

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**PhD in Education, Program in Research Methods**

EDRS 820 - 001 | Evaluation Methods for Educational Program and Curricula  
3 Credits | Spring 2019  
Mondays | 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm | Innovation 203 | Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission to PhD program, successful completion of EDRS 810, or permission of instructor. Prior completion of EDRS 811 and 812 helpful but not required.

**University Catalog Course Description**

Explores development and types of current systems and models for evaluating educational programs and curricula. Emphasizes evaluation needs and problems of public and private elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities. Also considers needs of government agencies, industry, and health-related organizations.

**Course Overview**

This course examines the theory, ethics, and practice of program evaluation. The course will be designed to meet the needs of those who either wish to pursue program evaluation as part of their professional, practical, or research interests as well as to those who will or may supervise others who conduct program evaluations. The course will provide the learner with the rudiments of designing an evaluation to meet the needs of a volunteer client and grasp learning and applicability of program evaluation standards in the process. Areas of focus include understanding the nature of program evaluation and using program evaluation in applied settings, such as K-12 or higher education; local, state, or federal agencies; community health programs; nonprofits; or industry. This course is one of the requirements for the Ph.D. professional specialization in Research Methods. For students not specializing in Research Methods, it is one of the electives within the 15 credits required of research methods for Ph.D. students.

## **Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a lecture format with in-class activities and assignments. In case of university closings due to inclement weather or class cancellation, a learning module covering the lecture, readings, and/or class activities may be posted on Blackboard.

## **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- Understand the nature and purpose of evaluation;
- Distinguish between evaluation and research in the context of program evaluation studies and social science research;
- Apply the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2011) Program Evaluation Standards in planning and conducting program evaluations;
- Distinguish among the major approaches and methods for conducting a program evaluation;
- Apply evaluation models and methods appropriately within a given evaluation context, such as public and private elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities, government agencies, non-profits, industry, and health-related organizations;
- Understand program evaluation questions, including but not limited to: program theory, stakeholder experiences and satisfaction, fidelity of implementation, randomized control trials, program impact and outcomes, cost analyses, etc.
- Develop a program evaluation plan (including appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative methods);
- Understand the linkages between program evaluation, program design, and program implementation and program theory (theory of change, theory of action, logic models);
- Understand the cultural, political, economic, and social justice implications of program evaluations;
- Understand issues concerning the evaluation industry, its social and political context and controversies about the ethical and moral responsibilities of evaluation practitioners.

## **Professional Standards**

### **A. Competencies for the Doctoral Program**

Students must demonstrate the following major competencies to be awarded a Ph.D. in Education degree:

1. Ability to communicate effectively in a variety of professional roles in both oral and written forms;
2. Knowledge of significant theory, developments and practices in one's professional specialization (e.g. teaching of mathematics, counseling, etc.), and one or more supporting areas of study;
3. Ability to understand, utilize and interpret basic principles and methodologies of educational research design and data analysis; and
4. Ability to organize efforts to solve problems, advance knowledge, test theories, and adapt information to meet professional goals.

Mastery of these competencies is demonstrated by successful coursework, successful completion of a comprehensive portfolio assessment preparation and acceptance of a dissertation, and successful completion of an oral defense of the dissertation.

## **B. Program Evaluation Standards (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2011)**

Students examine and develop competencies to adhere to the Program Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2011) including:

1. **Utility Standards:** The utility standards are intended to increase the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs.
2. **Feasibility Standards:** The feasibility standards are intended to increase evaluation effectiveness and efficiency.
3. **Proprietary Standards:** The proprietary standards support what is proper, fair, legal, right, and just in evaluations.
4. **Accuracy Standards:** The accuracy standards are intended to increase the dependability and truthfulness of evaluation representations, propositions, and findings, especially those that support interpretations and judgments about quality.
5. **Evaluation Accountability Standards:** The evaluation accountability standards encourage adequate documentation of evaluations and a meta-evaluative perspective focused on improvement and accountability for evaluation processes and products.

## **C. Student Outcomes and Relationship to Professional Standards**

The student outcomes are informed by the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles (AEA, 2018) for professionals conducting program evaluation.

