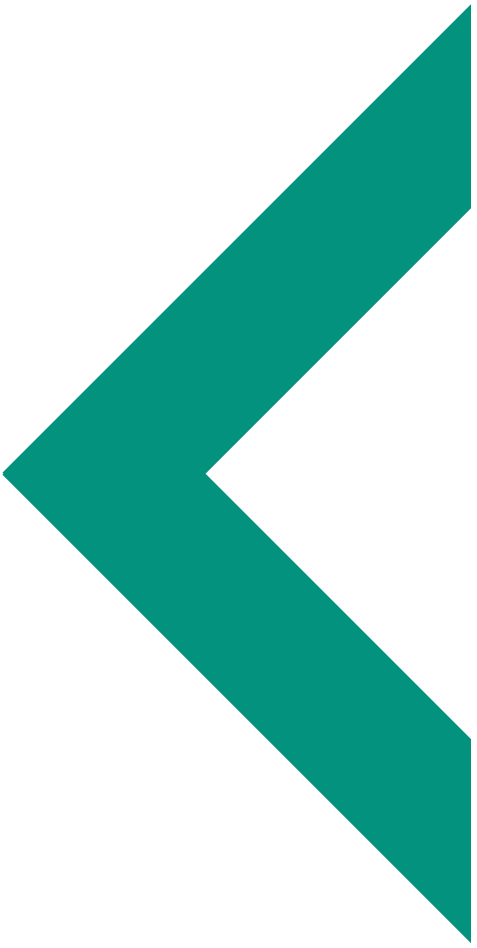
RESEARCH REPORT

Procedures for the Evaluation of Approved Council Curriculum Materials



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The following Office of the Council staff conducted this research: Christopher Dean (project management, research design, procedures research, report writing) and Kerry Wilson (research design, scan research, procedures research, report writing).

An Interim Evaluation of Curriculum Advisory Committee was established for the purpose of advising on the development of curriculum evaluation procedures. The members of the committee were:

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The valuable advice provided by members of the Interim Evaluation of Curriculum Advisory Committee is appreciated.

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Executive summary

This report presents the results of a research project, the purpose of which was to scan latest developments in curriculum evaluation and, using this scan, to develop procedures, protocols and timelines for the evaluation of the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of approved Queensland School Curriculum Council curriculum materials.

The research was conducted by the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, with the assistance of an Interim Evaluation of Curriculum Advisory Committee established specifically to advise on this project.

The research asked three major questions. These questions, together with a summary of responses to them, are provided below.

Research Question 1
What are the latest developments in evaluation and, in particular, in evaluation of curriculum materials?

In researching Question 1, a scan of latest developments in evaluation revealed the following:

1.1 A diverse range of approaches is currently available to evaluators. These approaches include experimental approaches, goal-based or objectives approaches, system-management approaches, goal-free approaches, decision-making approaches, responsive approaches and utilisation-focused approaches. While there remains contention about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the various approaches to evaluation, there is a trend to acknowledge that no approach on its own is 'perfect' and that an approach or combination of approaches should be chosen to best suit a situation.

1.2. While there is acknowledgment that the scientific and naturalistic paradigms are based on different philosophies, there is a trend to accept that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have a legitimate role to play in evaluation and that they can be effectively combined.

1.3 Several documents have been developed as a consequence of an increased focus on the role of standards and ethics in educational evaluation and in evaluation in general. The *Program Evaluation Standards* published in 1994 by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation provide a guide for the responsible conduct of the evaluations of educational and training programs, projects and materials. The Australasian Evaluation Society has developed *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations* to promote the ethical practice of evaluation.

1.4 There is a growing trend to utilise current technology in evaluation. Examples of this trend include using on-line technology in evaluations and analysing qualitative data using advanced computer software packages.

1.5 Contemporary advice with regard to the planning of evaluations currently focuses on directing attention to the key elements or topics that are relevant in planning an evaluation and identifying a checklist of questions or considerations related to these key elements.

1.6 Although all Australian states and territories undertake regular evaluation of syllabus materials, little documentation is available about the evaluation procedures that are used. However, those states that have most recently reviewed curriculum materials have used procedures that focus on open consultation with key stakeholders and that utilise on-line technologies as part of the consultative process.

A full response to Research Question 1 is contained in Section 1 of the report, 'Scan results'.

Research Question 2
What procedures should be used for the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials?

In researching Question 2, it was decided that the required activities for the evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials were best presented as two procedures. These procedures were called:

- Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee;
- Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials.

It was found that the following activities were required in the procedures:

Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.1. Establishing the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee: Activities here involve the establishment of a committee to provide advice to the Director in relation to the Council's Curriculum Evaluation Framework, the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials, and other curriculum evaluation matters referred to the committee by the Director.

2.2 Inviting nominations: Activities here involve establishing a register of calls for nominations for the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee from organisations as approved by the Director of the Office and inviting these organisations to identify nominees to serve as committee members for a maximum of two years.

2.3 Advising members of their roles and responsibilities: Activities here involve welcoming committee members and outlining to the members the role and composition of the committee, the likely schedule of meetings and the responsibilities of members.

Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials

2.4 Initiating an evaluation: Activities here include the appointment of an evaluation manager, and the preparation and approval of an appropriate project profile.

2.5 Appointing an evaluation team: Activities here include the appointment of internal staff or external consultants via established procurement processes, and the briefing of staff or consultants on the evaluation to be conducted.

2.6 Managing and liaison: Activities here include the establishment of management and quality assurance processes internal to the project, and the establishment and maintenance of appropriate liaison between the Office and the evaluation team (internal or external).

2.7 Preparing the evaluation design and publishing plan: Activities here include consultation with appropriate people about the evaluation, preparation and approval of an evaluation design according to an evaluation design template, and preparation and approval of a publication plan.

2.8 Collecting data: Activities here involve the selection of appropriate data collection processes, obtaining requisite permissions to collect data, drawing representative samples where applicable, and ensuring that data collection processes are acceptable to those supplying the information.

2.9 Analysing data: Activities here cover analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data with a rigour to the extent required by the intended use of the evaluation.

2.10 Preparing evaluation reports: Activities here include drafting reports according to an approved report template, ensuring that the language of the report matches the expected audience, ensuring that the findings and conclusions are fair and balanced, and consulting with the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee prior to finalising the report.

2.11 Providing results and follow-up: Activities here include submitting the report to the Director, having the report considered according to the Director's decision, publishing the report (electronic and/or print), and following up on report findings.

The procedures reference the *Program Evaluation Standards* published by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation and the *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations* published by the Australasian Evaluation Society.

A full response to Research Question 2 is contained in the Section 2 of the report, 'Procedures for the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials'.

Research Question 3
What evaluation cycle should the Council adopt for the evaluation of Council curriculum materials in each key learning area and the Preschool Curriculum Guidelines?

In researching Question 3, it was found that the following were important aspects requiring consideration in the development of an evaluation cycle for approved curriculum materials:

3.1 Any curriculum evaluation cycle needs to consider the implementation plans of school authorities for the approved curriculum materials. To evaluate the approved curriculum materials at a very initial stage of implementation would inevitably result in misleading findings, while to evaluate the approved materials too late would be irresponsible and unresponsive to the users of such materials. (In considering an appropriate time to undertake a first summative evaluation, it was felt that there should be at least two to three years between the approval/publishing of materials and an initial (summative) evaluation of these materials.)

3.2 Curriculum evaluation activity needs to be considered within the context of all other known evaluations planned by the Council, including evaluations of testing programs and evaluations related to planning and service activities. (For this reason the illustrative evaluation cycle presented in this research report includes all known evaluations planned for the Office.)

3.3 Any curriculum evaluation cycle will be dependent upon, and integrated with, the curriculum research and development cycle, and needs to be flexible in responding to changes that might occur to this cycle. (The illustrative evaluation cycle presented in this research report assumes a period of at least four years between the release of a syllabus and the release of any revision of this syllabus. It should be noted that, at the time of writing, the research and development cycle for the revision of approved curriculum materials had not been finalised.)

3.4 There is need for two types of evaluations:

- an evaluation that reflects or looks back upon an approved and completed set of curriculum materials prior to engagement in any redevelopment or revision activity (these are sometimes called summative evaluations or reviews);
- an evaluation that is an integral part of a research and development or redevelopment phase (these are sometimes called formative evaluations).

3.5 The evaluation cycle needs to be planned so that maximum use of evaluation findings is possible. For this to occur:

- the findings of summative evaluations need to be available prior to the commencement of research and development or redevelopment;
- the findings of formative evaluations need to be available at critical stages during the research and development or redevelopment phases.

3.6 The evaluation cycle needs to be planned with a view to meeting a recurrent need for permanent and casual evaluation staff rather than staffing based on a non-continuous project model. (The illustrative evaluation cycle presented in the research report assumes an ongoing need for evaluation staff, both permanent and casual.)

A full response to Research Question 3 is contained in Section 3 of the report, ‘Evaluation cycle’.

Introduction

Purpose of research

The purpose of the Procedures for the Evaluation of Approved Curriculum Materials Research Project was to develop procedures, protocols and timelines for the evaluation of the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of approved Queensland School Curriculum Council curriculum materials.

Background to the research

In July 1999 the Chair of the Queensland School Curriculum Council forwarded the Council's Curriculum Evaluation Framework to the Minister for Education for his consideration (see Appendix 1). This was in response to his request of the Council to develop curriculum evaluation guidelines and to outline the Council's plans in this regard. (Curriculum evaluation in this context means the evaluation of approved curriculum materials, not drafts-in-development.) An essential feature of the Curriculum Evaluation Framework is collegiality and cooperation among key stakeholders.

The Curriculum Evaluation Framework covers the following four foci:

- Focus 1 Evaluation of student outcomes;
- Focus 2 Evaluation of the use of approved Council curriculum materials in schools;
- Focus 3 Evaluation of the curriculum support services;
- Focus 4 Evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials.

In subsequent correspondence of 23 September 1999 to the Council Chair, the Minister indicated that while he was impressed with the 'comprehensive nature of the Curriculum Evaluation Framework…' he considered the scope 'too broad' and stated that he was interested only in an evaluation of the 'appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the materials developed by the Council'.

In response to this letter, the Council Chair advised the Minister on 8 November 1999 that 'in effect, further development will focus mainly on what is called Focus 4 of the Framework – Curriculum materials'.

Furthermore, the Chair stated that this developmental work 'will involve the following four aspects:

- the establishment of a Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee to progress curriculum evaluation;
- the carrying out of a scan to provide latest information in curriculum evaluation;
- the development of procedures and a timetable for the evaluation of curriculum;
- the development of protocols for suggested use by schools and school authorities to assist the Council to evaluate its curriculum.'

This research project further developed the Curriculum Evaluation Framework by focusing on the first three aspects outlined by the Chair in respect of the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials. It is expected that the fourth aspect (i.e. the development of protocols) will be considered after the procedures and timetable are finalised.

Research questions

The research project addressed the following questions:

1. **What are the latest developments in evaluation and, in particular, in evaluation of curriculum materials?**

2. **What procedures should be used for the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials?**

3. **What evaluation cycle should the Council adopt for the evaluation of Council curriculum materials in each key learning area and the Preschool Curriculum Guidelines?**

Research approach

The research approach was based on the following four major principles:

1. In keeping with the collegial and cooperative nature of the Council's Curriculum Evaluation Framework, an Interim Evaluation of Curriculum Advisory Committee was established that was widely representative of the education community for the purpose of advising on the development of curriculum evaluation procedures.

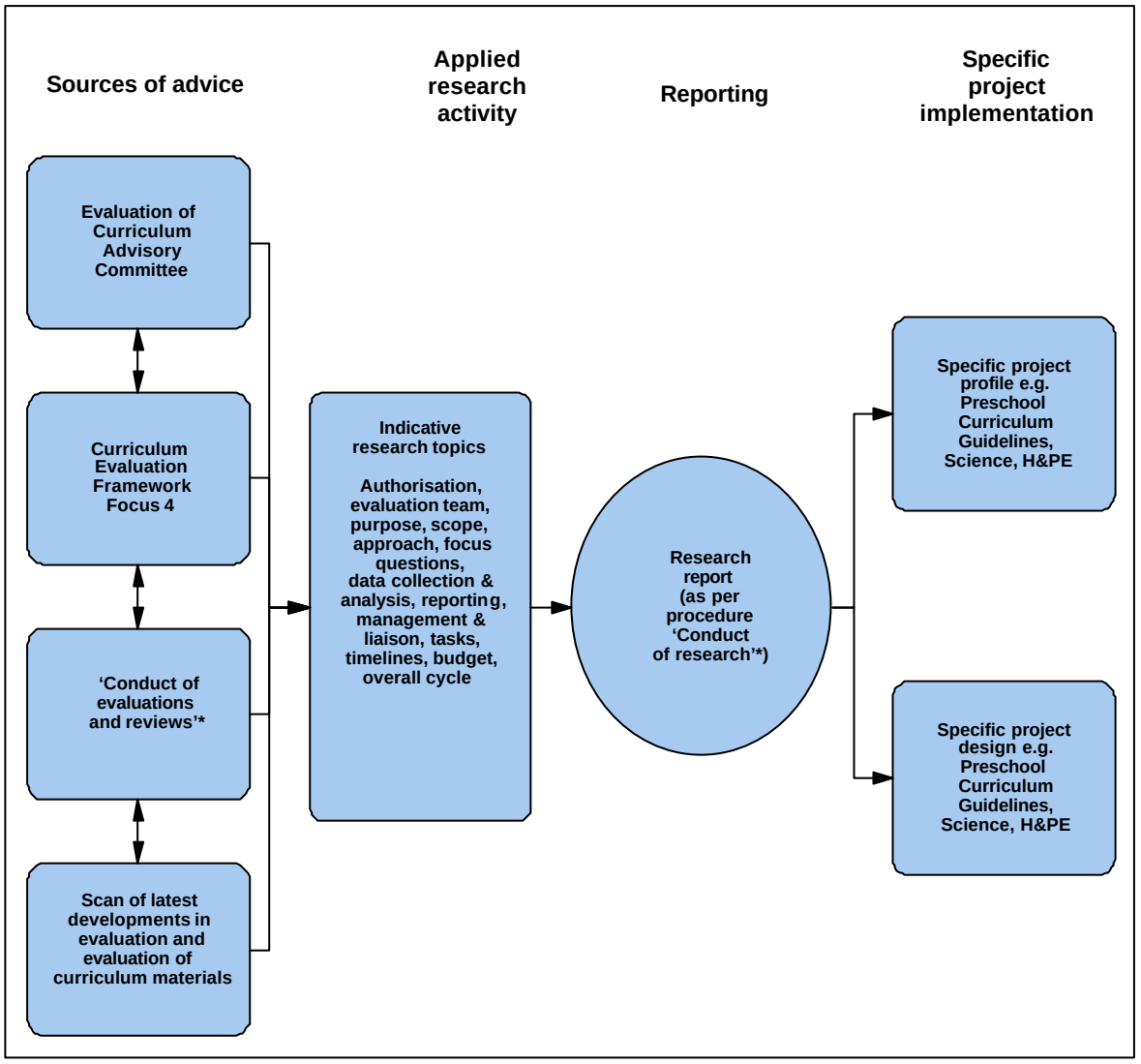
2. The research was informed by the latest international and national literature and views about the evaluation.

