

Peer Evaluation Course Curriculum Outline

Strengthening evaluation practice
and evidence-based decision making
in higher education

January 2024



A QAA-FUNDED COLLABORATIVE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Peer Evaluation Course Curriculum 2024

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Context.....	1
Aims	1
Who is the course for?.....	2
Benefits of the course.....	2
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW	3
Course Content	3
ASSESSMENT.....	7
Teaching	7
Assessment	7
Accreditation.....	7
RESOURCES	10
PERSONAL STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES REFLECTION TOOL	10
TEMPLATE 1 – ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT & STRUCTURES.....	14
TEMPLATE 2 – EVALUATION APPROACHES & EXAMPLES	16
FEEDBACK SURVEYS	19
REVIEW FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE 1: FORMATIVE REVIEW.....	19
REVIEW FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE 2: FEEDBACK ON THE RESIDENTIAL.....	19
REVIEW FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE 3: FEEDBACK ON PEER REVIEW PROCESS	20
KEY TEXTS.....	21
TEMPLATE 3 – PEER EVALUATOR CHECKLIST	23
TEMPLATE 4 - PEER EVALUATION REVIEW REPORT	25

INTRODUCTION

This course curriculum outline is an output from a Collaborative Enhancement Project supported and funded by QAA Membership. The project was led by the University of Bath in partnership with Bath Spa University, University of Derby, University of East Anglia, London School of Economics, Sheffield Hallam University. Find out more about Collaborative Enhancement Projects on the [QAA website](#).

The course curriculum was developed by NERUPI (The Network for Researching and Evaluating University Participation Interventions) www.nerupi.co.uk. Based at the University of Bath, NERUPI is a community of practice for those seeking to reduce inequalities in higher education. With over 80 member organisations, NERUPI is well-established with extensive experience of providing expertise in evaluation designed to support continuous institutional improvement and meet regulatory requirements.

The Peer Evaluation Course was co-created through delivery and evaluation of a Pilot Peer Evaluation course. Working with experienced evaluators and researchers, the aim of the pilot was to develop Peer Review guidelines and a CPD curriculum for use in the higher education (HE) sector in order to strengthen evaluation practice within higher education institutions (HEIs) seeking to improve equity in student access, participation and success. It combines collaborative learning with a process of Peer Review, providing an additional level of external objectivity and perspective to inform and support the planning and evaluation of initiatives to improve equity in student access, participation and success.

Context

Evaluation of impact is a subject of concern, given the relatively large amount of financial support for widening participation in HE, and the need for effective and efficient use of public investment. The complexity of widening participation objectives, particularly multifaceted interventions, makes evaluation challenging. The Office for Students (OfS) have tasked the English higher education sector with demonstrating impact on student outcomes with claims assessed against standards of evidence and have made improving the quality and volume of evaluation of activity a policy priority. Across the UK, evaluation is centre-stage for HEIs wishing to demonstrate their effectiveness. Networks for peer-supported learning, and specifically processes of peer review, have been identified as one way in which evaluation capabilities can be developed, through an open process of sharing ideas for evaluation strengthening, and supporting the development of specific skills and expertise.

Aims

These aims describe the purposes of the course which will enable participants to improve their own and others' professional practice through development of their knowledge, skills and understanding of widening participation and equity evaluation.

- Deepen knowledge and understanding of the challenges to greater equality in the HE sector and their own organisations and the implications for their practice.
- Develop evaluation understanding and expertise and apply this in order to strengthen evaluation planning, design and identification of appropriate methods.
- Understand the peer review process and conduct a peer evaluation.
- Make more effective use of evaluation and research to inform and improve delivery and outcomes of equity interventions.

- Experience working with colleagues to identify strengths and areas for improvement in their own and others' current practice and ways of addressing these in order to strengthen their own and their organisations' practices.
- Develop the capacity to critically review and analyse other institutions' evaluation strategies and methods in order to support continual improvement across the sector.
- Develop dissemination strategies that support continuous improvement and regulatory compliance in their own and others' organisations.
- Develop reflexivity and criticality of their own practice and institutional aspects.

Who is the course for?

This course is for higher education staff members working in widening participation evaluation who wish to understand more about evaluation theory and practice, improve their expertise and evaluation practices to ensure more effective evidence, and to use evaluations more effectively for evidence-based decision making in their organisation.

