with iPads. (Yes, no)
  - I talked to student ambassadors with iPads. (Yes, no)
  - I completed my SECaT on the student ambassadors’ iPads. (Yes, no)
  - I was reminded by the student ambassadors to complete my SECaTs but I used my own device. (Yes, no)
  - I thought the SECaT ambassadors were useful for encouraging me to complete my survey. (1 = not useful (I already did it, I’m not interested), 2 = somewhat useful (it reminded me to do it later), 3 = useful, I did the survey on my own device, 4 = very useful (I did my survey on the iPad), 5 = extremely useful (I did my survey on the iPad and got something out of talking to the ambassadors))
  - Open comment: Do you have any other comments or suggestions about our student ambassadors program or other communications for the SECaTs?

**Audience**
This evaluation is an internally conducted evaluation designed to improve University processes and practices. The final report will
Based on your evaluation objectives, methodology and methods, how will you gauge the impact of your project? List observable or measurable indicators (such as impacts, benefits, efficiencies, or participant satisfaction) or intended outputs and outcomes (such as actions, activities, processes or products which have been defined for the project or have been created as a result of the project). Can you always specify objective criteria? What about surprises in the data? How flexible are these criteria? (i.e. if you found the iPad promotions didn’t greatly impact student response rates but where an important symbol for staff that you are encouraging students to respond?)

Criteria & standards
1. Data shows there were survey completion when ambassadors were working. Rating: < 500 completions = mild impact, <1000 completions = moderate impact, >=1000 completions = high impact.
2. Perceptions of usefulness scale: 1 = not useful (I already did it, I’m not interested), 2 = somewhat useful (it reminded me to do it later), 3 = useful, (I did the survey on my own device), 4 = very useful (I did my survey on the iPad), 5 = extremely useful (I did my survey on the iPad and got something out of talking to the ambassadors).

Do you require ethics approval? Considerations include: Informed consent vs voluntary participation; anonymity vs confidentiality; identification vs de-identification of data; and “Do no harm”. See: http://www.uq.edu.au/research/integrity-compliance/human-ethics

An ethics notification was submitted to inform the University that the survey will be conducted. Since the outcomes of this evaluation will be used solely for University improvement processes and will not be published externally, a full ethics submission was not required.

What type of resourcing may be required?
- Human: project participants & staff, evaluator, external reviewer, staff with specific expertise
- Financial: project and evaluation budget, incentives
- Other requirements: technological, time

The following resourcing is required to conduct this evaluation:
Staffing: Existing staff within the Evaluations Unit in ITaLI
Budget: Absorbed as part of business processes.
Tools: Google Analytics and SurveyMonkey are UQ licensed software.

This evaluation will be conducted over a two week period at the summation of Semester 2, 2014. It is expected that the report will
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation &amp; Monitoring</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>What do you need to consider while you are implementing the project and/or evaluation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                             |                | - Communications  
|                             |                | - Gatekeepers (do we have guides about doing student surveys – particularly in not over-surveying students?)  
|                             |                | - Risks  
|                             |                | - Data collection, storage, and management  
|                             |                | - Reflections & refinements  
|                             |                | - Incidental evaluation outcomes  

| Finalisation | Reporting | How will the evaluation conclude?  
|--------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |           | Reporting methods:  
|              |           | - Verbal: seminar, symposium, conference  
|              |           | - Written: report, website, research publications  
|              |           | Evaluations outcomes: Short, medium & long term resourcing implications for the project, its renewal, sustainability, or re-evaluation (meta-evaluation) |