[2018 Updated Guiding Principles](#)

## **Required Texts**

Mertens, D. M., & Wilson, A. T. (2018). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive Guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Yarbrough, D. B., Shulha, L. M., Hopson, R. K., & Caruthers, F. A. (2011). *The program evaluation standards: A guide for evaluators and evaluation users* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

## **Recommended Texts**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Washington, DC: Author. (\* recommended strongly)

Alkin, M. C., & Vo, A.C. (2011). *Evaluation Essentials: From A to Z* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). NY: Guilford.

## Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy). Late assignments will not be accepted without advance notice and a valid reason. Please provide appropriate documentation to support requests for late submission of assignments. All assignments are due by 7:20 pm (i.e., before class) on the specified date. If you have to miss a class session, please let the instructor know in advance.

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

1. **Evaluation Project** (140 points – 70% of course grade) Students will conduct an evaluation of a program or curriculum of their choice. The project will include developing an evaluation plan and implementing the plan by collecting and analyzing data, interpreting and reporting on the findings.

- **Program Overview/Introduction (20 points):** Provide a description of the program and a justification for the program evaluation. The justification should include a discussion of past or current monitoring, assessment, or evaluation efforts and any key findings pertinent for your evaluation of the program; use supporting scholarly literature (research and evaluation) of similar programs or constructs of interest. Include a discussion of issues, concerns, or challenges that the program faces and potential factors related to the issues. Include evaluation questions.
- **Evaluation Plan (20 points):** Develop an evaluation plan based on the program overview and evaluation questions: include the evaluation design, data sources and sampling plan, methods and measures used to collect and analyze the data, data analysis plan, a timeline, and references. Work with your instructor to seek IRB approval, if needed.
- **Abstract Submission to DCSCEP Conference (20 points):** Write and submit an abstract proposal to the DCSCEP conference based on your program evaluation plan. Review instructor feedback. Details about proposal submission available [here](#).
- **Evaluation Project Presentation at DCSCEP Conference. (20 points).** Students will attend the conference and present their evaluation project at the conference.
- **Results & Discussion (20 points):** Present your findings and interpret/discuss your findings. Address each evaluation question using the evidence from your data. The discussion section will include limitations of your evaluation plan and implementation constraints. Connect to findings from other evaluations/research mentioned in the introduction.
- **Evaluator Recommendations (20 points):** Provide a list of recommendations based on the findings. The recommendations should be appropriate given the extent to which the data and results address the evaluation questions.
- **Adherence to APA Style (20 points)**

**2. Research Paper: (20%).** The purpose of this assignment is for students to learn about an evaluation approach, model, or technique in depth. The assignment may be an execution of the technique OR a research paper providing a detailed, scholarly overview of the technique. The paper should be 8- 10 double spaced pages and adhere to APA guidelines for formatting. If you would like to pursue a topic or technique not listed below, please consult with the instructor.

**Logic Model:** Develop a logic model for a given program that includes all the key components. The model should clearly provide an illustration of the theory of the program by accurately listing the input, activities, output, and outcomes (short, intermediate, long-term).

**Cost Analysis:** Conduct a cost analysis of a program and write a report OR write a detailed overview of cost analysis including the following: definition, models/types, research on cost analysis, and summarize three cost analysis studies; conclude with a discussion of issues and applicability in educational policy and/or practice.

**Evaluability Assessment:** Conduct an evaluability assessment of a program and write a report OR write a detailed overview of evaluability assessment that includes the following: definition and scope, compare and contrast with needs assessment and context/input evaluation, summarize three evaluability assessment studies; conclude with a discussion of key issues and relevance/importance of evaluability assessment in educational program development and evaluation.

**Meta-Evaluation:** Conduct a meta-evaluation and write a report OR write a detailed overview of meta-evaluation that includes the following: definition, types/methods, summarize three meta-evaluations; conclude with a discussion of issues and applicability of meta evaluations in educational evaluation.

**3. Class Participation (10%).** Students are expected to participate in class activities that are individual or small group assignments. Assigned readings are to be completed. Attendance is required. Please contact the instructor if you plan to miss a class. Late submission of assignments will automatically deduct 10 points from participation points (all-or-nothing).

- Attend all class sessions on time.
- Use your MASON e-mail account for all correspondence with the instructor.
- Complete readings and participate fully in discussions, group, or individual classwork.
- Submit all assignments to the class blackboard on time.