The course is suitable for participants demonstrating the following:

- Previous experience of research and evaluation in a widening participation context
- Support from their organisation for participation in the course
- Engagement and involvement from their organisation for receiving a Peer Evaluation of the organisation's evaluation practices
- Ability to influence the evaluation work that is taking place internally
- Knowledge of equity and widening participation issues
- Reflexivity and willingness to adapt own practice as a result of learning
- Openness to sharing information about evaluation practices
- Capacity for critical and holistic thinking
- Willingness and ability to work collaboratively with others in a similar role, maintaining an environment of honesty and candour
- Commitment to the Peer Evaluation process and capacity to participate fully, including in the virtual sessions, face-to-face sessions, residential experience and Peer Evaluation pair work.

Benefits of the course

For individuals

- Understand equity and widening participation issues and how to negotiate sector challenges and increase the impact of their work
- Understand evaluation theories and ways to approach theoretically grounded evaluations
- Improve own practice in evaluation planning, design and methods, implementing and reporting
- Able to effectively demonstrate the impact of interventions and generate stronger evidence
- Improve skills in communicating to different audiences for evaluation and tailoring findings effectively
- Increased reflexivity and criticality in own practice
- Experience of working collaboratively with sector colleagues
-

- Disseminate Peer Evaluation findings persuasively to actively contribute to strengthening evaluation and its use in widening participation.
- Better able to support continuous improvement and regulatory compliance in organisations

For organisations

- Peer feedback on evaluation approaches
- Suggestions for evaluation strengthening internally
- Benchmarking evaluation practice against others in the sector
- Opportunity for development of collaborative evaluation projects
- CPD for members of staff involved in evaluation

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The course considers five key areas:

1. Equity and widening participation issues and policy in higher education
2. Organisational contexts and structures
3. Evaluation expertise
4. Peer Evaluation exchanges
5. Dissemination strategies (internal and external)
6. Peer Evaluation process

Course Content

1. **Equity and widening participation issues and policy in higher education**

Participants will explore key issues in equity and widening participation in the higher education sector in the context of change and challenge within their own and others' organisations, including:

- Familiarity with national policies to widen access, participation and progression
- The expansion of higher education and increased diversity of the student body
- The impact of socio-economic background (class, race, gender, disability and intersectionalities) on educational outcomes and careers
- Innovations in curriculum, pedagogy and student support

2. **Organisational contexts and structures**

Participants will develop understanding of change and challenge within their own organisations by collecting and contextualising information in preparation for Peer Review. Through completion of a standard template and collation and inclusion of supporting information participants will describe:

- The impact of the local and national context on the organisation, including national equity policies and changes over time
- The characteristics of the student body
- The access, participation and progression priorities of their organisation
- The structure and approach to evaluation of equity and widening participation
- Intervention planning, delivery and evaluation
- Supporting information

The materials will be subject to individual and collective reflective activities. This process will prepare participants for undertaking a Peer Review of other organisations.

3. Evaluation expertise

Participants will develop expertise, reflexivity and criticality in evaluation, enabling them to improve their own professional practice and to assess others, as well as exploring key theoretical debates, including:

- The difference between research and evaluation
- Key debates in research and evaluation, including objectivity, subjectivity and validity
- Different approaches to evaluation, including experimental and quasi-experimental design, theory-based approach, developmental evaluation, appreciative inquiry realism and critical realism
- The strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to research and the range of evaluation methods, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods
- Practical and ethical factors to consider when deciding between methods
- The application of theory of change and logical frameworks in the intervention planning and evaluation process
- Definitions of aims, activities, measures and indicators
- Strategies for gathering data and using evidence effectively

4. Peer Evaluation exchanges

Participants will undertake a Peer Evaluation of another organisation as specified in Template 4, requiring appropriate feedback to their Peer Review partner in the first instance, and will be expected to:

- Engage with the materials and in the Peer Evaluation discussion
- Review the information critically and holistically
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Make suggestions/recommendations for changes
- Work collaboratively in the Peer Evaluator pair to agree findings
- Prepare a Peer Evaluation report.

5. Dissemination

Receiving a Peer Review is a major benefit of this process for participants and their organisations, and it is expected that the line manager will receive the full report. Collation of the institutional context information has also proved useful for organisations. However, development of a reporting and dissemination strategy for both templates is an important element of the course. In order to maximise

its impact of the materials they will require adaptation for a range of internal and external stakeholders, including:

