



Evaluation of Health Programs: A Postgraduate Overview Course

Postgraduate Evaluation Curriculum

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MEASURE Evaluation

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ACRONYMS

ANC	antenatal care
ARV	antiretroviral
BCC	behavior change communication
GEMNet-Health	Global Evaluation and Monitoring Network for Health
INSP	National Institute of Public Health
ITN	insecticide-treated mosquito nets
JSI	John Snow, Inc.
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCH	maternal and child health
PHFI	Public Health Foundation of India
PMTCT	prevention of mother-to-child transmission
RAP	rapid-assessment procedures
RH	reproductive health
RHIS	routine health information system
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	voluntary counseling and testing

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As part of an effort to strengthen postgraduate education on evaluation of health programs, the Global Evaluation and Monitoring Network for Health¹ (GEMNet-Health) and MEASURE Evaluation have embarked on developing competency-based curriculum materials for a master's degree level, overview course on evaluation.

The modular curriculum materials are presented here, along with a summary of the curriculum development approach followed.

As countries seek to improve their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacities, there is a need for specific training in evaluation at the postgraduate level. Recognizing this need, the GEMNet-Health Steering Committee has convened technical expert groups to generate resources that will facilitate development of a consistent and coordinated approach to evaluation training.

In 2016, building upon previous M&E competency development efforts, GEMNet-Health developed core competencies for a 60-hour master's level overview course in evaluation. These competencies have been shared widely with the evaluation community through presentations at conferences.

Subsequently, considering the need for additional materials to support the core competencies, GEMNet-Health began an initiative aimed at compiling a repository of existing evaluation course materials, developing a generic, modular course outline, mapping the GEMNet-Health core competencies to the generic course outline, and then developing curriculum materials for a master's-level overview course on evaluation. Due to resource and time constraints, GEMNet-Health adopted a staged approach, selecting two out of the eight modules to start with as a pilot for development of the module content.

After discussions within the network and with other stakeholders, the group decided to approach this curriculum development effort as a set of modules. Each module is designed to function both as a part of the larger course but also as a stand-alone module that can be incorporated into other courses, workshops, or other trainings. Each module includes a syllabus with competencies, topics and learning objectives specific to that module, session plans, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, and additional resources.

It is important to note that the competencies listed under each module are unlikely to be fully addressed by one module. Each individual module may cover only some aspects of a given competency, and the set of modules taken together would be needed to cover the competencies fully.

¹ GEMNet-Health is a global network of public health institutions whose purpose is to foster organizational growth, collaboration, and mutual support for M&E of health programs globally through linkages among members. For more information, please visit <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/networks/gemnet-health>.

POSTGRADUATE EVALUATION CURRICULUM MODULES

Course Summary

To simplify future development of a standard course syllabus and learning objectives, and to better map competencies directly onto a course, the task group initiated its work by creating a generic course outline for a master's level overview course on evaluation of health programs. The outline presented below, which is based on a course at the National Institute of Public Health (INSP), includes eight course modules, their durations, and competencies covered.

Next, the core competencies for an overview course on evaluation (developed earlier by GEMNet-Health) were mapped to each module in the course outline. Some competencies aligned with a single course topic, but most corresponded to multiple course topics.

This course outline represents only one of many possible course designs. The chosen generic course outline is adapted from an overview evaluation course at the INSP in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Ideally, all the topics need to be in place to make the evaluation course complete, comprehensive, and effective in achieving the competencies. While this course outline was designed to function as a stand-alone course, the topics included could also be incorporated separately based on the needs of individual institutions.

Table 1. Generic course outline

Module	Competencies	Course hours
Module 1. Evaluation as a Strategic Tool for Public Programs and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss evaluation in the context of public policy • Analyze policy cycle/results chain • Assess the role of evaluation for policymaking and the link of strategic information to evaluation • Discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges • Identify and list the ethical and political implications of evaluation work 	4
Module 2. Evaluation Theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge of relevant evaluation theories • Outline program theory approach and describe its foundations and assumptions • Illustrate evaluation theories using stylized examples 	6
Module 3. Public Problem: What is a Program About?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate evaluation theories using stylized examples • Create sound and appropriate evaluation questions • Assess and select an appropriate evaluation method for a defined health program and resource context 	6
Module 4. Evaluating Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe/recognize common quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection that are used in different types of evaluations 	8

Module	Competencies	Course hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraise common evaluation designs and appropriate contexts for using them • Critique evaluation designs and their implementation • Critically review evaluation results • Assess and select an appropriate evaluation method for a defined health program and resource context • Discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges • Illustrate ethical principles for research and how those apply to evaluation • Describe how data from an evaluation study can be interpreted and how a final report should be written 	
Module 5. Evaluating Program Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe/recognize common quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection that are used in different types of evaluations • Appraise common evaluation designs and appropriate contexts for using them • Critique evaluation designs and their implementation • Critically review evaluation results • Assess and select an appropriate evaluation method for a defined health program and resource context • Discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges • Illustrate ethical principles for research and how those apply to evaluation • Describe how data from an evaluation study can be interpreted and how a final report should be written 	8
Module 6. Evaluating Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select appropriate quantitative and qualitative method(s) for evaluating program results • Recognize common challenges in evaluating results such as confounding, bias, selection, and statistical power • Interpret and discuss results • Critically review evaluation results • Discuss practical constraints in interpreting evaluation results 	10
Module 7. Identifying Successes, Gaps and Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe/recognize common quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection that are used in different types of evaluations • Recognize common statistical challenges in evaluation such as confounding, bias, selection, and statistical power • Appraise common evaluation designs and appropriate contexts for using them • Critique evaluation designs and their implementation • Critically review evaluation results • Assess and select an appropriate evaluation method for a defined health program and resource context 	12

