

Equity in Higher Education – Impact Evaluation Provider Directory

2025 Application Guidelines



ACSES

Australian Centre
for Student Equity
and Success



Curtin University

acses.edu.au

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success acknowledges Indigenous peoples across Australia as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the nation's campuses are situated. With a history spanning more than 60,000 years as the original educators, Indigenous peoples hold a unique place in our nation. We recognise the importance of their knowledge and culture, and reflect the principles of participation, equity, and cultural respect in our work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and future, and consider it an honour to learn from our Indigenous colleagues, partners, and friends.

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1. Introduction

The Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) is a national research and policy centre funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and based at Curtin University. ACSES partners with universities to close equity gaps in higher education by identifying and promoting evidence-based policies, practices, and programs that improve student success. We do this through various activities and funding (including grants and fellowships), training, and providing resources and curating evidence repositories and summaries.

ACSES has a vision to be the leading authority on finding what works in creating more equitable outcomes for higher education students. We will achieve this by designing, implementing, and evaluating activities, programs, and initiatives designed to support target groups of students in accessing and succeeding in higher education. This includes us working with key university staff to embed evaluative thinking into business-as-usual, and to provide guidance and support for staff responsible for implementing and evaluating higher education equity programs.

1.1 Background

One of the most effective ways to understand what works in higher education equity is through impact evaluations (IEs). These evaluations assess whether equity-focused programs and activities are achieving their intended outcomes. They can take different forms, including:

- quantitative IEs, which estimate the causal impact of programs by using comparison groups
- theory-based IEs, which examine how and why a program contributes to outcomes.

While some universities have in-house expertise to conduct impact evaluations, many do not. To support institutions in finding the right skills, we are developing the Impact Evaluation Provider Directory (the Directory).

The Directory will help universities and other stakeholders identify external experts who offer specialised skills and independent perspectives in evaluating equity initiatives. It will make it easier for institutions to access and engage with the right evaluation professionals.

2. The Impact Evaluation Provider Directory

ACSES is committed to there being a strong culture of evaluation and continuous improvement in the higher education equity sector. This requires the availability of well qualified and experienced evaluators. To this end, ACSES is pleased to invite applications for inclusion in the Impact Evaluation Provider Directory. This Directory will list qualified individual evaluators who can support impact evaluation work across the higher education equity sector.

2.1 Purpose of the Directory

The aim of this Directory is to:

- make it easier for higher education equity practitioners to identify and engage capable impact evaluation providers
- improve transparency across the sector
- ensure value for money by promoting proven expertise.

Please note that being listed in the Directory does not constitute endorsement by ACSES, nor does it guarantee work. However, it does signal that the listed individual meets defined quality criteria for conducting impact evaluations.

ACSES will promote the Directory as a resource for the Australian higher education sector. ACSES will not refer the sector to any specific providers; the selection of any individual will be the sole responsibility of the higher education institution seeking the service.

ACSES will request feedback periodically from the equity sector about Directory providers, and this feedback may be made available to those using the Directory, to help them make an informed decision.

2.2 Structure of the Directory

The Directory is an open panel, meaning new applicants may be added through periodic calls. Listings will include:

- name of the individual (and where relevant, their employer)
- approved evaluation stream(s): quantitative IE and/or theory-based IE
- contact details (email and phone).

The Directory will be hosted online and accessible to higher education equity stakeholders who may contact providers directly to discuss evaluation needs.

3. Provider applications

3.1 Eligibility and requirements

The Directory is open to any applicant within Australia.

Applicants must nominate individuals, even if submitting as a company.

Each named individual must demonstrate:

3.1.1 Minimum requirements (Pass/Fail)

For each evaluation stream (quantitative or theory-based) the individual is applying under, they must:

- have completed training relevant to that evaluation approach
- have played a core technical role in the delivery of at least one completed impact evaluation relevant to the approach. A “technical role” relates to the execution, and/or analysis of the evaluation in a way that requires specialist methodological expertise relevant to the IE stream. It does not relate to the more general project management or coordination, stakeholder engagement, or administrative roles.