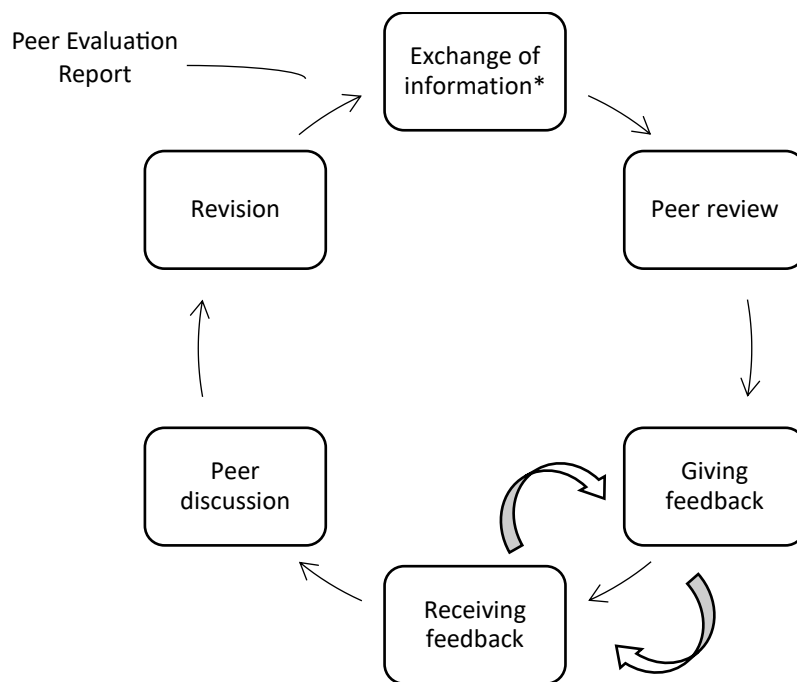
- Senior managers and governance groups
- Regulatory bodies
- Widening participation and equity committees and strategy groups
- External stakeholders such as schools, colleges and community groups
- Practitioners to inform planning and delivery of future interventions
- Evaluation colleagues, including practitioners developing evaluation skills
- Students
- Future research such as focus groups, co-creation or participatory action research.

6. Peer Evaluation process

In order for the Peer Evaluation process to be successful throughout the course, Peer Evaluators will need to:

- Build positive relationships based on mutual respect
- Develop an understanding of the other's context
- Listen carefully and appreciatively
- Ask appropriate and incisive questions
- Challenge constructively
- Work collaboratively to agree areas for improvement
- Think critically and holistically to identify issues and make suggestions/recommendations
- Be open to changing their practice through a process of continuing development.

The Peer Evaluation Cycle



* Exchange of information is based on structured templates designed to elicit information quickly and efficiently.

ASSESSMENT

Teaching

Teaching will include a variety of formats, including presentations, group discussions, group tasks, seminars, individual activities, readings, and Peer Evaluator pair-work.

Sessions will be held both online and in person. A residential experience is recommended.

Assessment

Assessment of participants will be made at different points throughout the course, linked to the submission of various templates underpinning the Peer Evaluation process, plus there will be a requirement to demonstrate engagement with Peer Evaluation dissemination through the completion of a dissemination output (this will vary depending on the priority audience identified for the results).

The assessment criteria that apply to the different templates is given in Table 1 below.

The results of the assessments will be fed back individually. The materials and feedback which highlights particularly strong engagement and criticality will be used for reflection, to stimulate further discussion, and for learning, both individually and within the group.

Participants unable to meet a defined level of competence defined in the assessment criteria will be advised not to undertake Peer Reviews without further professional development.

Accreditation

Options for external accreditation are being considered.

Peer Evaluation Course 2024

Table 1: Assessment Criteria

	Purpose	Content (Headings)	Assessment
COMMUNICATION	To ensure maximum efficacy of Peer Evaluations	Applicable to all areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language used is unclear impeding understanding* 2. Language is generally clear but with some problem areas 3. Language is clear throughout
Self-reflection tool	To provide a framework for self-reflection to develop the understanding, skills and expertise to undertake Peer Evaluations.	Personal qualities and expertise described in the self-reflection tool and evidenced in the other templates and Peer Review process (links to Template 3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient evidence of capacity to undertake a Peer Review with little awareness of areas for improvement* 2. Some evidence of capacity to undertake a Peer Review with awareness of areas for improvement 3. Evidence of capacity to undertake a Peer Review with awareness of areas for improvement
Template 1: Organisational context and structures	To collect and structure information on their own organisation and the context for management and delivery of evaluation of access and participation interventions.	Local context; changes over time including impact of national equity policies; student body; regulatory compliance e.g. access, participation and progression (strategies and interventions); WP Evaluation (structure and approaches); programme planning and evaluation; supporting information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information insufficient to undertake a Peer Review* 2. Significant gaps in the information presented adversely affecting the quality of the Peer Review* 3. Some gaps in the information presented, limiting the effectiveness of the Peer Review 4. All sections completed with appropriate information 5. All sections completed with appropriate information, including additional links where required. 6. All sections completed with appropriate information, including additional links where required and additional commentary and reflections from the institutional contact
Template 2: Evaluation approaches and examples	To collect information on how evaluation is approached and operationalised, and the methods typically used to evaluate the key interventions. To collate examples of evaluation projects.	Evaluation planning and governance, evaluation delivery, ethical considerations, data access, Theory of Change; evaluation methods; evaluation evidence to include information on approach plus example(s) of completed evaluation(s) demonstrating evaluation in practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examples incomplete or inappropriate impeding Peer Review* 2. Examples presented with significant gaps limiting the effectiveness of the Peer Review 3. Appropriate examples presented with supporting information facilitating in-depth Peer Review.
Template 3: Peer Evaluator checklist	Prompts to guide the thought-process of the Peer Evaluator in reviewing the information submitted for the peer review.	Organisations context and APP priorities; evaluation planning and delivery; use of Theory of Change; evaluation methods;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information provided does not demonstrate engagement with or analysis of the material* 2. Information provided demonstrates some engagement with the material but no analysis*

