

GUIDING PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST

for Evaluating Evaluations based on *the 2004 Guiding Principles for Evaluators*¹

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This checklist is designed to help evaluators apply the American Evaluation Association's *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* in formative and summative metaevaluations. The checklist's contents generally adhere to and in some cases are taken verbatim from the *Guiding Principles*. Rewriting and/or expansion of the language in the *Principles* were done to enhance concreteness and systematic application. This checklist is a revision of the previous 2001 version.² Any distortions of material drawn from the *Principles* is unintentional and the checklist developers' responsibility. Otherwise, credit for the content underlying the checklist belongs to the AEA task force members who developed the 1995 version of the *Principles* and the 2004 revision.³ This checklist was developed pursuant to a request from the 2005 AEA Ethics Committee. However, the American Evaluation Association was not asked to endorse this checklist, and no claim is made as to the Association's judgment of the checklist. The developers intend that this checklist be used to facilitate use of the *Guiding Principles* toward the aim of producing sound evaluations.

While the *Guiding Principles* were developed to guide and assess the services of evaluators, they are also advocated for use in evaluating individual evaluations. *The American Journal of Evaluation* provides space for publishing critiques and comments on previously completed evaluation studies. Contributing "meta-evaluators" are asked to ". . . critique the studies, by using wherever possible the existing standards and guidelines published by AEA (the 'guiding principles') and the Joint Committee (the 'evaluation standards')" This checklist is offered as a tool to assist metaevaluators to apply the *Principles* to actual studies.

The checklist is not designed as a stand-alone device for reporting metaevaluation findings. Essentially, it is a format for a metaevaluator's database. It provides the metaevaluator a means to systematically apply the *Guiding Principles*' concepts in compiling, organizing, analyzing, and formatting findings. It is intended that metaevaluators use the results from applying the checklist to prepare and deliver user-friendly reports. However, where appropriate, the completed checklist can be included in the metaevaluation's technical appendix.

AJE's advice to ground metaevaluations in both the "guiding principles" and the "evaluation standards" should be underscored. The *Guiding Principles* and the Joint Committee (1994) *Program Evaluation Standards* are compatible; both have limitations; and both have valuable, unique qualities. Evaluators should employ them as complementary codes and, as appropriate, use them in concert. The "guiding principles" provide only general, although vital advice (**systematic inquiry, competence, integrity/honesty, respect for people, responsibilities for general and public welfare**) to evaluators for delivering ethical and competent service throughout their careers. They do not include details for applying the general career-oriented principles to individual studies. While the *Standards* focus exclusively on educational evaluations, they present detailed criteria for assessing an evaluation's **utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy**. Experience and studies have shown that the *Standards* can be usefully adapted for assessing and guiding evaluations outside the education field. Checklists for applying the Standards are available at www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists.

Application Suggestions

1. As a preliminary step, characterize the target evaluation. Use Form 1 to describe the following items related to the target evaluation: client, financial sponsor, cost of the target evaluation, time frame for the target evaluation, evaluator(s), stakeholder groups, program or other object evaluated, purpose(s) of the target evaluation, key questions, methodology, reports, apparent strengths, and apparent weaknesses. Using the same form, summarize the target evaluation in a succinct paragraph.
2. Characterize the metaevaluation. Use Form 2 to describe the following items related to the metaevaluation: title of the metaevaluation; client; financial sponsor (if different from the client); other audiences; purpose(s); metaevaluation services/reports to be provided; metaevaluative questions; methods; schedule; metaevaluator(s); their relationship(s), if any, to the target evaluation; their relationship(s), if any, to the object of the target evaluation; and main contractual agreements.
3. Collect and study information needed to judge the evaluation. Applicable documents may include contracts, proposals, interim and final reports, newspaper articles, meeting minutes, correspondence, press releases, file notes, court affidavits and depositions, publications, etc. Other sources could include notes from telephone interviews and site visits. One might also provide selected stakeholders a copy of this checklist and invite them to submit information needed to arrive at the noted judgments. Use Form 3 to make a convenient list of the employed sources.
- 4a. Work through the checkpoints for each of the 5 principles (Forms 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16). Determine whether each checkpoint is applicable to the particular evaluation. Write NA on the lines to the left of the nonapplicable checkpoints. For the remaining checkpoints, place a plus (+), minus (-), or question mark (?) on the lines to the left of the applicable checkpoints. (A + means an evaluation met the checkpoint's intent, and a - means the evaluation failed to meet the checkpoint's intent.) Base your + and - conclusions on your judgment of whether the evaluation met the checkpoint's intent. Place a ? in the box if you have insufficient information to reach a judgment. Place a * in the indicated space under the column marked *minimum requirement* for any item you judge to be essential for passing the particular principle. As feasible, collect additional information needed to reach judgments about the criteria for which too little information is on hand.
- 4b. In the spaces provided (on Forms 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16), write the identifying number of each document (including applicable page numbers) or other information source (including comments as appropriate) you used to help make a judgment about each checkpoint.
- 4c. In the spaces provided at the right side of Forms 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16, record noteworthy rationales for your judgments (of +, -, NA, ?, and *).
5. When feasible (as defined below), rate the target evaluation on each principle by following the instructions for **quantitative analysis** that appear following each set of checkpoints (Forms 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17). Do this for each principle only if you have been able to assign + or - ratings as follows: 8 of the 9 checkpoints for Principle A, 6 of the 7 checkpoints for Principle B, 12 of the 21 checkpoints for Principle C, 10 of the 16 checkpoints for Principle D, and 10 of the 13 checkpoints for Principle E. A quantitative analysis result would be dubious for any principle or all of them collectively to the extent that many checkpoints have to be marked NA or ?. A quantitative analysis should not be done for any principle for which a checkpoint marked * (minimum requirement) is not met and should not be done overall if any checkpoint marked * is not met. Rate adherence to any principle Poor if an item marked * (minimum requirement) was not met. Consider the cut points given for making judgments of Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent as general guides. Revise the cut points as you deem appropriate and provide your rationale for the revised cut points.
6. Provide an overall narrative assessment of the evaluation's satisfaction of each principle and overall in the spaces provided for **qualitative analysis** following each set of checkpoints (Forms 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 21).
7. Assess the target evaluation's sufficiency of documentation on Form 19. An evaluation should be judged Poor for any principle or overall if it contains insufficient credible evidence to support its conclusions.
8. If feasible, assign an overall rating of the target evaluation, across all 5 principles, by following the instructions for an **overall quantitative analysis** that appear in Form 20. This will be feasible only if you have been able—under the decision rules in 5 above—to perform quantitative analyses on all 5 principles in Forms 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17 and only if the evaluation has passed all the minimum requirement (*) items.