For full definitions of quantitative and Theory-based IEs used here, please refer to the [SEHEEF](#).

3.1.2 Evaluation criteria

Criteria	Quantitative IE stream	Theory-based IE stream
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal qualification in a relevant field with strong quantitative focus (for example, evaluation, economics, statistics, social science, health science).• Completed relevant training to IE stream¹ (for example, experimental/quasi-experimental approaches, methods, techniques).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal qualification in a relevant field (for example, evaluation, public policy, implementation science).• Completed relevant training in the IE stream (for example, theory-based IE approaches, methods, techniques).
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorship on at least one publicly available, formally and externally, peer-reviewed² impact evaluation publication³ using methods relevant to the stream.• Successful referee report regarding individual's ability to: work successfully with subject-matter experts when delivering IE, deliver with integrity, and within time and/or financial constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorship on at least one publicly available, formally and externally peer-reviewed impact evaluation report using methods relevant to the stream.• Successful referee report regarding individual's ability to: work successfully with subject-matter experts when delivering IE, deliver with integrity, and within time and/or financial constraints.

3.1.3 Supporting information required

Applicants must provide:

- a completed application form, demonstrating that the evaluation criteria have been met.

¹ Training relevant to the IE stream may or may not be embedded within the applicant's formal qualification. Relevant courses should be listed in the application, unless the relevant content is obvious from the formal qualification information provided.

² An external, formal peer review is a review process common for publishing journal articles, or similar, such as grey literature that has undergone a formal peer review process by an established, organisational publication committee or panel of experts. This does not include any reports that have undergone an "internal" peer review (for example, by colleagues or supervisors).

³ Publications include academic theses, research papers, academic publications, and evaluation reports that are publicly available.

3.1.4 Referees

Applicants must include two referees that have worked directly with the applicant on an impact evaluation. All nominated referees will be contacted to confirm the applicant meets the criteria, and notably that the applicant:

- contributed technical expertise to a successful impact evaluation
- worked successfully with subject-matter experts to deliver the impact evaluation
- delivered the impact evaluation within time and/or budget constraints, and with integrity.

Approval to the Directory will require at least one referee to recommend the applicant for inclusion on the Directory and confirm the criteria have been met by the applicant.

3.2. Application questions

Direct all questions, by 15 August 2025, to:

Associate Professor Tim Pitman

Director – Trials and Evaluation Program
Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success
Curtin University
GPO Box U1987 PERTH WA 6845

Email: acses@curtin.edu.au

Subject: IE Provider Directory Questions

3.3. Application submission

Applications should be submitted electronically by 29 September 2025.

Submissions should include in the subject line: **Equity in Higher Education – Impact Evaluation Provider Directory**

Address the email to the attention of Tim Pitman, Director – Trials and Evaluation Program

Email: acses@curtin.edu.au

3.4. Information for selected providers

If your application is successful, ACSES will:

- notify you of acceptance and inclusion in the Directory
- offer general guidance on sector expectations and opportunities but will not manage work engagements or issue projects directly.

3.4. Key dates and documentation

Stage 1: Request for Proposal issued	
Notification of Call for Applications made public	21 July 2025
Questions close	15 August 2025
Stage 2: Application submission	
Closing date for applications	29 September 2025
Notification of outcomes	31 October 2025
Providers appointed to the Directory	31 October 2025

Application Documentation: The *Equity in Higher Education – Impact Evaluation Provider Directory* (this document) and the *Application Template* are available [on our website](#).

4. Other information

4.1 Privacy

ACSES will take all reasonable measures to ensure that any personal information contained in the application will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

No applicant shall provide any information, make any statement, or issue any document or other written or printed material concerning their application to any media without the prior written approval of ACSES.

Individuals approved for the Directory may choose to remove their information available on the Directory at any stage.

4.2 Contracts for services

There will be no contracts between approved providers and ACSES as part of this Directory. Any contracts offered to Directory providers are the sole responsibility of the institution contracting that provider. All costs incurred will be the responsibility of the institution, and it is expected that the costs will be negotiated between the Directory provider and the institution.