Peer Evaluation Course 2024

	Purpose	Content (Headings)	Assessment
	The checklist is designed to guide the peer evaluator's analysis and structure the feedback and discussion with the peer evaluator (after the evaluator has first read and assimilated the information in Template 1).	evaluation evidence (completed examples and plan)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Information provided demonstrates understanding of the material but limited analysis or reflection 4. Information provided demonstrates good understanding, analysis and reflection 5. Information provided demonstrates comprehensive understanding, analysis and reflection
Template 4: Peer Evaluation report	A thinking tool to organise ideas and reflections on the material with space for additional reflections and to provide a basis for recommendations.	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) Additional reflections Recommendations	PEER EVALUATION REPORT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient information in Peer Review to demonstrate engagement with material* 2. Significant gaps in the Peer Review analysis strongly limiting the usefulness of the Peer Review feedback* 3. Some gaps in the Peer Review analysis limiting the usefulness of the Peer Review feedback 4. Satisfactory analysis providing useful feedback in some areas 5. Thorough analysis providing useful feedback in most areas 6. Thorough analysis providing useful feedback in all areas

*Participants assessed at this level would require further professional development before undertaking a Peer Review.

RESOURCES

PERSONAL STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES REFLECTION TOOL

Introduction

The purpose of the tool is to support you to reflect on your existing strengths and identify the areas we should prioritise for your further personal development during the course, and for you to engage in a process of reflection by using the tool to assess what you have learnt and the progress you are making towards your personal development goals.

The tool is designed to be used for reflection at three stages during the course:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Self-assessment of strengths & identification of areas for development | After Session 1 |
| 2. Mid-course reflection | Before Session 4 |
| 3. End-course reflection | After Session 5 |

The reflective element encourages you to take a more critical attitude towards your own knowledge and understanding, and your existing practices. It invites you to engage in a process of ongoing learning by paying attention to other information, theories, experiences and practices and to deliberately reflect on what they might mean for you. You can use the review sections to record any specific learning points. You can also use the tool to plan future adaptations to your practice, for example how you might bring together new knowledge and practice together to improve your evaluation approach.

Structure of the tool

The sections in the tool reflect the course content as these are the areas identified as being pertinent to building evaluation capabilities and to engaging fully with the peer review process:

- Equity and widening participation issues in higher education
- Organisational contexts and structures
- Evaluation expertise
- Peer Evaluator exchange
- Dissemination
- Values underpinning Peer Evaluation processes

Tips for self-reflection

- The purpose of reflection is to improve our effectiveness and become better informed in our decision-making; this means taking a critical stance and thinking holistically.
- Challenge your answers to remain reflective about what you already know and what else might be important both in your current situation and being a Peer Evaluator.
- Some things are stable, others change frequently, so a dynamic approach is needed.
- Challenge yourself to go beyond your instincts and look for evidence (how do you know?).

SELF-REFLECTION TOOL

	Initial reflection			Mid-course reflection	End-of-course reflection
	Excellent understanding	Adequate understanding	Need to develop understanding		
Equity and widening participation issues in higher education					
National policies to widen access, participation and progression					
Higher education trends and diversity of the student body					
Implications of background (class, race, gender, disability and intersectionality) on educational outcomes and careers					
Innovations in curriculum, pedagogy and student support					
Organisational contexts and structures					
Impact of the local and national context on your organisation and changes over time					
Characteristics of your student body and their needs					
The access, participation and progression priorities of your organisation					
How your organisation is structured and position of evaluation of equity and widening participation					
How your organisation plans, delivers and evaluates its interventions					
Evaluation expertise					
The difference between research and evaluation and implications for evaluation practice					

