



Get the Most out of Your Project Evaluation:

A Checklist for Using Evaluation Findings

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Evaluation use occurs when an evaluation leads to a change in the program being evaluated, the host organization, or the people involved in the evaluation or the program. ATE projects are encouraged to use their evaluations for reasons beyond accountability to NSF. One of the ATE program's broader impact review criteria reinforces the importance of using evaluation: "Is the evaluation likely to provide useful information to the project and others? Will the project evaluation inform others through the communication of results?" (<http://bit.ly/nsf-ate>). Below are 14 ways project staff and other stakeholders can use evaluation findings throughout a project's lifecycle.

Using Evaluation Findings

For Project Improvement

Create a feedback loop so you are regularly reflecting on evaluation findings and using them to fine-tune your activities and deepen your project's impact.

1. **Identify and maximize the project's strengths.** Evaluation findings may reveal which activities are working especially well. Set aside time for project staff to review and discuss evaluation findings and their implications for project activities. Find ways to make changes that increase project impact, such as expanding the reach of high-impact activities or dedicating more resources to successful areas.
2. **Assess and address any trouble areas.** Evaluation findings could identify aspects of the project that are not working as intended. Insights from participant feedback, institutional data, or other sources of data can help you more fully understand barriers to success. They may even suggest modifications to project activities, such as changes in curriculum content, training materials, or instructional activities.
3. **Gauge project's reach of project's target audience.** Obtain a deeper understanding of who your project is reaching. Disaggregate findings by participant characteristics such as gender, race, age, discipline, enrollment status, or other factors. This can reveal whether some are being served more by your project than others or if an intended audience is not being served as expected.
4. **Add or modify industry engagements.** Evaluation findings may identify a gap in industry partnerships or business expertise. Use these insights to recruit new industry partners or find additional opportunities for collaboration.



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For Project Dissemination and Advocacy

Promote technological education teaching and learning by sharing what you've learned with colleagues and others who can help advance your project and the field.

5. **Share lessons learned from your evaluation with others whose intended outcomes are similar to yours.** Share lessons documented through your evaluation at conferences; in practitioner and academic journals; or in blogs, newsletters, and magazines. Help others learn from your project's struggles and areas of success.
6. **Highlight project achievements for institutional administrators.** Sharing evaluation findings with institutional administrators can bring awareness and acclaim to your project and department. Most college administrators are too busy to read full evaluation reports. Provide a one-page summary of key achievements that highlight the value and impact of your work. They'll appreciate having this succinct document to share with institution stakeholders like board members, policymakers, and community partners.
7. **Disseminate news of your project's achievements to industry partners.** Sharing evaluation findings with industry partners helps them to assess the return on investment for their time and other contributed resources. It may also prompt them to continue or increase their involvement with your project.
8. **Communicate key findings to participants who provided data for the evaluation.** A great way to thank evaluation participants is to share key findings with them. If evaluation findings suggest that some aspects of the project should change, demonstrate that you value participants' input by sharing how your project is responding.

For Project Accountability

Fulfill the requirements of informing advisors and funders of your project's progress and impact.

9. **Share information about project activities and achievements with advisors.** If your project has an advisory group, share short reports or presentations to communicate key evaluation findings and progress towards your project goals. Invite discussion of implications for project activities.
10. **Include and respond to evaluation findings in your annual report to NSF.** In addition to integrating evaluation findings into your NSF annual report, describe how the project responded to or took action because of evaluation results. Don't just report findings—explain how you are using the information.
11. **Include key results in your final outcomes report to NSF.** A project outcomes report is required within 90 days of a grant's end date. This report provides a "complete picture of the results" across all years of the project (bit.ly/POR-FAQs). Use your evaluation findings across the life of your project to summarize the most important lessons and showcase the impact of your project.

For Project Planning

Use evaluation findings about past work to plan your next endeavor.

12. **Identify areas of need for future projects.** Review evaluation findings to identify emerging needs for faculty, students, or other stakeholders. Draw on these insights to craft goals and objectives for a new ATE proposal.
13. **Identify ideas for future targeted research projects.** If a project's evaluation showed that a certain type of intervention worked especially well in your local context, the evaluation may point to an opportunity to test how the intervention works on a larger scale. See EvaluATE's [Checklist of the Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development](#) to learn more about foundation, early-stage, and design and development research.
14. **Substantiate results of prior support in future proposals.** If your next ATE proposal names any PI or co-PI who have received NSF support within the past five years, your proposal will need to include a summary of results from that completed work. Your evaluation findings will help you fulfill this requirement. Also, use your evaluation findings to explain how what you learned from prior projects is informing your new proposal.