3. The research was applied in nature and culminated with information that will be easily adapted and used in the preparation of project profiles and evaluation designs for specific evaluation projects (for example, the evaluation of the Preschool Curriculum Guidelines).

4. The development of the curriculum evaluation procedures was guided by the generic quality system procedure 'Conduct of evaluations and reviews' used by the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council.

Figure 1 provides a summary of the overall research approach.

Figure 1: Summary of overall research approach



* Office quality system procedure

This report

The remainder of this report is presented in three sections (Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3), each of which responds to one of the three research questions:

- Scan results (Research Question 1);
- Procedures for the evaluation of approved Council Curriculum materials (Research Question 2);
- Evaluation cycle (Research Question 3).

Section 1: Scan results

1.1 Introduction

This section of the research report addresses the first research question:

What are the latest developments in evaluation and, in particular, in evaluation of curriculum materials?

In order to establish the latest developments in evaluation and the evaluation of curriculum materials, the following information was scanned:

- web pages of evaluation societies and associations from Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and United States;
- significant and available texts published after 1980 on the evaluation of educational or social programs and the evaluation of curriculum;
- relevant evaluation journals, magazines and reports.

Informal telephone interviews were also conducted with various personnel in other Australian states and territories to clarify information about the procedures used in their state and territories for the evaluation of curriculum materials.

From this scanning process information was obtained about:

- contemporary approaches to evaluation;
- the use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in evaluations;
- the role of standards and ethics in evaluation;
- the utilisation of technology in evaluation;
- planning for the conduct of evaluations;
- procedures used for the evaluation of curriculum materials in Australian states and territories.

The information obtained about the latest developments in each of these areas is presented in the remainder of this section of the research paper.

Throughout the remainder of this section of the research paper, the word 'program' is used generically to refer to the object of an evaluation. The term 'program' is considered to be inclusive of curriculum materials and therefore no attempt is made to distinguish between the latest developments in evaluation and the latest developments in the evaluation of curriculum materials.

This follows the trend in contemporary literature to use the term 'program' generically to cover the diverse range of objects being evaluated today. For example, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994, p. 3) offers the following definition of evaluation:

> '*Evaluation*: The systematic investigation of the worth of merit of an object. For the purpose of conciseness…the term *program* will be used generically to refer to the object of evaluation. Objects covered … include educational and training programs, projects and materials.'

1.2 Contemporary approaches to evaluation

A scan of current literature and information on evaluation shows that since the 1970s the field of educational and other social program evaluation has expanded dramatically and consequently there are now a proliferation of evaluation approaches available to evaluators (Chelimsky & Shadish 1997; Shadish, Cook & Leviton 1991).

While there remains contention about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the various approaches to evaluation, there is a trend to acknowledge that no one approach is 'perfect' and that an approach or combination of approaches should be chosen to best suit a situation (Payne 1994; Stecher & Davis 1987).

Caulley (1993a, p. 125) reinforces this notion in the following statement:

> 'Your choice of an evaluation approach will depend on the nature of your program, the purpose of the evaluation, and how a model resonates with your personal value system.'

Stake (cited in Kemmis & Stake 1988, p. 18) also agrees with this view and states:

> 'It is not reasonable to expect that any model or set design guidelines could cover the many responsibilities and identify the many inquiry opportunities of even the simplest evaluation study.'

A brief overview of the predominant approaches available to contemporary evaluators is presented in Table 1. It is acknowledged that approaches to evaluation are difficult to categorise discretely as there are similarities between the approaches in some aspects.

The information in Table 1 draws heavily on the categorisations and descriptions of evaluation approaches presented by Caulley (1993a), House (1983), Stecher & Davis, (1987) and Payne (1994).

Table 1: Overview of predominant contemporary evaluation approaches

Approach (Emphasis)	Description of the approach	Possible focus question(s)	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
Experimental approach (Research design)	Evaluation is 'those procedures for collecting and analysing data which increase the possibility for "proving" rather than "asserting" the worth of a social activity' (Suchman cited in Riley 1990, p. 118).	What are the effects of the program and how can they be generalised?	Objective evidence is provided about the impact of a program. There is an emphasis on independence, objectivity and generalisability of conclusions.	Rigidly controlled experimental designs are difficult to conduct in real world settings. Information is not obtained about the complexities of the real world influences on a program. The beliefs and views of participants in the program are not acknowledged.
Goal-based or objectives approach (Measuring achievement of goals and objectives)	Evaluation is determining the extent to which program goals have been met.	What are the program goals and objectives and how can their attainment be measured?	Clear links are evident between the goals and outcomes of a program and the procedures used for measuring results. Objective data can be used to describe the impact of a program.	The side-effects or unintended outcomes of a program are ignored. Program goals may be impossible to achieve because of the context, circumstances and limitations under which a program operates. Program goals may not be appropriate to the needs of the clients. There may not be consensus about the goals or objectives of a program.
System-management approach (Results)	Evaluation is concerned with making judgments about the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of programs in terms of program inputs and outputs.	Are the expected results achieved? Can the results be achieved more economically? What are the most effective programs?	Provides information on the results of a program and clearly links inputs to outputs.	Information is only collected about the results of a program and not the processes and therefore the reasons for the results will not be apparent. The approach relies on outputs being measurable. The approach does not take into account the participants in the program and the processes in which they are involved. Determining 'appropriateness' is often overlooked.
Goal-free approach (Consumers' needs)	Evaluation is concerned with determining the merit of a program by relating program effects to the relevant needs of the program	What are the stakeholders' needs and are they being met? What are all the effects of a program?	Satisfying clients' needs is the key focus. Information about the unintended side effects of a program is obtained whereas these might be missed if the evaluation approach is totally goal-focused.	Determining stakeholder needs is difficult due to variation in context and circumstance. Approach can lack focus.

Approach (Emphasis)	Description of the approach	Possible focus question(s)	Perceived advantages	Perceived disadvantages
	participants (Scriven 1996)			
Decision-making approach (Decision making)	Evaluation is the 'process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives' (Stufflebeam cited in Riley 1990, p. 137).	Which decisions need to be made and what information will be relevant?	Relevant information can be provided to decision-makers at key points in a program and provide a basis for rational decision making.	Information that is identified as relevant by the decision-makers may not acknowledge input from the range of stakeholders. Decision-making approaches are usually very structured and unintended outcomes could be missed. Focus is on collection of information rather than making judgments.
Responsive approach (Views of stakeholders)	Evaluation is concerned with making judgments about a program based on the views of all the stakeholders involved in the program.	Which people have a stake in the program and what are their points of view?	The strengths and weaknesses of a program are described from the perspectives of actual participants. Conflicting points of view can be considered. Processes of the program are considered as well as the outcomes.	Focus can be perceived as being too much on the process of the program rather than the outcomes. Relies predominantly on qualitative data which does not allow for the easy comparative evaluation of programs. Role of the evaluator is less objective than other more authoritarian approaches. Difficult to take account of perspectives of all concerned groups.
Utilisation-focused approach (Use of results)	Evaluation is the 'systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of a program for use by specified people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing and affecting' (Patton cited in Rogers 1992, p. 85).	Who are the intended information users and what information will be most useful?	There is potential for an increased utilisation of evaluation results. Meaningful information is provided to people who are concerned about a program.	Stakeholders are defined as the decision-makers and other groups with legitimate stakes in the program are excluded. Involvement of a broad group may make it difficult to focus the evaluation questions. The approach is primarily information gathering and lacks an evaluative component. Can be difficult to ensure that all interests are represented. Involvement of stakeholders in data interpretation diminishes evaluation independence.

1.3 Use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies

A scan of contemporary evaluation information shows that one of the key issues in evaluation over the last twenty years has been the contention between evaluation approaches based on scientific and naturalistic philosophies (Caulley 1993b; Norris 1990) and associated debate about the superiority of either quantitative or qualitative methodologies in evaluation designs (Cook 1997).

Nigel Norris (1990, p. 42) notes:

> 'The question of the degree to which evaluation studies should take account of local variation and context or work within a standardised methodological and often political framework, has evolved as a significant and discriminating issue for evaluators of social and educational programmes. … It is significant because it is a question which divides the evaluation community into those who advocate preordinate research designs and those who favour more responsive evaluation studies.'

However, a review of literature indicates that while there is acknowledgment that the scientific and naturalistic paradigms are based on different philosophies, there is a trend to accept that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have a legitimate role to play in evaluation and that they can be effectively combined (Caulley 1993b; Cook 1997; Datta 1997; Payne 1994; Shadish, Cook & Leviton 1991). This position is supported by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) whose standards encourage the use of a variety of methods.

Underpinning this view is the proviso that the choice of methodologies should be dependent on the evaluation questions to be answered. Cook (1997, p. 35) highlights this notion and states:

> 'The case for qualitative methods does not depend on attacking the foundations of quantitative methods; it rests on their utility for answering important evaluation questions either when used alone or when used together with quantitative methods. Practitioners need not be as defensive now as they were 25 years ago. They are full brothers and sisters in evaluation.'

Evaluators are also cautioned to choose methodologies from within a clearly identified evaluation approach. Caulley (1993b) points out that while there is no reason why qualitative and quantitative data cannot be combined in the one evaluation, there are fundamental differences between positivist and naturalistic approaches that will determine how evaluators make use of the qualitative and quantitative data.

1.4 Standards and codes of ethics in evaluation

A scan of evaluation literature shows that over the last twenty years there has been an increased focus on the role of standards and ethics in educational evaluation and in evaluation in general.

One view purports that the need for a focus on standards and ethics has emerged as a result of the increased use of evaluation approaches from the naturalistic paradigm. Volpato (1996, p. 33) comments:

> ‘Because social programs are not laboratories and involve a number of groups of people – such as the clients of a program, the personnel involved, the supporting agencies and various stakeholders – the standards for program evaluation involve more than standards of scientific practice. As a result, codes of ethics and program evaluation standards have emerged in recent years, enabling evaluations themselves to be evaluated.’

In response to early interest in the development of standards for educational evaluation in the United States, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation was founded in 1975 and subsequently published *Standards for Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects and Materials* in 1981. In 1989 the Joint Committee re-examined these standards and as a result of an extensive review new *Program Evaluation Standards* were published in 1994.

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) supported the development of the standards even though the association has not formally adopted the standards. The Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) formally endorsed the Joint Committee standards in 1996.

The *Program Evaluation Standards* provide a guide for the responsible conduct of the evaluations of educational and training programs, projects and materials. There are thirty standards organised around the four important attributes of an evaluation: utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy. The standards are described as follows:

- The *utility* standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.
- The *feasibility* standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic and frugal.
- The *propriety* standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.
- The *accuracy* standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

The Joint Committee acknowledges that the standards are not equally applicable to all evaluations and encourages users to identify which ones would be applicable to a given situation.

In general, the Joint Committee advises evaluators to:

- gather information that is relevant to the questions posed by clients and other audiences;
- gather sufficient information for judging the effectiveness, costs, responsiveness to societal needs, feasibility, and worth of the object being evaluated;
- involve many people with different perspectives in evaluations;
- use a wide variety of evaluation methods.

The Australasian Evaluation Society has further focused on the ‘propriety standards’ and developed *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations*. These guidelines, endorsed by the AES in 1997, focus on ethical behaviour and decision making in evaluation and are intended to promote the ethical practice of evaluation.

1.5 Utilisation of technology in evaluation methodology

A scan of contemporary evaluation information reveals a focus in journal articles and texts on the utilisation of current technology in evaluation. Evidence of this trend can be seen in the Australian Evaluation Society (AES) magazine, *Evaluation News and Comment* which:

- regularly features articles focusing on computers in evaluation;
- includes World Wide Web (WWW) bookmarks in each edition;
- regularly includes publications related to the use of technology in evaluation in the book summary section.

A brief scan of this information shows that the latest developments in using technology in evaluation include:

- using on-line technology in evaluations;
- analysing qualitative data using advanced computer software packages.

Rogers (1994) and Stillman (1996) encourage evaluators to utilise current WWW technologies. The ways that the WWW may be utilised in evaluations include:

- accessing on-line or archived materials relevant to evaluation or the evaluation topic;
- using electronic discussion groups for collecting evaluation data;
- participating in discussion lists related to evaluation (for example, Qualr-s is a discussion list focusing on qualitative research for studying humans, and Arlist is a discussion list focusing on action research);
- accessing library catalogues;
- collecting and analysing survey data using on-line technology or email.

