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| Evaluation ethics protocol checklist  [To be used as a peer reviewed or self-check process] |

**Why a checklist for evaluation ethics?**

It is advisable for evaluators to routinely check their projects to ensure they are meeting ethical requirements. Checklists both act as a memory aid**to good practice and** are also a frequently required procedure from institutional clients. The following checklist and information form is intended to support ethical considerations throughout a project. Such a checklist prompts the making of clear statements of intent, mechanisms of approach and consideration of hazard arising from research and evaluation in a manner which can be understood by the public and professionals alike. While some of the items appear to be beyond the scope of ethics alone, any matter that may affect the success of programme evaluation is of indirect ethical interest if it may expose respondents, programme stakeholders or project team members to exploitation or risk.

This form has been designed as a starting guide for those working outside of a large institution and so do not have ready (and required) access to an institutional committee-based ethics process. The checklist has been designed to be relevant for a wide range of evaluation approaches. Particular attention has been paid to ensure it is useful for those undertaking participatory, action research oriented, and/or community-based evaluation approaches. A similar form, but tailored more specifically to social research, can be downloaded from the Learning for Sustainability ethics page at <https://learningforsustainability.net/ethics/>.

**How to use this form**

This form has been designed to be used as a self-check by individuals and/or teams, of their own evaluation projects. If you are looking for a more rigorous process with external validation, this form can serve as the basis for a peer-review of your project with one or more external evaluators named as peer reviewers. It is suggested strongly that the review be undertaken in a collegial manner with you (or your team) as project applicant working through the questions with the peer reviewers – either face to face or by using Zoom or another on-line meeting tool.

Ideally, reviewers looking at your project will require:

1. A completed evaluation ethics protocol checklist (this form)
2. Copies of completed information and consent forms or scripts (if applicable)
3. A copy of the project brief and evaluation methodology and approach

Finally, it is a good idea to also complete an accompanying Health and Safety register to show you have thought about those aspects of the evaluation activities included in this application. Health and safety issues need to cover any risks for both participants and evaluators.

This form is free to use, and no attribution is required. However, any comments or suggested improvements would be welcomed, and incorporated into future versions. And it would be great to hear about some of the situations that you do use it in.

All the best with your ongoing projects

Will Allen – willallennz@gmail.com **Please type in the white boxes below each question. Prompts are provided to help with most questions. All boxes are to be completed. Those that don’t apply to your project should be completed with N/A.**

