Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub
Evaluation Guide for Careers Activities and Programmes
Edition 1 – February 2021

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is an ongoing process whereby you are making judgements about the quality of your careers' activities and programme, with the aim of making it as effective as possible.

According to the UK Evaluation Society the main purpose of evaluation is to *'provide relevant evidence, rigorously gathered and analysed to inform decisions about the value of policies and programmes and appropriate allocation of resources.'* This evidence can come from a range of sources.

Evaluating and collecting this evidence becomes a systematic, ongoing process as part of your careers programme.

Source: Careers and Enterprise Company: Evaluating the Evidence Support Doc.

Why evaluate?

Gatsby Benchmarks

For Gatsby Benchmark 1, the Good Career Guidance report from Gatbsy specifies: '*The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers [or college staff] and employers as part of the evaluation process.*' (page 22 of schools guide and page 2 of the College guide).

For the Compass evaluation, the criterion is that your programme is 'evaluated for effectiveness at least every 3 years' however, good practice is to evaluate at least yearly.

Ofsted requirements

In the school inspection handbook (p.61) it says that '*Inspectors will use a **range of evidence** to evaluate personal development, including: the quality of careers information, education, advice and guidance, and how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps.*' This evidence can come from a range of the methods detailed in this guide.

In the Ofsted guidance from the Careers and Enterprise Company they suggest asking the following framing questions:
1. Is what's on offer high quality?
2. **How do you know?**

Evidence towards Careers quality assessments such as Career Mark and Matrix

If you want to apply for any quality awards such as The Matrix Standard or the Career Mark or The Quality in Careers Standard they will also ask for evidence of evaluation.

For the students

Evaluation is important for the accountability measures above but is also an important to improve. By using a range of evaluation methods, the careers programme can continuously improve, which ultimately benefits the students.

✓ Top Tips ✓

Build evaluation opportunities into all planning of careers progamme and activities

Keep all feedback and evaluation evidence in one file for easy access

Include evaluation and reflection time as a regular agenda item in all meetings

Evaluation Methods – One-page guide

Methods of evaluation and gaining feedback	Students	Parents	Employers	Staff / Governors
Quick feedback: Face-to-face				
Red/amber/green cards	✓			
Dart board/target board	✓			
Post-it notes or postcards – 1 sentence feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical movements	✓			
One more question slips	✓			
Quick feedback: virtual				
Poll within Teams/Zoom	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online poll like Mentimeter	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poll with email	✓	✓	✓	✓
Padlet page	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hands up/like features and reactions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online quiz	✓			✓
Surveys				
Paper surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓
Electronic surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓
Face to face surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓
Qualitative methods				
Email conversations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Verbal conversations and questioning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Focus groups	✓	✓	✓	✓
Case studies	✓		✓	
Student council/PTFA	✓	✓		
Networking events		✓	✓	✓
Suggestion box	✓			✓
Quantitative methods and self-assessments				
Attendance and engagement figures	✓	✓	✓	✓
Compass	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destination data	✓			
Using LMI data	✓		✓	
Skills assessments	✓			
Self-assessment frameworks				
CDI Framework	✓	✓	✓	✓

Quick Feedback: Face to face

Red/Amber/Green cards

A pile of these cards can be left out with a box near the door in the careers room, or any room you run careers activities in. You can ask them to rate the session in terms of red, amber or green by selecting the relevant card and popping it in the box when they leave. For some additional feedback, you can leave out a pen to add comments to the card.

Dart/target board

You can draw a darts/target board and ask participants to write their name on a post-it note and stick it on the board, with the most happy/confident being closest to the target and the least happy/confident being further away. Otherwise, you can ask them to score their satisfaction with a specific number on the board. The Velcro darts boards (like this one on Amazon) work effectively for this.

Post-it notes/postcards

There are several ways that this can be used. You can ask a specific question or ask for '1 sentence feedback' i.e. one thing you've learned, one sentence about this activity, your career plan in one sentence etc.

Physical movements

This can be a good way to get people out of their seats. You can have a continuum across the room with each side being opposite extremes. One side can be 'extremely satisfied' and the other side being 'extremely unsatisfied' and you then ask people to stand along that imaginary continuum with how satisfied they are. The other way this method is can work is if you have A, B, C and D stuck up in the four corners of the room. You can then ask multiple-choice questions and ask participants to go and stand in the corner of whatever their response is. You can take photographs for evidence or make a note of the responses.

'One more question' slips

A good way of evaluating understanding is ask for questions from your participants. This can work well towards the end of a session. Especially if you when ask 'does anyone have any more questions?' you don't get any response. You can ask every person to think of one question each and write it on the slip anonymously and then chose them at random to answer some. Any that you don't get through, may form the planning for another follow-up session or to adapt the session for next time. This method can work for both group and 1-to-1 sessions.

Quick feedback: Virtual

These may be subject to IT permissions and may not always be accessible in all institutions. Your IT team may be able to help if there's specific permissions you need.