Module	Competencies	Course hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges • Illustrate ethical principles for research and how those apply to evaluation • Describe how data from an evaluation study can be interpreted and how a final report should be written 	
Module 8. Translating Results for Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges • Illustrate ethical principles for research and how those apply to evaluation • Identify and list the ethical and political implications of evaluation work • Design an ethically acceptable evaluation plan • Describe how data from an evaluation study can be interpreted and how a final report should be written • Describe the audience for the evaluation, including their role • Learn how to develop a stakeholder engagement and dissemination plan for results 	6

MODULE 1. EVALUATION AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Background

As part of an effort to strengthen postgraduate education on evaluation of health programs, the Global Evaluation and Monitoring Network for Health² (GEMNet-Health) and MEASURE Evaluation have embarked on developing competency-based curriculum materials for a master's degree level, overview course on evaluation.

In 2016, GEMNet-Health developed core competencies for a 60-hour master's level overview course on evaluation. Subsequently, considering the need for additional materials to support the core competencies, GEMNet-Health began developing a set of modular curriculum materials that correspond to these core competencies.

Each module is designed to function both as a part of the larger course but also as a stand-alone module that can be incorporated into other courses, workshops, or other trainings. Each module includes a syllabus with competencies, topics and learning objectives specific to that module, session plans, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, and additional resources.

Module 1

Learning objectives and sessions

At the end of the module, students will be able to:

1. Identify the role of evaluation within the public policy cycle
2. Illustrate use of evaluation to inform evidence-based policies and programs

Sessions:

- **Session 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Within the Public Policy Cycle** (2 hours)
 - Session 1A: Background: Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Session 1B: Policies, Public Policies and Policy Agendas and Programmes
 - Session 1C: Evaluation & Public Policies
- **Session 2: Evaluation to Inform Evidence-Based Policies and Programs** (2 hours)

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Competencies

1. Discuss evaluation in the context of public policy
2. Analyze policy cycle/results chain
3. Assess the role of evaluation for policymaking and the link of strategic information to evaluation
4. Discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges
5. Identify and list the ethical and political implications of evaluation work

It is important to note that the competencies listed for this module may not be fully addressed by this module. Competency 4 (“*discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges?*”) is also covered by Sessions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Competency 5 (“*Identify and list the ethical and political implications of evaluation work?*”) is also covered in session 8. Therefore, not all content related to each of these competencies is included in this session alone and additional content would be required for mastery.

Syllabus

[Evaluation of Health Programs: A Postgraduate Overview Course – Module 1 Syllabus: Evaluation as a Strategic Tool for Public Programs and Policies](#)

PowerPoints

[Session 1. Monitoring and Evaluation within the Policy Cycle](#)

[Session 2. Evaluation to Inform Evidence-Based Policies and Programs](#)

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MODULE 6. EVALUATING RESULTS

Background

As part of an effort to strengthen postgraduate education on evaluation of health programs, the Global Evaluation and Monitoring Network for Health³ (GEMNet-Health) and MEASURE Evaluation have embarked on developing competency-based curriculum materials for a master's degree level, overview course on evaluation.

In 2016, GEMNet-Health developed core competencies for a 60-hour master's level overview course on evaluation. Subsequently, considering the need for additional materials to support the core competencies, GEMNet-Health began developing a set of modular curriculum materials that correspond to these core competencies.

Each module is designed to function both as a part of the larger course but also as a stand-alone module that can be incorporated into other courses, workshops, or other trainings. Each module includes a syllabus with competencies, topics and learning objectives specific to that module, session plans, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, and additional resources.

Module 6

Learning objectives and sessions

At the end of the module, students will be able to:

1. Identify data sources to analyze program performance and track program outcomes
2. Illustrate the use of qualitative and quantitative data to assess program performance
3. Track program results and compare actual performance versus goals

Sessions:

- **Session 1:** Developing Performance Monitoring Plans/M&E Plans (3 hours)
- **Session 2a:** Tracking Results/Changes (3 hours)
- **Session 2b:** Appraising Results (4 hours)

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Competencies

1. Select appropriate quantitative and qualitative method(s) for evaluating program results
2. Recognize common challenges in evaluating results such as confounding, bias, selection, statistical power
3. Interpret and discuss results
4. Critically review evaluation results
5. Discuss practical constraints in interpreting evaluation results

It is important to note that the competencies listed under each module are unlikely to be fully addressed by one module. Each module may only cover some aspects of a given competency, and the set of modules taken together would be needed to cover the competencies fully.

Competencies 1, 2, and 3 (“*select appropriate quantitative and qualitative method(s) for evaluating program results;*” “*recognize common challenges in evaluating results such as confounding, bias, selection, statistical power;*” and “*interpret and discuss results*”) are only covered by this module, module 6.

Competency 5 (“*discuss practical constraints in evaluation research: List the key considerations in planning an evaluation and describe strategies for navigating these challenges*”) is also covered by sessions 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8. Competency 4 (“*critically review evaluation results*”) is covered by sessions 4, 5, and 7. Therefore, not all content related to these competencies is included in this session alone and additional content would be required for mastery.

Syllabus

[Evaluation of Health Programs: A Postgraduate Overview Course – Module 6 Syllabus: Evaluating Results](#)

PowerPoints

[Session 1. Developing Monitoring and Evaluation \(M&E\) Plans](#)

[Session 2A. Tracking Results/Changes](#)

[Session 2B. Appraising Results](#)

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