

Creating an Evaluation Guide for Your FIPSE Grant

Warning this is not an official document of the U.S. Department of Education. It is a worksheet designed to assist our grantees in thinking about project evaluation.

Step 1: Refining the Project

Main Themes a.k.a "Project Goals"	Key Questions a.k.a "Project Objectives"	What is being documented or measured so that by the end of the grant we will be able to determine if you met your project objectives?	Speed and Extent of Change
<p>General Instructions: Pick 1-3 main themes that your project seeks to address.</p>	<p>For each of your themes, identify a couple of key questions that you seek to answer. <i>These questions should be relevant to your project goal(s), focused, and measurable.</i> Think about what data you will need to collect to document program outcomes. What data will you need to demonstrate how your project is/or is not an improvement over the pre-grant status quo? (Negative findings are fine. They help us define the cutting edge of research.) Think about what evidence you need to gather to be able to convince others at similar institutions to replicate or modify some or all of your program activities.</p>	<p>Examples: Change, improvement (or lack of improvement) in knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, behaviors, educational or professional goals, school or work environment. Immediate educational or career impact, long-term educational or career impact (5+ years post). Change in the number and/or strength of professional ties, academic or professional achievements. The diffusion effect of training colleagues and students, and the community impact. You may also document participation in special activities/internships/events and satisfaction with program management but these last two alone are insufficient for a thorough program assessment.</p>	<p>Now that you have identified your objectives and thought about your possible outcomes, you need to tell us in your proposal or evaluation plan: 1) Who will change, 2) What is going to change, 3) When do you expect the change to take place, and 4) How much change is expected. If you cannot identify this at the start, then you will not know what to monitor. You cannot just wait to see if something, anything, happens.</p>
<p>Your Project:</p>			

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<p>FIPSE Examples. Goal 1: Train engineering students to be more globally competent.</p>	<p>Project Objective 1a: To graduate engineering students with Spanish-speaking ability adequate for conversing informally with native Spanish speakers.</p>	<p>Increase in Spanish-language proficiency among American students who are non-native speakers of Spanish.</p>	<p>By comparing language ability prior to travel and post study abroad, the participating undergraduate American engineering students will show evidence of increased Spanish language proficiency as measured by: Option A: an average increase of X percent on Brigham Young's Foreign Language Achievement Test (FLATS), or Option B: an average increase of X points on our college's Spanish placement exam, or Option C: increases in self-reported willingness to conduct a series of tasks (speaking with colleagues, writing memos, reading documents, hosting a professional meeting, etc.) in Spanish.</p>
	<p>Project Objective 1b. To give engineering students the basic knowledge to be more effective overseas employees from day 1.</p>	<p>Increase our students' basic knowledge about engineering regulation and professional life, and increase their professional contacts in Mexico.</p>	<p>Having completed our program abroad, our students will show evidence of being a more effective overseas employees from day 1 by Option A: Being able to identify 5 primary Mexican govt. agencies that deal with engineering policy, 10 major Mexican engineering firms, 2 Mexican professional assoc. for engineers, and 2 major Spanish-language engineering publications. They will have contact info for 2 Mexican engineers and/or 1 letter of recommendation from a Mexican engineer with whom they interned or studied. OR Option B: Being able to demonstrate, on a faculty-designed test, that they have a better grasp of the rules and regulations impacting the international practice of their profession than those who did not go abroad. OR Option C: Using more primary source material in their senior project than those who did not study abroad. Their senior projects will contain information that could only be gathered abroad - interviews, local knowledge of a particular issue, etc. OR Option D: Receiving an average of 1.5 more job offers and/or higher salary offers than engineering students who did not go abroad.</p>

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Step 2: Planning Data Collection