	Initial reflection			Mid-course reflection	End-of-course reflection
	Excellent understanding	Adequate understanding	Need to develop understanding		
Key debates in research and evaluation (objectivity, subjectivity, validity) and the implications of different approaches to evaluation					
The strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to research and different research designs					
The range of evaluation methods available (including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods) and how to use them (please be specific)					
The application of Theory of Change and logical frameworks in the planning and evaluation process					
Defining effective aims, activities, measures and indicators					
Strategies for gathering and analysing data and for generating the most evidence effectively					
Dissemination					
Informing senior managers and governance groups					
Reporting to regulatory bodies					
Informing widening participation and equity committees and strategy groups					
Influencing external stakeholders, e.g. schools, colleges and community groups					

	Initial reflection			Mid-course reflection	End-of-course reflection
	Excellent understanding	Adequate understanding	Need to develop understanding		
Informing and influencing practitioners involved in planning and delivery of interventions					
Informing and influencing evaluation colleagues, including practitioners developing evaluation skills					
Informing other stakeholders (e.g. students)					
Peer Evaluation process					
How to build positive relationships based on mutual respect					
Understanding of other organisation's contexts					
Careful and appreciative listening					
Asking appropriate and incisive questions					
Challenging constructively					
Working collaboratively to agree areas for improvement					
Thinking critically and holistically to identify issues and make suggestions/ recommendations					
Being open to change your practice through a process of continuing development					

TEMPLATE I – ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT & STRUCTURES

This template should be completed by the institutional contact to collect and structure information on the organisation and the context for the delivery of evaluation of access, participation and progression activities. The use of references and links to other sources (e.g. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) documentation, university webpages, Athena Swan) is encouraged.

1. THE ORGANISATION

- 1.1 Name:
- 1.2 Location(s):
Region:
- 1.4 Mission Group:
Brief description (e.g. Is there a specialism e.g. Arts, STEM, professional accreditation. Mainly part-time or mature students?) Has this changed significantly over the last 30-40 years?

2. LOCAL CONTEXT

- 2.1 What's the profile of the local area in terms of deprivation (e.g. deprived, mixed, affluent)? Has this changed significantly over the last 30-40 years?
- 2.2 How do you assess local education system performance, i.e. educational attainment at Level 2 and Level 3 in schools and colleges?
- 2.3 What are the levels of education in the local area, e.g. participation in HE, qualification level of adult population? Has this changed significantly over the last 30-40 years?
- 2.4 How would you describe the local labour market (e.g. depressed, expanding, booming)? Has this changed significantly over the last 30-40 years?
- 2.5 What are the key strategic priorities for the institution (strategic plans)?
- 2.6 Any important strategic partners, e.g. further and higher education colleges? Businesses?

3. STUDENT BODY

- 3.1 Please provide student numbers

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Foundation level		
Undergraduate		
Postgraduate		
Domestic students		
International students		

- 3.3 What's the geographical reach for UK student recruitment?
- 3.4 Please describe the demographics of UK student intake focusing on key characteristics, e.g. diversity, low participation neighbourhoods, class, income, ethnicity, gender, (dis)ability etc. Has this changed significantly over the last 30-40 years?
- 3.5 How would you describe the needs of students and what they want from the institution?

4. ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESSION

- 4.1 What are your main organisational access, participation and progression priorities/targets to address inequalities? Refer to your regulatory system, e.g. access and participation plan (APP) in England.
- 4.2 What are the characteristics of your target groups? Why have they been chosen?
- 4.3 What types of activities/interventions/strategies does your organisation offer to support target groups and address these inequalities?
- 4.4 How are access, participation and progression activities managed and coordinated (e.g. is there a formal committee or cross-institutional strategy group that has oversight? If so, who chairs it?)?
- 4.5 How are access, participation and progression activities organised and delivered?

5. PROGRAMME PLANNING AND EVALUATION

- 5.1 Who's involved in planning access, participation and progression activities?
- 5.2 How is information on activities captured and stored (e.g. project proposals/applications, activity plans etc)?
- 5.3 How is evaluation of access, participation and progression activities organised and managed?
- 5.2 Where does evaluation sit in the organisation structure?
- 5.3 How many staff are involved in the evaluation team? Who's responsible for what?
- 5.4 Please note any differences, if any, in the approach to evaluation between access, participation and progression activities.

6. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Please append any other relevant reports or materials which help to describe the context and structures. These could include, for example, organisational structure charts/reporting lines; local assessments; strategy documents.

List here materials appended with file name(s):

Completed by:

Name:

Position:

Email:

Date:

TEMPLATE 2 – EVALUATION APPROACHES & EXAMPLES

This template is designed to collect information on how evaluation of access, participation and progression activities is being taken forward in practice and should be completed by the institutional contact. Please include references and links to other sources (e.g. Theory of Change, evaluation plans, evaluation reports, evaluation self-assessment documents).