9. In the **qualitative analysis form** (21), briefly present your overall evaluation of the target evaluation. Do this by thoughtfully considering and synthesizing all of the information and judgments that you recorded in Forms 1 through 20.
10. Caveat: Temper your metaevaluation conclusions according to the **sufficiency of evidence** pertaining to the applicable checkpoints. Conclusions concerning any or all of the *Guiding Principles* should be tentative to the extent that needed evidence is lacking. However, as a general rule, evaluation comments on the target evaluation's sufficiency of documentation are appropriate. In many metaevaluations it will not be feasible to perform sensible quantitative analyses. The qualitative analyses that are always appropriate should clearly state limitations regarding such matters as the sufficiency of evidence and the feasibility of rating the evaluation by quantitative means.
11. Decide **how to report** the information in the completed checklist. Form 22 may be used to present your bottom-line judgments of the evaluation's satisfaction of each guiding principle. Sometimes the metaevaluator will employ the completed checklist only as a working document for preparing a summative evaluation report, such as an article for *AJE*. In such cases, the metaevaluator might appropriately retain and not share the completed checklist; he or she would simply use it to produce other, more user-friendly communications for clients and other stakeholders. However, sometimes it will be helpful to include the completed checklist in a technical appendix to the metaevaluation report. Determinations on these matters should be guided by considerations of how best to inform the audience and secure its interest in and use of the findings and how best to assure the metaevaluation's validity, credibility, and accountability.
12. If the metaevaluators decide to share the completed checklist, they may use Form 23 to sign and date the checklist, thereby attesting to their assessment of the target evaluation.

Form 1: Characterization of the Target Evaluation

Use this form to record basic information and initial impressions concerning the target evaluation.

Title of the target evaluation:

Client of the target evaluation:

Financial sponsor of the target evaluation (if different from the client):

Estimated Cost of the target evaluation:

Time frame for the target evaluation (e.g., from initial contract date to final report deadline):

Evaluator(s):

Stakeholder groups:

Program or other object of the target evaluation:

Purpose(s) of the target evaluation (e.g., bettering products, personnel, programs, organizations, governments, consumers and the public interest; contributing to informed decision making and more enlightened change; precipitating needed change; empowering all stakeholders by collecting data from them and engaging them in the evaluation process; and generating new insights):

Key evaluative questions:

Main methods:

Key reports to be provided by those in charge of the target evaluation:

Apparent strengths of the target evaluation:

Apparent weaknesses of the target evaluation:

Brief narrative description of the target evaluation:

Form 2: Key Points Regarding the Metaevaluation

Use this form to record basic information about the metaevaluation.

Title of the metaevaluation:

Client of the metaevaluation:

Financial sponsor of the metaevaluation (if different from the client):

Other audiences for the metaevaluation:

Purpose(s) of the metaevaluation (e.g., formative and/or summative):

Key metaevaluation services/reports to be provided:

Key metaevaluative questions:

Main metaevaluation methods:

Schedule and due dates for the metaevaluation:

Title and date of the metaevaluation contract:

Metaevaluator(s):

Name:				
Title:				
Affiliation:				

Relationship(s), if any, of the metaevaluator(s) to the target evaluation:

Relationship(s), if any, of the metaevaluator(s) to the object of the target evaluation:

Form 3: Main Documents and Other Information Sources Referenced in Judging the Target Evaluation

Rarely can a metaevaluator succeed in producing a substantive, defensible evaluation of an evaluation by simply reading the final evaluation report. In undertaking a metaevaluation it is important to collect a range of relevant documents and, as feasible, to interview stakeholders. The information used to form metaevaluative judgments is often found in documents such as contracts, proposals, evaluation instruments, correspondence, interim and final reports, technical appendices, newspaper articles, meeting minutes, correspondence, press releases, file notes, publications, etc. Beyond obtaining and studying such documents, metaevaluators should consider conducting site visits and/or telephone interviews to obtain information and judgments from the evaluation’s stakeholders. Such stakeholders include the evaluator, client, program staff, program beneficiaries, and others. It can also be useful to provide selected stakeholders with copies of this checklist and invite them to provide needed information that is otherwise unavailable. Explicitly listing and systematically referencing the documents and other sources of information on which a metaevaluation is based is not always necessary, especially in the case of small scale, formative metaevaluations. However, such documentation can be invaluable when there is a clear need to convince external audiences that the provided metaevaluation judgments are valid and credible.