| Dissemination | Enactment: How will you use the outcomes of the evaluation beyond what the audience and stakeholders have specified? Are you required to implement further actions as outcomes of the evaluation?  
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               | Feedback: If and when you receive feedback from the audience and stakeholders, what will you do with it?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Key findings</th>
<th>Report Key findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                     | The ambassadors' iPads logged 648 SECaT completions of the SECaTs.  
|                     | The SECaT communications plan increased student completion rates by 16.1% when ambassadors where out engaging other students.  
|                     | 84% of students (n=136) who completed the follow-up survey ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the usefulness of the SECaT ambassadors.  
|                     | The overall efficacy of the SECaT student ambassadors program shows that it had a mild impact on the completion rates of the SECaTs. It is recommended that a cost-benefit analysis be conducted to further gauge the future merit of the plan. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissemination Plan</th>
<th>Dissemination Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                     | The findings from the SECaT student ambassadors program will be shared through:  
|                     | 1. UQ news; and  
|                     | 2. The ITaLI “Information for students” webpage. |
7 Scriven’s (2007, 2013) Key Evaluation Checklist

The table below summarises and adapts evaluations components as outlined by Scriven (2007, 2013) in his Key Evaluation Checklist. This table is designed to assist with the evaluation report writing process by offering an alternative evaluation approach to the ITaLI approach previously outlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Key Item</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PART A: PRELIMINARIES</td>
<td>A1. Executive Summary</td>
<td>Outline of the results of the evaluation or key findings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                        | A2. Clarifications        | - Define the parameters of the evaluation, such as stakeholders and audience.  
- Specify the purpose: formative (to discover areas for improvement), summative (to support decisions about what is being evaluated), or ascriptive (for pure research or for the sake of knowing).  
- List the evaluation questions.  
- Outline other clarifications, such as interrelated projects, evaluation funding, etc. |
|                        | A3. Design and Methods    | How will you conduct the evaluation? What methodological approach guides your perceptions and understanding of phenomena within the context of the evaluation? Provide an overall description and justification of the evaluation design and methods you have used. Define all investigative procedures and requirements. Include:  
- Data collection, management and analysis: Paper (surveys, questionnaires, exams), online (surveys, questionnaires, exams), verbal (interview, focus groups, peer review, external review), sampling (random, snowball, stratified, targeted), delivery mode (face-to-face, online, blended), statistical procedures, text sentiment, existing datasets. |
| PART B: FOUNDATIONS    | B1. Background and Context| Information about the historical, recent, concurrent, and other project information to outlay the necessary background and context for the evaluation.                                                                 |
|                        | B2. Descriptions and Definitions| List all information about the project which needs further description or definition for clarification purposes, such as specific terminology or jargon specific to the project. |
|                        | B3. Consumers (Impactees) | - Participants: Students, Staff, or Externals (Industry professionals or other colleagues)  
- Audience: Who is the evaluation conducted for? |
|                        | B4. Resources ('Strengths Assessment')| Scriven (2013) defines Resources in his evaluation checklist as pertaining to the resources available to the project rather than the resources available to conduct the evaluation. The specification of resources at the project level allows the evaluator/s to review the ways in which resources (financial, physical, and intellectual-social-relational) to evaluate the efficacy of resource usage within the program, thereby determining the cost-benefit or efficiency of a project. |
|                        | B5. Values                | - List judgment criteria which will be used to determine the success of the project.  
- List goals and needs of the participants and audience which will impact the outcomes of the evaluation and add to the evaluation’s priorities or objectives, such as: legal requirements, ethics, personal/social/cultural/environmental values, data/specifications fidelity values, professional standards, etc. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Key Item</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **PART C: SUBEVALUATIONS** | C1. Process | - Describe the evaluation implementation process: how did the enactment of the evaluation plans go?  
- Provide information of the outputs of the project and evaluation: what changes/outputs have been observed or created? |
| | C2. Outcomes (Effects) | - List the impact/effects of the project: did the project achieve what it was aiming to do? What evidence is there of this?  
Scriven encourages further explanation of the causal mechanisms which have been created within the projects to explain outcomes which affect stakeholders in the projects, whether directly or indirectly. |
| | C3. Costs | - Describe the financial, human, space, time, expertise, etc. costs of the project: were there gains to these costs achieved by the project? |
| | C4. Comparisons | - Include information about other 'like-projects' which may be compared to the project being evaluated: were their differentiations which show the success or failure of the project being evaluated? |
| | C5. Generalizability | - Suggest how this project and its evaluation can be made transferable to other areas, projects, etc. |
| **PART D: CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS** | D1. Synthesis | Synthesise the information gained from the evaluation, such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats. Outline returns on investment of the project or other information of significance to stakeholders or the project and evaluation. |
| | D2. Recommendations, Explanations, Predictions, and Redesigns. | Include recommended strategies for the project based on the outcomes of the evaluation. Recommendations can be made about operational aspects of the project or evaluation (Scriven calls these micro-recommendations). Recommendations can also be made at the macro level to disseminate the whole-of-project implications to the context, systems or organisation in which the project is embedded. Macro-recommendations should also provide predictive indicators of future impacts or successes. Other recommendations at the macro level can include suggested redemdes of the project, policy, or other whole-of-organisation system or function in which the project is embedded. |
| | D3. Responsibility and Justification | If out of the recommendations, personnel are identified then their responsibility should be outlined along with the justification for their role in enacting the recommendation/s in future. |
| | D4. Report & Support | The evaluation should list the manners in which the outcomes will be reported as well as the support mechanisms to be instituted to enact the recommendations of the evaluation. This is particularly important for evaluations which have human implications, such as redundancies, etc. |
| | D5. Meta-evaluation | Meta-evaluations are designed to re-evaluate the original evaluation that has been conducted. Scriven suggested that meta-evaluations should always be conducted as a quality control mechanism to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the original evaluation conducted. A meta-evaluation can be a self-reflection/review, peer review, or full re-evaluation as per the original evaluation. |
8 Logic Model

