



**Extending the Professionalisation of
Evaluation**

Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review (VEPR)

Annexes

United Kingdom Evaluation Society

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Annex 1 VEPR Concept Paper

Introducing a Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review (VEPR) initiative for the UK Evaluation Society and EES

A. Why have a peer review system for evaluation practitioners?

In the past decade evaluation associations and societies internationally have been focusing on ways to enhance professionalism in evaluation through the development of competencies frameworks and practice standards. The evaluation community has also debated the pros and cons of a ‘designation’¹ system that can support professional accountability, enhance quality evaluation practice and support individual practitioners’ acquisition of knowledge and skills. Canada was the first evaluation society to implement such a system. However, there are a range of difficulties in developing designation systems, given the varied pathways to evaluation work, the diverse roles that evaluation practitioners undertake, and the diversity of cultural and other contexts in which evaluation is practised.

The proposed VEPR adopts a new approach, focusing primarily on professional development through peer review, rather than designation as such. This takes into account the difficulties noted above concerning roles, pathways to the evaluation field and diversity of cultural contexts. The proposed VEPR model is based significantly on professional peer review systems that have been found to be effective within other professions, including the teaching, medical and midwifery professions that also require a strong focus on ethical practice. Each evaluation society can tailor the basic VEPR model to suit the cultural contexts of that society’s members.

B. How will the proposed VEPR system work, and how will it benefit members of a sponsoring evaluation society?

VEPR envisages a review process where members of an evaluation society or association apply to their evaluation society to undergo a structured professional practice review with the assistance of two approved peer reviewers. The reviewer panel will be comprised of senior evaluation practitioners representing a range of evaluation roles - evaluation providers, educators, commissioners, advisors, and so on - so that the VEPR will be relevant to any of those roles, and the review can be undertaken by peers experienced in those evaluation roles. The proposed review process will focus on the applicant identifying selected practice areas for review where they would like to enhance their professional capability. These areas will address the capabilities framework of the relevant society. The proposed process of selecting reviewers for a particular applicant allows for the applicant to have some choice, to ensure that the reviewers are appropriate as well as independent.

VEPR is **not** a test, or something that the applicant might ‘pass’ or ‘fail’. The review process is specifically focused on self-reflection and designed to support applicants to explore their current practice, focusing on skills areas that they want to develop,

¹ The term ‘designation’ is used in this paper to refer to a formally recognised status for a member of a particular profession that indicates a level of skill and accountability.

through a structured discussion with peers they respect. 'Success', in this system, occurs when both the applicant and the reviewers consider that significant learning has occurred through the review process. To become an approved VEPR reviewer, the person must have undergone a VEPR review themselves.

A satisfactory review will have two main outcomes. Firstly, the reviewers and applicant work together to compile a report that summarises what the applicant has learned and achieved through the peer review, together with some reflections from all parties on the applicant's areas for development. This document is the property of the applicant and may be used by them for their own purposes, including sharing with others. Secondly, where the review is concluded to the satisfaction of the applicant and reviewers, the applicant's name is included in an index on the society's website, indicating that they have undergone a formal peer review process. Should the peer reviewers conclude that the applicant has not demonstrated an acceptable level of learning from the review process, a development plan will be suggested to the applicant together with an invitation to a further review within 12 months.

Key advantages of the proposed VEPR model are that it:

- facilitates regular and personalised professional development
- is entirely voluntary, promoting participation through peer encouragement rather than as a professional imperative or prerequisite of practice
- combines the objectives of professional learning and accountability to the profession
- sets up accountability to the profession itself, rather than to the professional body
- promotes discussion of evaluation practice and standards amongst practitioners.

A further benefit of the VEPR is that it provides a system for evaluation societies and associations to identify capacity and capability gaps and needs across the profession at large. It also provides assurance to commissioners, evaluation stakeholders and participants, and the broader public that evaluation practitioners are engaged in continuing professional development.

Annex 2 Guiding Principles of Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review

Background

For over two decades evaluation associations and networks have been exploring ways to promote evaluation excellence through improved access to quality education and training, dissemination of good practices, adoption of ethical guidelines and delineation of the capabilities required for evaluation. However, history confirms that another critical component of professionalisation is the existence of legitimate collective processes that recognise the fundamental knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to carry out work to an adequate standard of quality. Voluntary evaluator peer review is one such process.

Evaluation activities have grown rapidly since the advent of the evaluation discipline in the 1950's. Evaluations are now carried out all over the world in highly diverse cultures and legitimising contexts. While no single professional recognition system can be expected to fit all countries and regions, the internationalisation of evaluation means that many evaluators practice across national borders. As with other professions the credibility of the evaluation profession on a global scale depends on the adoption of generally agreed principles that capture shared values and aspirations wherever evaluation is practiced in the public interest.

In light of the above considerations these guidelines are for use by Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) when implementing a voluntary peer review system for members who wish to enhance their professional capability and/or to attain formal recognition that they have acquired the capabilities expected of a competent evaluator.

Origin of the VEPR Approach and Charter

The concept of a Charter of Principles for the evaluator peer review process was proposed during a panel held on VEPR at the 11th European Evaluation Society Biennial Conference in Dublin October, 2014. This followed up a workshop funded by EvalPartners in London in April 2014 which outlined a VEPR scheme and proposed pilots by the UK Evaluation Society and EES.