Instructions: When documenting the basis for judgments, number each source of information used to judge the target evaluation from 1 - n. Provide a label for each document or other source of information below to the right of the pertinent identification number. (When you record your judgments for each checkpoint—on Forms 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16—in the provided spaces you may record the identification number, relevant page numbers (of referenced documents), and comments concerning other information sources you used to reach your judgments.)

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Insert additional pages of references, as needed.

Form 4: Guiding Principle A—SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY

For each checkpoint, assign a NA, +, -, or ?

<p>To meet the requirements for conducting SYSTEMATIC, DATA-BASED INQUIRY, the evaluators <u>did</u>:</p>	<p>Provide the identification number(s) of information sources (from the list on Form 3) you used to reach your judgment. Provide pertinent page numbers for the referenced documents and comments, as appropriate for the other sources.</p>	<p>Place a * below for any checkpoint that you judge to be a minimum requirement, i.e., essential for meeting this principle whether or not all other checkpoints are met.</p>	<p>Provide noteworthy rationales for your judgments of NA, +, -, or ?.</p>
<p>JUDGMENT</p>	<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>MINIMUM REQUIREMENT CHECKPOINTS (*)</p>	<p>RATIONALE</p>
<p>A.1</p> <p>___ Meet the highest technical standards for quantitative methods—so as to obtain and report accurate, credible information. Key examples are the <i>APA Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing</i> and the Accuracy section of the <i>Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards</i>.</p>			
<p>A.2</p> <p>___ Meet the highest technical standards for qualitative methods—so as to obtain and report accurate, credible information. The Accuracy section of the <i>Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards</i> is applicable here.</p>			

<p>A.3</p> <p>___ Engage the <u>client</u> in exploring the shortcomings and strengths of a reasonable range of potential evaluation questions</p>			
<p>A.4</p> <p>___ Engage an appropriate range of stakeholders in exploring the shortcomings and strengths of a reasonable range of potential evaluation questions</p>			
<p>A.5</p> <p>___ Engage the client in considering shortcomings and strengths of the evaluation approaches and methods for answering the agreed upon evaluation</p>			
<p>A.6</p> <p>___ Clearly and fully inform the client and stakeholder about all aspects of the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.</p>			
<p>A.7</p> <p>___ Report in sufficient detail the employed approach(es) and methods to allow others to understand, interpret, and critique the evaluation process and findings</p>			
<p>A.8</p> <p>___ In reporting, make clear the limitations of the evaluation process and findings</p>			

<p>A.9 — In communicating evaluation methods and approaches, discuss in a contextually appropriate way those values, assumptions, theories, methods, analyses, results, and analyses significantly affecting the <u>interpretation</u> of the evaluative findings</p>			
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Form 5: Quantitative Analysis for Guiding Principle A–SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY

Caveat: It is problematic to do any kind of precise quantitative analysis of ratings drawn from the *Guiding Principles* and this checklist, because the relative importance of different checkpoints can vary across evaluations, some checkpoints will not be applicable in given evaluations, and the authors of the *Guiding Principles* provided considerably less detail for some principles than others. There is thus no basis for defining one set of cut scores to divide such criterial concepts as Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent. The following quantitative analysis procedure is provided only as a rough guide and illustration for exploring the quantitative rating matter. This procedure may be useful in some cases, but not others. Users are advised to apply the procedure with caution and where it clearly would be misleading not to apply it at all.

To apply this procedure to quantify the target evaluation’s merit in fulfilling Principle A, carry out the following steps and record your answer in the space at the right of each step.

Procedure	Answer
1. Proceed with this analysis only if all checkpoints for this principle marked * as a <u>minimum requirement</u> have been met (marked +).	
2. Determine the number of <u>applicable indicators</u> associated with Principle A by subtracting the number of Principle A indicators marked NA from the total number of Principle A indicators (9).	
3. If the number of indicators marked + or - is less than 8, <u>abort</u> the quantitative analysis and proceed to the qualitative analysis.	
4. Assess whether the following <u>cut scores</u> are acceptable: and defensible for interpreting the value meaning of the score for Principle A. Indicate your decision by placing a checkmark in the appropriate space to the right. Write the rationale for your decision on this matter in the space to the right. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for all 9 checkpoints: [0-4: Poor, 5: Marginal, 6: Moderate, 7: Good, 8 or 9: Excellent]⁴ • for 8 applicable checkpoints: [0-4: Poor, 5: Marginal, 6: Moderate, 7: Good, 8: Excellent 	___Acceptable ___Not Acceptable Rationale:
5. Determine the rating for the evaluation on Principle A by summing the number of principles met and adding a 0. For example, a score of 8 would receive a rating of 80.	