1. EVALUATION PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

- 1.1 What is the process for agreeing evaluation, for example are there any formal structures for agreeing evaluation plans, e.g. as part of project approval processes?
- 1.2 Is the evaluation team involved at programme and project planning stages and, if so, how?
- 1.3 Who oversees the evaluations?
- 1.4 Who receives evaluation reports internally?
- 1.5 How does evaluation feed into decisions about projects and programmes?
- 1.6 Have you collected any feedback internally on how evaluation is working and/or completed the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment? If so, what were the conclusions?

2. EVALUATION DELIVERY

- 2.1 Who takes the lead on delivering evaluations? What role(s) do evaluation staff play?
- 2.2 Are delivery practitioners involved in supporting evaluations? How?
- 2.3 Are academics involved in supporting evaluation? How?
- 2.4 Who else is involved?

3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 What is the process for ensuring ethical evaluations?
- 3.2 What are the implications for the implementation of evaluations?

4. ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT & OTHER INSTITUTIONAL DATA

- 4.1 What sort of institutional data is used to inform evaluation (e.g. admissions, student records, financial, attainment, destinations)?
- 4.2 How is data to support evaluation usually controlled?
- 4.3 Who has access to data?

5. THEORY OF CHANGE

- 5.1 Do staff use logical framework approaches or Theory of Change to plan outreach, participation and progression interventions?
- 5.2 Please provide one to two examples:
List here material appended and file name(s)

7. EVALUATION METHODS

	Very Frequently Used (standard practice)	Often Used (common in most evaluation studies)	Occasionally Used (used ad hoc for a few studies)	Never Used
<i>1. Methods for collecting information from individuals (participants, stakeholders, and others)</i>				
Questionnaires/surveys				
Logs and diaries				
Interviews				
Photo-elicitation				
Personal stories				
Creative expression activities				
Other (please specify)				
<i>2. Information from groups</i>				

	Very Frequently Used (standard practice)	Often Used (common in most evaluation studies)	Occasionally Used (used ad hoc for a few studies)	Never Used
Focus groups				
Voting/polls				
Other (please specify)				
3. Methods for evaluating delivery				
Structured observation (experts)				
Participant observation				
Participant feedback				
Practitioner feedback				
Other (please specify)				
4. Administrative data				
Project records				
National Pupil Database (NPD, HEAT, EMWREP etc.)				
Exam results (schools/colleges)				
HE applications data (e.g. UCAS)				
Student enrolment data				
On-course attainment (university)				
Continuation/completion data (university)				
Degree attainment data				
Graduate progression data				
Student satisfaction (e.g. NSS data)				
Other (please specify)				
5. Secondary sources				
Literature review				
Other (please specify)				

7. EVALUATION APPROACH

Please describe your general evaluation approach making use of the information in this template where appropriate and include brief illustrative examples where applicable.

8. EVALUATION EVIDENCE (COMPLETED EXAMPLE)

Please provide at least one example evaluation of a completed access, participation and progression project or programme. This should be chosen to illustrate your institution's general evaluation approach. If possible, the information provided should include the aims of the evaluation, detail on the methods used, detail on the analysis/results, and the findings/conclusions. Evidence should be in the form of **two** of the following:

- full final report or report on interim findings
- committee paper
- internal briefing paper
- presentation
- other.

List here materials appended with file name(s):

9. EVALUATION EVIDENCE (PLAN)

Please provide at least one example of a current evaluation plan. This could include ongoing work and should be chosen to illustrate how your organisations will meet the OfS evaluation requirements for APP work or regulatory requirements in Scotland and Wales.

List here materials appended with file name(s):

10. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Please append any other relevant reports or materials which help to describe the context for evaluation. These could include, for example, copy of OfS self-assessment review (if appropriate), organisational structure charts/reporting lines, minutes of steering group meetings, operational review documents.

List here materials appended with file name(s):

Completed by:

Name:

Position:

Email:

Date:

FEEDBACK SURVEYS

REVIEW FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE 1: FORMATIVE REVIEW

1. How does your experience of the course so far meet with your expectations? (as expected, different to expected, not sure). Please tell us why you answered that way:
2. The main ideas are communicated clearly (Scale: agree – disagree). Comments:
3. The level of the material is about right (Scale: agree – disagree). Comments:
4. What's been most helpful about the course so far?
5. What could be improved?
6. Do you have any ideas for what else should be included in the sessions/residential or the Peer Evaluation processes?
7. Any other comments?