This Charter of Principles takes the initiative a step further in terms of encouraging other evaluation societies to adopt a voluntary peer review process adapted to their context and based on the set of principles noted below. Participants at the Dublin conference concluded that rather than aiming at standardisation, such a Charter would allow adaptation of VEPR systems to diverse contexts while facilitating cooperation and ensuring coherence of voluntary evaluator peer-review standards across borders.

Piloting of the approach is recommended prior to full scale implementation to ensure equity and impartiality, as well as responsiveness of the review structure and process to the unique requirements of the national or regional context and the distinctive capacities of individual evaluation societies. Specific terms of reference would guide the work of review board members and administrators. An independent evaluation of the process, it was noted, should be commissioned after the pilot phase and every three years following mainstreaming of the approach.

Principles for Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review

The principles are:

- (i) voluntariness
- (ii) autonomy
- (iii) legitimacy
- (iv) transparency
- (v) pluralism
- (vi) quality assurance.

These are consistent with good evaluation practice and reflect agreed UK Evaluation Society and EES guidelines and frameworks.

Voluntariness

Any paid-up member of the society or association is eligible to apply. The process should be voluntary. Neither applicants nor reviewers should feel under any obligation to engage in the process, though they can be encouraged. It should not be conceived as a professional imperative or a prerequisite to practice. Instead the review should promote willing participation and emphasise advice and encouragement on evaluation practice rather than simply testing of knowledge. The overall process should be designed to stimulate individual accountability and learning as well as provide applicants with tailor made advice focused on capability building.

Autonomy

A hallmark of professionalism is self-management. The overall approach and the detailed review specifications should promote accountability to the profession itself and, through it, to the public at large. Of course, consultation with commissioners and other stakeholders is desirable at stages of the process and periodically as the VEPR pilot is mainstreamed. Independence from external influence does not imply insularity but the core principle of the VEPR process is that only experienced and reputable evaluation professionals can vouch for the quality of work done by other evaluation professionals. In particular, it is not appropriate for any public or private body to interfere in VEPR processes or decisions. Equally public or private funding for design or implementation of the review process should not be accepted if it comes with conditions that undermine the integrity or autonomy of the peer review process.

Legitimacy

The review process should be guided by an explicit competencies or capabilities framework informed by good practice and developed following due process and extensive consultations with the membership of the sponsoring evaluation association or society. No peer review process should be launched without such a framework. This implies a deliberate focus on personalised professional development and periodic recalibration of merit criteria and review processes. Conversely experience with the VEPR process may help refine the capabilities framework adopted by the evaluation society.

Lodging the responsibility of the process within evaluation societies and associations has the advantage of helping them identify capability gaps and needs across the profession at large. This is ultimately why peer review is the instrument of choice for the proposed

system of professional recognition and also why only evaluation associations or societies can provide robust guarantees that the review process has been valid and fair.

Pluralism

Evaluators stem from many professional fields and disciplines, conduct evaluation in private, public and third sectors and receive funding from government and non-government agencies alike. They have also been variously trained in different methodologies and may at different levels of experience when they apply for VEPR. The process needs to recognise and be responsive to these different levels of experience and methodological preference and appropriateness, relevant to the evaluations the applicant has conducted. Reviewers need to be selected with this in mind offering the applicant a fair opportunity to demonstrate their evaluation capability.

Transparency

The credibility of the review process also hinges on public access to adequate information about the financial aspects of the scheme, the governance structure as well as the detailed guidelines that will guide the review process. Applicant confidentiality should be carefully protected but full information disclosure practiced regarding the criteria and standards for review, the oversight mechanism, the roles and responsibilities of review board members, the functions allocated to administrators, the process of receiving and handling applications, the protocols that govern decision making and reporting on results, and the provisions made for appeals. A register of successful applicants will also be made public.

Quality Assurance

Oversight arrangements will be put in place by each sponsoring VOPE to ensure that these guiding principles are observed. Impartiality and relevance in the selection and application of merit criteria will be guaranteed by senior evaluators of impeccable credentials validated by the VOPE who would take responsibility for overseeing the quality assurance arrangements, the rigour and fairness of reviewer selection, the impartiality of reviews and the adequacy of safeguards regarding protection from vested interests. They would also ensure that no conflict of interest impairs the decision-making process. An independent appeals process will further ensure that the review is fair.

Each VOPE would ensure that the criteria and the processes they use remain relevant to the needs and aspirations of individual members, e.g. by allowing members to update their VEPR interests periodically in addition to renewing their VEPR status at a statutory interval set by the VOPE, e.g. every three years. Continuous learning and updating is consistent with commitment to a strong community of practice.

Annex 3 An Introduction to Reflective Practice

A key element of VEPR is its focus on reflective practice. This annex provides an introduction to the concept of reflective practice, its role in training and development of professional practice, and how this relates to competency in evaluation practice.

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning (Schön 1983). According to one definition it involves "paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively. This leads to developmental insight" (Cochran-Smith et al 1999). A key rationale for reflective practice is that experience alone does not necessarily lead to learning; deliberate reflection on experience is essential.

Reflective practice as a core element of professional practice

The importance of 'reflective practice' was promoted during the 1980's by Donald Schön in relation to discussions about what constituted good 'professional' practice, at a time when there was a move to identify the 'competency base' for various occupational groups. Identifying core competencies involved undertaking a functional analysis of role or task (or whole occupation), breaking this down into 'functional units and the units into elements, each of which has to be separately assessed to cover a range of situations according to a list of performance criteria.' (Eraut 1994).