<p>6. If you disagree with the cut scores in 4 above, provide the ones you will use here. In either case, <u>record your rating and quality designation (poor, marginal, moderate, good, or excellent)</u> of the evaluation in the space at the right. Also, provide your rationale for the new cut scores below:</p>	<p>Rating: ____ Quality Designation: Rationale:</p>
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Form 6: Qualitative Summary for Guiding Principle A—SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY

Write your **overall assessment** of the evaluation's compliance with the SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY Principle below.

Form 7: Guiding Principle B—*COMPETENCE*

For each checkpoint, assign a NA, +, -, or ?

<p>To meet the requirements to provide COMPETENT PERFORMANCE to stakeholders, the evaluator or evaluation team <u>did</u>:</p>	<p>Provide the identification number(s) and page numbers of any documents (from the list on Form 3) you used to reach your judgment.</p>	<p>Place a * below for any checkpoint that you judge to be a minimum requirement, i.e., essential for meeting this principle.</p>	<p>Provide noteworthy rationales for your judgments of NA, +, -, or ?.</p>
<p>JUDGMENT</p>	<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>MINIMUM REQUIREMENT CHECKPOINTS (*)</p>	<p>RATIONALE</p>
<p>B.1 ___ Possess the education, abilities, skills, and experience appropriate to competently and successfully carry out the proposed evaluation tasks.</p>			
<p>B.2 ___ Demonstrate a sufficient level of cultural competence to ensure recognition, accurate interpretation, and respect for diversity.</p>			

<p>B.3</p> <p>___As appropriate, demonstrate cultural competence by seeking awareness of their own culturally-based assumptions, their understanding of the worldviews of culturally-different participants and stakeholders in the evaluation, and the use of appropriate evaluation strategies and skills in working with culturally different groups. (Diversity may be in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economics, or other factors pertinent to the evaluation context.)</p>			
<p>B.4</p> <p>___ Practice within the limits of their professional training and competence and, as feasible, would have declined an evaluation assignment outside those limits</p>			
<p>B.5</p> <p>___In the occasion of being unable to decline an evaluation assignment transcending one’s capabilities, make clear to appropriate parties any potential significant limitations of the evaluation</p>			
<p>B.6</p> <p>___Make every effort to gain the competence required to successfully conduct the evaluation directly or through the assistance of other appropriately qualified evaluators</p>			

<p>B.7 — Evidence a history of continually seeking to maintain and improve evaluation competence—through such means as formal coursework and workshops, self-study, evaluations of one’s own practice, and learning from the practices of other evaluators--in order to deliver the highest level of evaluation service.</p>			
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Form 8: Quantitative Analysis for Guiding Principle B–COMPETENCE

Caveat: It is problematic to do any kind of precise quantitative analysis of ratings drawn from the *Guiding Principles* and this checklist, because the relative importance of different checkpoints can vary across evaluations, some checkpoints will not be applicable in given evaluations, and the authors of the *Guiding Principles* provided considerably less detail for some principles than others. There is thus no clear basis for defining one set of cut scores to divide such criterial concepts as Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent. The following quantitative analysis procedures is provided only as a rough guide for exploring the quantitative rating matter. This procedure may be quite useful in some cases, but not in others. Users are advised to use the procedure with caution and where it clearly would be misleading not to use it at all.

To employ this procedure to quantify the target evaluation’s merit in fulfilling Principle B, carry out the following steps and record your answer in the space at the right of each step.

<p>1. Proceed with this analysis only if all checkpoints for this principle marked * as a <u>minimum requirement</u> have been met (marked +).</p>	
<p>2. Determine the number of <u>applicable indicators</u> associated with Principle B by subtracting the number of Principle B indicators marked NA from the total number of Principle B indicators (7).</p>	
<p>3. If the number of indicators marked + or - is less than 6, <u>abort</u> the quantitative analysis and proceed to the qualitative analysis.</p>	
<p>4. Assess whether the following <u>cut scores</u> are acceptable: and defensible for interpreting the value meaning of the score for Principle B. Indicate your decision by placing a checkmark in the appropriate space to the right. Write the rationale for your decision on this matter in the space to the right.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for all 7 checkpoints: [0-2: Poor, 3: Marginal, 4: Moderate, 5: Good, 6 or 7: Excellent • for 6 applicable checkpoints: [0-3: Poor, 4: Marginal to: Moderate, 5: Good, 6: Excellent] 	<p>___ Acceptable ___ Not Acceptable</p> <p>Rationale:</p>
<p>5. Determine the rating for the evaluation on Principle A by summing the number of principles met and adding a 0. For example, a score of 7 would receive a rating of 70.</p>	
<p>6. If you disagree with the cut scores in 4 above, provide the ones you will use here. In either case, <u>record your rating and quality designation (poor, marginal, moderate, good, or excellent)</u> of the evaluation in the space at the right. Also, provide your rationale for the new cut scores below..</p>	<p>Rating: _</p> <p>Quality Designation:</p> <p>Rationale:</p>

Form 9: Qualitative Summary for Guiding Principle B—COMPETENCE

Write your **overall assessment** of the evaluation's compliance with the COMPETENCE Principle below.