- **Grading**

The following grading scale will be used for all class assignments:

<b>Percent</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
98 – 100	A+
93 – 97	A
90 – 92	A-
88 – 89	B+
83 – 87	B
80 – 82	B-
70 – 79	C
Below 70	F

## Class Schedule

Week/ Date	Module/Topic	Readings	What's due?
Week 1: January 28, 2019	Course Overview; Introduction to Program Evaluation	Mertens & Wilson: Chapter 1 Program Standards: Introduction AEA 2018 Guiding Principles & Evaluator Competencies	
Week 2: February 4, 2019	Evaluation and Research Evaluation Approaches and Models	Leeuw & Donaldson, 2015 Baskin, 2001	
Week 3: February 11, 2019	Evaluation Approaches and Models The role of theory in Evaluation	Frye & Hammer, 2012 Mertens & Wilson: Chapters 2-6	Eval Project: Initial draft of Program Overview and Plan for Instructor Feedback
Week 4: February 18, 2019	Evaluation Approaches and Models Evaluation Questions	Program Standards: Part II, III & IV Mertens & Wilson: Chapters 7-9	
Week 5: February 25, 2019	Stakeholder & Evaluand	Mertens & Wilson: 10 - 12	Eval Project: Draft of conference proposal <a href="#">DCSCEP conference proposal deadline: March 1, 2019</a>
Week 6: March 4, 2019	Evaluation methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, mixed	Thomas, 2006  Mertens & Wilson: 10 - 12	
Week 7: March 11, 2019	Evaluation methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, mixed	Qual, Quan, and Mixed Methods Evaluation Studies (Posted on Blackboard)	Eval Project: Revised evaluation plan draft
Week 8: March 18, 2019	Spring Break: No class		
Week 9: March 25, 2019	Data Collection and Analysis	Program Standards: Part I Mertens & Wilson: Chapters: 13, 14	
Week 10: April 1, 2019	Communication of findings, Utilization	Morris & Clark, 2013	Draft of conference

		Merterns & Wilson: Chapter 13	presentation (optional)
Week 11: April 8, 2019	No class	<a href="#">Presentation at the DCSCEP conference on Friday, April 12, 2019</a>	
Week 12: April 15, 2019	Logic Models	Program Standards: Part V	
Week 13: April 22, 2019	Needs Assessment Evaluability Assessment Cost Analysis	<a href="#">Davies, 2013</a>  <a href="#">Needsassessment.org</a>	<b>Week 13: Evaluation Project Due</b>
Week 14: April 29, 2019	Meta Evaluation Drafting an RFP	Mertens & Wilson: Chapter 14 Resources on Blackboard	
Week 15: May 6, 2019	Evaluator Identity	Mason & Hunt, 2018 Scriven, 1996 Skolits, Morrow, & Burr, 2009	
Week 16: May 13, 2019	No class		<b>Individual assignment due</b>

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### GMU Policies and Resources for Students

#### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> ).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.



- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .**

Rubric: Logic Model

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Comprehensiveness</b>	Does not present a comprehensive picture of the program	Presents a comprehensive picture of the program	Presents a highly comprehensive picture of the program	
<b>Placement of Components</b>	Components are missing and/or not placed in correct columns	All components are placed in correct columns	All components are placed in correct columns The outcomes are horizontally and vertically places reflect	
<b>Plausible connections</b>	Outcomes are not plausible or unclear in their connection inputs and activities	Outcomes are plausible from the inputs and activities Intermediate and long term outcomes are reasonably linked	Outcomes are highly plausible from the inputs and activities Intermediate and long term outcomes are linked	
<b>Logic</b>	Outcomes and outputs are not logically linked to activities	Outcomes and outputs are linked logically to activities		
<b>Brevity &amp; Readability</b>	Exceeds a page; language is confusing or highly technical with jargon	Fits one page; language is clear and free of jargon; understood by a non-technical reader		
<b>Total</b>				