While the use of computer technology has long been accepted as part of quantitative data analysis, there is a growing trend to utilise computer technology in the analysis of qualitative evaluative data. Richards and Richards (1992) argue that contemporary well-designed computer software can be used for rigorous analysis of qualitative data and hence enhance the reputation of qualitative methods.

1.6 Planning for evaluations

A scan of available information with regard to the planning of evaluations shows that advice currently focuses on directing attention to the key elements or topics that are relevant in planning an evaluation and identifying a checklist of questions or considerations related to these key elements. Authors that have foregrounded this approach in providing advice for planning evaluations include Kemmis (1994), Nixon (1992), and Owen (1993).

These planning frameworks or checklists are considered to be useful for any evaluation and are not considered to be representative of a particular evaluation approach. Kemmis (1994, p. 2) highlights that the planner he presents is primarily a practical tool which ‘simply lists a number of design evaluation considerations which might be relevant in any of a number of different approaches’.

Table 2 provides an overview of the key elements or topics considered relevant in planning an evaluation by Kemmis, Nixon, and Owen.

Table 2: Overview of key elements relevant in planning an evaluation

Kemmis (1994)	Nixon (1992)	Owen (1993)
Purpose	Purpose	Purpose
Stakeholders	Worthwhileness	Evaluation audience
Program issues	Interpretation of the task	Evaluation resources
Resources	Subjects of the evaluation	Evaluation focus
Control issues	The evaluators	Key evaluation questions
Evidence	Evaluation methods	Data management (collection and analysis)
Data gathering	Time schedule	Reporting
Analysis and interpretation	Control of information	Standards of conduct
Reporting	Criteria for making judgments	Budget and timelines
	Reporting	

As can be seen in Table 2, there is commonality among the key elements identified even though different language is used to describe the elements.

A further comparison of the questions or considerations that each of the authors has identified for each of the key elements shows that they are similar in nature. Kemmis (1994), however, offers one of the most detailed checklists of ideas for evaluation design.

1.7 Procedures used for the evaluation of curriculum materials in Australian States and Territories

Little formal documentation is available about the specific procedures that Australian states and territories use to evaluate or review their curriculum materials. A summary of the information that was obtained is provided in Table 3.

The information contained in Table 3 was drawn from the following two sources:

- A unpublished report on the results of a survey distributed by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities seeking information on curriculum quality assurance policies and practices in all Australian states and territories. The survey included a focus on the procedures used for the evaluation of syllabuses. The 1999 report indicates that regular evaluation of syllabus materials is undertaken in all states and territories as part of the syllabus development and review process, although the procedures vary.
- Informal telephone conversations with personnel in other states and territories to clarify the status of the activities identified in the above report.

Table 3: Summary of procedures used in Australian States and Territories for the evaluation of Years 1 to 10 syllabuses

State or territory	Planned or systematic activities to review and improve the content of syllabuses
Australian Capital Territory	A quality assurance process, 'School development', takes place in all government schools every five years. During this process, schools undertake a curriculum review to ensure that quality curriculum is provided within centrally defined guidelines and system policy. The review consists of responses to a set of generic focus questions and a summary report for each key learning area.
New South Wales	Systematic evaluation is considered a key phase in the syllabus development process. The *Syllabus Development Handbook* which identifies syllabus development processes is currently being refined and the identification of evaluation procedures is not yet formalised. However, it is acknowledged that the nature and scope of syllabus evaluations will be determined by identified needs and that all evaluations will be transparent, widely consultative and acknowledge national and international research.
Northern Territory	Up until 1999, curriculum was approved for a maximum of five years and syllabus advisory committees were responsible for ensuring that revision was informed by appropriate evaluation. Plans for future evaluation of curriculum materials have not yet been made as a major curriculum review has been undertaken.
Queensland	External evaluations are conducted throughout the trial/pilot phases of all syllabus development projects. Government and non-government schools participate in these evaluations. Procedures for the evaluation of approved syllabuses are currently in development (i.e. this research project). The development process has involved the state, Catholic and independent school authorities.
South Australia	In 1999 an extensive review was undertaken of the Statements and Profiles. No formal documentation of the procedures used is available. The review process was highly consultative and involved key stakeholders. The consultation process involved focus group meetings and the utilisation of a web-based survey. An external consultant was involved to analyse data and write the report.
Tasmania	Initial materials are published on the web with specified feedback time. Syllabuses go through a review cycle including a one year 'volatile' state where solicited feedback informs the modification of the syllabus. Syllabus advisers also seek feedback at moderation meetings.
Victoria	During 1999 an extensive review of the Curriculum Standards Framework was undertaken. No formal documentation is available on the specific procedures used for the review. The review process was based on a three-phase open consultation process involving a broad range of stakeholders. An external consultant facilitated the consultation process and managed the collection and analysis of data. A key feature of the review was the utilisation of a web-based survey for data collection.
Western Australia	The Outcomes and Standards Framework will be reviewed in 2004/5 after a five-year implementation period. At this stage plans for evaluation are only just being addressed and as yet plans have not been formalised.

As can be seen in Table 3, there is little formal documentation available about the specific procedures used in other states and territories. However, there is evidence that there is a trend for evaluations or reviews to be transparent, cognisant of current research, involve a broad range of stakeholders, and utilise contemporary technologies.

1.8 Summary of the latest developments in evaluation and the evaluation of curriculum materials

Based on the information obtained through the scanning process, the latest developments in the evaluation and in the evaluation of curriculum materials can be summarised as follows:

- A diverse range of approaches is currently available to evaluators. While there remains contention about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the various approaches to evaluation, there is a trend to acknowledge that no one approach is 'perfect' and that an approach or combination of approaches should be chosen to best suit a situation.

- While there is acknowledgment that the scientific and naturalistic paradigms are based on different philosophies, there is a trend to accept that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have a legitimate role to play in evaluation and that they can be effectively combined.

- Several documents have been developed as a consequence of an increased focus on the role of standards and ethics in educational evaluation and in evaluation in general. The *Program Evaluation Standards* published in 1994 by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation provide a guide for the responsible conduct of the evaluations of educational and training programs, projects and materials. The Australasian Evaluation Society has developed *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations* to promote the ethical practice of evaluation.

- There is a growing trend to utilise current technology in evaluation. Examples of this trend include using on-line technology in evaluations and analysing qualitative data using advanced computer software packages.

- Contemporary advice with regard to the planning of evaluations currently focuses on directing attention to the key elements or topics that are relevant in planning an evaluation and identifying a checklist of questions or considerations related to these key elements.

- Although all Australian states and territories undertake regular evaluation of syllabus materials, little documentation is available about the evaluation procedures that are used. However, those states that have most recently reviewed curriculum materials have used procedures that focus on open consultation with key stakeholders and that utilise on-line technologies as part of the consultative process.

Section 2: Procedures for the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials

2.1 Introduction

This section of the research report addresses the second research question.

What procedures should be used for the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials?

The information obtained in response to this question is presented as two procedures. These procedures are called:

- Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee;
- Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials.

The development of these procedures was informed by*:*

- the results of the scan of latest developments in evaluation and the evaluation of curriculum materials;
- advice from the Interim Evaluation of Curriculum Advisory Committee;
- the existing Office quality system procedure pce 02 'Conduct of evaluations and reviews'.

As a result of this development process, activities for the procedure 'Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee' were identified in relation to:

- establishing the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee;
- inviting nominations;
- advising members of their roles and responsibilities.

Activities for the procedure 'Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials' were identified in relation to:

- initiating an evaluation;
- appointing an evaluation team;
- managing and liaising;
- preparing an evaluation design and publishing plan;
- collecting data;
- analysing data;
- preparing evaluation reports;
- providing results and follow-up.

The draft procedures were developed so that they could be used by:

- management staff of the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council who request or authorise the conduct of a formal evaluation;
- staff of the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council who undertake a formal evaluation;
- external consultants who undertake formal evaluations for the Queensland School Curriculum Council.

The procedures were developed to capture the content and intent of:

- the *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations* published by the Australasian Evaluation Society in 1997 (see Appendix 2). Where appropriate, these guidelines are referenced as AES Guidelines;
- the *Program Evaluation Standards* published by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation in 1994 (see Appendix 3). Where appropriate, these standards are referenced as PES.

The following terms were defined for the purposes of the procedures:

- ***Approved Queensland School Curriculum Council curriculum materials*** – Refers to curriculum materials that have been developed by the Queensland School Curriculum Council and have been approved for publication by the Council or the Director of the Office of the Council. Approved curriculum materials could include key learning area syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, assessment guidelines, curriculum framework papers, sourcebook guidelines, sourcebook modules, or initial in-service materials. Approved Council curriculum materials could be published in print, CD-ROM and/or on-line formats.
- ***Consultant*** – The person or organisation appointed to conduct an external evaluation.
- ***Evaluation*** – The systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object. In this case the object is the approved Council curriculum materials.
- ***Evaluation Manager*** – The Office person appointed to manage an evaluation within the Office or an evaluation being conducted by an external team.
- ***Evaluation team members*** – The staff appointed as the evaluation team whether the evaluation is conducted within the Office or by an external consultant.

The remainder of this section of the research report presents the following two procedures:

- Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee;
- Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials.

Throughout the procedures, the officer identified in italics after each activity is the person responsible for undertaking the activity.

2.2 Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee procedure

2.2.1 Establishing the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.2.1.1 Seek approval from the Director to establish a Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee with the following role and composition. Use form 'Minute template' as per Office quality system procedure 'Formal referral of matters to management for information or approval'.

The Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee will provide advice to the Director of the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council in relation to:

- the Council's Curriculum Evaluation Framework;
- the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials;
- other curriculum evaluation matters as referred to the committee by the Director.

The Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee will include the following nominees with knowledge, expertise and/or experience in curriculum evaluation:

- two people nominated by Education Queensland, one of whom must be a practising teacher;
- two people nominated by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission one of whom must be a practising teacher;
- two people nominated by the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland, one of whom must be a practising teacher;
- one person nominated by the representatives of the parent groups who, at the time of appointment by the Council, is a parent of a P to 10 student enrolled in a Queensland school;
- one person nominated by the Queensland Teachers' Union;
- one person nominated by the Queensland Independent Education Union;
- two representatives from higher education;
- one representative from the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies;
- one equity representative with extensive understanding of equity issues in general;
- one pre-service teacher nominated by the Higher Education Forum;
- officers from the Office of the Council nominated by the Director.

Assistant Director (Quality Assurance)

2.2.1.2 Approve establishment of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee and appoint an appropriate person to act as Chair of the committee. Advise the Chair that his/her responsibilities include:

- producing agendas;
- facilitating and leading informed discussions on issues of relevance;
- providing all members with opportunities to contribute to the committee's deliberations;
- communicating Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee recommendations and advice to the Director of the Office of the Council;
- preparing reports, as requested by the Queensland School Curriculum Council, the Director, or the Assistant Director (Quality Assurance), about the advice and decisions of the committee;
- ensuring that accurate committee meeting records are kept.

Director

2.2.1.3 Appoint an officer to act as Executive Officer to the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee. Advise the Executive Officer that, in supporting the operations of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee, his/her responsibilities include:

- arranging the meeting venues;
- organising catering;
- organising meeting facilities and resource requirements (data show, OHP);
- assisting in the preparation and distribution of agendas, correspondence, minutes and other meeting papers, as required;
- keeping records.

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.2.1.4 Ensure there is a budget to support the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee.

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.2.2 Inviting nominations

2.2.2.1 Establish a register of calls for nominations to the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee. In the register include the name of the organisation, contact person, contact details and nominees required for each nominating organisation.

Executive Officer

2.2.2.2 Invite organisations to identify nominees for the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee to serve as committee members for a maximum period of two years. Identify the nominees required, the role and composition of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee and the number and likely schedule of meetings.

(Note: The Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee meetings will normally be of three hours duration. The Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee will meet on at least four occasions each year. Besides regular meetings, the Chair may convene additional meetings to deal with emergent or follow-up matters as required.)

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.2.3 Advising members of their roles and responsibilities

2.2.3.1 Develop and distribute a letter of welcome to members. Include in the letter the role and composition of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee and the number and likely schedule of meetings.

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.2.3.2 At the first Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee meeting, advise members of their responsibilities to:

- provide advice from their recognised knowledge, experience and/or expertise in curriculum evaluation (members should be encouraged to communicate with their nominating organisation);
- advise, in writing, their nominating organisation and the Chair if they are unable to continue to serve on the committee, thus allowing vacancies to be filled by other nominees;
- advise the Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting and request/advise that they be represented by a proxy.

(Note: When appropriate, officers from the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council may attend committee meetings as facilitators and/or observers. In such instances, officers may contribute to the general discussion, but will not be permitted to propose, second or vote on any motions.)

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.3 Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials procedure

2.3.1 Initiating an evaluation

2.3.1.1 Develop and approve an evaluation cycle for the evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials.

Director

2.3.1.2 Request approval from the Director to conduct an evaluation as required by the evaluation cycle. Use form 'Minute template' as per Office quality system procedure 'Formal referral of matters to management for information or approval'.

(Note: Evaluations of curriculum materials not identified in the approved evaluation cycle may be also requested by the Director.)

Assistant Director (Quality Assurance)

2.3.1.3 Approve the conduct of the evaluation of the curriculum materials as appropriate and discuss with the Assistant Director (Quality Assurance).

Director

2.3.1.4 Appoint the appropriate person to manage the evaluation within the Office (i.e. the Evaluation Manager) and determine whether the evaluation will be outsourced or conducted internally by Office staff as per Office quality system procedure 'Strategic and operational planning'.

(Note: In many, but not all, cases the Evaluation Manager will work in the Quality Assurance area. For all external evaluations, the Evaluation Manager will be the Principal Project Officer (Quality Assurance).)

