



Professional Development Survey 2005 – 2006

Results and Actions

Background

Between November 2005 to February 2006 UKES surveyed UKES members and those attending the annual conference concerning their professional development experiences and needs. The results were intended to form the basis of an action plan for work in 2006 to support professional development and a medium term strategy in this area.

This paper presents the results of the survey and actions which are now being undertaken by UKES.

If you have any comments about this paper, or for further information, please contact Dale Webb: dale.webb@health.org.uk or telephone 020 7257 8023.

Our sample

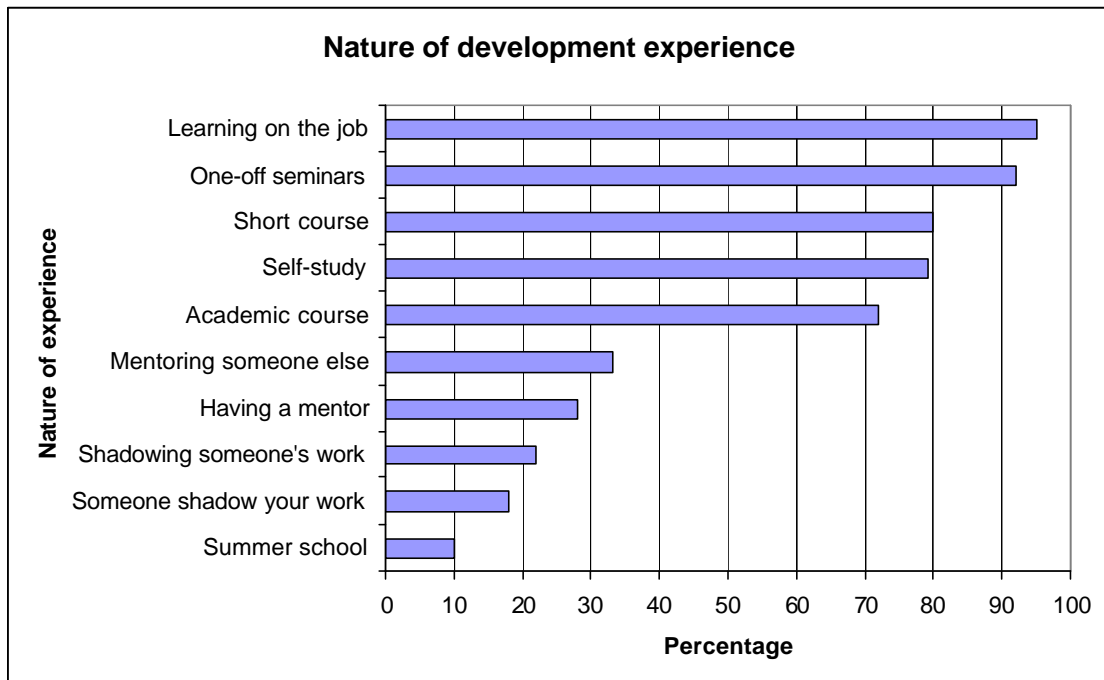
90 surveys were completed, either in paper form or online. 67% of respondents were women and 76% were current members of the UKES. We asked respondents to describe the nature of their evaluation work (multiple responses were allowed): 71% described themselves as evaluators, 36% as evaluation managers, 26% as evaluation commissioners and 8% as 'other' (including lecturer, policy analyst and trainer).

Professional development experience

The following chart shows the types of professional development expertise that our sample told us that they had received.

