

# **Evaluator Skills: What's Taught vs. What's Sought**


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# Key Questions

- What roles, competencies, and skills do employers look for when hiring evaluators?
  - Are they in line with what is emphasized in graduate programs in evaluation?
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# Methods

- Lit Review
  - Comparison of requirement in graduate programs and competency taxonomies
- Pilot Survey for Employers
- Pilot Survey for Job Seekers
- Job Bank Analysis
- AEA/CES Think Tank Discussion

# Literature Review

- Endless resources on resume writing, interviewing, search strategies, negotiating, and networking
- The question “how do evaluators get a job in a specific organization?” is not yet addressed in the literature.
- Backgrounds, skills, roles, tasks are multifaceted and not agreed upon within the evaluation community.

# Competencies suggested in the literature and by the IPDE program

<b>Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators (Stevahn et al, CJE, 2005)</b>	<b>Essential Skills Series in Evaluation (CES)</b>	<b>IDPE Competency Assessment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional Practice</li> <li>▪ Systematic Inquiry</li> <li>▪ Situational Analysis</li> <li>▪ Project Management</li> <li>▪ Reflective Practice</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal Competence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding Program Evaluation</li> <li>▪ Building an Evaluation Framework</li> <li>▪ Improving Program Performance</li> <li>▪ Evaluating for Results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research Methods (Design, Statistics, Qualitative Methods, Measurement, Other)</li> <li>▪ Evaluation (eval-specific logic &amp; methodology; theory &amp; models/ approaches; social, political, &amp; cultural context; planning, budgeting, contracting, &amp; management; computer &amp; database skills; reporting &amp; utilization; metaevaluation &amp; standards; history &amp; nature of the evaluation profession)</li> <li>▪ Cognate Expertise</li> </ul>

# Core Requirements in Evaluation Ph.D. Programs

	<b>Claremont</b> (units)	<b>WMU IPDE</b> (credit hours)
Evaluation Courses	18	35-39
Research Methods/Statistics	28	12-18
Cognate Area/Electives	26	18-21
Total Course Work	72	65-78

# Survey: Employers (n = 27)

*44% of respondents from academic institutions*

- General evaluation and research design, planning, and methods (n=21)
- Writing skills (n=12)
- Interpersonal skills/teamwork (n=11)
- Data analysis skills (n=9)

# How competent are entry-level job candidates?

- Adequately competent: 14%
- Minor gaps: 57%
- Major gaps: 29%
  - “Real world” experience and understanding
  - Interpersonal skills/teamwork
- Employers by far cited experience and real world application (n=13) as a “positive”

# Job seekers [n=17]

- Academic positions (47%)
- Government (35%)
- Non-profit (35%)
- Independent consulting (29%)




# Job Seekers' Perceived Strengths

- Quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis
- Instrument design
- Evaluation design



# Job Seekers' Perceived Weaknesses

- Industry/content areas
  - Academic credentials
  - Publications
  - Project management experience
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# Which is More Important?

	Content Knowledge	Evaluation Expertise	Equally Important
Employers	0%	35%	65%
Job Seekers	25%	38%	38%

# AEA Job Bank

205 Jobs on AEA Job Bank analyzed

- For profit (35%)
- Non-profit (27%)
- K-12 education (12%)
- Higher education (11%)
- Government (9%)

# ***Job Bank: Skills Sought***

- Quantitative methods and analysis (82%)
- Reporting (81%)
- Interpersonal communication skills (79%)
- Data management (75%)
- Content area skills (66%)
- Supervisory and team management (53%)
- Qualitative methods and analysis (49%)
- Evaluation theory and methods (43%)

# *Responsibilities*

- Analysis (84%)
- Reporting (82%)
- Planning and design (79%)
- Implementation (75%)
- Data collection/field work (69%)
- Instrument development (61%)
- Conceptualization (53%)
- Management/supervision (40%)

# Think Tank Thoughts

- “Real world” experience is crucial
- Interpersonal skills/communication skills also essential
  - Those with backgrounds in counseling found their experience beneficial
- Understanding culture of an organization
  - Including organizations that do not understand or value evaluation

# Preliminary Hypotheses

- Programs should offer real world experience, esp in project management
  - Programs should offer opportunities to learn communication skills
  - Results of refined surveys should tell us more!
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