How far this process could be applied to professional practice was subject of considerable debate. Although professional practice generally involves a set of practical skills, it also includes other elements, such as a set of formal theories and values, and practice being restricted to members of a professional body, which allows for professional and ethical oversight. One area of debate related to how the acquisition of practical skills related to the underlying theoretical and value base, which also linked with wider discussions about how practical abilities (often implicit) related to explicit (conceptual or theoretical) learning. (e.g. Polanyi 1966, Kolb 1984). Schön highlighted a central tension between what he described as the 'high ground' of academic rigour and the 'lowland of messy practice'. Bridging this gap, he suggested, required more than the mechanical application of competencies, and the application of 'professional artistry', an artistry which should be informed by 'reflective practice'.

This involves moving between learning, reflection and action, and developing the 'art of problem framing, an art of implementation, and an art of improvisation'. Reflection in practice and reflection on action (a double feedback loop) were essential, he argued, in the development of advanced professional practice, particularly in a changing and uncertain world where practice has to be constantly reassessed in the light of changing external requirements.

Various attempts had been made to identify different 'types' of professional practice, such as Bines (1992) distinction between practical, expert and reflective practitioners. Jones and Joss (1995) sought to link these distinctions to different approaches to professional development. Training for the 'practical professional' for example relies heavily on 'learning-by-doing', with little explicit reflection or abstraction, while training for the reflective practitioner learning involves an experiential process of doing, observing, reflecting, conceptualising and experimenting. This, they argued, was particularly important when dealing with the

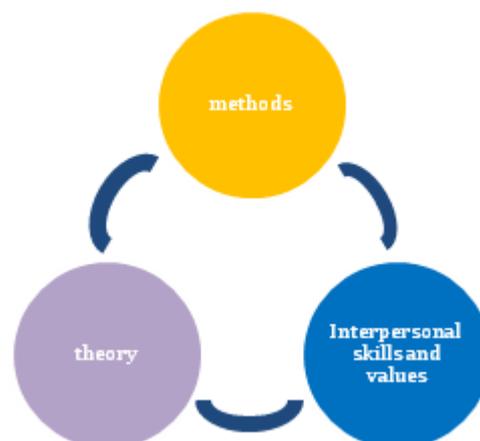
complexity, variability and uncertainty associated with working in human services. Thompson (2002) similarly argued that human problems are typically too complex to be solved by the simple application of technical solutions. This is perhaps why social work and teaching appear to have led the way in developing a 'reflective practice' approach to professionalisation.

Reflective practice as a core evaluation capability

How far evaluation itself is a 'professional' practice (and what kind of professional practice it is) has been subject of considerable debate. Picciotto (2011) in his review of these debates notes a link between these and how the term 'evaluation' is defined. Some definitions he argues, place a strong emphasis on technological and methodological aspects quoting as an example of this, Rossi et al's (2004) definition of evaluation as 'the systematic, rigorous and meticulous application of scientific methods to assess the design'. Others, however, emphasise the 'human service' dimension, such as the evaluator's role in supporting learning in organisations and programmes. Picciotto quotes Cronbach et al's 1980 description of the evaluator as 'an educator (whose) success is to be judged by what others learn'.

Different orientations towards the evaluator role and its professionalisation were also reflected in discussions within the UK Evaluation Society between 2009 and 2012 about the pros and cons of establishing a framework of evaluation competencies. The outcome of this was the Society's 2012 Evaluation Capabilities Framework (since retitled) (<https://www.evaluation.org.uk/professional-development/framework-of-evaluation-capabilities>) which covers both a set of technical and methodological skills, and a set of interpersonal skills, qualities and dispositions that are required for effective practice. The latter include reference to the evaluator being able to adapt to changing circumstances, exercise sound, rigorous and fair judgments, display independence of mind and integrity and display self-knowledge.

As noted in wider debates about professional practice, in order to practice effectively, the evaluator has to bring together a set of practical skills (methods of data collection, analysis and reporting), a theoretical approach (the evaluation model used, with an understanding of its underpinning epistemology) and the interpersonal skills required to put these into practice. The diagram below illustrates these three elements.

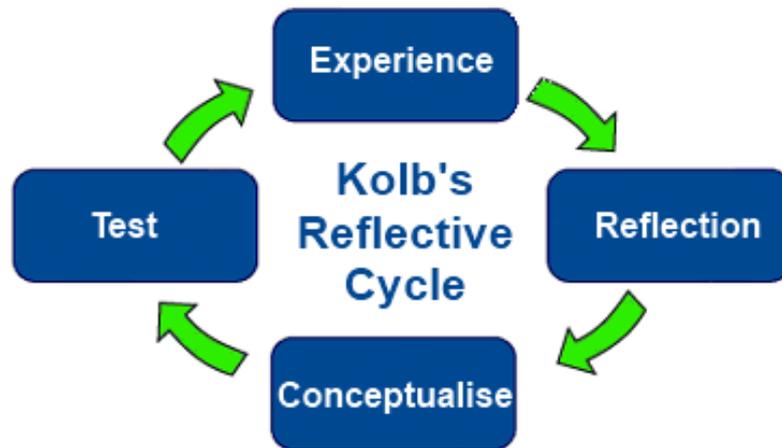


As noted by Schön, bringing these together requires a process of self-reflection. It requires a process of planning and action, and taking time to reflect on the effectiveness of the action, recalibrating this (refining the methods or evaluation approaches to use, or reviewing the quality of relationships with clients, those delivering or receiving the intervention being evaluated), as new information comes to light, or external circumstances change.