The representation of the Logic Model below has been adapted from various authors, such as Stufflebeam (2000), Wholey et al. (2004), and Glenaffric Ltd (2007). This model is designed to allow users to discern the usefulness of projects through a linear evaluation of the project’s implementation process.

**Project – Program - Course**

- **Instigator**
  - Deficiency
  - Desire
  - Need

- **Inputs**
  - Human
  - Financial
  - Equipment

- **Process**
  - Content
  - Activities
  - Assessment

- **Outputs**
  - Change
  - Product
  - Service
  - Engagement

- **Outcomes**
  - Behaviour
  - Perceptions
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Achievement

- **Impacts**
  - Short term
  - Medium term
  - Long term

**Evaluation**

Formative

Summative
9 Value-Creation Matrix

The representation of the Value-Creation Matrix below has been adapted from Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011) to help users define and monitor indicators of value alongside potential sources of data. The Wenger, Trayner & de Laat evaluation model includes five cycles. These are:

**Cycle 1: Immediate value:** the activities and interactions between members have value in and of themselves

**Cycle 2: Potential value:** the activities and interactions of cycle 1 may not be realized immediately, but rather be saved up as knowledge capital whose value is in its potential to be realized later.

**Cycle 3: Applied value:** knowledge capital may or may not be put into use. Leveraging capital requires adapting and applying it to a specific situation.

**Cycle 4: Realized value:** even applied new practices or tools are not enough. A change in practice does not necessarily lead to improved performance, so it is important to find out what effects the application of knowledge capital is having on the achievement of what matters to stakeholders.

**Cycle 5: Reframing value:** this happens when learning causes a reconsideration of how success is defined. It includes reframing strategies, goals and values. ([http://wenger-trayner.com/resources/publications/evaluation-framework/](http://wenger-trayner.com/resources/publications/evaluation-framework/))
10 Hubball & Burt’s (2007) Pragmatic Program Evaluation Model

The action research-based model below was designed to specifically evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of program-level learning outcomes.

Evaluation Questions

1. **Learning Context Evaluation**: What are the critical factors when developing program-level learning outcomes?
2. **Process Evaluation**: To what extent are learning outcomes reflected in program learning experiences?
3. **Impact Evaluation**: When and how do students demonstrate learning outcomes in this context?
4. **Follow-up Evaluation**: What are the overall reflections for implementation and alternative applications of learning outcomes to other academic activities in this context?
11 Evaluation References


