

Research Center Frequently Asked Questions: Grant Evaluation Consultation Services

Q: I am applying for a grant and need help developing an evaluation plan. How do I go about making an appointment to consult regarding grant evaluation services?

A: Please email the research center at coeresearchcenter@shsu.edu or use Dr. Joshi's booking link on our website.

Q: Who can request evaluation support?

A: Faculty and staff from the College of Education and College of Health Sciences and across the university are welcome to request services. Priority is given to COE- and COHS-affiliated researchers, but we support interdisciplinary and cross-college efforts as well.

Q: When should I contact the Research Center about evaluation services?

A: As early as possible—ideally during the planning or pre-proposal stage. We want to be collaborators with you, and that requires planning ahead, if possible. Early collaboration allows us to do the following:

- Co-develop evaluation plans that align with grant requirements
- Provide feedback on logic models or theories of change
- Ensure appropriate budgeting for evaluation work
- Meet tight proposal deadlines

Q: I have a grant for which I want to apply, but the proposal is due in one week. Is that enough notice for the Research Center to help me with my grant?

A: The Research Center requires grant teams to reach out for consultation services at least three weeks prior to the grant deadline. This will give the Research Center staff a chance to provide the best services possible.

Q: What information should I have ready before reaching out?

A: To streamline the process, please prepare the following:

- A brief overview of your project idea or grant
- Funding agency and deadline
- Specific evaluation requirements (if known)
- Draft goals/objectives of the project
- Potential budget range (*in large federal grants, evaluation teams typically mandate about 10% of the budget, but this can be increased; however, the budget must align with what is asked of the evaluation team*)

Q: What's the turnaround time for support or deliverables?

A: The Research Center strives for responsive services and realistic timelines. Proposal support generally requires at least three weeks' notice. Once the Research Center has received a request and learns more about the project, we will work with grant teams to co-develop timelines for our

portion of the proposal. For funded projects, timelines will also be co-developed and mutually agreed upon. Please know that if we receive multiple requests at once, we will prioritize them based on alignment with the project goals and the Research Center mission, specialized areas of our staff, budgetary needs, and notification.

Q: I've set an appointment with the Research Center for grant evaluation consultation. What can I expect during this meeting?

A: Consulting for evaluation aspects of a grant is a multistep process. The first meeting will include understanding the project goals and objectives, intervention components (if any), assessment plans, and the team involved. The Research Center staff will guide the investigators to incorporate appropriate evaluation design, provide input on the assessment process, research methodology, and analytical processes. Should the grant team want the Research Center to be the evaluators, roles and ongoing services will be negotiated and documented to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Q: What does collaboration with the Research Center look like?

A: We tailor our involvement based on your needs, but typical collaboration includes:

- Initial consultation to clarify evaluation scope
- Assistance with drafting evaluation plans and writing the relevant sections of your proposal
- We can also provide boilerplate language about our Center's qualifications and past evaluation work.
- Participation in grant writing meetings as needed
- Regular check-ins once the project is funded
- Evaluation reports for progress, annual review, and final close-out

Q: What kinds of evaluation services does the Research Center offer?

A: We offer comprehensive external and internal evaluation services for grant-funded and institutional research projects. These might include the following:

- Formative and summative evaluation design
- Process evaluation, impact and outcomes measures for a project
- Logic model development
- Incorporating appropriate theoretical framework
- Evaluation reporting for federal, state, and private funders
- Plan for continuous quality improvement
- Ongoing consultative support throughout the project lifecycle

Q: What types of grants or projects benefit from evaluation services?

A: Our services are commonly used for the following:

- Federal grants (e.g., NSF, DOE, IES)
- State and regional education agency projects
- Foundation-funded programs
- Institutional research or pilot programs requiring formal evaluation

Q: How are responsibilities divided between the project team and the evaluators?

A: The Research Center staff can handle both the design and implementation of evaluation tasks. In most situations, project teams are expected to do the following:

- Facilitate access to participants, data, or documents
- Collect and analyze data (*unless explicitly stated and discussed in meetings, we do not collect or analyze data for the research team*)
- Coordinate timelines and communication
- Include evaluation staff in project meetings as appropriate
- Budget appropriately for evaluation work (we can assist with this)

Q: What kinds of data and reporting can we expect from the Research Center evaluation team?

A: The Research Center provides the following:

- Baseline, interim, and summative evaluation reports
- Stakeholder briefs or infographics upon request
- Customized evaluation reporting aligned with funder requirements
- Other data and reporting based on request and early discussions and planning

Q: How much should I budget for evaluation services?

A: Budgets vary depending on project complexity, duration, and data needs. A typical evaluation budget begins at 10% of total project costs, though this can increase depending on the need. Some funders have specific requirements for evaluation services.

The Research Center staff will work with you to develop a reasonable and funder-aligned evaluation budget. Budgeting for evaluation consulting assumes the program team is involved in the data collection process. The Research Center staff typically are not directly involved in the data collection process so this will need to be explicitly discussed in planning meetings. Depending on the funding, research assistants (graduate or undergraduate) need to be recruited for the data collection and management process.