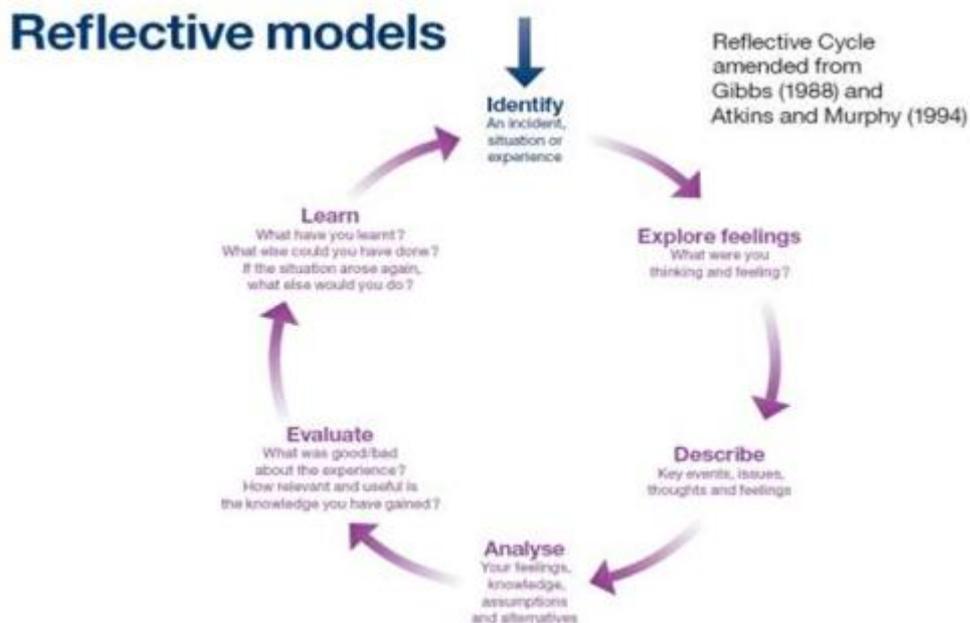
Taking this further, if we take a definition of evaluation which includes one of supporting learning, then the role of evaluator also needs to be able to support participants in the organisations, programmes and projects in a similar process of reflecting on, and learning from their own activities. In order to do this, the evaluator themselves will need to hone their own reflective skills.

Key steps in the process of reflective practice

Reflective practice generally involves going through a number of steps or stages. A number of different versions of these are in circulation, but most contain the following key elements outlined in Kolb's original model of a reflective cycle, which sought to bring to the surface and articulate elements of an experience which may not initially have been apparent.



The following, rather more detailed, version is useful, as it provides a very specific set of issues and questions for consideration at each stage of the process.



This has also been used as the basis for the portfolio template provided as part of the VEPR applicants' application form, i.e. candidates are asked to describe a project which illustrates the capability being explored and are then asked to write answers to the following questions:

Reflection
Evaluation (1): What went particularly well in this element of the project? What was particularly good about the way you addressed it, and handled your role?
Evaluation (2) What was challenging in this particular element of the project? Was there anything you felt you might have done differently?
Analysis: What sense can you make of the situation? What theoretical or external body of knowledge can help you make sense of the experience?
Conclusions (general): What can be concluded, in a general sense, from these experiences and the analyses you have undertaken?
Conclusions (specific): What can be concluded about your own specific, unique, personal situation or ways of working?
Personal Action plans: What have you learnt from this experience? Does it indicate any additional training or development you would like to undertake to support you going forward?

Reflective practice and active listening

Reflective practice can be done by an individual, as a group, or in a one to one session between an individual and their supervisor or trainer. If it is done with another person, then it is important that the person supporting the process (whether a peer, a supervisor or trainer) is able to listen and support the person reflecting in an engaged, but neutral manner. In this respect, the concept of 'active listening' is helpful. This helps in:

- Building rapport
- Establishing and building trust
- Creating feelings of acceptance, safety and understanding
- Increasing clarity/ understanding
- Increasing self esteem

Qualities of a good active listener include:

- Empathy
- Acceptance
- Genuineness/ authenticity

These three core qualities can be achieved through being self-aware, non-judgmental, calm, not interrupting, listening to all, positive body language, giving encouraging responses and by having a clear sense of boundaries. Listening is a two-way process of listening and responding. The active listener needs to be able to pick up on the content of a conversation but also the way it is being conveyed, how the person is feeling and how they are experiencing what is happening to them.

There are a number of specific techniques that help support the process of active listening. These include:

- Allowing silences
- Asking relevant and open questions
- Being reflective
- Listening for feelings as well as facts

- Not jumping to conclusions!
- Paying attention to the speaker
- Indicating that you have heard what they have said (verbally and non-verbally)
- Asking questions for clarification, to explore something in more depth
- Recapping what you have heard them say
- Respecting their expertise and knowledge of their particular situation (which may be different to your own)
- Giving your own opinions respectfully (use first person)
- Not providing instant solutions!

