EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

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Evaluation planning template

[Use this template for equity-focused evaluations that do not require formal HREC approval. Complete only the sections relevant to your activity and delete sections that are not relevant.]

[Project Title]

Background

Write an overview of the problems you are looking to solve and key contextual issues. It should answer the following questions:

- What is the core problem the work is aiming to resolve?
- What are the root causes of the core problem?
- Who are the students most impacted by the core problem, and how many students are in these groups?
- What are the key contextual issues impacting the problem within ECU and more broadly?
- How do the ECU Strategic plan and/or other university plans or frameworks connect to the core problem?

The initiative

Next, describe what the work is and how you plan to go about it. This should have a specific focus on how you are working to resolve the core problem. Consider addressing the following questions:

- Is this a new or ongoing initiative?
- What are the intended **primary outcomes** of the work (long-term outcomes that should indicate the core problem identified above are resolved)?
- **Which root causes you are addressing** to get there (because you cannot solve everything!)?
- What are the intended **supporting outcomes** you plan to achieve on the way to the long-term outcomes (short-medium term outcomes)?
- What is your broad theory of how the work will lead to its key aims (this could be a logic model or a focused theory – use graphics if appropriate)?
- Stage of student lifecycle (Pre-Access, Access, Participation, Attainment and Transition out, Non-lifecycle specific – include secondary if necessary)

- Activity category (Information and experience, Skills, Resources, Institutional development
- In what year did/When will the initiative commence?

Evaluation planning

Type of evaluation

Guidance: Identify whether this will be continuous quality improvement (CQI), theory-based impact evaluation (TBIE) or quantitative impact evaluation (QIE).

Scope

Use this subsection to identify any specific areas that will be in and out of scope. For example, you may want to focus your evaluation on specific student cohorts or only on your own initiative, or you may want to look at how your initiative interacts with other initiatives across ECU. If you are explicitly putting particular focuses out of scope, make a clear statement in this section to that effect.

Evaluation questions: Continuous quality improvement

The evaluation questions will be driven by the type of evaluation. CQI questions should include investigation of whether the initiative's design is appropriate for its audience, whether it is resourced appropriately, if the work is delivered to students as intended, and how students react to the initiative, e.g. (bearing in mind you may not ask all of these):

- Is [initiative] the right approach for addressing the issue of [needs] among [equity group/s]?
- Are the funds, people and skills sufficient to build and deliver [initiative]?
- Did the design phase integrate evidence-based practice?
- Was the work delivered as intended/to a level of appropriate quality?
- How many students did [initiative] reach, including [equity group/s]?
- How did students initially react to [initiative]?
- How did [equity group/s] differ in their reaction to [initiative]?

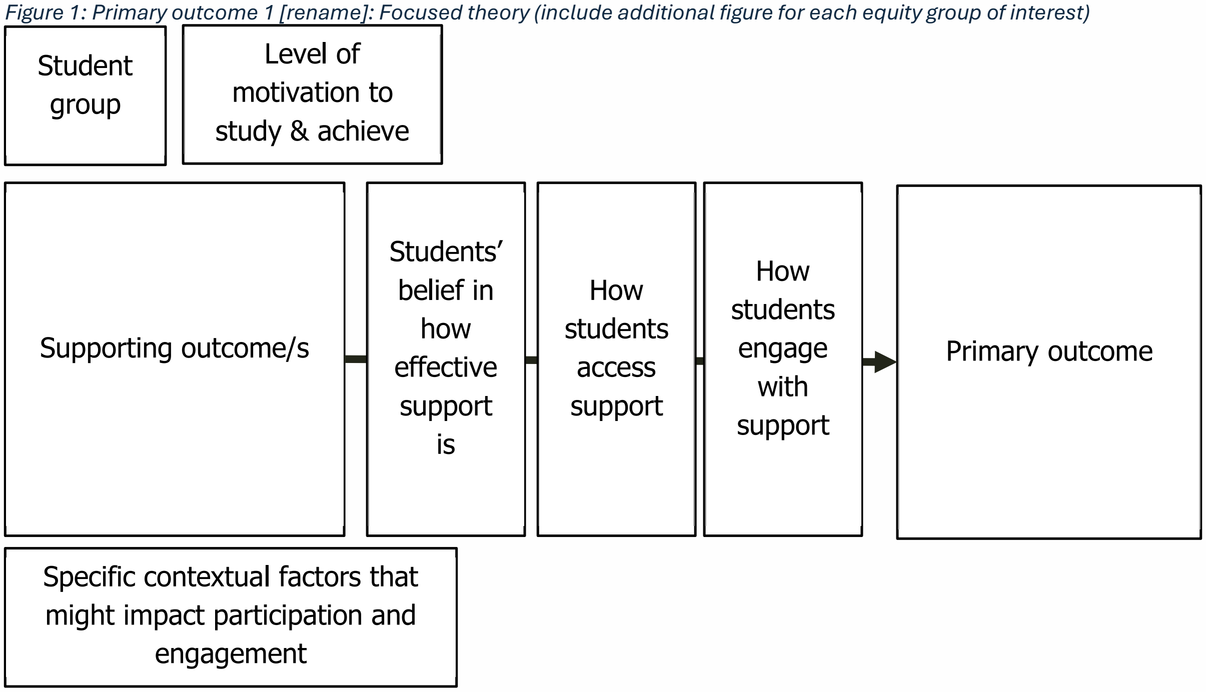
Evaluation questions: Theory-based impact evaluation