Rubric: Evaluation Project

Project Component	Unsatisfactory (below 10 )	Minimal (10-14)	Competent (14 -18)	Outstanding (18 -20)	Score
<p><b>Introduction</b> Include a synthesis of the most important elements describing the program, justification for the evaluation, and evaluation questions (20 points)</p>	<p>The introduction is unclear and/or too brief to completely communicate information about the program or the justification. The evaluation questions are vague, unclear, or missing.</p>	<p>The introduction has several issues with clarity, extraneous text, or is incomplete, lacking key information about the program or the justification. More than one evaluation question is general, lacks a clear relationship to information provided in the text, or is unclear. More questions are needed to address the issues identified.</p>	<p>The introduction may have minor issues with clarity, extraneous text, or missing information. The introduction may lack information for the justification. Most of the evaluation questions are related to information provided in the text, are clear and precise. The questions may also not be completely sufficient to address the issues identified</p>	<p>The introduction provides a clear and complete synthesis of the information about the program and justification for the evaluation. Evaluation questions are related to information provided in the text, are clear and precise, and are sufficient to address the identified issues. No extraneous text is included.</p>	
<p><b>Plan</b> Develop a plan derived from the program overview and evaluation questions that includes a description of the evaluation design, data sources and sampling plan, methods and measures to collect and analyze the data and timeline. (20 points)</p>	<p>Methods do not address the criteria. Data sources, research design, and data analysis are not appropriate. The timeline is missing or not feasible.</p>	<p>Methods are missing sections parts. The evaluation design, data sources, collection or analysis methods are not fully appropriate for the issues or questions. The timeline is missing major sections or has major difficulties with feasibility.</p>	<p>Methods address all parts. There are methodological concerns the evaluation design, data sources, or data collection or analysis methods. OR methods are appropriate, but not fully described. OR, the methods are described but not fully aligned to or address the evaluation issue and questions. The timeline may not fully reflect the plan or have minor issues related to feasibility</p>	<p>Methods fully address all parts. Evaluation design, data sources, data collection methods and analysis are appropriate and thoroughly described. Selection and justification of methods reflects contemporary educational evaluation methods. The methods are well aligned and address the evaluation issues and questions. The plan and timeline is complete and feasible</p>	

<p><b>Results &amp; Discussion</b>  Report of data analyses  Description of findings  Interpretation of findings in relation to the evaluation issues, questions, and literature  Identification of limitations (20 points)</p>	<p>Findings do not address the criteria. Data analyses are not appropriate. Sections of findings are missing. Discussion does not address the criteria. Interpretations and conclusions are not grounded in the findings, or are missing. Findings and their interpretations are not connected to the evaluation issue, questions or literature, or are missing major parts.</p>	<p>Findings inadequately address all criteria or a criterion is missing. Data analyses are not fully appropriate. Reporting is incomplete in parts. Discussion does not address all criteria. Some interpretations and/or conclusions are not grounded in the findings. Findings and their interpretations are not connected to the evaluation issue, questions, or literature.</p>	<p>Findings address all criteria. Data analyses are appropriate but are not complete or accurately described. Reporting of the findings are generally appropriate for the methods employed (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods). Discussion addresses all criteria. Interpretations and conclusions are grounded in the findings. Findings and their interpretations are generally connected to the evaluation issue, questions, and literature</p>	<p>Findings fully address the criteria. Data analyses are appropriate, complete, and accurately described. Reporting of the findings is appropriate for the methods employed (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods) Discussion fully addresses all criteria. Interpretations and conclusions are well grounded in the findings. Findings and their interpretations are meaningfully connected to the evaluation issue, questions, and literature. Limitations are addressed thoughtfully.</p>	
<p><b>Evaluator Recommendations</b>  Discussion of recommendations addressing strength and opportunities for program improvement (20 points)</p>	<p>Recommendations are missing or not justified  Explanation is missing for one or more recommendations.</p>	<p>Recommendations are mostly not justified based on the findings and mostly disconnected from strengths and opportunities for growth. Explanation is sparse for the recommendations is sparse</p>	<p>Recommendations are mostly connected to strengths and opportunities for growth and are justified and mostly explained.</p>	<p>Recommendations are clearly based on strengths and opportunities for growth and are well justified and explained.</p>	
<p><b>APA Style</b>  Use APA writing style, formatting, including</p>	<p>Writing lacks clarity, coherence, many errors, and/or no use of APA style. Citations and</p>	<p>Writing has multiple problems with clarity, coherence, and organization. There are</p>	<p>Writing lacks some clarity or has minor organizational problems affecting the overall</p>	<p>Writing is concise, coherent, well organized, and with correct APA style. Citations and</p>	

citations within text and references. (20 points)	references are minimal or absent.	many errors in APA style, citations, and/or references. Multiple references are missing or incomplete.	coherence, and/or there are some errors in APA style, citations, or references. There may also be a small number of missing citations or references	references are correct and complete.	
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