References

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Annex 4

UK Evaluation Society Framework of Evaluation Capabilities

1. EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE

- 1.1 Understands the social and political role of evaluation
- 1.11 Awareness of the history of evaluation and its emergence as a distinct field of inquiry
- 1.12 Appreciates the linkages and differences between evaluation and social research
- 1.13 Indicates familiarity with the use of program theory in evaluation
- 1.14 Understands the political implications of different evaluation theories and their use

1.2 Familiarity with evaluation designs and approaches

- 1.21 Is familiar with a range of evaluation theories and approaches
- 1.22 Knows how to engage effectively with evaluation stakeholders
- 1.23 Identifies relevant evaluation questions
- 1.24 Knows how to design an evaluation appropriate to the evaluation task
- 1.25 Takes account of the policy context in designing evaluations

1.3 Comprehends and makes effective use of evaluation methodologies

- 1.31 Appreciates advantages and potential constraints of qualitative and quantitative methods
- 1.32 Appreciates different uses of monitoring systems and indicators and their role in evaluation
- 1.33 Understands participatory approaches and the contexts in which most appropriate
- 1.34 Realises which methods are appropriate for formative/ summative purposes
- 1.35 Comprehends that criteria for validity and reliability differ according to method

2. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- 2.1 Demonstrates ability to manage and deliver evaluations
- 2.11 Ascertains the social/political context and program logic
- 2.12 Conforms to relevant ethical standards and guidelines
- 2.13 Identifies data gathering instruments appropriate to the task
- 2.14 Gathers relevant evidence, analyses and interprets in context
- 2.15 Conducts robust data analysis, whether qualitative or quantitative
- 2.16 Reports fairly and justly to agreed audiences in the public interest
- 2.17 Disseminates evaluation findings and promotes their use

2.2 Demonstrates interpersonal skills

- 2.21 Writes fluently and communicates clearly
- 2.22 Shows ethical sensitivity in specific socio/political contexts
- 2.23 Uses sound negotiating skills
- 2.24 Demonstrates cultural and gender awareness
- 2.25 Displays impartiality in conducting and reporting evaluation
- 2.26 Manages conflicts of interests and values fairly

3. QUALITIES AND DISPOSITIONS

- 3.1 Demonstrates ability to adapt to changing circumstances in a principled manner
- 3.2 Exercises sound, rigorous and fair judgment
- 3.3 Contributes to the professional evaluation community
- 3.4 Displays independence of mind and integrity especially when evaluation challenged
- 3.5 Upholds democratic values in conducting and reporting evaluations
- 3.6 Displays self-knowledge and pursues professional development

Annex 5 Key documents from VEPR Guidelines

A Application Form for Reviewees

Personal details and Experience

Personal details

Name	
Contact details:	
Address	
Telephone (s)	
Email	
Confirmation of current Society membership	Reference/membership number
Have you participated in a UK Evaluation Society VEPR before? If so, when?	Yes/No Date

Professional statement

Give a short statement to summarise where you are in your evaluation practice and career at the present time and how these relate to issues you propose for review.

Max 100 words

--

Looking forward, what are your objectives for your evaluation practice?

Max 50 words

--

Education and professional experience

Please attach a short version (*no more than five sides of A4*) of your CV edited to reflect aspects relevant to evaluation. List:

- Post graduate education and training indicating in what ways this education and training was relevant to your evaluation practice
- Professional experience to demonstrate three years full-time equivalent evaluation-related work experience within recent years.
- The activities carried out in your primary evaluation role for example as: Practitioner; Commissioner; Teacher; Researcher etc.

Referees

Please nominate two referees familiar with your evaluation practice and the work you want to discuss in your review, who the Society could contact in confidence about your application if necessary.

1	
2	

Capabilities and Proposed Review Issues

Capabilities and practice areas for the review: self-assessment

The table below shows how the self-assessment works in practice. The first column contains the list of the UK Evaluation Society Capabilities. In the middle column make an assessment of your own capability using a six-point scale explained below. In the third column identify those capabilities that you wish to concentrate on in the review. These might arise from questions emerging from your past experience, or could reflect areas identified in your professional statement. Choose at least one from each of the three main domains: Evaluation knowledge; Professional practice; and Qualities and dispositions.

(To help your choice, see an example by clicking [here](#) – to be developed after the pilot.)

Six-point scale – 1 is little experience, 6 is high

- 1 I have no specific training in this area and have developed limited or no capability through my evaluation practice.
- 2 I have some experience through practice but not any specific training or education.
- 3 I have some experience through practice and some training or education.
- 4 I have moderate practical experience with this capability evidenced through my work.
- 5 I have substantial practical experience with this capability evidenced through my work.
- 6 I have substantial practical experience and have studied this capability through education, training or research.

UK Evaluation Society Capabilities Domain	Indicate your assessment of each capability using the six-point scale	Indicate those capabilities you wish to focus on in the Review – at least one from each of the three domains
1. EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE		
1.1 Understands the social and political role of evaluation		
1.11 Awareness of the history of evaluation and its emergence as a distinct field of inquiry		
1.12 Appreciates the linkages and differences between evaluation and social research		
1.13 Indicates familiarity with the use of program theory in evaluation		
1.14 Understands the political implications of different evaluation theories and their use		
1.2 Familiarity with evaluation designs and approaches		
1.21 Is familiar with a range of evaluation theories and approaches		
... and continue in a similar way for each of the 35 capabilities		

UK Evaluation Society Capabilities Domain	Indicate your assessment of each capability using the six-point scale	Indicate those capabilities you wish to focus on in the Review – at least one from each of the three domains
shown in Annex 4 above.		

Issues for Review and related documents for the portfolio

In this section, please set out those issues or topics you wish to discuss relating to your development as an evaluator including at least one that you wish to strengthen.