Polls within Teams/Zoom

Both Zoom and Teams meetings have built-in polling features. These can be used at any point during a meeting, for example you can ask about confidence about the subject area at the start and then again at the end of the session to measure the distance travelled.

If you have a Teams channel for your careers, you can also embed a poll or Microsoft Form into your Teams channel to ask for feedback.

- Guide to polls in Teams meetings
- Guide to polls in Teams channel
- Guide to polls in Zoom meetings

Online poll like Mentimeter

Mentimeter is a free polling website where you can set up a presentation to ask the audience specific questions. There are a range of different question formats such as word clouds, multiple choice and sliding scales. Mentimeter has the benefit of being both visual and very easy to both set up and use. The free version only allows two slides per presentation, but you can have multiple presentations and reuse them over and over. You can easily use Mentimeter within a Teams or Zoom meeting by sharing your screen and participants can use any digital device such as a phone to answer the questions.

This 7 minute video is a good overview of how to get started. There are lots of YouTube video tutorials for all aspects of using Mentimeter on their channel.
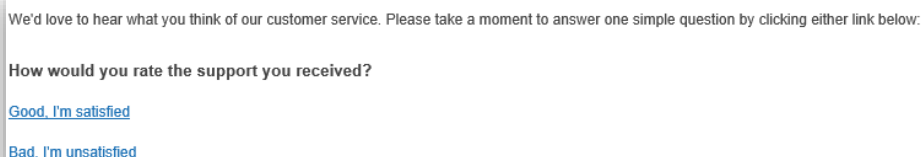
There are other platforms like Plickers, Vevox and Poll Everywhere which are similar to Mentimeter.

Poll within an email

If you have the correct permissions, you can insert a poll directly into your email

This works well as there are no additional clicks or pages to open. However, even if you don't have this functionality, you can use hyperlinks to open an online form (like Microsoft Form, Google Forms or Survey Monkey). You could have two or more different forms based on their response. Below is an example of how that might look:

Once you have the forms set up and a template like the one below, you can easily copy and paste it into an email or include it as a signature.

We'd love to hear what you think of our customer service. Please take a moment to answer one simple question by clicking either link below:

How would you rate the support you received?

Good, I'm satisfied

Bad, I'm unsatisfied

Padlet page

The Padlet website is primarily an online noticeboard. Each Padlet page can be set up in a number of ways but you can set it up as a board where anyone can add their own comments, or 'like' a comment from someone else. It is very flexible as you can include images or hyperlinks. Here is an example of where it has been used as a notice board for comments. You can set one up like this as an online suggestions box. You can set it up as a poll like this example or this example. As well as the interactive features for evaluation, it can be used to share content and for collaborative work. There are lots of tutorials online such as this one.

Hands-up/like feature and reactions

Within both Teams and Zoom meeting there are lots of opportunities to make the most of the 'reactions' options. For example, you can ask a question like 'put your hand up feel confident with this particular area'. Another method is to add a range of comments/statements in the chat and ask participants to like the one they feel best fits them.

Online quiz like Kahoot

Kahoot is primarily used as a quizzing website. It is free to set questions and use. Participants complete the quiz by entering a code into the website on their phones or devices. Setting up a quiz can be a good way of assessing understanding knowledge. There are other ways it can used as a polling website like Mentimeter. This article gives some good examples.

Surveys

The Careers and Enterprise Company have shared a number of [example evaluation documents](#) that can used as they are, or adapted for purpose.

Paper surveys

If you are able to give out paper surveys, the advantage is that it does return a much higher response rate. Ask for them to be completed before the participant(s) leave the room. The disadvantage is that the data needs to be analysed manually which can be time-consuming. They tend to work best where there are not too many questions – one side of A4 max.

Electronic surveys

If your school or college already uses Microsoft Teams, embedding a [Microsoft Form](#) can be very easy and will download into Excel. Google forms and Survey Monkey can be used in the same way. The main advantage of using electronic forms are that the data gets inputted directly and can then be easily analysed. The link can be shared widely and can be added to the careers pages on the website, on social media or placed into an email signature. The full URL links are often very long so the use of a shortener like [Bitly](#) can help if you're using the link in a non-electronic format.

Face-to-face surveys

This can work well with one-to-one interactions whereby you get feedback by asking a set of questions before the student leaves the room (or over the phone/Teams call). The advantage to this is that you can ask follow-up questions or for clarification. It can put them on the spot and is more time-consuming but can be an effective way of gathering students' views. You can do the same with colleagues, employers, parents etc. The advantage of using a pre-made survey rather than more qualitative methods, is that you can generate both quantitative and qualitative data and can easily compare between people and over time.

Qualitative Methods

Email conversations

Any feedback that you receive via email (good and bad) can be used as evaluation. You can email to specifically ask for feedback after you've completed your activity. A good habit is to file those emails away as soon as you receive them, either in an electronic folder or print off and file in a paper folder. This means that when it comes to evaluating that feedback, it's all in one place.