Form 10: Guiding Principle C—*INTEGRITY/HONESTY*

For each checkpoint, assign a **NA, +, -, or ?**

<p>To ensure the <i>INTEGRITY and HONESTY</i> of their own behavior and the entire evaluation process, the evaluator or evaluators <u>did</u>:</p>	<p>Provide the identification number(s) and page numbers of any documents (from the list on Form 3) you used to reach your judgment.</p>	<p>Place a * below for any checkpoint that you judge to be a minimum requirement, i.e., essential for meeting this principle.</p>	<p>Provide noteworthy rationales for your judgments of NA, +, -, or ?.</p>
JUDGMENT	SOURCE	MINIMUM REQUIREMENT CHECKPOINTS (*)	RATIONALE
<p>C.1 ___ Take the initiative in negotiating all aspects of the evaluation with clients and representative stakeholders</p>			
<p>C.2 ___ Negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the evaluation tasks</p>			
<p>C.3 ___ Negotiate honestly with clients and representative stakeholders concerning the limitations of the selected methods</p>			
<p>C.4 ___ Negotiate honestly with clients and representative stakeholders concerning the scope of results likely to be obtained</p>			

<p>C.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate honestly with clients and representative stakeholders concerning appropriate uses of the evaluation's data</p>			
<p>C.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the costs of the evaluation</p>			
<p>C.7 <input type="checkbox"/> As appropriate, forewarn the client and relevant stakeholders of any contemplated procedures or activities that likely would produce misleading evaluative information or conclusions</p>			
<p>C.8 <input type="checkbox"/> Make appropriate efforts to resolve concerns about any procedures or activities that likely would produce misleading evaluative information or conclusions</p>			
<p>C.9 <input type="checkbox"/> As feasible and appropriate decline to conduct the evaluation if important concerns cannot be resolved</p>			

<p>C.10</p> <p>___ If declining a problematic assignment was not feasible, consult colleagues or representative stakeholders about other proper ways to proceed, such as discussions at a higher level, a dissenting statement, or refusal to sign the final document</p>			
<p>C.11</p> <p>___ Prior to accepting the evaluation assignment, disclose any real or apparent conflicts of interest with their role as evaluator</p>			
<p>C.12</p> <p>___ In proceeding with the evaluation, report clearly any conflicts of interest they had and how these were addressed</p>			
<p>C.13</p> <p>___ Explicate their own, their clients', and other stakeholders' interests and values concerning the conduct and outcomes of the evaluation</p>			

<p>C.14</p> <p>___ Before changing the negotiated evaluation plans in ways to significantly affect the scope and likely results of the evaluation, inform, as appropriate, the client and other important stakeholders in a timely fashion of the changes and their likely impact</p>			
<p>C.15</p> <p>___ Record, explain, and report all changes made in the originally negotiated plans</p>			
<p>C.16</p> <p>___ Provide the clients and stakeholders with valid representations of the evaluation procedures</p>			
<p>C.17</p> <p>___ Provide the clients and stakeholders with valid representations of the evaluation data and findings</p>			
<p>C.19</p> <p>___ Within reasonable limits, take steps to prevent or correct misuse of their work by others</p>			
<p>C.20</p> <p>___ Disclose all sources of financial support for the evaluation</p>			

C.21 ___ Disclose the source of the request for the evaluation			
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Form 11: Quantitative Analysis for Guiding Principle C-*INTEGRITY AND HONESTY*

Caveat: It is problematic to do any kind of precise quantitative analysis of ratings drawn from the *Guiding Principles* and this checklist, because the importance and applicability of checkpoints varies for different evaluations, some checkpoints will not be applicable in given evaluations, and there is no one consistent basis for setting cut scores to divide the criterial concepts of Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent. The following quantitative analysis procedures is provided only as a rough guide for exploring the quantitative rating matter. This procedure may be useful in some cases, but not in others. Users are advised to apply the procedure with caution and where it clearly would be misleading not to apply it at all.

To employ this procedure to quantify the target evaluation's merit in fulfilling Principle C, carry out the following steps and record your answer in the space at the right of each step.

2. <u>Proceed with this analysis</u> only if all checkpoints for this principle marked * as a minimum requirement have been met (marked +).	
2. Determine the number of <u>applicable indicators</u> associated with Principle C by subtracting the number of Principle C indicators marked NA from the total number of Principle C indicators (16).	
3. If the number of indicators marked + or - is less than 12, <u>abort</u> the quantitative analysis and proceed to the qualitative analysis.	
4. Determine the <u>percent of Principle C applicable indicators that the target evaluation passed</u> by dividing the number of indicators marked with a plus (+) by the number of indicators <u>not</u> marked NA.	
5. Determine the <u>score for Principle C</u> by multiplying the percent of Principle C applicable indicators marked with a + by 100.	
6. Assess whether the following <u>cut scores</u> [0-39: Poor, 40-59: Marginal, 60-79: Moderate, 80-92: Good, 93-100: Excellent] are acceptable and defensible for interpreting the value meaning of the score for Principle C. Indicate your decision by placing a checkmark in the appropriate space to the right. Write your rationale for your decision on this matter below.	<p>___Acceptable</p> <p>___Not Acceptable</p>
7. If you disagree with the cut scores in 6 above, provide the ones you will use here. In either case <u>record the rating and quality designation (poor, marginal, moderate, good, or excellent)</u> of the evaluation in the space at the right. Also, provide your rationale for the new cut scores below.	<p><u>Rating:</u></p> <p><u>Quality Designation:</u></p> <p><u>Rationale:</u></p>

Form 12: Qualitative Summary for Guiding Principle C-INTEGRITY/HONESTY

Write your **overall assessment** of the evaluation's compliance with the INTEGRITY/HONESTY Principle below.