First Issue

<p>Issue related to your development as an evaluator: What do you wish to discuss?</p>	
<p>Competency or career development issue being explored</p>	
<p>Setting the scene Brief description of project, client, evaluation approach and methods used. What was your role? Were you working alone or with a team?</p>	
<p>Illustrating the capability: Describe the specific element of the project which illustrates the capability being explored.</p>	
<p>Details of documents attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original examples must either be documents in the public domain or accompanied by specific written permission from the client or holder of the intellectual property. Otherwise draft a short précis to explain the context and issues. • Attachments must be no more than 20 pages or should indicate specific pages to be read in a longer report. 	

Copy the block above for the second issue.

B Application Form for Reviewers

VEPR reviewer roles and attributes

The role of the VEPR reviewer is to support VEPR applicants to undertake an in-depth review of their evaluation skills and capabilities in some specific areas selected by the applicant to develop their evaluation practice. The table below outlines some attributes essential to the reviewer role.

Role	Skills and attributes
Collaborate with the VEPR applicant to compile their review portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sound knowledge of evaluation theory and practice ▪ Practice base that includes work in relation to complex evaluation projects ▪ Good communication skills and teamwork ▪ Ability to adhere to a schedule
Undertake the review meeting (option of phone, Skype and face-to-face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervision, mentoring or peer review skills and experience
Collaborate with the applicant to finalise and report on the review outcomes, including comments from reviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to report constructively and succinctly on a colleague's learning

Reviewer details and experience

Personal details (same information required as for reviewee)

Professional statement

Give a short statement to summarise where you are in your evaluation practice and career at the present time and how these relate to conducting a review.

Max 100 words

Education and professional experience

Please attach an abbreviated copy of your CV no longer than 10 sides of A4 edited to reflect aspects relevant to evaluation. List:

- Post graduate education and training indicating in what ways the education and training was relevant to your evaluation practice
- Professional experience to demonstrate ten years evaluation-related work experience.

Training in reflective practice

Have you participated in any reflective practice experience or training course? If Yes, indicate the nature of the experience, date and location.

Yes/No	<i>Date and location:</i>
	<i>Nature of the experience:</i>

Referees

Please nominate two referees familiar with your evaluation practice who the Society may contact about your application if necessary. They should be able to (1) confirm your evaluation experience and (2) attest to your experience and suitability for the VEPR reviewer role. The referees may be Society members or people in 'good standing' from other relevant organisations.

1	
2	

Peer reviewer experience, skills and capabilities

Please describe your skills, experience and attributes relevant to the VEPR reviewer role (max 150 words).

Skills required	Your skills and experience (roles undertaken and skill used)
Supervision, mentoring or peer review skills and experience	

Declaration

I declare that the expertise, skills, qualifications and other attributes described above and in my CV are an accurate record.	
<i>Date</i>	
<i>Signature</i>	

Evaluation Capabilities: Reviewer's Self-assessment

The table below lists the Capabilities in the Society's Capabilities Framework. In the middle column make an assessment of your own capability using a six-point scale explained below. In the third column identify your relative strength in the capabilities for the purpose of being a peer reviewer.

(To help your choice, see an example by clicking [here](#) – to be developed after the pilot.)

Capability self-assessment (second column)

Six-point scale – 1 is little experience, 6 is high

- 1 I have no specific training in this area and have developed limited or no capability through my evaluation practice.
- 2 I have some experience through practice but not any specific training or education.
- 3 I have some experience through practice and some training or education.
- 4 I have moderate practical experience with this capability evidenced through my work.
- 5 I have substantial practical experience with this capability evidenced through my work.
- 6 I have substantial practical experience and have studied this capability through education, training or research.

Peer review strength (third column)

For each of the evaluation capabilities listed below, please rate your level of competence for the purposes of being a peer reviewer, based around your more recent experience.

Use the following four options:

- A Expert
- B Strong
- C Basic
- D None [This is so reviewers can identify areas where they consider they would not have strengths to be a reviewer]

UK Evaluation Society Capabilities Domain	Indicate your assessment of each capability using the six-point scale	Indicate your level of strength in each capability relevant to acting as a peer reviewer
1. EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE		
1.1 Understands the social and political role of evaluation		
1.11 Awareness of the history of evaluation and its emergence as a distinct field of inquiry		
1.12 Appreciates the linkages and differences between evaluation and social research		
... and continue in a similar way for each of the 35 capabilities shown in Annex 4 above.		

Reviewer's experience

Indicate by an X in the table below the main sectoral and occupational scope of your experience.

Sector/role	UK domestic	Other European & international
<i>Evaluation roles</i>		
Practitioner		
Commissioner		
Teacher		
Researcher		
<i>Public/private sector</i>		
Public		
Private		
Voluntary/Not for profit		
Philanthropic foundations		
<i>Economic & social sectors</i>		
Agriculture		
Education		
Employment/Labour market policies		
Finance & banking		
Health		
HIV/AIDS		
Institutions		
Local government		
Other service sectors		
Rural		
Skills Development		
Transport		
Welfare		
<i>(additional areas)</i>		

C Review Report Form

Applicant details <i>Full name:</i> <i>Email contact:</i>		
Reviewer details Lead reviewer <i>Full name:</i> <i>Email contact:</i> Co-reviewer <i>Full name:</i> <i>Email contact:</i>		
Review details <i>Date/s of review meetings:</i> <i>Medium of review meeting/s:</i> [e.g. phone/Skype/in person] <i>Comments:</i>		
Capabilities explored	Learning by applicant (total 750 words)	Reviewer endorsement of learning (total 500 words)
1. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
2. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
3. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
4. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
5. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
6. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
Other gains from the VEPR review	[Applicant benefit]	[Reviewer benefit]
Other comments on the review (outcomes or process)	[Applicant comment]	[Reviewer comment]
Declaration We declare that the VEPR review for [applicant full name] was completed on [dd/mm/yyyy] to the satisfaction of the applicant and the two reviewers, in all aspects of the review process. Signed Applicant: _____ Lead reviewer: _____ Co-reviewer: _____		