Assistant Director (Quality Assurance)

2.3.1.5 If the evaluation is part of an overall curriculum development or revision project, ensure that the evaluation is considered within the Project Profile of the curriculum development or revision project. In determining the content for the evaluation section of this Project Profile, seek advice from the Evaluation Manager of the particular evaluation project. Complete and submit this Project Profile according to the Office quality system procedure 'Strategic and operational planning'.

Relevant Project Manager

or

If the evaluation project is a stand-alone project, that is, is not part of another overall project, complete and submit a separate Project Profile for the evaluation, according to the Office quality system procedure 'Strategic and operational planning'.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.1.6 Regardless of whether the evaluation is a stand-alone project or part of a curriculum development or revision project, before finalising the Project Profile, seek advice from the Manager (Information and Publishing) in relation to any publication that may result from the conduct of the project (see 'Scheduling' section of Office quality system procedure 'Publishing'.)

Evaluation Manager

2.3.1.7 Approve Project Profile as appropriate.

Director

2.3.2 Appointing an evaluation team

2.3.2.1 If the evaluation is to be conducted internally by Office staff, appoint or confirm the officer/s who will work on the evaluation.

Evaluation Manager

or

If the evaluation is to be conducted externally (that is, outsourced) purchase the services of an evaluation consultant according to Office quality system procedure 'Procurement of goods and services'. Use the Evaluation Design Template (see Appendix 4) as the basis for specifications for the invitation to offer. Include in the invitation to offer aspects such as:

- conditions of engagement, resources available, services to be rendered, any fees to be paid, time frame for completing the evaluation, ownership of materials and intellectual properties, procedures for dealing with disputes, editorial role of the commissioner, the publication and release of evaluation report(s) and any subsequent use of evaluation materials;
- requirement of potential evaluators to disclose any of their roles or relationships that may create potential conflict of interest in the conduct of the evaluation.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.2.2 When staffing evaluation teams both within and external to the Office, ensure that the evaluation team possesses the knowledge, abilities, skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed in the evaluation and that the evaluation team fairly represents their competence and does not practise beyond it (see AES Guideline 6).

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.2.3 Brief evaluation team members (or the consultant in the case of external evaluations) on the following aspects:

- this draft procedure 'Conduct of evaluations of approved curriculum materials'. In the case of consultants, provide a computer disk of the procedure and associated required documentation;

- the contents of the Evaluation Design Template (see Appendix 4) and the procedure for completing the Evaluation Design (see Section 2.3.5 below);
- the contents of the Australasian Evaluation Society's *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations* (see Appendix 2) and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation's *Program Evaluation Standards* (see Appendix 3);
- details regarding the evaluation to be conducted, including any anticipated publications that may arise;
- if a consultant, background information about the Council and the curriculum materials be evaluated;
- if a consultant, any aspects related to the Formal Instrument of Agreement (FIA), in particular issues related to ownership of materials and intellectual properties;
- if a consultant, any aspects related to post-offer negotiations. Advise evaluators that contractual arrangements should be followed and the Evaluation Manager should be immediately advised if any changing or unforeseen conditions or circumstances arise that may require renegotiation of the FIA.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.2.4 Become familiar with all documentation provided or discussed at the briefing.

Evaluation team members

2.3.3 Managing and liaising

2.3.3.1 If the evaluation is being conducted externally (that is, outsourced), appoint a person who will be the one point-of-contact with the Evaluation Manager and identify the proposed formal consultant/Office of the Council liaison processes.

(Note: It is expected that informal liaison will occur on a regular basis to provide updates on evaluation results.)

Consultant

2.3.3.2 Identify internal management processes for:

- controlling and quality assuring the evaluation;
- ensuring that timelines are met;
- ensuring the continuation of the evaluation if key personnel leave the organisation during the evaluation project.

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.3.3 Throughout the evaluation, pay particular attention to informing the Evaluation Manager about situations where one or more of the members of the evaluation team:

- are faced with circumstances beyond their competence or confidence;

- discovers evidence of an unexpected or significant problem with the curriculum materials being evaluated or related matters, unless informing the Evaluation Manager constitutes a breach of rights for those concerned (see AES Guidelines 14 and 16).

Evaluation team members

2.3.3.4 Brief the Evaluation Manager and relevant Council committees regularly as indicated in the Evaluation Design.

Evaluation team members

2.3.4 Preparing the evaluation design and publishing plan

2.3.4.1 Consult with appropriate people and prepare an Evaluation Design using the Evaluation Design Template. The Evaluation Design should be rigorous to the extent required by the intended use of the evaluation using the Evaluation Design Template (see Appendix 4).

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.4.2 In preparing the Evaluation Design, pay particular attention to relevant equity issues and take account of the potential effects of differences and inequalities within and among stakeholder groups related to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual ability, religion, socioeconomic or ethnic background. Give particular attention to any rights, protocols, treaties or legal guidelines which apply (see AES Guideline 10).

2.3.4.3 Before finalising the Evaluation Design, consult with the Manager (Information and Publishing) on the publishing details to be included in the Evaluation Design (i.e. what reports will be prepared and when, how the reports will be published and distributed, what formal presentations will be made to Council Committees or interested stakeholder groups on the evaluation results).

Discuss and agree on who should be appointed as Publishing Manager for the project and complete a publishing plan using Office quality system form 'Publishing specifications and approvals plan'. In the publishing plan cover:

- publication of the Evaluation Design (on the web);
- publication and distribution of reports arising from the evaluation project.

(Note: For further details, see section on 'Planning' in Office quality system procedure 'Publishing'.)

Evaluation Manager (applies to evaluation being conducted internally or externally)

2.3.4.4 If the evaluation is being conducted externally, discuss with the consultant aspects of the publishing plan to be included in the Evaluation Design.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.4.5 Submit the Evaluation Design and Publishing plan to the Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee.

Evaluation Manager or Consultant through Evaluation Manager

2.3.4.6 Consult with the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee for advice on the Evaluation Design and the publishing plan.
Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.3.4.7 Submit to the Director for approval:

- the completed Evaluation Design;
- and the publishing plan as detailed in the completed 'Publishing specifications and approvals plan'.

Use form 'Minute template' as per Office quality system procedure 'Formal referral of matters to management for information or approval'.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.4.8 Consult and approve the Evaluation Design and the completed 'Publishing specifications and approvals plan' as appropriate and inform the Assistant Director (Quality Assurance) and the Evaluation Manager.

Director

2.3.4.9 When approved, email the approved Evaluation Design to all Office managers for their information.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.4.10 If the Evaluation Design has been approved for publishing on the Web, arrange for its editing and Web publishing. Do not include the budget section in the Internet publication. (See details on the role of the Publishing Manager in Office quality system 'Publishing'.)

Project Publishing Manager (in conjunction with the Information and Publishing Manager)

2.3.5 Collecting data

2.3.5.1 Collect data with a rigour to the extent required by the intended use of the evaluation and to obtain information that:

- addresses the focus questions for the evaluation;
- is responsive to the needs and interests of identified stakeholders (see AES Guideline 13 and PES: U3).

Evaluation team members

2.3.5.2 Choose, develop and implement data collection processes so that they will assure:

- the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use;
- the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use (see PES: A5 and A6).

Evaluation team members

2.3.5.3 When collecting data from outside organisations, obtain the requisite permission of outside organisations from which evaluation data are to be collected.

(Note: If the evaluation has been requested or approved by the Queensland School Curriculum Council and if data are to be collected from the organisations or institutions of Council members, permission from these organisations for actioning of the Evaluation Design is assumed.)

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.5.4 Collect data from relevant stakeholder groups. Where applicable, for each data source, use procedures for drawing samples that ensure the selected sample is representative of the diversity within the stakeholder population.

For example, it is expected that:

- samples of teacher populations be drawn taking into consideration:
  - the three school authorities;
  - teachers from different school types (primary, secondary, middle, special, schools of distance education);
  - teachers of students representative of the diversity of the student population;
  - teachers from schools with a range of demographic characteristics (for example, geographic location, size, structure, socioeconomic backgrounds);
  - teachers from schools with different curriculum organisation (multi-age, vertical timetabling);
  - different teacher types (specialist, resource, primary classroom, advisory visiting teachers, special needs support teachers);
  - the full range of year levels;
  - males and females.
- samples of student populations be drawn taking into consideration:
  - students from an Aboriginal background;
  - students from a Torres Strait Islander background;
  - girls;
  - boys;
  - students who are geographically isolated;
  - students who are gifted and talented;
  - students from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds;
  - students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds;
  - students at risk;
  - students with learning difficulties;
  - students with disabilities.

Evaluation team members

2.3.5.5 Identify yourself to potential informants or respondents and advise them of the purpose of the evaluation and of the commissioners of the project, namely, the Queensland School Curriculum Council (see AES Guideline 11).

If visiting sites (for example, school, District Office, diocesan office) to collect data:

- make suitable arrangements at least two weeks prior to the visit, through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the site (for example, principals of schools);
- confirm the arrangements for the visit in writing (through the CEO of the site) and, if you have not already done so, include a letter of introduction from the Director;
- always report to the CEO or his/her representative prior to collecting data;
- after the visit, send a thank-you letter mentioning the names of the people who assisted with data collection;
- include the site on a database of addresses of those who are to receive the report/s (or report summary), should the report/s be approved for publication.

Evaluation team members

2.3.5.6 Prior to collecting data, obtain the informed consent of those directly providing data, preferably in writing. Advise participants of what data will be sought, how the information will be used and reported, and the likely risks and benefits arising from their participation in the evaluation. In the case of minors, and other dependants, obtain informed consent from parents or care-givers (see AES Guideline 12). Advise participants of confidentiality arrangements.

Evaluation team members

2.3.5.7 Use data collection processes that are practical and acceptable to those supplying the information and cause minimum disruption to participants (see PES: F1). Provide data sources with adequate time and resources to be able to provide useful information.

Evaluation team members

2.3.5.8 Maintain any agreements with informants regarding confidentiality; however, if during the course of data collection evidence is discovered of actual or potential criminal activity or serious harm or wrongdoing, exercise ethical and legal responsibilities to:

- avoid or reduce any further harm to victims of the wrongdoing;
- fulfil obligations under the law and professional codes of conduct, which may include reporting the discovery to the appropriate authority (see AES Guideline 17).

Evaluation team members

2.3.6 Analysing data

2.3.6.1 Analyse both quantitative and qualitative data with a rigour to the extent required by the intended use of the evaluation (see AES Guideline 13).

Evaluation team members

2.3.6.2 Analyse quantitative data appropriately and systematically so that the focus questions for the evaluation are answered (see PES A8). Where appropriate, when analysing quantitative data:

- choose analytic procedures that are appropriate to the focus questions and the nature of the data;
- conduct multiple analyses of the data;
- report potential weaknesses in data analysis and describe their possible influence on interpretations and conclusions;
- consider practical significance and replicability when drawing inferences and formulating conclusions from quantitative analyses.

Evaluation team members

2.3.6.3 Analyse qualitative data appropriately and systematically so that the focus questions for the evaluation are answered (see PES A9). Where appropriate, when analysing qualitative data:

- choose analytic procedures and methods of summarisation that are appropriate to the focus questions and to the nature of the data;
- report potential weaknesses in the data, for example, a single source of information that seemed important but could not be cross-checked, or contradictory findings that cannot be reconciled;
- focus the analysis on clear questions of interest and define the boundaries of information to be examined;
- establish meaningful categories of information by identifying regular and recurrent themes in the qualitative data;
- communicate frequently with representatives of the stakeholders to ensure that they find the intermediate qualitative analyses appropriate, and the tentative conclusions meaningful;
- seek corroboration of qualitative evidence using independent methods and sources.

Evaluation team members

2.3.7 Preparing evaluation reports

2.3.7.1 Report evaluation results in accessible language and in such a way that audiences are provided with a fair and balanced response to the evaluation questions. Prepare reports that:

- present results as clearly and simply as accuracy allows so that the client and potential stakeholder audiences can understand the evaluation process and results;
- are direct, comprehensive and honest in the disclosure of findings and the limitations of the evaluation;
- interpret and present evidence and conclusions in a fair manner;
- include sufficient details of the methodology and findings to substantiate the conclusions;
- clearly identify evaluative judgments;
- clearly identify the author(s) of the report;
- clearly identify the owners of the report i.e. the Queensland School Curriculum Council;
- acknowledge any others who contributed significantly to the evaluation (unless anonymity is requested);
- include appropriate reference to any published or unpublished documents (see AES Guidelines 18 to 20, and PES: A10, A11, U5).

(Note: It is expected that evaluation reports will identify explicitly justified conclusions that can be assessed by the client and stakeholders. Recommendations are not included in evaluation reports. Where appropriate, recommendations are made by the Office of the Council based on the evaluators' conclusions.)

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.7.2 Keep the results and other findings confidential throughout the evaluation until reports are released by the Queensland School Curriculum Council and in accordance with any consent arrangements agreed with contributors.

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.7.3 Prepare reports electronically as instructed in the Office quality system form Evaluation and Review Report Template (see Appendix 5) to provide the following information:

- executive summary;
- statement of the purposes of evaluation;
- description of the curriculum materials being evaluated;
- description of the evaluation approach adopted;
- identification of the focus questions for the evaluation;
- information obtained to answer each focus question;
- summary and conclusions.

Evaluation Manager or Consultant

2.3.7.4 Provide written reports (in electronic form) on the agreed upon dates (unless otherwise specified, as per Evaluation Design) to the Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee.

Evaluation Manager or Consultant through Evaluation Manager

2.3.7.5 Consult with the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee for advice on the Evaluation Report.

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

2.3.7.6 Finalise the text of the report in readiness for final text approval as per the approved 'Publishing specifications and approvals plan'. The final report should reflect fully the findings and conclusions determined by the evaluator, and these should not be amended without the evaluator's consent (see AES Guideline 21).