REVIEW FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE 2: FEEDBACK ON THE RESIDENTIAL

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the residential? (Scale: not at all satisfied – very satisfied)
2. How would you rate the following? (Scale: very poor – excellent)
The accommodation
The meeting venue
Pre-residential information
Timing of the sessions
Pace of the sessions
Facilitation of the sessions
Content of the sessions
Group activities
Time management
3. What did you like most about the residential?
4. What did you like least about the residential?
5. How could the event be improved?
6. Any additional comments or suggestions?

REVIEW FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE 3: FEEDBACK ON PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Peer Review process

1. Did you complete the Peer Reviews both at the same time or one after the other?
2. Please comment on any particular difficulties you faced:
3. How could the Peer Review process be improved?

The Peer Review discussion

4. What did you learn from taking part in the Peer Review process that you wouldn't otherwise have known?
5. Was there anything else that you would have liked to have talked about?

The Peer Review outcomes

6. How do you anticipate using the Peer Review report going forward?
7. Do you think the Peer Review process and report will be useful in any of the following ways: (Y/N/DK)

Supporting planning your evaluations
Supporting undertaking your evaluations
Supporting reporting of your evaluations
Making the case for changes to the evaluation management regime
Securing evaluation resources
Enhancing the evaluation culture internally
Managing expectations for evaluations
Other

Peer review training sessions and guidance

8. Did you feel the Peer Review sessions gave you what you needed to be a Peer Reviewer? (Y/N/DK)
9. How could the training sessions be improved?
10. How could the guidance to Peer Reviewers be improved?

Other comments

11. Any other comments on your experience of the Peer Review process or suggestions for the future?

Completed by:

Date:

KEY TEXTS

Equity and widening participation issues and policy in higher education

Arday, J., Boliver, V., & Branchu, C. (2021) Understanding the Bigger Picture: Exploring the BAME Experience in Higher Education, Social Policy and Society.

Boliver, V., & Powell, M. (2023) Competing conceptions of fair admission and their implications for supporting students to fulfil their potential at university. Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 27(1), 8-15.

Bathmaker, A-M., Ingram, N., Abrahams, J., Hoare, T., Waller, R. and Bradley, H. (2016) Higher education, social class and social mobility: the degree generation. Palgrave MacMillan

Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'The forms of capital'. In Richardson, J.G. (ed.) Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education. New York: Greenwood Press, 241–58.

Burke, P.J. (2012) The Right to Higher Education. Abingdon: Routledge.

Crawford, C. (2014) The link between secondary school characteristics and university participation and outcomes. London: Department for Education.

Harrison, N., & Waller, R. (2018). Challenging discourses of aspiration: The role of expectations and attainment in access to higher education. British Educational Research Journal, 44(5), 914-938.

Mirza, H.S (2018) Respecting Difference: Researching the intersectionality of gender, race, faith and culture in higher education in Burke, Stevenson and Hayton (eds), Evaluating equity and widening participation in higher education, London: UCL Institute of Education Press.

Pickering, N. (2021) Enabling equality of access in higher education for underrepresented groups: a realist “small step” approach to evaluating widening participation, Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 26(1), 111-130.

Shields, S. (2020) Curiosity and careers: Female working-class students' experiences of university, International, Studies in Sociology of Education.

Social Mobility Foundation (2023) Impact Report 2022 – 2023. London: Social Mobility Foundation.

Whitty, G., Hayton, A., and Tang, S. (2015) Who you know, what you know and knowing the ropes: A review of evidence about access to higher education institutions in England. Review of Education, 3 (1), 27–67.

Evaluation expertise

Bryman, A. (2006) Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? Qualitative Research, 6(1), 97–113.

Cohen, L, Manion, L & Morrison, K. (eds) (2018 edition, 2007), Research Methods in Education. Abingdon: Routledge.

Copestake, J. (2014) Credible impact evaluation in complex contexts: Confirmatory and exploratory approaches. Evaluation, 20 (4), 412–27.

Crockford, Julian, (2020) Unknown knowns: implicit epistemological hierarchies in the evaluation of widening participation activities, *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, Volume 22, Number 2, July 2020, 15-43(29) Open University

Harrison, N and Waller, R (2017) Evaluating outreach activities: overcoming challenges through a realist 'small steps' approach, *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 21 (2-3): 81-87

Hayton, A and Bengry-Howell, A (2016) 'Theory, evaluation and practice in widening participation: A framework approach to assessing impact' in *London Review of Education* 14.3. 42–54

Hayton and Stevenson (2018) Key debates in researching and evaluating equity initiatives, Burke, Stevenson and Hayton (eds), *Evaluating equity and widening participation in higher education*, London: UCL Institute of Education Press

Mountford-Zimdars, A., Moore, J. and Shiner, R. (2020) Enhancing widening participation evaluation through the development of a self-assessment tool for practitioners: learning from the OfS project Standards of Evaluation Practice (Phase 2) 2017–2019, In : *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, Volume 22, Number 2, July 2020, 44-66(23) Open University

Office for Students (OfS) (2019) Access and participation standards of evidence

Pawson, R. (2013) *The science of evaluation: a realist manifesto*. London, Sage.