Form 13: Guiding Principle D—RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

For each checkpoint, assign a NA, +, -, or ?

<p>To meet the requirements for RESPECTING THE SECURITY, DIGNITY, AND SELF-WORTH OF THE EVALUATION’S RESPONDENTS, CLIENTS, AND OTHER EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS, the evaluator or evaluators <u>did</u>:</p>	<p>Provide the identification number(s) and page numbers of any documents (from the list on Form 3) you used to reach your judgment.</p>	<p>Place a * below for any checkpoint that you judge to be a minimum requirement, i.e., essential for meeting this principle.</p>	<p>Provide noteworthy rationales for your judgments of NA, +, -, or ?.</p>
<p>JUDGMENT</p>	<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>MINIMUM REQUIREMENT CHECKPOINTS (*)</p>	<p>RATIONALE</p>
<p>D.1 ___ Develop a comprehensive understanding of the evaluation’s contextual elements, including, as appropriate, geographic location, timing, political and social climate, economic conditions, and other relevant dynamics in progress at the same time</p>			
<p>D.2 ___ Abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding risks, harms, and burdens that might befall participants in the evaluation</p>			
<p>D.3 ___ Abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding informed consent of evaluation participants</p>			

<p>D.4</p> <p>___ Abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding informing participants and clients about the scope and limits of confidentiality</p>			
<p>D.5</p> <p>___ In the event of having to state negative or critical conclusions that could harm client or stakeholder interests, seek in appropriate ways to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur</p>			
<p>D.6</p> <p>___ In seeking to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms, guard against compromising the evaluation's integrity</p>			
<p>D.7</p> <p>___ As appropriate, act in accordance with justified conclusions that the benefits from doing the evaluation or in performing certain evaluation procedures should be foregone because of the risks and harms</p>			

<p>D.8</p> <p>___ To the extent possible, seriously consider during the negotiation the evaluation’s possible risks and harms and what to do about them</p>			
<p>D.9</p> <p>___ Conduct the evaluation and communicate the results in a way that clearly respects each stakeholder’s dignity and self-worth</p>			
<p>D.10</p> <p>___ As feasible, act to assure that evaluation participants benefit in return</p>			
<p>D.11</p> <p>___Assure that evaluation participants had full knowledge of and opportunity to obtain any benefits of the evaluation</p>			
<p>D.12</p> <p>___Assure that program participants were informed that their eligibility to receive services did not hinge on their participation in the evaluation</p>			

<p>D.13</p> <p>— Seek to ensure that those asked to contribute data and/or incur risks do so willingly</p>			
<p>D.14</p> <p>— Become acquainted with and respect differences among participants, including their culture, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity</p>			
<p>D.15</p> <p>— Take into account participants' differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting the evaluation</p>			
<p>D.16</p> <p>— Foster the evaluation's social equity by providing, as appropriate, feedback and other pertinent benefits to the evaluation's contributors</p>			

Form 14: Quantitative Analysis for Guiding Principle D—RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

Caveat: It is problematic to do any kind of precise quantitative analysis of ratings drawn from the *Guiding Principles* and this checklist, because some criteria are more important than others, many criteria will not be applicable in given evaluations, the importance and applicability of checkpoints vary for different evaluations, and there is no clear basis for setting cut scores to divide the criterial concepts of Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent. The following quantitative analysis procedure is provided only as a rough guide for exploring the quantitative rating matter. This procedure may be useful in some cases, but not in others. Users are advised to apply the procedure with caution and where it clearly would be misleading not to apply it at all.

To employ this procedure to quantify the target evaluation's merit in fulfilling Principle D, carry out the following steps and record your answer in the space at the right of each step.

7. Proceed with this analysis only if all checkpoints for this principle marked * as a <u>minimum requirement</u> have been met (marked +).	
2. Determine the number of <u>applicable indicators</u> associated with Principle D by subtracting the number of Principle D indicators marked NA from the total number of Principle D indicators (16).	
3. If the number of indicators marked + or - is less than 10, <u>abort</u> the quantitative analysis and proceed to the qualitative analysis.	
4. Determine the <u>percent of Principle D applicable indicators that the target evaluation passed</u> by dividing the number of indicators marked with a plus (+) by the number of indicators <u>not</u> marked NA.	
5. Determine the <u>score for Principle D</u> by multiplying the percent of Principle D applicable indicators marked with a + by 100.	
6. Assess whether the following <u>cut scores</u> [0-39: Poor, 40-59: Marginal, 60-79: Moderate, 80-92: Good, 93-100: Excellent] are acceptable and defensible for interpreting the value meaning of the score for Principle D. Indicate your decision by placing a checkmark in the appropriate space to the right. Write your rationale for your decision on this matter here:	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Acceptable
7. If you disagree with the cut scores in 6. above, provide the ones you will use here. In either case, <u>record your rating and quality designation (poor, marginal, moderate, good, or excellent)</u> of the evaluation in the space at the right:. Also, provide your rationale for the new cut scores below:	Rating: Quality Designation: Rationale:

Form 15: Qualitative Summary for Guiding Principle D—RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

Write your **overall assessment** of the evaluation's compliance with the **RESPECT FOR PEOPLE** Principle below.

Form 16: Guiding Principle E—RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GENERAL AND PUBLIC WELFARE

For each checkpoint, assign a NA, +, -, or ?

