

575X8 Evaluation of Policy & Professional Practice

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Increasingly evaluation research has become central to assuring and underpinning quality, effectiveness and accountability in many public services sectors, including social work, education and health care.

This short, advanced post graduate course is intended for students with some familiarity with fundamental principles of evaluation research, and with some of the key approaches (including impact evaluation, process evaluation and realist evaluation) that may be deployed to evaluate interventions (if students do not have such familiarity then reading the set texts prior to the course is likely to be necessary and sufficient). The critical focus of the course will be on three key challenges and different theoretical and practical responses to them, namely:

1. Issues in relation to bias, particularly in relation to measuring outcomes of interventions.
2. Paying significant attention to the context of the service and the research itself.
3. Considering differing perspectives on outcomes.

The content of the course will be focused on sharing experiences of developing and carrying out current and recent evaluative research, with some review of historical “classics” of evaluative research. Various methods will be presented and the course will explore pragmatic, theoretical and methodological issues in developing effective evaluative designs.

Indicative Readings:

Forrester, D. (2012) ‘Evaluative Research’ in M. Gray, J. Midgely, and S. Webb (eds.) *Handbook of Social Work*. London: Sage

***Mertens, D.M. (2015) *Research Methods in Education and Psychology. Integrating Diversity with Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London, Sage.

Moore GF, Audrey S, Barker M, et al. (2015) ‘Process evaluation of complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance’, *British Medical Journal* 350: h1258.

Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*, London, Sage.

Special Issue: Understanding and Practicing Participatory Evaluation (2004) *New Directions for Evaluation*, vol. 1998, iss.80, pp. 1-99.

Torgerson, D.J. and Torgerson, C.J. (2008) *Designing Randomised Trials in Health, Education and the Social Sciences: An Introduction*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.