Evaluation Manager

2.3.8 Providing results and follow-up

2.3.8.1 Submit evaluation report to the Director and seek approvals in relation to the final text approval for publication and modes of consideration of the findings of the report. For example:

- internal consideration by the manager/s and team/s of projects/s for which the evaluation is relevant;
- internal consideration by all managers;

- consideration by Council via submission.

Use form ‘Minute template’ as per Office quality system procedure ‘Formal referral of matters to management for information or approval’.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.8.2 Approve, as appropriate, final text for publication and modes of consideration of findings.

Director

2.3.8.3 Have the findings considered in accordance with the decision of the Director.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.8.4 If the Council is to consider findings, prepare recommendations based on the conclusions of the evaluation report. Initiate submission processes according to Office quality system procedure ‘Council meetings’.

Evaluation Manager
or
Where the findings are not being considered by Council, include a summary of the Evaluation Report in the Director’s report to Council, and where applicable, any actions undertaken.

Evaluation Manager

2.3.8.5 Implement the publication and distribution process for the Evaluation Report as outlined in the ‘Publishing specifications and approvals plan’ as per quality system procedure ‘Publishing’.

Project Publishing Manager

2.3.8.6 Prepare and give presentations of the evaluation findings to Council committees and/or interested stakeholders as identified in the Evaluation Design. When presenting information based on the reports of the evaluation, ensure that the integrity of the reports is not compromised.
(see AES Guideline 22).

Evaluation Manager

2.3.8.7 Action findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Officers given responsibility for actions

2.3.8.8 At the time of undertaking the annual review or revision of the Council’s Strategic Plan, or at the time of preparing the Council’s annual report to parliament, whichever comes earlier, consult with the Evaluation Manager on outcomes of the evaluation and report in the annual review or revision and/or the annual report. Undertake this exercise in accordance with Office quality system procedures ‘Ongoing monitoring of, and reporting of, projects and services’ and ‘Strategic and operational planning’.

Assistant Director (Quality Assurance)

2.3.8.9 Advise the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee of the outcomes of the evaluation and any associated follow-up activities that have occurred since the approval of publication of the evaluation report (for example, any recommendations that have been made, presentations that have been given, any follow-up activity within the Office).

Chair of the Curriculum Evaluation Advisory Committee

Section 3: Evaluation cycle

3.1 Introduction

This section of the research report responds to the third research question:

What evaluation cycle should the Council adopt for the evaluation of Council curriculum materials in each key learning area and the Preschool Curriculum Guidelines?

Research on this question yielded a number of aspects which required consideration in the development of an appropriate cycle for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials. These included:

- the need to be aware of the various contexts in which the evaluation of approved curriculum materials will occur;
- the need to differentiate between formative and summative evaluation;
- the need to schedule evaluations to maximise the use of evaluation findings;
- the need to fund evaluation activity on a recurrent rather than an individual project basis.

Each of these aspects is described below. This is followed by the presentation of an illustrative evaluation cycle which incorporates a consideration of these aspects.

3.2 Contexts for the conduct of curriculum evaluation

In respect of developing an appropriate cycle for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials, there are at least three major contextual considerations.

First, it is important to consider the implementation plans of school authorities for the approved curriculum materials. To evaluate the approved curriculum materials at a very initial stage of implementation would inevitably result in misleading findings, while to evaluate the approved materials at too late a stage would be irresponsible and unresponsive to the users of such materials.

In considering an appropriate time to undertake a first summative evaluation, it was felt that there should be at least two to three years between the approval/publishing of materials and an initial (summative) evaluation of these materials.

Second, any evaluation of approved curriculum materials needs to be considered in the context of other known evaluations planned by the Council. These include:

- evaluations of curriculum materials still in initial development;
- evaluations of testing programs;
- evaluation of planning and services activities; for example, strategic plans.

Third, any curriculum evaluation cycle needs to be dependent upon, and integrated with, a curriculum research and development cycle and any assessment cycles that might also be developed. The evaluation cycle also needs to be flexible and needs to be able to respond to changes that might occur with respect to curriculum research and development or assessment.

In examining curriculum evaluation within the context of other Council activities, there needs to be a clear understanding of what is meant by:

- evaluation;
- research and development (R & D);
- assessment.

Explanations of the key terms are provided below.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation 1994). In this definition, 'object' refers to approved curriculum materials while 'systematic investigation' implies a reliance on appropriate evaluation approaches such as goal-based, responsive, or utilisation-based (see section on Scan Results in this research report) and appropriate methods, techniques and procedures (see section on Procedures in this research report). In this sense, evaluation is formal and planned (without being inflexible) and not informal or ad hoc.

Research and Development

Worthen & Sanders (1973) define development as the production and testing of curriculum materials (such as books, films, computer-assisted instruction programs).

Research assists this development. Such assistance might be:

- integrated seamlessly into the developmental exercise, perhaps even to the extent that there is no real distinction between research and development. This type of research would not result in the preparation of a formal research report.
- regarded as a separate exercise which informs development. According to Worthen & Sanders, research is 'the activity aimed at obtaining generalisable knowledge by contriving and testing claims about relationships among variables or describing generalisable phenomena. This knowledge, which may result in theoretical models, functional relations, or descriptions, may be obtained by empirical or other systematic methods and may or may not have immediate application'. This type of research is more planned and would most likely result in the production of a formal research report.

Assessment

Assessment is the purposeful, systematic and ongoing collection of information about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes (definition taken from the Council's Years 1 to 10 Science syllabus).

Assessment information may be used for a variety of purposes by teachers and curriculum developers.

Teachers might use assessment information to:

- inform students, teachers, parents/carers, others in the community and/or school authorities about students' demonstrations of outcomes;
- make decisions about student needs, the learning and teaching processes

and resource requirements;
- discuss future learning pathways with students, parents/carers;
- guide the planning of class and school curriculum programs.

Curriculum developers from the Office of the Council might use assessment information to:

- inform decisions about the appropriateness of a sequence of learning outcomes;
- inform decisions about the appropriateness of the alignments of core learning outcomes with particular year levels.

A test is one type of assessment instrument that can be used to collect information about students' demonstrations of outcomes. In the context of the Office, testing refers to the administration of formal tests under standardised conditions, for example, The Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy.

The illustrative evaluation cycle (see Appendix 6) assumes a period of at least four years between the release of a syllabus and the release of any revision of that syllabus. The cycle for the evaluation of all other curriculum materials (for example, framework papers, sourcebook guidelines and materials) take this period of time as a point of reference.

In advocating a fixed 'shelf-life' for syllabuses, it is recognised that the outcome statements in syllabuses influence all other curriculum activity and therefore cannot be changed at whim. Teachers and schools require the stability of knowing that a particular version of the syllabus has a stated finite lifetime, after which a revision will be issued.

3.3 Differentiation between formative and summative evaluation

In respect of developing an appropriate cycle for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials, there is also a need to differentiate between two broad types of evaluations: summative and formative.

A *summative* evaluation would reflect or look back upon the approved and completed set of curriculum materials prior to engagement in any redevelopment or revision (research and development) activity. As noted above, it is considered that this should occur at least two to three years after approval/publication of the curriculum materials.

It is envisaged that a summative evaluation would endeavour to cover all aspects of the curriculum materials within the scope of the evaluation, although probably not cover each aspect to the same degree of detail. The evaluation would be conducted over a six-month period, during which time considerable evaluative information would be forthcoming ready to be used by officers responsible for revising the curriculum materials, and also for accountability purposes.

A summative evaluation could be conducted either externally or internally. An appropriate decision for each evaluation would be made at the time.

Formative evaluations would be conducted throughout the curriculum redevelopment/revision (research and development) period. These evaluations would focus on:

- aspects arising from the summative evaluation but which might require more detailed evaluative data;
- aspects which arise during the course of research and development which might require evaluative data.

It is envisaged that these formative evaluations would be conducted on a smaller scale than a summative evaluation and that the aspect being evaluated would be at a more micro level (for example, evaluating the worth of a particular sequence of core learning outcomes for a specific key learning area). It is also expected that there would be more interaction between evaluators and developers. Indeed, it is expected that they would be part of the same team.

The last point notwithstanding, a formative evaluation could be conducted by either external or internal staff. An appropriate decision on this matter would be made at the time of each evaluation. If the evaluation were conducted by an external consultancy, some form of strategic alliance would be required between the Council and the consultancy whereby the external evaluator would be a member of the curriculum team (at least part-time) for the duration of the project.

3.4 Maximising the use of evaluation findings

In respect of developing an appropriate cycle for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials, it is clear that it needs to be planned so that maximum use of evaluation findings is possible. For this to occur:

- the findings of summative evaluations need to be available prior to the commencement of research and development or redevelopment;
- the findings of formative evaluations need to available at critical stages during the curriculum research and development or redevelopment phases.

3.5 Funding evaluation activity

In respect of developing an appropriate cycle for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials, there is a need to plan evaluations with a view to meeting a recurrent need for permanent and casual evaluation staff rather than having staffing based on a non-continuous project model.

The illustrative evaluation cycle presented in the last part of this section of the research report assumes an ongoing need for evaluation staff, both permanent and casual. By way of example, for the evaluation of syllabuses, the illustrative cycle indicates that there will be an ongoing need to resource:

- one summative evaluation of a key learning area, for example, Languages other than English;
- several formative evaluations for two other key learning areas, for example, Health and Physical Education, and Science.

Such an evaluation cycle, or one similar to this illustration, would simplify and make more efficient the budgeting and resourcing of evaluation activity within the Council.

3.6 An illustrative evaluation cycle

Taking all above considerations into account, it is quite clear that any cycle for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials cannot be designed independently of other Council activity. Appendix 6 details an illustrative evaluation cycle that is presented within the context of:

- strategic planning research and development activity;
- curriculum research and development activity;
- evaluations of strategic plans, curriculum materials in development, and testing programs.

It should be noted that the content of Appendix 6 has been discussed by managers in the Office of the Council. While the content may be further refined, Appendix 6 presents the overall desired corporate direction for the Office at the time of writing this report.

Appendix 1: Curriculum evaluation framework

QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

Curriculum Evaluation Framework

1. Purposes

1.1 Purpose of Curriculum Evaluation Framework

This Framework has been developed in response to a specific request from the Minister for Education. In a letter received by the Council on 23 February 1999, the Minister wrote:

> *I would encourage careful consideration to be given to evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of all materials developed by the Council. While I acknowledge that implementation is the responsibility of individual school authorities, I would encourage the Council to develop some specific guidelines for curriculum evaluation. In this way, the Council can inform all school authorities of the key aspects which will need to be considered in relation to future evaluation programs and processes.*

In keeping with the above request, the purpose of this Curriculum Evaluation Framework is to provide specific guidelines for curriculum evaluation, in particular, to outline the key aspects that need to be considered in relation to future curriculum evaluation programs and processes.

1.2 Purposes of curriculum evaluation

The purposes of curriculum evaluation conducted within the parameters of the Curriculum Evaluation Framework are to account for, and assist in improving:

- student learning;
- use of approved Council curriculum materials in schools;
- curriculum support services;
- Council curriculum materials.

In fulfilling the purposes of **accountability** and **improvement**, curriculum evaluation will centre mainly on the **appropriateness** and/or **effectiveness** and/or **efficiency** of those aspects being evaluated. Within the context of this Framework, these three terms are described as follows:

- Evaluating **appropriateness** is about making judgments about the extent to which the stated or implied goals (or expectations) for the curriculum product or process match the stated or implied needs of clients (students, teachers, schools, school authorities, Council). When applied to student outcomes, however, a different description of appropriateness is used. In this context, appropriateness is about making judgments about the extent to which the measured outcomes match expected outcomes (stated or implied) for particular groups of students.

- Evaluating **effectiveness** is about making judgments about the extent to which stated or implied curriculum goals (or expectations) for the curriculum product or process have been fulfilled or achieved. It could also be described as the extent to which the curriculum product or service has had an impact on clients.

- Evaluating **efficiency** is about making judgments about the amount of resources or effort needed to provide a given curriculum product or process. Efficiency of curriculum might be determined by comparing the differing amounts of resources or effort needed to produce the *same* or *simila*r curriculum product or process. A same or similar product or service requiring less resources or effort would be regarded as more efficient; and vice versa.