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| 1. Project name: |
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| 1. Expected dates of work: |
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| 1. Identity, skills and experience of evaluators:   [Provides an indication of whether the team has the appropriate methodological and practical knowledge and experience to undertake the project, or if not, how they will be supported by people with appropriate skills.] |
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| 1. Purpose of evaluation:   [Aims and objectives might indicate key evaluation questions, policy evaluation, and any potential “value” added to the subject group and/or society in general.] |
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| 1. Does the project require ethical/cultural approval by other bodies? If yes please name the other bodies, and confirm that you have appropriate permissions:   [This question asks the proposal developers to identify the relationships that are appropriate. In the first instance evaluators should ascertain that there is no established ethics approval process operating within the organizational/institutional environment they are operating in, and that they are required to use. Particular attention needs to be paid to ensure that consideration has been given to the appropriate involvement of indigenous people and other (occasionally left out) groups. It is important to note that, increasingly, these groups may have their own ethics protocols that need to be complied with.] |
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| 1. Sources of funding:   [The organization, individual or group providing the finance for the study.] |
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| 1. What conflicts of interest – real, potential, or perceived – do the evaluators or their employers or funders have in this project? How will this be acknowledged and managed? |
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| 1. Project rationale:   [Some rationale for conducting the evaluation should be offered. How will this help/be used by the different stakeholder groups involved, including funder and/or client?] |
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| 1. Design of evaluation – including methodology and methods:   [Describe briefly what will be done and how the different participants (including clients/funder) are to be expected to participate – including their potential involvement in the design of the evaluation. What will be required of them? All procedural matters should be clarified. Depending on the methodology, steps may be detailed in advance, or set out through a process-led framework. Time commitments and data-collection settings should be revealed. Data analysis methods and procedures should also be clarified. If this study is part of a wider body of work, explain how it links with the wider inquiry including any implications required for ethics consideration. ] |
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| 1. Types of person(s) taking part as participants:   [Who will take part? Why and how will the subject/respondent group be chosen? What sampling techniques will be deployed? Outline selection method, including the approach to stakeholder analysis where appropriate. If Māori are involved, describe any engagement you have undertaken or plan to undertake with iwi/hapū or other Māori entities about this evaluation.] |
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| 1. Will the project require the evaluators to be aware of, and use, cultural safety practices? If yes, outline how this will be managed:   [Applicants may wish to think beyond national cultures and identities, to also consider how they would engage with other distinct social and professional cultures.] |
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| 1. Recruitment procedures:   [Is there any sense in which subjects might be “obliged” to participate – or are volunteers being recruited? If participation is compulsory, the potential consequences of non-compliance must be indicated to subjects; if voluntary, entitlement to withdraw consent must be indicated and when that entitlement lapses.] |
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| 1. How much time will participants have to give to the project?   [Need to ensure that this is considerate of stakeholders input and realistic.] |
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| 1. Potential benefits and hazards:   [What risks to the subject are entailed in involvement in the evaluation? Are there any potential physical, psychological or disclosure dangers that can be anticipated? What is the possible benefit or harm to the subject or society from their participation or from the project as a whole? What procedures have been established for the care and protection of subjects (e.g., insurance, medical cover) and the control of any information gained from them or about them? Are the target group or community in any danger of being over-researched or over-involved? Remember to think about whether there may be any risks for the evaluation team members through their involvement, and how these could be mitigated.] |
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| 1. Informed consent:   [Consent may be provided in several forms depending on the evaluation context. These can include written, oral, and proxy. Justification must be provided on what form is appropriate and why. Where written information is being provided and written consent is required, consent forms must be provided. Where oral consent is asked the basic script should be provided.] |
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| 1. IP Protection – for participants and evaluators:   [Consideration must be given to ownership of the information, and this should be documented. Care must be taken to identify where local and traditional knowledge are being provided, and how their owners’ rights are protected. Also document how the project team concerned will be using the information, and what they - or their wider team in the case of more inclusive initiatives - will own from the process. Similarly clarify IP considerations and expectations that the client or funder may have.] |
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| 1. Confidentiality and anonymity:   [[Identify how and why decisions about the degree of confidentiality and anonymity to be provided to participants in the project were reached. If the project is promising confidentiality and anonymity detail the steps taken to safeguard the confidentiality of records and any potential identifying information about the subject.] |
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| 1. Data protection and storage:   [The project should comply with the requirements of current data protection legislation and how this is accomplished should be disclosed to participating subjects and those monitoring the evaluation. This should include how and where the consent forms and data will be stored pre- and post-project completion; proposed data storage arrangements, degree of security etc. and whether material facts have been withheld (and when, or if, such facts will be disclosed).] |
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| 1. Dissemination of findings:   [What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc? In areas where information is jointly owned by participants as partners or co-researchers, then attention should be paid to how they want to use the data.] |
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| 1. Are there any plans for future use of the data beyond those already described?   [This should detail whether the data can be stored and used again in the future. Care needs to be taken that any data used in the future can appropriately be understood “in context”. Consideration also needs to be given to participants, and how to articulate this in the consent process.] |
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| 1. Have you considered how to ensure that ethics considerations are reviewed as the project proceeds?   [This is particularly relevant for projects that go on over a longer time period.] |
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| 1. Is there any other information, which you think would be relevant to the reviewers’, or your own, consideration of the ethical issues raised in this documentation? |
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**DECLARATION**

The information supplied above is to the best of my knowledge and belief complete and accurate. I/we acknowledge that the information provided here and in related attachments covers the ethical issues related to this project.

Signature of Applicant:

Date:

NOTE and DISCLAIMER: This form is provided as a starting guide only for evaluators that find themselves having to operate without the benefits of established ethical processes that are commonly found within larger organisations and institutions. It has been designed to cover common evaluation questions but is provided here on the basis that it may not cover all ethical eventualities. Those undertaking the evaluation that is the subject of this form need to undertake their own further assessment of ethical considerations for their project and add other issues as appropriate. Similarly, peer reviewers, if used, may also suggest additional considerations. The form can be used as an individual checklist, or in a more formal peer review process.

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| **PEER ASSESSMENT** | | | |
| I/We [Name(s)] have reviewed the above project in discussion with [insert names] on [date]and, upon reading the revised ethics documentation have agreed with the evaluation team that: | | | |
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| (*Delete that which does not apply*) | | | |
| □ The proposal demonstrates robust ethical reflection by the evaluator/s and provides a robust ethical design for the evaluation | | | |
| □ The proposal requires further consideration of ethics issues | | | |
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| Signature/s: |  | |  |
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| Date: |  | |  |

This review has been jointly conducted by those named above, with the reviewer(s) asking questions and prompting the evaluator(s) to reflect upon, clarify and expand upon, the responses. in an earlier draft of this application. The evaluator(s) remain responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed.

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| [Note: If you wish to use this peer review formally then some thought will have to be given to ensure the credentials and independence of your reviewers. Other people will at the least need some way of verifying the reviewers – perhaps through their website pages. If it is to be used formally, as well as being a supportive peer review process, then the reviewers also need to be comfortable with being contacted about their review. |

**REVIEWER(S)**

**Please provide brief information about the reviewer(s) and their credentials, including a verifiable contact link to their website or organization if applicable.**

[This provides a pathway to verifying the ethics review if necessary for report publication or similar.]