2003

Peer Review of Evaluation Studies

Christopher J. O'Leary
W.E. Upjohn Institute, oleary@upjohn.org

Citation
https://research.upjohn.org/confpapers/8

This title is brought to you by the Upjohn Institute. For more information, please contact repository@upjohn.org.
Peer Review of Evaluation Studies

Christopher J. O’Leary
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

WWW.UPJOHN.ORG

Outline

1. Characteristics of high quality studies
2. Peer review of a completed evaluation report
3. Evaluations involving an advisory panel
4. Performance based evaluation contracts
5. Lessons for research contractors
1. Characteristics of high quality studies

- Properly framed research question
- Appropriate sample with sufficient size
- Transparent estimation methodology
- Robust and reproducible results
- Relevance to policy issues
- Appropriate budget
2. Peer review of a completed evaluation report

Influence on the quality of the evaluation study

Authors informed of review in advance
Authors not informed review in advance

Interpret findings for government consumption
Adequacy of sample design
Results of data collection
Suitability of estimation methodology
Internal and external validity
Comparison to previous related findings
Relevance of results for policy
Guidance for improvement of study
3. Evaluations involving an advisory panel

Writing the solicitation for an evaluation study
Choosing the best technical and financial proposal
Refinement and implementation of the study design
Preliminary examination of data
Finalizing the estimation methodology
Assessing the potential and limitation of findings
Reviewing project reports
Repackaging findings of the evaluation study
4. Performance based evaluation contracts

Approved study design
Report on sampling (admin, survey, random)
Interim project report
Preliminary final report
Final report

Popularized summaries
5. Lessons for research contractors

Answer the question posed
Use samples that are sufficiently large
Fully exploit available administrative data
Keep estimators as simple as possible
Document the behavioral context of the evaluation
Translate evaluation results to the policy context
Keep study costs reasonable
Present findings in an accessible way