2. Overview

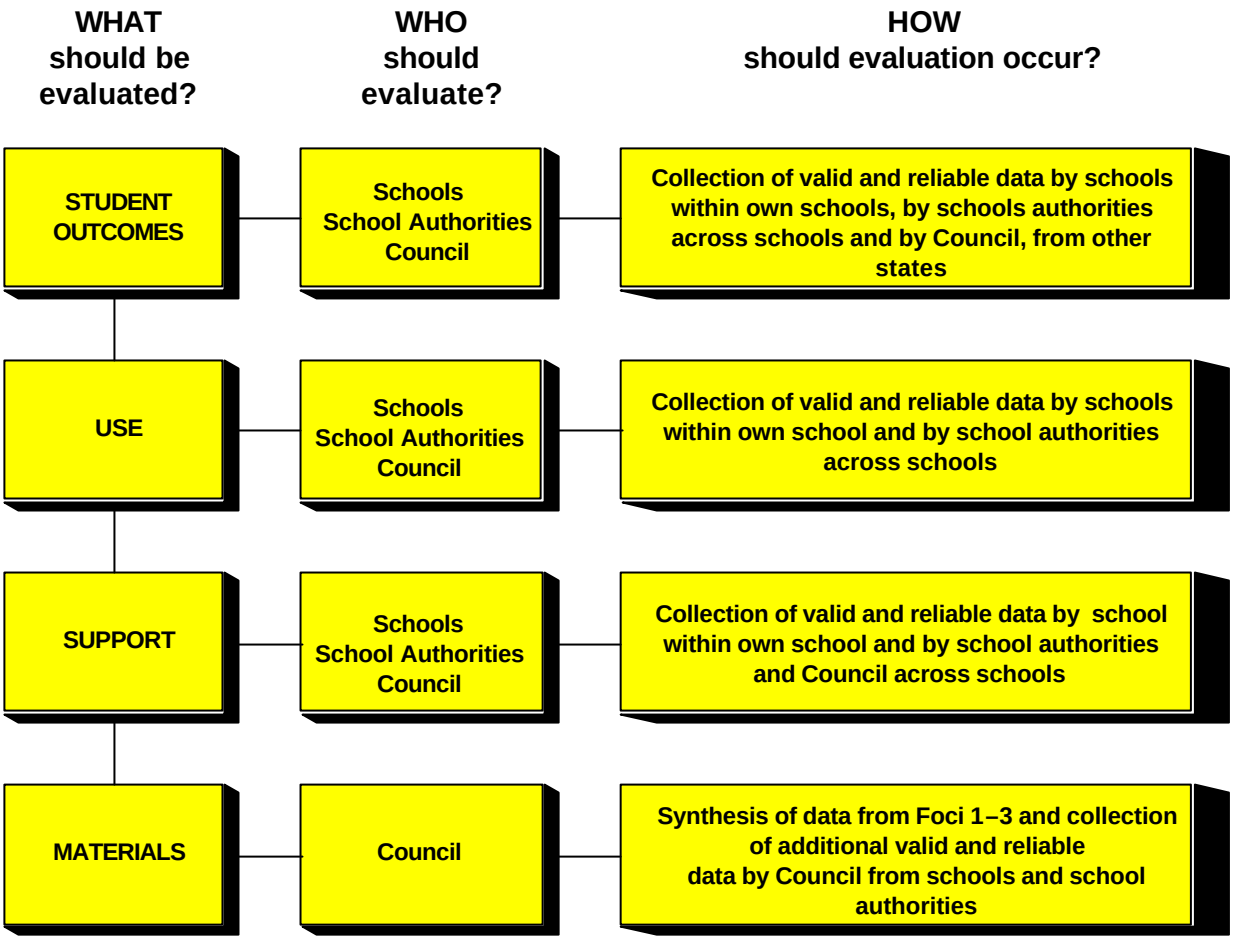
In keeping with the purposes of curriculum evaluation outlined above, the Curriculum Evaluation Framework comprises the following four foci:

- Focus 1: Evaluation of student outcomes;
- Focus 2: Evaluation of the use of approved Council curriculum materials in schools;
- Focus 3: Evaluation of the curriculum support services provided to assist the implementation of Council curriculum materials;
- Focus 4: Evaluation of QSCC curriculum materials themselves.

An essential feature of the Curriculum Evaluation Framework is collegiality and cooperation among key stakeholders – schools, school authorities and the Queensland School Curriculum Council.

Diagram 1 provides a succinct summary of the Curriculum Evaluation Framework. The remainder of the paper elaborates upon each of the four focus areas.

Diagram 1 Summary of Curriculum Evaluation Framework



3. Focus 1: Evaluation of student outcomes

Within the parameters of this Framework, it is considered that:

- Focus 1 should be about evaluating the **appropriateness** of student outcomes;
- schools, school authorities and the Queensland School Curriculum Council should be involved in the evaluation.

In evaluating student outcomes, there will be a need to:

- determine the learning outcomes that students have demonstrated, both within and across school authorities;
- evaluate (or place a value on) the appropriateness of these demonstrations for particular groups of students.

It is considered that schools should evaluate the appropriateness of the outcomes of their students by collecting valid and reliable data, for the purposes of:

- accounting for these outcomes to their school community and, where applicable, their school authority;
- assisting the improvement of individual school curriculum programs and teaching and learning practices.

It is considered that school authorities should evaluate the appropriateness of the outcomes of their students by collecting valid and reliable data from, and across, schools, for the purposes of:

- accounting for these outcomes to the Minister and/or governing bodies;
- assisting improved teacher expertise in the area of school curriculum programming and teaching and learning practices.

It is considered that the Queensland School Curriculum Council should evaluate the appropriateness of student outcomes statewide by gathering data from other states and by accessing school authority evaluation reports on Focus 1, for the purposes of:

- accounting to the Minister for the outcomes included in its syllabuses;
- assisting in improving the outcome statements, along with other relevant aspects of curriculum materials.

4. Focus 2: Evaluation of the use of approved Council curriculum materials in schools

It is important to know how all approved Council curriculum materials are being used (syllabuses, sourcebooks and initial in-service materials), as considerable public resources have been applied for their development.

Within the parameters of this Framework then, it is considered that:

- Focus 2 should be about evaluating the **appropriateness** and **effectiveness** of the use of approved Council curriculum materials in schools;
- schools, school authorities and the Queensland School Curriculum Council should be involved in the evaluation.

It is considered that schools should evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of their own use of Council curriculum materials by collecting valid and reliable data for the purposes of:

- accounting to their school community on their use of Council curriculum materials and, where applicable, their school authority;
- assisting their teachers to improve their use of the materials.

It is considered that school authorities should evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the use of Council curriculum material in their schools by collecting valid and reliable data from, and across, schools, for the purposes of:

- accounting to the Minister and/or governing bodies for use in their schools;
- assisting improved use by their employees.

It is considered that the Queensland School Curriculum Council should evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the use of Council curriculum materials statewide by accessing school authority evaluation reports on Focus 2, for the purposes of:

- accounting to the Minister for the use of these materials;
- assisting curriculum developers to improve the information about use, particularly information included in sourcebooks and initial in-service materials.

5. Focus 3: Evaluation of curriculum support services

Within the parameters of this Framework, it is considered that:

- Focus 3 should be about evaluating the **appropriateness**, **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of curriculum support services;
- schools, school authorities and the Queensland School Curriculum Council should be involved in the evaluation.

It is considered that schools should evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum support services that they provide, by collecting valid and reliable data, for the purposes of:

- accounting for their support services to their school community and, where applicable, to their school authority;
- assisting the improvement of these school support services.

It is considered that school authorities should evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their curriculum support services to schools, by collecting valid and reliable data, for the purposes of:

- accounting to the Minister and/or governing bodies for the curriculum support they give to their schools;
- assisting improvement of these curriculum support services.

It is considered that the Queensland School Curriculum Council should evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum support services it provides to schools and schools authorities, by collecting valid and reliable data, for the purposes of:

- accounting to the Minister for the support it provides;
- assisting improvement of these support services.

In proposing the involvement of the Council in this evaluation area, it is acknowledged that its major current involvement is the provision of sourcebooks and initial in-service materials. It behoves the Council to evaluate the appropriateness of this support, and to examine any possible future support that will be required in any changed, dynamic model of curriculum development ushered in by new delivery technologies.

6. Focus 4: Evaluation of approved Council curriculum materials

Within the parameters this Framework, it is considered that:

- Focus 4 should be about evaluating the **appropriateness**, **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the curriculum materials themselves;
- the Queensland School Curriculum Council should be involved in this evaluation.

It is expected that schools and school authorities would be able to access Council evaluation reports on Focus 4.

It is considered that the Queensland School Curriculum Council should evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum materials by collecting valid and reliable data from schools and school authorities, for the purposes of:

- accounting to the Minister for these curriculum materials;
- assisting improvement of the materials.

To a degree, judgments about Council curriculum materials will be able to be made through an analysis of information obtained through the first three foci to be evaluated. The Queensland School Curriculum Council's data collection, however, should seek additional information which focuses on the intrinsic worth of Council curriculum materials. This is distinct from the manner in which the materials have been implemented and supported, and will traverse aspects connected with the underlying construct of the materials.

7. Summary

As has been noted, the Curriculum Evaluation Framework is collegial in nature and would require shared responsibilities and understandings by schools, school authorities and the Council.

A summary of the concepts included in the Framework appears below.

In summary, it is considered that **schools** should:

- evaluate the learning outcomes of their students;
- evaluate their own use of Council curriculum materials;
- evaluate their own curriculum support services;
- assist school authorities and the Council to collect data as indicated in this Curriculum Evaluation Framework.

In summary, it is considered that **school authorities** should:

- evaluate student learning outcomes within their respective authority;
- evaluate the use of Council curriculum materials in their schools;
- evaluate the curriculum support services provided within their respective authority;
- provide the Council with access to schools so that it can evaluate its curriculum materials and support services;
- provide the Council with access to evaluation reports on Foci 1–3 of the Framework (student outcomes, use, and support).

In summary, it is considered that the **Queensland School Curriculum Council** should:

- evaluate student learning outcomes from a statewide perspective via access provided to school authority evaluation reports;
- evaluate the use of approved Council curriculum materials from a statewide perspective via access provided to school authority reports;
- evaluate its own curriculum support services;
- evaluate approved Council curriculum materials;

provide schools and school authorities with access to its evaluation reports.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for the ethical conduct of evaluations

Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations

A. Commissioning and preparing for an evaluation

Principle All parties involved in commissioning and conducting an evaluation should be fully informed about what is expected to be delivered and what can reasonably be delivered so that they can weigh up the ethical risks before entering an agreement.
Principle All people who might be affected by whether or how an evaluation proceeds should have an opportunity to identify ways in which any risks might be reduced.

Guidelines

Briefing document

1. Those commissioning an evaluation should prepare a briefing document or terms of reference that states the rationale, purpose and scope of the evaluation, the key questions to be addressed, any preferred approaches, issues to be taken into account, and the intended audiences for reports of the evaluation. The commissioners have an obligation to identify all stakeholders in the evaluation and to assess the potential effects and implications of the evaluation on them, both positive and negative.

Identify limitations, different interests

2. In responding to an evaluation brief, evaluators should explore the shortcomings and strengths of the brief. They should identify any likely methodological or ethical limitations of the proposed evaluation, and their possible effect upon the conduct and results of the evaluation. They should make distinctions between the interests of the commissioner and other stakeholders in the evaluation, and highlight the possible impacts of the evaluation on other stakeholders.

Contractual arrangement

3. An evaluation should have an agreed contractual arrangement between those commissioning the evaluation and the evaluators. It should specify conditions of engagement, resources available, services to be rendered, any fees to be paid, time frame for completing the evaluation, ownership of materials and intellectual properties, protection of privileged communication, storage and disposal of all information collected, procedures for dealing with disputes, any editorial role of the commissioner, the publication and release of evaluation report(s), and any subsequent use of evaluation materials.

Advise changing circumstances

4. Both parties have the right to expect that contractual arrangements will be followed. However, each party has the responsibility to advise the other about changing or unforeseen conditions or circumstances, and should be prepared to renegotiate accordingly.

Look for potential risks or harms	5. The decision to undertake an evaluation or specific procedures within an evaluation should be carefully considered in the light of potential risks or harms to the clients, target groups or staff of the program. As far as possible, these issues should be anticipated and discussed during the initial negotiation of the evaluation.
Practise within competence	6. The evaluator or evaluation team should possess the knowledge, abilities, skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed in the evaluation. Evaluators should fairly represent their competence, and should not practise beyond it.
Disclose potential conflict of interest	7. In responding to a brief, evaluators should disclose any of their roles or relationships that may create potential conflict of interest in the conduct of the evaluation. Any such conflict should also be identified in the evaluation documents including the final report.
Compete honourably	8. When evaluators compete for an evaluation contract, they should conduct themselves in a professional and honourable manner.
Deal openly and fairly	9. Those commissioning an evaluation and/or selecting an evaluator should deal with all proposals openly and fairly, including respecting ownership of materials, intellectual property and commercial confidence.

B. Conducting an evaluation

Principle An evaluation should be designed, conducted and reported in a manner that respects the rights, privacy, dignity and entitlements of those affected by and contributing to the evaluation.
Principle An evaluation should be conducted in ways that ensure that the judgments that are made as a result of the evaluation and any related actions are based on sound and complete information. This principle is particularly important for those evaluations that have the capacity to change the total quantum and/or distribution of program benefits or costs to stakeholders in the program.

Guidelines

Consider implications of differences and inequalities	10. Account should be taken of the potential effects of differences and inequalities in society related to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual ability, religion, socioeconomic or ethnic background in the design, conduct and reporting on evaluations. Particular regard should be given to any rights, protocols, treaties or legal guidelines which apply.
Identify purpose and commissioners	11. Evaluators should identify themselves to potential informants or respondents and advise them of the purpose of the evaluation and the identity of the commissioners of the evaluation.
Obtain	12. The informed consent of those directly providing information

informed consent

should be obtained, preferably in writing. They should be advised as to what information will be sought, how the information will be recorded and used, and the likely risks and benefits arising from their participation in the evaluation. In the case of minors and other dependants, informed consent should also be sought from parents or guardians.

Be sufficiently rigorous

13. The evaluation should be rigorous in design, data collection and analysis to the extent required by the intended use of the evaluation.

Declare limitations

14. Where the evaluator or evaluation team is faced with circumstances beyond their competence, they should declare their limitations to the commissioner of the evaluation.

Maintain confidentiality

15. During the course of the evaluation, the results and other findings should be held as confidential until released by the commissioner, and in accordance with any consent arrangements agreed with contributors. Confidentiality arrangements should extend to the storage and disposal of all information collected. Consent arrangements may include provision for release of information for purposes of formative evaluation and for purposes of validation of evaluation findings.

Report significant problems

16. If the evaluators discover evidence of an unexpected and significant problem with the program under evaluation or related matters, they should report this as soon as possible to the commissioner of the evaluation, unless this constitutes a breach of rights for those concerned

Anticipate serious wrongdoing

17. Where evaluators discover evidence of actual or potential criminal activity or other serious harm or wrongdoing (for example, alleged child sexual abuse) they have ethical and legal responsibilities to:

- avoid or reduce any further harm to victims of the wrongdoing
- fulfil their obligations under law and their professional codes of conduct, which may include reporting the discovery to the appropriate authority
- maintain any agreements made with informants regarding confidentiality.

