



Evaluation Values and Criteria Checklist

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Sound evaluations are grounded in clear and appropriate **values** (principles, attributes, or qualities held to be intrinsically good, desirable, important, and of general worth) and **criteria** (standards on which to base judgments). This checklist is intended to help evaluators and their clients consider an appropriate range of generic values and criteria as they identify those that will undergird particular evaluations.

Societal Values

- Equity** Fair to all—a free and reasonable conformity to accepted standards of natural right, law, and justice without prejudice, favoritism, or fraud and without imposition of undue hardships regarding access
- Effectiveness** Successful in meeting targeted needs and/or achieving goals
- Conservation** Deliberate, thoughtful, successful efforts to avoid waste and preserve natural and economic resources, so institutions/programs can operate cost-effectively and cities and the countryside can continue to be fit for future generations
- Excellence** Possessing high standards and performing near the standards or possessing good qualities in an eminent degree
- Citizenship** Being a constructive part of, acting responsibly, and contributing to the common welfare of one's community
- Freedom** Citizens' inalienable rights to follow their conscience in utilizing, supporting, and acting according to their beliefs within reasonably formulated and legally specified limits and without undue restraints
- Lawfulness** Abiding by laws in behaving, settling disputes, distributing public goods, maintaining order, and sanctioning or punishing misbehavior

- National Defense** Maintaining ability to protect society and citizens from aggression from without and from undermining within in order to protect the society's values, possessions, international rights, and viable status in the world community and to preserve its citizens' freedom and other rights

Criteria Inherent in the Definition of Evaluation

- Merit** An object's intrinsic value or quality; concerns whether a program, product, or service matches the state of the art in concept, design, delivery, materials, and outcomes
- Worth** An object's extrinsic value or how useful and affordable it is in meeting the assessed needs of a defined group of beneficiaries. While all institutions should strive to offer meritorious services, sometimes they should terminate even good programs or excellent staff members, because the institution's constituents do not need or cannot afford their services.

Criteria Inherent in the CIPP Evaluation Model¹

- Defensible Purpose** A purpose that is ethical, socially responsible, tractable, and beneficial to society or individuals
- Needs** Conditions or things that are necessary or useful for fulfilling a defensible purpose, e.g., a child's ability to read and a school's possession of competent teachers
- Supportable Plan** A sound, targeted, feasible set of arrangements for fulfilling a defensible purpose; must be responsive to beneficiaries' needs
- Responsible Implementation** Congruence between activities and plans and between expenditures and budget, including improvement of plans and budgets where needed
- Laudable Outcomes** Outcomes that are high in quality, service to all rightful beneficiaries, significance, safety, and cost-effectiveness

¹ A model calling for evaluation of context, input, process, and product in the process of judging a program's value. See Stufflebeam, D. L. (2000). The CIPP model for evaluation in D. L. Stufflebeam, G. F. Madaus, & T. Kellaghan (Eds.), *Evaluation models: Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation* (pp. 279-317). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Institutional Values

- Mission** The chief function of an organization or institution
- Goals** The desired, usually long-term outcomes toward which ambition and effort are directed
- Priorities** Preferential ratings assigning attention, time, and resources to programs, goals, or other entities ahead of competing alternatives

Technical Requirements

- Codes** Sets of rules of procedures and standards of materials designed to secure uniformity and protect the public interest—in such matters as building construction and public health—usually established by a public agency and commonly having the force of law in a particular jurisdiction
- Standards** Sets of principles, rules, or expectations for professional behavior or practices—in such areas as medical specialties, law, engineering, educational tests, and elementary and secondary schools—set up by organized groups and sometimes reinforced by certain sanctioning powers of the groups against nonconforming members

Duties of Personnel

- Professional Competence** An individual's obligations associated with membership in a profession (For example, teachers are expected to maintain up-to-date knowledge of their content areas, develop ability to manage classrooms, be proficient in measuring educational achievement, be skilled in communicating with students and parents, demonstrate effectiveness in helping students learn, and help advance teaching as a profession.)
- Job Performance** Fulfillment of assigned job responsibilities (For example, a teacher might be expected to teach assigned courses effectively, maintain decorum in the classroom, manage extracurricular activities, counsel students, communicate with parents, and cooperate in school improvement projects.)

Ground-Level Criteria

- Idiosyncratic Criteria** Cannot be specified in advance, must be negotiated, should be defined in considerable operational detail (For example, evaluation of an agricultural extension program in a certain locality should assess not only its merit compared to standards of instructional technology, but also should determine with area farmers the assessment criteria they value, e.g., how well the program complements rather than duplicates other sources of information they obtain and especially how well it addresses their most important information needs.)

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