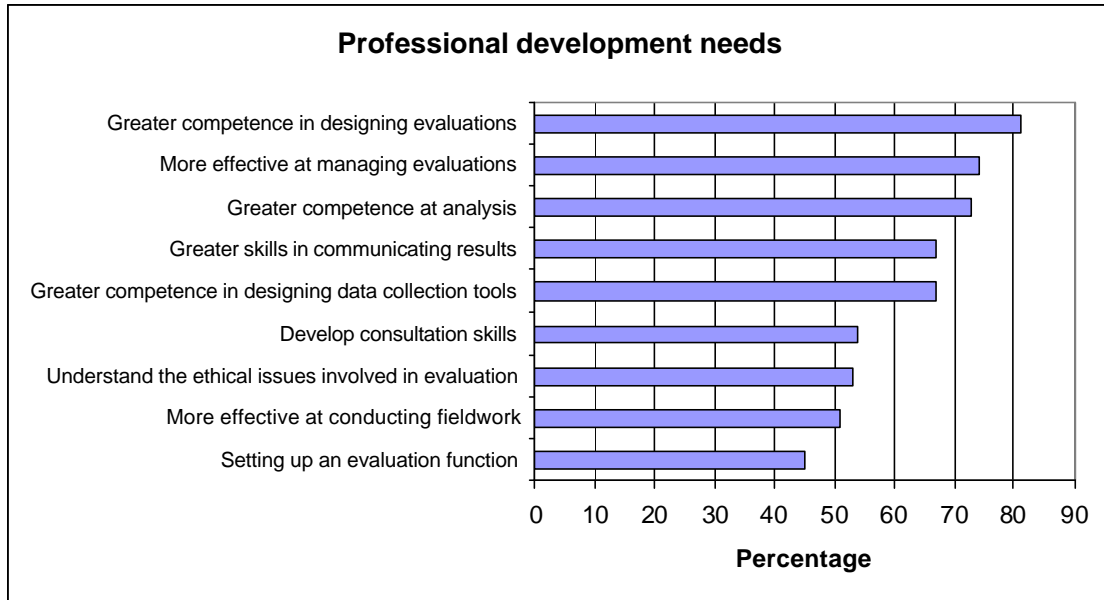


The following chart shows the nature of that development experience.



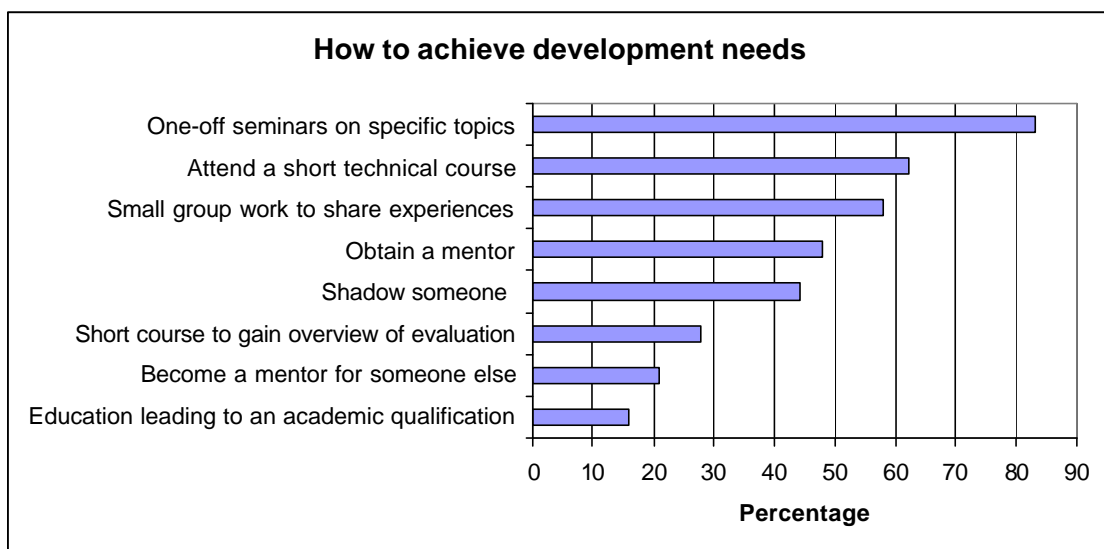
Professional development needs as an evaluator

We asked respondents to identify some professional development needs. The main responses were as follows:



Additional needs cited were: influencing policy through evaluation; evaluation as a tool for organisational development; commercial sensitivity and keeping abreast of the latest developments in the field.