At times these responsibilities may conflict or go beyond an evaluator's competence. To minimise such dilemmas, evaluators should anticipate the risk of discovering serious wrongdoings for a particular evaluation, and develop protocols for identifying and reporting them, and refer to the protocols when obtaining informed consent from people providing information (Guideline 12).

C. Reporting the evaluation results

Principle The evaluation should be reported in such a way that audiences are provided with a fair and balanced response to the terms of reference for the evaluation.

Guidelines

Report clearly and simply	18. The results of the evaluation should be presented as clearly and simply as accuracy allows so that clients and other stakeholders can understand the evaluation process and results. Communications that are tailored to a given stakeholder should include all important results.
Report fairly and comprehensively	19. Oral and written evaluation reports should be direct, comprehensive and honest in the disclosure of findings and the limitations of the evaluation. Reports should interpret and present evidence and conclusions in a fair manner, and include sufficient details of their methodology and findings to substantiate their conclusions.
Identify sources and make acknowledgments	20. The source of evaluative judgments (whether evaluator or other stakeholder) should be clearly identified. Acknowledgment should be given to those who contributed significantly to the evaluation, unless anonymity is requested, including appropriate reference to any published or unpublished documents.
Fully reflect evaluator's findings	21. The final report(s) of the evaluation should reflect fully the findings and conclusions determined by the evaluator, and these should not be amended without the evaluator's consent.
Do not breach integrity of the reports	22. In releasing information based on the reports of the evaluation, the commissioners have a responsibility not to breach the integrity of the reports.

Source: Australasian Evaluation Society 1997, *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations*. Available URL: http://www.aes.asn.au (accessed March 2000.)

Appendix 3: Program evaluation standards

Summary of the Program Evaluation Standards

Utility standards

The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.

U1 Stakeholder identification—People involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

U2 Evaluator credibility—The people conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

U3 Information scope and selection—Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.

U4 Values identification—The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 Report clarity—Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

U6 Report timeliness and dissemination—Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

U7 Evaluation impact—Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

Feasibility standards

The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

F1 Practical procedures—The evaluation procedures should be practical, to keep disruption to a minimum while needed information is obtained.

F2 Political viability—The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

F3 Cost effectiveness—The evaluation should be efficient and produce information of sufficient value so that the resources expended can be justified.

Propriety standards

The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.

P1 Service orientation—Evaluations should be designed to assist organisations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

P2 Formal agreements—Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

P3 Rights of human subjects—Evaluations should be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

P4 Human interactions—Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other people associated with an evaluation so that participants are not threatened or harmed.

P5 Complete and fair assessment—The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

P6 Disclosure of findings—The formal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full set of evaluation findings along with pertinent limitations are made accessible to the people affected by the evaluation, and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.
P7 Conflict of interest—Conflict of interest should be dealt with openly and honestly, so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.
P8 Fiscal responsibility—The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate.

Accuracy standards

The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

A1 Program documentation—The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately so that the program is clearly identified.
A2 Context analysis—The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.
A3 Described purposes and procedures—The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail so that they can be identified and assessed.
A4 Defensible information sources—The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.
A5 Valid information—The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.
A6 Reliable information—The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.
A7 Systematic information—The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed and any errors found should be corrected.
A8 Analysis of quantitative information—Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analysed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.
A9 Analysis of qualitative information—Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analysed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.
A10 Justified conclusions—The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.
A11 Impartial reporting—Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.
A12 Metaevaluation—The evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Source: Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation 1994, *Program Evaluation Standards*, http://www.eval.org/AEADocuments/documents.htm. (Accessed March 2000.)

Appendix 4: Evaluation design template

QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

Evaluation Design Template

Evaluation of [enter name of the curriculum materials] Design

1 PURPOSE

To evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of *[insert the name of the approved Queensland School Curriculum Council curriculum materials for example, the Years 1 to 10 Science curriculum materials]* in order to account for and improve current and future curriculum materials.

(An explanation of underlined terms is provided in Attachment 1.)

2 DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS BEING EVALUATED

One of the major functions of the Queensland School Curriculum Council is to ensure the development of quality curriculum materials for the compulsory years of schooling (Years 1 to 10) in Queensland schools. In fulfilling this role, the Council develops a range of curriculum materials. These curriculum materials could include key learning area syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, assessment guidelines, curriculum framework papers, sourcebook guidelines, sourcebook modules, or initial in-service materials. Approved Council curriculum materials could be published in print, CD-ROM and/or on-line formats.

In the development of these materials, the Council has adopted, as the basis for a common curriculum, the nationally agreed key learning areas. These are English, Health and Physical Education, Languages other than English (LOTE), Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, Technology, and The Arts.

[Describe the curriculum materials to be evaluated. Where appropriate, include a description of the context of the curriculum materials and any significant issues associated with them for example, the newness of an outcomes approach in the Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education and Science curriculum materials; the emphasis on the on-line provision of particular curriculum materials; school authority implementation plans.]

3 OVERALL EVALUATION APPROACH TO BE ADOPTED

The overall evaluation approach to be adopted for the evaluation of *[insert name of curriculum materials]* will be eclectic and complementary in nature and will incorporate aspects of the following evaluation approaches:

- **goal-based** in that the evaluation will determine the extent to which the goals or intentions of the curriculum materials have been achieved. Goal-based evaluation is viewed as useful for evaluating the impact of programs as it focuses clearly on the relationship between the goals and the outcomes of a program;
- **responsive** in that the evaluation will consider the worth of the curriculum materials with respect to the diverse views of all identified stakeholders. Responsive evaluation

focuses on discovering the claims issues, questions and perceived problems of stakeholders and is therefore viewed as useful in providing a rich description of the strengths and weaknesses of a program as a basis for future action;
- **utilisation-focused** in that the evaluation will provide information to inform the Council about how the curriculum materials can be improved. Utilisation-focused evaluation emphasises the provision of relevant information to enhance the usefulness and utilisation of the evaluation findings.

(Briefly outline further details of the evaluation approach and associated methodologies to be used.)

The Queensland School Curriculum Council is the client of the evaluation.

The key stakeholders for the evaluation of *[insert name of curriculum materials]* are:
- teachers;
- school administrators;
- school authorities.

Other stakeholders are:
- students;
- parents;
- tertiary institutions;
- teacher unions;
- Board of Senior Secondary School Studies.

4 FOCUS QUESTIONS

The focus questions for the evaluation of *[insert name of curriculum materials]* are:

1. **To what extent are the curriculum materials appropriate?**
   a) To what extent do the intentions of the curriculum materials reflect current educational theories and priorities, particularly at a state and national level?
   b) To what extent do the intentions of the curriculum materials match stakeholder needs?

2. **To what extent are the curriculum materials effective?**
   a) What impact have the curriculum materials had on stakeholders?
   b) To what extent have the intentions of the curriculum materials been achieved?

3. **To what extent are the curriculum materials efficient?**
   a) To what extent are the curriculum materials usable/workable in terms of resources and time?
   b) To what extent are the resources and time required to use the curriculum materials comparable with that required to use other curriculum materials with similar intentions?

4. **In light of the above, what improvements could be made to the curriculum materials?**

(For each of the focus questions, develop specific questions relevant to the curriculum materials being evaluated. Examples of specific questions relevant to key learning area curriculum materials are provided in Attachment 2 of this template. Replace the questions in Attachment 2 of this template with the specific questions identified for the evaluation.)

5 DATA COLLECTION

The following matrix identifies the data collection processes that will be used in the evaluation of *[insert name of curriculum materials].* Contextual information will also be obtained from the

Officers of the Council and relevant literature and data sources to ensure that the evaluation is realistic and responsive to the conditions within which the *[insert name of curriculum materials]* are being used.

[Develop and insert a data collection matrix. In developing the data collection matrix, refer to Section 2.3.5 (Collecting data) and Section 2.3.6 (Analysing data) of the procedure 'Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials'. The data collection matrix should identify:

- *in the first column, the focus questions to be answered;*
- *in the subsequent column headings, the data sources that will be required in order to answer the focus questions (this will include all the key stakeholders identified in Section 3 of the evaluation design template as the minimum requirement);*
- *in the remaining cells, the most appropriate mode through which the data will be collected from the source, for example, interview, focus group, questionnaire etc. It is possible that not all cells will be filled.*

The major benefits of developing a data collection matrix are the following:

- *The essence of the evaluation design is represented on one page.*
- *The data sources are readily apparent, thus enabling a check for data corroboration (triangulation).*
- *The matrix makes it easy to ensure that all instrument questions related to the focus questions are included in the various instruments.*

An example of a data collection matrix is provided in Figure 1. It should be noted that this example is provided to illustrate the structure of a data collection matrix. The contents of the cells are not meant to advocate particular modes of data collection. Data collection modes will vary to best suit an evaluation.

Figure 1: Example of a data collection matrix

Focus Questions	Teachers	School administrators	School authorities	Parents	Students	Teacher unions	BSSSS	Other?
Focus Q1a	☺ ✉	✉	✉				✉	
Focus Q1b	☺ ✉	✉	✉	✉	☺ ✉		✉	
Focus Q2a	⌘ ☺ ✉ ✍	✉	✉	✉	☺ ✉ ✍	✉	✉	
Focus Q2b	⌘ ☺ ✉ ✍	✉	✉	✉	☺ ✉ ✍	✉		
Focus Q3a	⌘ ☺ ✉	✉	✉			✉		
Focus Q3b	⌘ ☺ ✉	✉	✉			✉		
Focus Q4	Interpretive procedures will be used to draw data from the results of the analysis of data collected for Focus Questions 1–3.							

Key: ☺ = Interview; ✉ = Survey (print or on-line); ⌘ = Focus group discussion, ✍ = observation of curriculum materials being used

Data collection processes should be chosen in order to:

- *obtain information that answers the focus questions;*

- *obtain information that is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders;*
- *emphasise collection of data from the key stakeholders;*
- *collect appropriate data from other identified stakeholders within resourcing and time limitations;*
- *address issues of representativeness and inclusivity;*
- *ensure modes of collection and instruments are acceptable to the data sources;*
- *ensure modes of collection and instruments are practical to implement in the time available;*
- *obtain both qualitative and quantitative data.*

Next, elaborate on the data collection matrix by describing:

- *each of the data sources;*
- *the instruments to be used in collecting data;*
- *the relationships among the data sources and the various instruments;*
- *the manner and sequence in which the data will be collected;*
- *procedures that will be used to ensure confidentiality of data and the mutual respect of participants;*
- *confidentiality and consent arrangements with data sources.*

In essence, this section should provide a clear picture of what data will be collected, from whom the data will be collected, how the data will be collected, and the sequence in which it will be collected.]

6 ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be analysed appropriately and systematically so that focus questions are effectively answered and findings can be easily understood by potential audiences.

(Briefly describe how the different types of data (for example, questionnaire data, interview data) will be analysed. Briefly describe the processes to be used in interpreting the analysed data. In completing this section refer to Section 2.3.6 (Analysing data) of the procedure 'Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials'.)

7 REPORTING

Reports will present the results of the evaluation of *[insert name of curriculum materials]* as clearly and simply as accuracy allows so that the client and stakeholders can understand the evaluation process and results. Reports will identify explicitly justified conclusions that can be assessed by the client and the stakeholders. Where applicable, recommendations based on these conclusions will be prepared by the Office of the Council.

While all reports will clearly identify authorship, the Queensland School Curriculum Council will remain the owner of all materials (including reports) and intellectual property related to the evaluation.

(*Consult with the Evaluation Manager to obtain details of the Publishing Plan for the evaluation project. Using the Publishing Plan as a guide:*

- *list the report/s that will be prepared and identify when they will be completed;*
- *briefly describe the focus of each report;*
- *describe how and when the report(s) will be published and disseminated;*
- *list any formal presentations to be made to Council committees or interested stakeholder groups on the findings of the evaluation.*

In completing this section of the Evaluation Design refer to Section 2.3.4 (Preparing the evaluation design and publishing plan) and Section 2.3.7 (Preparing evaluation reports) of the procedure 'Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials'.)

8 STAFFING

(Provide details of the staff who will perform the evaluation, including qualifications, expertise and experience. Include these details for:

- *overall supervising staff;*
- *management staff;*
- *operational staff.)*

9 MANAGEMENT AND LIAISON

The evaluation of *[insert name of curriculum materials]* will be managed by the Office of the Council.

(Outline the internal management procedures to be used by the Office's Evaluation Manager and/or the external evaluation consultant. Include internal management processes for:

- *controlling and quality assuring the evaluation;*
- *ensuring that timelines are met;*
- *ensuring the continuation of the evaluation if key personnel leave the organisation during the evaluation project.*

If the evaluation is being outsourced, the external evaluation consultant should describe the consultant/Office liaison processes to be used, including the provision of progress reports and discussions with key Council committees.

In completing this section of the Evaluation Design refer to Section 2.3.3 (Managing and liaising) of the procedure 'Conduct of evaluations of approved Council curriculum materials'.)

10 SUMMARY OF TASKS AND TIMELINES

(Complete a table that outlines a summary of the tasks to be performed and the associated timelines to be met for the evaluation.

The tasks to be listed in the summary will most likely include:

- *appointment of the staff for the evaluation team;*
- *preparation of the Evaluation Design (this document);*
- *authority, consent and confidentiality arrangements for data collection;*
- *data collection;*
- *analysis and interpretation of data;*
- *formal liaison tasks;*
- *preparation and provision of reports;*
- *(if applicable) report follow-up tasks.*

11 BUDGET

(If the evaluation is to be conducted internally by Office staff, include the budget information as listed in the approved Project profile.

If the evaluation is to be conducted externally, the consultant should include the budget as listed in the Formal Instrument of Agreement. This comprises the scheduled series of payments to be made during the course of the evaluation.

Note: The budget section will not be published on the World Wide Web.)