Verbal conversations and questioning

Often, we naturally evaluate as we go. For example, we might think about how an interaction went afterwards and discuss it with colleagues. Or in a conversation with a student we would ask how they felt a visit to a University went, or how they felt about a mock interview etc. You might then discuss any actions needed based on the discussion. To turn these conversations into evaluation evidence, they need to be recorded as soon as possible. One way to do that is in a follow-up email. For example, you might email the student and said 'I'm pleased to hear that the trip went well, when we talked you said that there wasn't information about accommodation, I've found this email address for you so you can write to them to ask more'.

Focus groups

This is a more formal way of gathering feedback. This can be effective with any group of stakeholders. It helps to set questions in advance, although you may find the topic of conversation goes off in different directions. When it works well you can capture some very interesting viewpoints in a focus group. There may already be groups set up that can work well for this such as student prefects, alumni groups or heads of curriculum areas.

Case studies

Case studies are very popular method of evaluation as you are able to explain the impact of careers activities and programme on individuals. It is important to anonymize case studies and check that the person involved is happy for their story to be shared, even if they can't be identified by name. When you have a selection of case studies these can be used in both evaluation but also in marketing and promotional materials.

Student council / PTFA

A student council or a parent body group such as a PTFA is an established group that could be a good source all feedback in a type of focus group activity. There may also be opportunities for them to work together collaboratively on an evaluation piece, where you can have representatives from all key stakeholders together giving their views and listening to each other's viewpoints.

Networking events

Networking events can be an effective way to evaluate as you are able to benchmark against other institutions. Formal talks and workshops are often based around examples of good practice but there are many informal ways of learning at these events such as speaking to people at the breaks.

Suggestion box

Suggestion boxes can be placed in a range of different locations to try and encourage comments and suggestions. For example, they can be put in the library, reception area, careers rooms and common spaces. If you provide paper and pens it can encourage comments and suggestions it should be an easy way to get feedback. However, you may find you have a low response rate.

Quantitative methods and self-assessments

Attendance and engagement figures

Doing simple analysis based on attendance and engagement figures for activities such as careers talks, work experience and mock interviews is a simple way to calculate how many students are taking part in these activities. With these figures you can enter them into compass+ to look at particular subgroups of students. This is especially important when evaluating if disadvantaged groups such as pupil premium and SEN are accessing and taking part in careers activities.

Compass

Compass+ has been designed as a tool to [evaluate your careers programme](). You can look at each of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks to see where the gaps are and to compare against the national averages. You are also able to compare over time to see where the benchmarks have increased or decreased. The advantage to this is that the report generated after you complete the evaluation can be shared with senior leaders governors and other key stakeholders.

Destination data

The Careers and Enterprise Company have a useful guide to the Why and How of Destination Data which we have stored on our [Gatsby Benchmark 3 page]() on the Sharepoint site. They make reference to the DFE's [Destinations Data Good Practice Guide]()

The main value of destination data is to compare it against the careers programme to ensure the activities reflect common destination paths for your students. For example, you can look at popular colleges and universities and also popular career paths and jobs to check they are covered in your programme.

Using LMI

In a similar way to destination data, Labour market information and intelligence can be used as a useful evaluation tool for your careers programme. You can compare the national and local job opportunities that are on the rise against your programme to see if there are any gaps.

Skills assessments and job quizzes

By understanding more about the characteristics of your students, you can use this information to evaluate if your careers programme is fit for purpose. With a tool like the [skills assessments]() in the Digital package from Skills Builder Partnership and [the reporting zone]() in Career Pilot you can analyse the information about cohorts of students.

Self-assessment frameworks

The Careers and Enterprise Company have developed an Evidence Evaluation tool which can be used as a guide to consider the evidence you have from all of the different data collection sources above. It can work well at the end of the academic year, when reviewing the previous year and planning/adapting the programme for the new academic year.

If you are looking at applying for any quality awards such Matrix accreditation or the Complete Careers Quality Mark, they also have their own self-assessments.

CDI framework

The CDI Careers Framework gives a clear audit document for evaluating against learning outcome statements for 17 areas of careers, employability and enterprise education. There are blank audit templates that can be downloaded for students in different key stage groups. There is also a curriculum audit sheet, where teachers and curriculum teams can evaluate how their subject areas fit with the careers framework.

Further Reading and references

Hambly, L. and Bomford, C. (2019) *Creative Career Coaching. Theory into Practice.* Routledge, Oxon, UK.

Morris, M. and Hooley, T. (2019) *Evaluating school careers' provision* Keynote speech for CDI, available online at: https://adventuresincareerdevelopment.wordpress.com/2019/08/09/evaluating-school-careers-provision-full-presentation/ [Accessed Feb. 2021]

Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation.* London, Sage.

UK Evaluation Society (2021) https://www.evaluation.org.uk/about-us/what-is-evaluation/ [Accessed Feb. 2021]