Annex 6 Pilot Implementation Timetable

1. Applications	
January 29 th	Application forms & associated feedback form sent out with 3-week deadline for completion
February 19 th	Training / briefing workshop held in which applicants could raise queries on the application process before completing their application forms. The workshop resulted in a decision to have two reviewer roles – a lead reviewer, who would organise the review and lead on the discussion, and a co-reviewer, who would act as timekeeper, note-taker and check all relevant areas had been covered.
Feb 22 nd – Mar 7 th	Application forms checked and any queries resolved. Matching of reviewees to reviewers based on application forms to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reviewee acted as reviewer for either of their reviewers No volunteer acted as reviewer for a colleague Conflicts of interest were avoided Gender was balanced (where possible) The same pair of reviewers did not do more than one review. Compiling review instructions and collating review documents.
2. Formal Reviews	
March 8 th	Review documentation was sent out and review “teams” were given until April 11 th to conduct the review, finalise the report and return the report to the co-ordinator.
Mar 9 th – Apr 11 th	Reviews involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreeing when and how to meet (face to face or via Skype) Choosing the topics to be discussed Holding the review Writing the report Submitting the agreed report to the co-ordinator
April 11 th – 15 th	Collating review reports Organising workshop for feedback on pilot
3. Assessing the Process	
April 18 th – 22 nd	Synthesising comments from review reports and feedback forms in preparation for pilot feedback workshop.
April 26 th	Pilot feedback workshop held in London which all bar two volunteers and all the members of the Working Group attended. Following the workshop, the Working Group met to agree the findings to be presented to the annual conference.
April 27 th – 28 th	VEPR findings presented to the Society’s Annual Conference in London.

Annex 7 List of feedback / evaluation questions

Feedback on Application Forms:

1. In total, how long did it take you to complete the application form to be reviewed?
2. In total, how long did it take you to complete the application form to be a reviewer (if applicable)?
3. Are there parts of the form(s) which you did not understand or found difficult to fill in? Please provide details and suggestions for how these could be improved.
4. Do you think the form(s) ask for irrelevant information? If so, please indicate what this is and why you think it is irrelevant.
5. Do you think the form(s) should ask for additional information? If so, please indicate what this is and why you think it should be included.
6. Do you feel there is sufficient information in the background document to enable you to complete the forms? If not, please provide details of what else should be included, and why.
7. Was the purpose of the scheme sufficiently clear to enable you to complete the forms in the most appropriate way?
8. The forms call for self-assessment and the identification of areas for growth. On a scale of 1-6, where 1 is extremely uncomfortable and 6 is very comfortable, how comfortable did you feel completing the forms?
9. Please provide any other comments and suggestions for improving the application forms.
10. Please provide any other comments on the process to date.

Before Reviews:

1. Before you are reviewed, what do you expect to get out of the VEPR process?
2. In what ways do you expect to see benefits in terms of strengthened capability?
3. Is this such that you would be willing to pay for it?
4. Are there any points on the process which you think should be done differently, and if so, why and how?
5. How long did it take you to prepare? Write the report?
6. Any other comments.

Post Reviews:

1. The key purpose of the scheme is to **deepen evaluation capability through a process of active reflection and learning**. To what extent did the process facilitate deepen capability, as opposed to the support and confidence which comes from sharing ideas and experience with a mentor? What would you say makes the difference between the two approaches? Would a different process (e.g. not using two reviewers, more emphasis on initial documentations) have strengthened the benefits of the process (if any)?
2. Did you feel that you were able to discuss areas for development **as openly as the process requires**? Were there any private reflections which you felt unable to share which were still useful to you? Was the experience of 'vulnerability' or external scrutiny helpful to you as an evaluator?
3. Did you find reference to the **Capabilities Framework** useful? Did the framework reflect the ways in which you experience and undertake evaluation? Were there areas you would wish to have reflected on which did not fall within the framework? It was obvious that a fairly narrow range of capabilities was chosen – did you consider other examples?
4. Did you feel that **the reviewer / reviewee roles were well-matched**? For example, if you are new to the field and working in either role (i.e. reviewer or reviewee) with someone with greater depth of experience, or vice versa, was this beneficial to you? In what ways did this affect the quality of the experience, and what you felt able to explore? At what point in an evaluation career would the process be most valuable?
5. Please comment on the **documentation** supplied, and what was required from you. Were word limits a constraint? Were there other aspects which would make a difference?
6. The consensus from feedback seemed to be that **two items was all that could comfortably be managed for reflection** within the time available. Would you agree? Would more time be helpful? One person suggested that reflection on a piece of written work would be helpful – would you agree?
7. What are your views on **the potential cost of the scheme**, and your (or your organisation's) willingness to pay, both financially and in terms of your time? Do you consider the benefits worth investment – perhaps at different stages in your career?
8. **Any other issues** not captured above?