Attachment 1: Explanation of terms

Term	Explanation
appropriateness	Appropriateness is the extent to which the intentions (goals) of the curriculum materials match stakeholder needs and align with current educational theories and priorities.
Approved Queensland School Curriculum Council curriculum materials	Refers to curriculum materials that have been developed by the Queensland School Curriculum Council and have been approved for publication by the Council or the Director of the Council. Approved curriculum materials could be key learning area syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, assessment guidelines, curriculum framework papers, sourcebook guidelines, sourcebook modules, initial in-service materials. Approved Council curriculum materials may be published in print, CD-ROM and/or on-line formats.
client	The individual, group or organisation that commissions the evaluator(s). The client for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials is the Queensland School Curriculum Council.
effectiveness	Effectiveness is the extent to which the intentions of the curriculum materials have been fulfilled or achieved. It is also the extent to which the curriculum materials have had an impact on stakeholders.
efficiency	Efficiency is concerned with the extent to which the curriculum materials are usable/workable for teachers in terms of resourcing and time. It is also comparing the resources and time required to use the Council's curriculum materials to that required to use other available materials with similar intentions.
evaluate	To systematically investigate the worth or merit of an object (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation 1994).
goal-based evaluation	Goal-based evaluation is based and focused on knowledge of the goals or intentions of a program. Program goals or intentions are used as the criteria for success and evaluation focuses on determining the extent to which goals have been achieved. Ralph Tyler first used this approach in curriculum evaluation in the 1930s. The approach remains influential today (Norris 1990).
impact	Affect or influence.
intentions	The end to which the curriculum materials strive to achieve i.e. the goals of the curriculum materials. The intentions of curriculum materials may be explicitly stated in the content of the materials, for example: • The *Science Years 1 to 10 Sourcebook: Guidelines* has been developed to assist teachers implement the Queensland Years 1 to 10 Science syllabus. • These initial in-service materials have been developed to help teachers and administrators understand the Years 1 to 10 Science syllabus and how it can be used to develop effective curriculum programs. The intentions of the curriculum materials may also be implicitly stated in the content of the curriculum materials. For example, the following intentions are evident in the Years 1 to 10 Science syllabus: • The syllabus describes the rationale, the learning outcomes and the assessment principles for the Years 1 to 10 Science key learning area. • The core learning outcomes describe those learnings which are

Term	Explanation
	considered essential for all students. • The syllabus provides a framework for planning learning experiences and assessment tasks through which students have opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do in the key learning area.
resources	Sources of support or aid. Resources could be human, financial, physical or information.
responsive evaluation	Responsive evaluation is concerned with describing the worth of a program with respect to the views of all participants. Robert Stake (1983), the most influential proponent of this approach, believes that evaluation should be responsive to the problems and needs of stakeholders and concerned with the multiple realities of an educational program.
stakeholders	Individuals or groups that may be involved in or may be affected by the evaluation (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation 1994). The stakeholders for the evaluation of approved curriculum materials include teachers; school administrators; school authorities; students; parents; tertiary institutions; teacher unions; and the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies.
utilisation-focused evaluation	Utilisation-focused evaluation is based on the premise that if the primary users of an evaluation are provided with relevant information, then it is more likely to be used (Caulley 1993a). Michael Patton first developed the utilisation-focused approach in response to concern about the non-utilisation of evaluation results (Rogers 1992).

Attachment 2: Examples of specific questions for key learning area curriculum materials

Focus question 1a – To what extent do the intentions of the curriculum materials reflect current educational theories and priorities, particularly at a state and national level?

Specific questions related to this focus question could include:

- To what extent does the rationale of the syllabus (i.e. nature of the key learning area, contribution to the key learning area to the Years 1 to 10 curriculum, cross-curricular priorities, understandings about the learners and learning) reflect current views of education in the key learning area?
- How well do the curriculum materials match the current initiatives of Queensland school authorities?
- To what extent do the cross-curricular priorities reflect current national education priorities (for example, National Plan for Literacy and Numeracy in Schools, Australia's Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling)?

Focus question 1b – To what extent do the intentions of the curriculum materials match stakeholder needs?

Specific questions related to this focus question could include:

- To what extent are the key learning outcomes considered appropriate by stakeholders in highlighting the uniqueness of the key learning area and its particular contribution to lifelong learning?
- To what extent are the core learning outcomes considered appropriate by stakeholders in describing the essential learnings for all students?
- To what extent is the progression described by the core learning outcomes and the typical alignment of year levels with outcomes considered appropriate by teachers?

Focus question 2a – What impact have the curriculum materials had on stakeholders?

Specific questions related to this focus question could include:

- What impact have the curriculum materials had on teacher practice?
- How have teachers used the syllabus outcomes for planning and assessing?
- To what extent have the curriculum materials impacted on students' learning?
- To what extent have the curriculum materials impacted on school policy, timetabling and staffing requirements?
- Which aspects of the curriculum materials have been used and why?
- To what extent is there articulation between the curriculum materials and courses of study developed by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies?
- What are the implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education?
- How have teachers used the syllabus outcomes for reporting?

Focus question 2b – To what extent have the intentions of the curriculum materials been achieved?

Specific questions related to this focus question could include:

- To what extent do the syllabus outcomes provide a useful framework for planning learning experiences and assessment tasks?
- To what extent have the syllabus outcomes allowed teachers to assess and report on the performance and progress of all students?
- How well are the learning outcomes in a particular strand sequenced conceptually across the progressive levels?
- To what extent have the curriculum materials allowed teachers in a range of teaching and learning contexts to meet the needs of the full range of students?
- To what extent do the sourcebook guidelines and modules assist teachers in implementing the syllabus to meet the needs of all students?
- To what extent do the initial in-service materials assist teachers in understanding the syllabus?

Focus question 3a – To what extent are the curriculum materials usable/workable in terms of resourcing and time?

Specific questions related to this focus question could include:

- What resources and time are required for teachers to plan, implement and assess using the syllabus?
- Which support materials (for example, modules, aspects of the initial in-service materials) have assisted teachers in using the syllabus and why?
- To what extent has the emphasis on on-line provision of curriculum materials made the task of planning and implementing more or less efficient for teachers?
- To what extent does the organisation and language of the curriculum materials facilitate use by stakeholders?

Focus question 3b – To what extent are the resources and time required to use the curriculum materials comparable with those required to use other curriculum materials with similar intentions?

Specific questions related to this focus question could include:

- How do the sourcebook modules compare (in terms of resources and time required to use them) to other support materials that teachers may be using (for example, other Council materials, other curriculum materials previously used, curriculum materials from other education authorities)?

Focus question 4 – In light of the above, what improvements could be made to the curriculum materials?

Specific questions for this focus question will be dependent on the information obtained in answering the previous questions.

Appendix 5: Evaluation and review report template

QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

[Enter title]
Evaluation/Review of…

An Evaluation and Review Report

If an external evaluator/reviewer, also use the words 'Prepared for the Queensland School Curriculum Council by ….' and include organisation logo if applicable.

Enter month and year

Acknowledgments

Acknowledge the officers who worked on the evaluation/review.

For example: ‘The following officers participated in this review: Henry Smith (data management and table/display generation), Chris Drake (review design, questionnaire design, analyses and report writing) and Anne Jones (interviewing, analyses and report writing).’

Acknowledge those who assisted the evaluators/reviewers in carrying out the project.

For example: ‘The cooperation of Council members and Office staff in completing and returning the surveys and participating in interviews is appreciated.’

ISBN [Insert allocated number after the Director has approved the report for publishing.]
© The State of Queensland (The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council) [date]

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Contents

Executive summary v

Introduction

etc.

List of [displays, tables]

Enter list of displays, tables etc and the pages in which they appear.

Executive Summary

Insert succinct summary of each section of the report.
Include all evaluation/review conclusions in this summary.
The Executive Summary should be able to stand alone as a separate document if need be.

Introduction

Purposes of evaluation/review

Enter purposes of evaluation/review as listed in the approved evaluation/review design.

[Enter name of program/project being evaluated/reviewed]

Briefly describe the program/project being evaluated/reviewed as per approved evaluation/review design.

Evaluation/Review focus

'In fulfilling the purposes of the evaluation/review, the following focus questions were addressed:'

Include the following information:
- the focus questions for the evaluation/review, as per approved evaluation/review design);
- if applicable, any additional focus questions not appearing in the approved evaluation/review design but which emerged during the evaluation/review.

Evaluation/Review approach

Briefly describe the methodology to be used in the conduct of the evaluation/review. Synthesise/summarise the information already included in the following sections of the evaluation/review design:
- Overall evaluation/review approach to be adopted.
- Data collection matrix.
- Analysis of Collected data.
- Summary of tasks and timelines.

It is expected that this section would not exceed half a page.

Focus Question 1 [Enter the wording of the focus question as per approved evaluation/review design.]

[Enter appropriate heading]

Insert findings in appropriate format. The Office favours succinct information, combining graphical display and/or tables and accompanying text. All graphs tables should be numbered.

[Enter appropriate heading]

Insert findings in appropriate format. The Office of the QSCC favours succinct information, combining graphical display and/or tables and accompanying text. All graphs and tables should be numbered.

Repeat this format for 2,3, 2.4 2.5 etc as required, until the final sub-heading below.

Summary and conclusions

This will be the final sub-heading for this section. Provide a succinct summary and draw suitable conclusions. Do not write recommendations as this will be included in the submission document prepared by Office staff in consultation with external evaluators/reviewers where applicable. Number the conclusions made.

Note: It is possible that in some evaluation/review reports, it may make sense to insert all conclusions at the end of the report. This would be particularly apt where conclusions tend to be based on more than one focus question (and therefore are based on findings reported in more than one section of the report. Where this is the case, the last heading of each section should be titled ‘Summary’, and the last section of the report should be titled ‘Conclusions’ rather than ‘Concluding Comments’). The final choice on location of the conclusions is therefore left to the discretion of the evaluator/reviewer.

[Enter heading summarising Focus Question 2]

For sections 3, 4, 5 etc. use the same format as section 2 above.

Concluding comments

Enter appropriate comments that conclude the report. See also comments made above about the location of conclusions.

Appendixes

Include in the appendixes:

- the data collection instrument/s;
- any other material deemed necessary, for example, detailed tables not included in the body of the report, statistical techniques etc.

Number each appendix Appendix 1, Appendix 2 etc.

Appendix 6: Illustrative evaluation cycle

Year/Semester	00/01	00/02	01/01	01/02	02/01	02/02	03/01	03/02	04/01	04/02	05/01	05/02	06/01	06/02	07/01	07/02	08/01	08/02	09/01	09/02
Strategic Planning																				
Strategic Plan	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D	**EVAL**	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D	**EVAL**	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D	**EVAL**	R&D	R&D, **eval**
P to 10 Framework																				
Curriculum framework (structure, definitions)		Plan & Design	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**, Pub,Dn								**EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval,** Pub,Dn						
Standards framework (learning outcomes at levels)		Plan & Design	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**, Pub,Dn								**EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval,** Pub,Dn						
Planning, assessment and reporting guidelines		Plan & Design	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**, Pub,Dn								**EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval,** Pub,Dn						
Evaluation guidelines				R&D, **eval**, Pub,Dn								**EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval,** Pub,Dn						
Cross-curricular guidelines			R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**, Pub,Dn								**EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval,** Pub,Dn						
Curriculum Guidelines																				
Preschool				**EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**, Pub,Dn														
Syllabuses																				
Health and Physical Education	AFI			Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn												
Science	AFI				Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn											
Languages other than English	Dn					Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn										
Studies of Society and Environment	Dn						Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn									
The Arts	T/P, **eval**	Pub	Dn					Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn								
Technology	T/P, **eval**	T/P, **eval**	Pub	Dn					Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn							
English	R&D, T	R&D, T, **eval**	P, **eval**	P, **eval**	Pub	Pub	Dn			Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn						
Mathematics	R&D, T	R&D, T, **eval**	P, **eval**	P, **eval**	Pub	Pub	Dn				Plan & Design	Assess **EVAL**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub,Dn					
Subject Areas	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Dn																

(continued)

Appendix 6: Illustrative evaluation cycle *(continued)*

Year/Semester	00/01	00/02	01/01	01/02	02/01	02/02	03/01	03/02	04/01	04/02	05/01	05/02	06/01	06/02	07/01	07/02	08/01	08/02	09/01	09/02
Associated curriculum materials																				
Health and Physical Education	Pub	Pub Dn			**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn								
Science	Pub	Pub Dn				**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn							
Languages other than English	Pub	Pub	Dn				**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn						
Studies of Society and Environment	Pub	Pub Dn	Dn					**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn					
The Arts	R&D, **eval**	Pub	Dn						**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn				
Technology	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub	Dn						**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn			
English	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub	Dn				**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn		
Mathematics	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**	Pub	Dn					**EVAL**				R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, Pub, Dn	
Cross-Key Learning Areas		R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn	R&D, **eval**, Pub, Dn
Literacy & Numeracy Testing Program																				
1999 Testing Program	R&D, **EVAL** ‖																			
2000 Testing Program	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**																	
2001 Testing Program		R&D	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**															
2002 Testing Program				R&D	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**													
2003 Testing Program						R&D	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**											
2004 Testing Program								R&D	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **EVAL** ‖									
2005 Testing Program										R&D	R&D	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**							
2006 Testing Program												Res, Dev	Res, Dev	R&D, **eval**	R&D, **eval**					
Year/Semester	**00/01**	**00/02**	**01/01**	**01/02**	**02/01**	**02/02**	**03/01**	**03/02**	**04/01**	**04/02**	**05/01**	**05/02**	**06/01**	**06/02**	**07/01**	**07/02**	**08/01**	**08/02**	**09/01**	**09/02**

Codes:

Pub – Publish

Dn – Dissemination

R&D – Research and Development

eval – Formative evaluation

EVAL – Summative evaluation (sometimes called Review)

AFI – Available for implementation

T – Trial

P – Pilot

T/P – Trial/Pilot

Plan & Design – preparatory activity for assessment, evaluation, research and development

‖ – indicates release of materials

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