<p>To articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that may be related to the evaluation, the evaluator or evaluators did:</p>	<p>Provide the identification number(s) and page numbers of any documents (from the list on Form 3) you used to reach your judgment.</p>	<p>Place a * below for any checkpoint that you judge to be a minimum requirement, i.e., essential for meeting this principle.</p>	<p>Provide noteworthy rationales for your judgments of NA, +, -, or ?.</p>
<p>JUDGMENT</p>	<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>MINIMUM REQUIREMENT CHECKPOINTS (*)</p>	<p>RATIONALE</p>
<p>E.1 ___ Present evaluation plans and reports that include, as appropriate, relevant perspectives and interests of the full range of stakeholders</p>			
<p>E.2 ___ Consider not only the immediate operations and outcomes of the evaluand, but also its broad assumptions, implications, and potential side effects</p>			
<p>E.3 ___ Follow the precepts of freedom of information by allowing all relevant stakeholders access to evaluative information in forms that respect people and honor promises of confidentiality</p>			

<p>E.4</p> <p>— As resources allow, actively disseminate findings to stakeholders</p>			
<p>E.5</p> <p>— As appropriate, tailor different reports to the needs and interests of different right-to-know audiences</p>			
<p>E.6</p> <p>— In tailoring reports for specific audiences, include all results that may bear on their interests and refer to any other tailored communications to other stakeholders</p>			
<p>E.7</p> <p>— Report clearly and simply so that clients and other stakeholders could easily understand the evaluation process and results</p>			
<p>E.7</p> <p>— Maintain an appropriate balance between meeting client needs and other needs</p>			

<p>E.8</p> <p>___ Effectively address legitimate client needs without compromising ethical and methodological principles</p>			
<p>E.9</p> <p>___ As needed, effectively and ethically address any threats to the evaluation's integrity, e.g., ones associated with inappropriate client requests or political conflicts</p>			
<p>E.10</p> <p>___ As needed, forthrightly identify and discuss conflicts with the client and stakeholders, resolve the conflicts if possible, or, as feasible, abort the evaluation if a serious conflict cannot be resolved</p>			
<p>E.11</p> <p>___ If a serious conflict could not be resolved and the evaluation could not be terminated, make clear the negative consequences for the evaluation</p>			

<p>E.12</p> <p>— In conducting the evaluation, take all appropriate steps to counter any clear threats, associated with the evaluation, to the public interest and good</p>			
<p>E. 13</p> <p>— Analyze and convey findings in terms of the welfare of society as a whole as well as the interests of the client and other relevant stakeholder groups</p>			

Form 17: Quantitative Analysis for Guiding Principle E—GENERAL AND PUBLIC WELFARE

Caveat: It is problematic to do any kind of precise quantitative analysis of ratings drawn from the *Guiding Principles* and this checklist, because some checkpoints are more important than others, many checklists will not be applicable in given evaluations, the checkpoints vary in importance and applicability across evaluations, and there is no one basis for setting cut scores to divide the criterial concepts of Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent. The following quantitative analysis procedure is provided only as a rough guide for exploring the quantitative rating matter. This procedure may be useful in some cases, but not others. Users are advised to apply the procedure with caution and where it clearly would be misleading not to apply it at all.

To employ this procedure to quantify the target evaluation’s merit in fulfilling Principle A, carry out the following steps and record your answer in the space at the right of each step.

1. Proceed with this analysis only if all checkpoints for this principle marked * as a <u>minimum requirement</u> have been met (marked +).	
2. Determine the number of <u>applicable indicators</u> associated with Principle E by subtracting the number of Principle E indicators marked NA from the total number of Principle E indicators (13).	
3. If the number of indicators marked + or - is less than 10, <u>abort</u> the quantitative analysis and proceed to the qualitative analysis.	
4. Determine the <u>percent of Principle E applicable indicators that the target evaluation passed by</u> dividing the number of indicators marked with a plus (+) by the number of indicators <u>not</u> marked NA.	
5. Determine the <u>score for Principle E</u> by multiplying the percent of Principle E applicable indicators marked with a + by 100.	
6. Assess whether the following <u>cut scores</u> [0-39: Poor, 40-59: Marginal, 60-79: Moderate, 80-92: Good, 93-100: Excellent] are acceptable and defensible for interpreting the value meaning of the score for Principle E. Indicate your decision by placing a checkmark in the appropriate space to the right. Write your rationale for your decision on this matter here:	<p>___ Acceptable</p> <p>___ Not Acceptable</p>
7. If you disagree with the cut scores in 6 above, provide the ones you will use here. In either case, <u>record the rating of the evaluation and quality designation (poor, marginal, moderate, good, or excellent)</u> in the space at the right. Also, provide your rationale for the new cut scores below:	<p>Rating:</p> <p>Quality Designation:</p> <p>Rationale:</p>

Form 18: Qualitative Summary for Guiding Principle E—RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GENERAL AND PUBLIC WELFARE

Write your **overall assessment** of the evaluation's compliance with the **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GENERAL AND PUBLIC WELFARE Principle** below.

Form 19: Documentation

Provide evaluative comments on the target evaluation's **sufficiency of documentation**.