Theory-based impact evaluation questions ask how and through what processes the initiative has impacted students, based on its intended outcomes. Using either your logic model or focused theory (see Figure 1, below), ask e.g. (bearing in mind you may not ask all of these)::

- To what extent did [initiative/activity/supporting outcome] contribute to [supporting outcome/primary outcome] among [equity group/s]? [Ask for each intended outcome]

- How/through what processes did [initiative] contribute to [outcome] among [equity group/s]?
- Did the mechanisms of change underlying [initiative] impact differ by context or setting?

Figure 1: Primary outcome 1 [rename]: Focused theory (include additional figure for each equity group of interest)



Evaluation questions: Quantitative impact evaluation

If you are looking to conduct a quantitative impact evaluation, the evaluation question needs to ask a question with a numerical answer: To what extent has [initiative] improved [outcome] for supported students? You will need to ask this for each intended outcome, describe specific subgroup analyses, and the specific measures you will use.

Sources of evidence (data)

Use this section to outline the sources of evidence or data you will use to answer the evaluation questions. These sources should be relevant and reliable, and realistic to collect within the scope of your evaluation. A mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence or data is ideal. You should also indicate which sources are existing, and which are new sources you will need to design and collect. Examples of evidence sources are listed below:

Existing evidence sources (data ECU or others already collect)

- QILT data
- ECU student data (access, participation, achievement and transition)
- Learning analytics

- CRM data

For each existing evidence source, outline a broad plan for how you will collate and analyse it, and any considerations around access and data governance you may need to take into account.

Additional evidence sources (data you will need to collect)

- Program participation data
- Exit sheets (e.g. ECU equity minute paper)
- Qualitative interviewing
- Focus groups
- Incidental interviews (‘back pocket qualitative questions’)
- Observation methods
- Survey methods
- Document analysis

For each additional evidence source, outline a plan for how you will recruit participants, gain their informed consent, encourage them to participate and ensure reciprocity. You should also aim to ensure accessibility. Each of the guides on the above sources will provide insight into how to do this.

Ethical considerations

Ensure you are able to meet the following ethical considerations:

☐ Voluntary participation with easy opt-out

☐ Plain-language information provided

☐ Privacy: anonymous or de-identified responses

☐ Data minimisation: collect only what’s needed

☐ Support resources provided (if sensitive topics)

☐ Indigenous data protocols respected (if relevant)

Note: If at any point publication/generalisation becomes a goal, or risks increase, pause and seek advice from your ethics office – HREC may be required. Consult the Guide to ethical evaluation for further guidance.

Identify the risk level of your evaluation:

☐ Low – short, anonymous feedback on non-sensitive topics

☐ Moderate – de-identified data; possible sensitive content; added supports

☐ High – sensitive topics or publication intent (consult Research Ethics Team)

Describe a rationale for the risk level identified above, and outline additional steps you will take if the risk level is moderate or high.

Identify how findings will be shared back to participants (e.g. short summary report).

Timeline

- Design and planning:
- Data collection/fieldwork:
- Analysis:
- Reporting:

Roles & Responsibilities

- Evaluation lead (name, role, contact):
- Team member 1 etc (name, role):
- Initiative lead (name, role, contact):