

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 2024
Mondays | 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm |
Angel Cabrera Global Center 1306B | 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.

Required Prerequisites: EDRS 810^{B-} or 810^{XS}.

^{B-} Requires minimum grade of B-.

^{XS} Requires minimum grade of XS.

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, an online synchronous class meeting may be held or 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 Text

Mertens, D. M., & Wilson, A. T. (2018). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide* (2nd Ed.) 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* (3rd Ed.). Sage.

Schwandt, T. A. (2015). *Evaluation foundations revisited: Cultivating a life of the mind for practice*. Stanford University Press
([Select chapters; e-book available through Mason libraries; see link on Blackboard ->Course Content](#))

Course Performance Evaluation

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

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

1. Evaluation Project (100 points – 70% of course grade) Students will develop a detailed proposal to evaluate a program or curriculum of their choice. The proposal will include the following sections.

- **Program Overview/Introduction (20 points):** Provide a description of the program, evaluation purpose with a justification for evaluation. The justification should include a discussion of past or current monitoring, assessment, or evaluation efforts and any key findings pertinent to your evaluation; 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 (40 points):** Develop an evaluation plan based on the program overview and evaluation questions: include the evaluation design, data sources and sampling plan, measures used to collect and analyze the data, data analysis plan, a timeline, and references. Ensure you are using language that demonstrates understand of key course concepts covered in class.
 - **Role of stakeholders and participants (5):** situate your evaluation in terms of the philosophical underpinning that guides your evaluation approach. Specifically describe what your role is in the evaluation relative to the program stakeholders and participants.
 - **Design (10):** include the evaluation design, rationale for the design, and guiding theory/conceptual framework. Identify a specific model/approach you will adopt with an explanation.
 - **Data Sources, Sampling, Measures (10):** describe the main sources of data, sampling strategies, and measures and tools that will be used to gather data. Describe a data management plan.
 - **Data Analysis (5):** describe in detail your plan for data analyses needed to address the evaluation questions. Consider how you will store data, software/programs to be used, any resources you will need (statistician, data analysts, etc.)
 - **Ethical Considerations (5):** describe how cultural responsiveness and ethical commitments will be considered. Again, use course concepts to frame your approach to ethical practice.
 - **Limitations (5):** Address key limitations of your evaluation plan and how can address them; suggest alternative approaches that might be a good fit
 - **Adherence to APA Style (10 points)**
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- **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 (10 points):** Students will attend the conference and present their evaluation project at the conference.

2. Logic Model (20%): Students will 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) along with assumptions and external factors that might influence program implementation and evaluation. Include a one page summary of the logic model.

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. If you have to miss a class session, please let the instructor know in advance.

- Attend all class sessions on time.
- Complete readings before class 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:

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

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Class Schedule

Week/ Date	Module/Topic	Readings	What's due?
Week 1: January 22	Course Overview; Introduction to Program Evaluation, Program Eval Standards	Mertens & Wilson: Ch 1 Schwandt Ch 1 (e-book)	
Week 2: January 29	Stakeholder & Evaluand Evaluation and Research Evaluation Approaches and Models I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hood, 2004 • Shadish & Cook, 2009 • Mertens & Wilson: Chapters 2-6 	
Week 3: February 5	Theory in Evaluation Evaluation Approaches and Models II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeuw & Donaldson, 2015 • Frye & Hammer, 2012 • Schwandt Chapter 2 	Eval Proposal Checkpoint: Initial idea/draft of Program Overview and Plan
Week 4: February 12	Evaluation Questions Evaluation Approaches and Models III	Mertens & Wilson: Chapters 8-9	
Week 5: February 19	Evaluation methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, mixed	Schwandt Chapter 4 Thomas, 2006	
Week 6: February 26	Workshop: Conference abstract	Mertens & Wilson Chapter 7 Cheung and Slavin 2016 Wolf et al 2020	
Week 7, March 4: Spring Recess – No class meeting Submit DCSCPEP conference abstract			
Week 8: March 11	Data Collection and Analysis Strategies	Mertens & Wilson: 10 – 12	Eval Proposal: Revised evaluation plan draft with evaluation questions and design
Week 9: March 18	Data Collection and Analysis Strategies		
Week 10: March 25 Asynchronous class	Evaluation proposal peer review on Blackboard No class meeting		

Week 11: April 1	Communication of findings Evaluation Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris & Clark, 2013 • Mertens & Wilson: Chapter 13 • Schwandt Ch 6 	
Week 12: April 8	Logic Model		Eval Proposal with data collection and analysis sections
Week 13: April 15 (asynchronous session – no class meeting)	Needs Assessment Monitoring & Evaluation Standards – Utility, Propriety, Feasibility		
Week 14: April 22	Meta Evaluation Standards: Accountability and Accuracy	Davies, 2013 Standards: Accountability and Accuracy Mertens & Wilson: Chapter 14	
Week 15: April 29	Drafting an RFP Evaluator Identity Guest Lecture: TBD	Schwandt Chapter 7	Attend the DCSCEP conference on April (tbd)
	Logic model self-assessment		Logic Model due April 30 – May 2nd

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/>).

Use of Generative-AI tools should be used following the fundamental principles of the Honor Code. This includes being honest about the use of these tools for submitted work and including citations when using the work of others, whether individual people or Generative-AI tools. AS a class, we will use AI in class activities.

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- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments> . Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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