One Year after Reviews

Please reflect on the VEPR process **one year on**, and provide your views on the benefits as you see them from this distance. The questions we asked last year may be of relevance, but it would also be useful to get your views on:

1. What might have deepened the learning you gained from the process?
2. Has any change you identified in the short term continued? Have the effects grown stronger or reduced?
3. Have you undertaken the actions you identified at the time?
4. Any other comments from your current perspective?

Annex 8 Summary of responses to questionnaire on application forms

1	Time for reviewees to complete application forms	Apart from one applicant who took 2 days, the average was 2 hours
2	Time for reviewers to complete application form	About an hour
3	Are there parts of the form(s) which you did not understand or found difficult to fill in? If so, please offer suggestions for improvement.	This produced the most comments with several points for future versions of the application forms – e.g. clarity (this is where examples will help), word limit, linking capabilities to issues discussed, making data re-entry easier
4	Do you think the form(s) ask for irrelevant information? If so, please indicate what and why you think it is irrelevant.	All bar one said No. This applicant considered the personal statement and the issues for review section irrelevant.
5	Should the forms ask for additional information? If so, please indicate what and why you think this should be included.	Mostly not , but one participant asked if academic publications should count while another thought there should be a stronger focus on ethics in the review.
6	Do you feel there is sufficient information in the guidelines document to enable you to complete the forms? If not, please provide details of what else should be included, and why.	Mostly yes , but more could be said about the nature and use of the supporting documentation and the confidentiality of the review report.
7	Was the purpose of the scheme sufficiently clear to enable you to complete the forms in the most appropriate way?	All bar one said Yes. The other remarked that they had only been thinking in terms of learning/improving for professional development, not demonstrating their capabilities.
8	The forms call for self-assessment and identification of areas for growth. On a scale of 1-6, where 1 is extremely uncomfortable and 6 is very comfortable, how at ease did you feel completing this self-assessment?	Number scoring 6 – 1 Number scoring 5 – 3 Number scoring 4 – 3 Number scoring 3 – 1 Number scoring 2 – 0 Number scoring 1 – 0
9	Please provide any other comments and suggestions for improving the application forms.	Provide link from application form to background guidance More on whether review is forward or backward looking or both
10	Please provide any other comments on the process to date.	Workshop and self-assessment against Capabilities Framework helpful Very impressed with process so far – many thanks

Annex 9 Outcomes of post pilot VEPR and Society member surveys

VEPR Volunteers' Responses Post Pilot

	7 returns from 10 volunteers	Yes	No	Difficult to say
1	Has the VEPR experience been of benefit to you in your work?	5	1	1
2	Has the VEPR experience changed the way you work / handle situations etc.?	0	2	5
3	Have you kept in touch with any of your reviewers/reviewees since the pilot?	5	2	n/a
4	Have you been able to continue with reflective practice since the pilot?	5	2	n/a
5	Would you be interested in encouraging the use of reflective practice in your institution (if relevant)?	5		2 not relevant
6	Have you completed the VEPR survey or encouraged colleagues to do so?	6	1	n/a
7	Now that a few months have passed since the pilot, have you noticed any unexpected outcomes, positive or negative, that could be attributed to your VEPR experience?	2	5	n/a
<p>Other comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am interested to know more about external recognition for those who have successfully completed the VEPR process – like it or not, most professional accreditation type schemes are motivated by some form of recognition in the market. We discussed whether ‘VEPRs’ should join a database accessible through the Society’s website. This would certainly be part of the ‘added value’ of the UK Evaluation Society VEPR. • Sincerely hope there will be interest in year two of the VEPR. This won’t come on its own though – the Society will need to promote at events and through channels other than the email updates. Why not produce a short YouTube about it. Why not promote on Linked-In and Twitter, etc... • Linked to above, once we’ve got a more stable model for VEPR in year two, hopefully the UK Evaluation Society can start promoting it as a recognised benefit of membership. • I would like to take part in a regional follow-up and exchange to keep reflecting and networking. • Valuable initiative in which most will have learnt something. However now needs to be trialled at an organisation as would probably be of most benefit to Middle level staff. Can we approach one of our institutional partners since we can’t afford to roll it out independently? 				

UK Evaluation Society Member Survey Responses

Thirteen Society members responded to the online survey sent out in September 2016 to all current individual (number) and Institutional (number) members. At least 6 of the respondents had been involved in the VEPR pilot.

	Question	Number of responses, and as a % of all respondents
1	Are you responding as an individual current or past member or an institutional current or past member?	individual 8 (62%) institutional 5 (38%)
2	What sector are you from?	private 9 (69%) academia 1 (8%) government 2 (15%) CS/NFP 1 (8%)
3	Do you support Council's proposal to conduct an extended pilot?	yes 13 (100%)
4	Are you personally interested in participating in a peer review as an applicant?	yes 11 (85%) no 1 (8%) no response 1 (8%)
5	For institutional members. Is your organisation interested in using the Society's VEPR process to provide independent professional review to help build evaluation professionalism for your staff/colleagues?	yes 3 (60%) no 1 (20%) unsure 1 (20%)
6	Timing. Would you have a strong preference for either conducting the review over a predetermined period or unstructured timing	open-ended 6 (46%) pre-determined 5 (38%) no preference 2 (15%)
7	Costs. The UK Evaluation Society will need to cover the costs of administering the scheme and so there needs to be a fee for the peer review. How much would you be willing to pay to participate in a peer review?	£100-£199 7 (54%) £200-£299 1 (8%) £300-£399 2 (15%) no response 3 (23%)
8	Would you be interested in participating as a Reviewer?	no 7 (54%) yes 5 (38%) no response 1 (8%)