TASO (2023) Enhanced Theory of Change (EToC) guidance and template.

Thiele, T., Pope, D., Singleton, A., & Stanistreet, D. (2018) Exploring the use of mixed methods in research and evaluation of widening participation interventions: Guidance for practitioners. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 20(4), 7–38.

Thomas, L. (2020) Using logic chain and theory of change tools to evaluate widening participation: Learning from the What works? Student Retention & Success programme, *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, Volume 22, Number 2, Special Edition, July 2020.

Peer Evaluation Process

Kline, N. (1998) *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*. London: Cassel.

Starr, J. (2008) *The Coaching Manual*, Pearson

TEMPLATE 3 – PEER EVALUATOR CHECKLIST

The aim of the template is to guide the thought process of the Peer Evaluator in reviewing the information submitted for the Peer Review. However, we suggest that reviewers read and assimilate the information and make their own conclusions in the first instance. The checklist can then be used to make notes to structure the feedback and discussion with the peer evaluation. It does not have to be followed systematically but could be used to capture key points for the meeting and identification of evaluation strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The opportunities and threats can be internal and/or external to the organisation.

A. REVIEWING THE ORGANISATION, CONTEXT & EQUITY PRIORITIES

Refer to Template 1, sections 1-5.

What aspects stand out as being most important for the access, participation and progression work of the organisation?

Do you identify any potential barriers or limitations to achieving the access, participation and progression objectives?

B. REVIEWING EVALUATION PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Refer to Template 2, sections 1-4.

How would you summarise the evaluation context (e.g. centralised/de-centralised, expert-led/practitioner-led etc.)? What might the implications be for evaluators?

Can you identify any notable features in how evaluation is organised? Can you identify any notable features in how evaluation is delivered?

Any factors that could be a block to progressing evaluations? How could these be mitigated?

C. USE OF THEORY OF CHANGE

Refer to Template 1, section 5.

How well does the organisation identify and specify outcomes and impacts for its activities? Is Theory of Change used?

If yes, can you identify any strong points or good practices? Note, this could be in relation to various aspects such as rationale for the intervention, relevance, completeness, logic chain, assumptions, mechanisms, outcome and impact measures, involvement of stakeholders, etc. What do you expect might be the weaknesses/limitations of the approach? How critical are these?

D. METHODS

Refer to Template 2, section 6.

How would you summarise the use of different evaluation methods and data (e.g. narrow or varied, mainly quantitative or mainly qualitative etc.)?

Can you identify any strong points or good practices?

What do you expect might be the weaknesses/limitations? How critical are these?

Can you identify any areas for change/doing things differently?

E. REVIEWING THE EVALUATION EVIDENCE – COMPLETED EXAMPLE

Refer to Template 2, section 7.

Is it clear why the evaluation was needed?

Are the research questions clear?

What evidence is presented and how strong is it?

Any concerns about the reliability of the data?

What other methods might have been used (and why)?

Can you identify any strong points or good practices?

In your opinion, did the method generate the most appropriate type(s) of information? Why/why not?

How well does the evaluation evidence capture and communicate the results?

F. REVIEWING EVALUATION EVIDENCE – PLAN

Refer to Template 2, section 8.

Is there a clear Theory of Change for the intervention, or, if not, do they explain the project process clearly?

Are the measures proposed and indicators to inform them valid? Why/why not?

Are the reasons for using the method(s) for collecting the evaluation information clear?

Are the reasons for choosing the approach to analysing the evidence clear (e.g. within an appropriate research design)?

What are the limitations of the evaluation approach?

Can you identify any areas for change/doing things differently/additional evaluation? What might be the blocks to strengthening this evaluation?

Do you need any more information/points of clarification?

TEMPLATE 4 - PEER EVALUATION REVIEW REPORT

1. REVIEW DETAILS

Institution name:

Institutional commissioner:

Institutional contact:

Peer Reviewer:

Overview of Peer Review activities completed:

Date of Review:

2. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Key issues to be addressed (summary of key contextual factors underpinning the approach)

Overview of the structures and processes for delivery and evaluation

3. ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS

Reflections from the discussion between the reviewer and the institutional contact

4. REVIEW FINDINGS (identifying strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats)

Evaluation context

Programme planning and Theory of Change

Evaluation delivery and methods

Evaluation examples

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary diagram: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Recommendations for evaluation strengthening (operational and strategic)