Form 20: Summary Quantitative Evaluation of the Target Evaluation

Caveat: It is problematic to do any kind of precise quantitative analysis of ratings drawn from the *Guiding Principles* and this checklist, because the relative importance of different checklists varies across different evaluations, many checkpoints will not be applicable in given evaluations, and there is no single basis for setting cut scores that divide the criterial concepts of Poor, Marginal, Moderate, Good, and Excellent. The following quantitative analysis procedure is provided only as a rough guide for exploring the quantitative rating matter. This procedure may be useful in some cases, but not others. Users are advised to apply the procedure with caution and where it clearly would be misleading not to apply it at all.

To apply this procedure to quantify the target evaluation's merit in fulfilling all 5 AEA Guiding Principles, carry out the following steps and, as appropriate, record your answers in the space at the right of each step.

1. <u>Proceed with this analysis only</u> if you obtained ratings (in Forms 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17) for all 5 principles in accordance with the instructions given for those forms.	
2. If the target evaluation rated Poor on any principle, judge the evaluation a <u>failure</u> regardless of its ratings on the other principles.	
3. If the target evaluation rated Marginal or higher on all 5 principles, determine the evaluation's <u>overall score</u> by summing the 5 scores and dividing by 5.	
4. Assess whether the following <u>cut scores</u> [0-39: Poor, 40-59: Marginal, 60-79: Moderate, 80-92: Good, 93-100: Excellent] ⁸ are acceptable and defensible for interpreting the value meaning of the score for the overall evaluation. Indicate your decision by placing a checkmark in the appropriate space to the right. Write your rationale for your decision on this matter here:	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Acceptable</p>

⁸ The rationale for this set of cut scores is focused mainly on the top and bottom judgment categories. Any evaluation that met less than 25 percent of checkpoints overall would provide a poor basis for decision making. An evaluation that met 93 percent or more of the checkpoints would be excellent, so long as no checkpoint judged to be a minimum requirement was failed. Meeting 80 - 92 percent of the checkpoints would seem to provide a probably good basis for decision making, again assuming that no minimum requirement checkpoint was missed. An evaluation that scored in the moderate range (meeting 60 - 79 percent of the checkpoints) would not be considered good, but also not disastrous if no minimum requirement checkpoints were missed. Summative metaevaluations should seek to credit evaluations that fall in the excellent range and discourage use of those that fall in the poor and marginal ranges (0 - 59 percent of the checkpoints met). Formative metaevaluations should seek to help strengthen especially those evaluations that fall in the moderate and good ranges.

<p>5. If you disagree with the cut scores in 4. above, provide the ones you will use here. In either case, <u>record the rating and quality designation (poor, marginal, moderate, good, or excellent)</u> of the evaluation in the space at the right. Also, provide your rationale for the new cut scores below:</p>	<p>Overall Rating:</p> <p>Overall Quality Designation:</p> <p>Rationale:</p>
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Form 21: Summary Qualitative Evaluation of the Target evaluation

Assess the target evaluation's overall merit, taking into account pertinent caveats.

Form 22: Overall Summary Evaluation of the Target Evaluation

Taking account of all the preceding analyses, provide your overall summary judgment of the target evaluation by placing checkmarks in the appropriate cells below.

<u>PRINCIPLE</u>	RATINGS				
	Poor	Marginal	Moderate	Good	Excellent
A. Systematic Inquiry					
B. Competence					
C. Integrity/Honesty					
D. Respect for People					
E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare					
Overall					

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS: In the space below state any general points, caveats, etc. that readers should keep in mind as they consider the preceding bottom-line judgments.

Form 23: Attestation

To the best of my/our ability, the above analysis, judgments, syntheses, and overall assessment provide a sound evaluation of the target evaluation based on the American Evaluation Association's 2004 *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*.

Name(s) (*print*):

(*sign*): _____ **Date:**

(*print*):

(*sign*): _____ **Date:**

(*print*):

(*sign*): _____ **Date:**

(*print*):

(*sign*): _____ **Date:**

(*print*):

(*sign*): _____ **Date:**

Reference

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994). *The program evaluation standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Endnotes

¹ American Evaluation Association, 2004. Guiding principles for evaluators. www.eval.org/Guiding%20Principles

² . Stufflebeam, D. L. (September, 2001). *Guiding Principles Checklist*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists

³ The AEA Task Force that developed the original 1995 *Guiding Principles* included William Shadish, Dianna Newman, Mary Ann Scheirer, and Christopher Wye. The 2004 revision of the *Principles* was prepared the 2002 and 2003 AEA Ethics Committees, whose collective membership included Gail Barrington, Deborah Bonnet, Elmima Johnson, Anna Madison, Doris Redfield, and Katherine Ryan.

⁴ . For each principle and all five combined cut scores for any evaluation that scored less than 40 would be considered a poor basis for conclusions and decisions. An evaluation that scored 93 to 100 would be judged excellent, so long as it passed all the minimum requirement standards. A score in the 80 to 92 range would seem to provide a quite good basis for conclusions and decisions, again assuming that no minimum standard was missed. An evaluation that scored in the marginal (40 to 59) and moderate (60 to 79) ranges would not be considered good, but also not disastrous if no minimum requirement checkpoints were missed. Summative metaevaluations should seek to credit evaluations that fall in the excellent range and discourage use of those that fall in the poor and marginal range. Formative metaevaluations should seek to help strengthen evaluations, especially those that fall in the marginal and moderate ranges.