The preferred means to achieve these needs were:

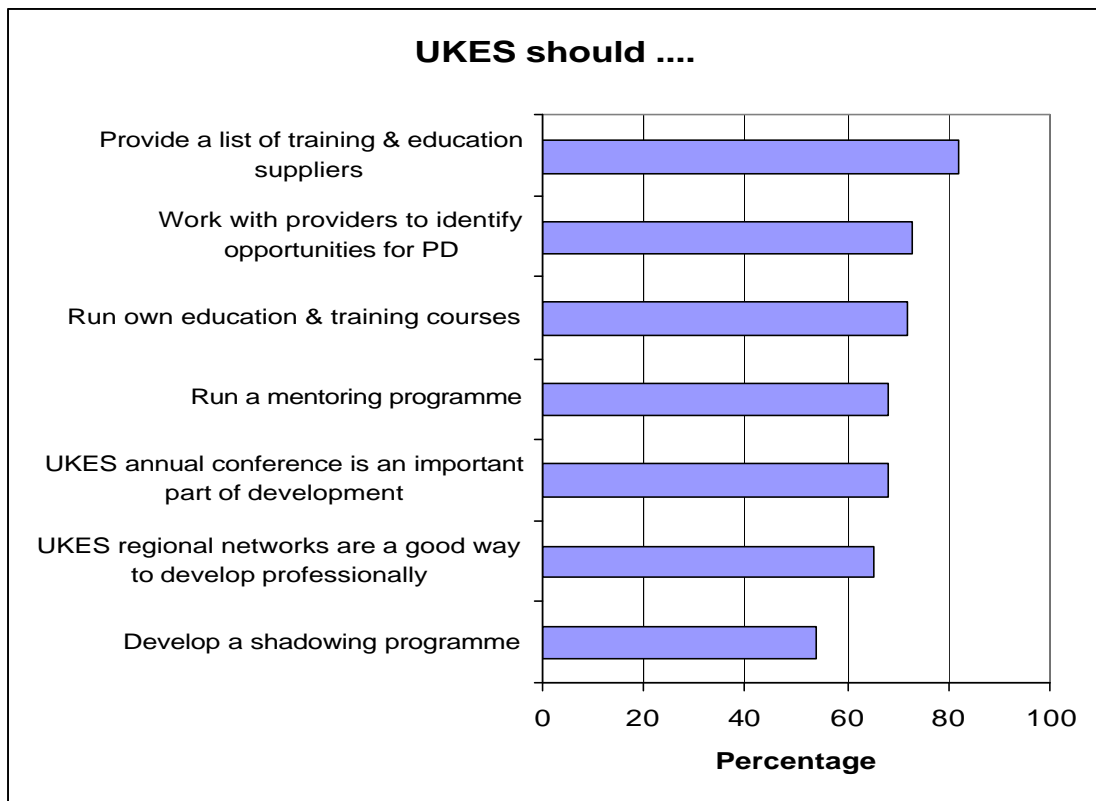


Other suggestions included master classes to explore 'live' issues, a reading group and accreditation of courses.

Role of UKES in supporting professional development

Finally, we asked respondents for their views on the role of UKES in supporting professional development. We gave them seven statements and asked them to report, using a 5-point Likert scale, whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement.

The results are presented for those who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements.



Discussion

Evaluation is much more than a technical or methodological exercise and yet the predominant types of professional development experience reported by our sample relate to research methodology and project management. Understanding the policy environments in which evaluation often takes place and the ethical issues involved in evaluation as well as having the interpersonal skills to engage stakeholders are all important facets of being an evaluator yet fewer respondents told us that they had received some development in these areas.

Professional development has typically come through more traditional routes such as seminars, academic study and short courses, yet evaluation is in many ways a craft, whose skills are learned on the job. So there is a challenge in developing professional development opportunities that are able to work with evaluators *in situ*.

None of this is to underplay the importance of professional development that provides evaluators with the skills to design and manage evaluations, which emerged as the most cited development need by our sample. Whilst there is continued appetite for development needs to be met through seminars and short courses there is also the desire to share experiences with fellow evaluators in small group settings and to work with a mentor or to shadow someone in their place of work.

So what will UKES do in response to this survey?

We will collate a list of suppliers of professional development in evaluation and make that list available via our website in the autumn of 2006

We will pilot a mentoring scheme during the second half of 2006. We will evaluate it with a view to extending the scheme in 2007.

We have ensured that professional development training is available at this year's annual conference and will endeavour to do so in future years.

We will work with the regional evaluation networks to promote their activities as professional development opportunities.

We will identify opportunities to broker conversations with suppliers of professional development in evaluation in order to ensure that the needs of society members are better met.