Baseline Measures	Data Collection Instruments	Who is the respondent, interview subject, focus group participant, etc.	Describe a possible comparison group or control group, if relevant.
<p>Do you need to collect any baseline data before you start so that you can measure how far you, your project, or your students have come by the end of the grant? Some common baseline measures to consider are: standardized test scores, field specific test scores, departmental placement test scores, and GPA. In addition, always keep basic demographic info on file including: student id #, major, year of graduation, e-mail contact, and any other relevant demographic info such as previous study abroad experience.</p>	<p>Examples: How will you monitor and document change? Pick measures that work best for you. Make sure your methods are thorough but feasible, and really address your project goals. Surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews, unobtrusive measures, standardized tests, exams, GPA, your own measurement tools, etc. are all data collection instruments that you should consider.</p>	<p>Examples: Students, teachers, community thought leaders, institutions, advisory board members, local citizens, etc.</p>	<p>Examples: Last year's students who were taught under the old curriculum; students in another section of the course who were concurrently taught with the unrevised curriculum; a similar, untreated group such as students in a similar course at another institution; a large state or national population, etc. We can work with you on this.</p>
<p>Your 1st Example Continued:</p>			

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Step 2: Planning Data Collection

Baseline Measures	Data Collection Instruments	Who is the respondent, interview subject, focus group participant, etc.	Describe a possible comparison group or control group, if relevant.
<p>Option A: FLATS Spanish test needs to be administered by the faculty advisor just prior to study abroad. Total cost per student = \$80. for the pre and post-test. Option B: Your college's Spanish placement exam needs to be administered just prior to study abroad. Option C: A pre-departure survey needs to be administered to students to measure their initial willingness to conduct a series of tasks in Spanish.</p>	<p>Option A: Standardized commercially available test. Option B: Your college's placement test. Option C: Your own attitude survey.</p>	<p>American undergraduate students who participate in the study abroad portion of your project.</p>	<p>Option A: See if the makers of your standardized test have data showing the amount of gain one could expect for different types of programs. Option B or C: If you have some engineering students who are not participating in the study abroad portion of the project, but are otherwise taking the same course of study, can you administer a test/survey to them? Or can you administer the test/survey to those you taught last year who did not go abroad?</p>
<p>Option A: Prior to overseas study, we will administer a short survey which will ask our students to identify the items listed under A in the previous box. Option B: A pre-departure survey needs to be administered to students to measure their initial knowledge of rules and regulations impacting the international practice of their profession. Option C: Students going abroad need to be instructed on what primary source material they should be collecting for their senior projects. Option D: Names and contact info for all students going abroad and those in your control group. You'll need to keep this information current for about 2 years.</p>	<p>Option A & B: Your own knowledge survey. Option C: You need to give some thought on how you will quantify the use of primary source material in senior projects. Option D: Your own survey of student job offers that both those studying abroad and those not studying abroad will complete.</p>	<p>American undergraduate students who participate in the study abroad portion of our project.</p>	<p>Options A, B, and D: Engineering students who are not participating in the study abroad portion of the project, but are otherwise taking the same course of study, will take the same survey. Or students you taught last year, who did not go abroad, will take the same survey. Option C: Engineering students who did not go abroad will have their use of primary source material in their senior projects recorded and quantified in the same manner as those students who did go abroad -- for purposes of this evaluation report only.</p>

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Step 3: Constructing a Timeline

When will your evaluation instrument(s) be drafted?	When will you collect your data?	When will you analyze your data?	Will your evaluation results provide feedback during the project that will enable you to modify project activities?	When will your written findings be ready for an outside audience?
Please indicate the timeline for designing <i>each</i> measure and data collection instrument.	Please enter approximate dates.	Please enter approximate dates.	Please explain at what point project administrators will review preliminary evaluation findings and make decisions about whether to modify activities. What project activities could be modified midstream if feedback warrants making changes?	Please enter approximate dates.
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<p>Options A & B: They are already completed. Option C: Pick a date prior to the departure of your first group of students.</p>	<p>Prior to the departure of your students and again immediately upon their return home.</p>	<p>During the month or two after the first students return home in year 2.</p>	<p>Findings will be reviewed over the summer between year 2 and 3. If there is insufficient evidence of the expected language gain, then P.D.'s will discuss options for year 3 such as: changing student housing arrangements to include host families instead of foreign student dorms, requiring that more courses taken abroad be taught in the host language, organizing a debate in the host language between the American students and their host counterparts, selecting new internship sites where students must use Spanish to communicate, etc.</p>	<p>Some date between the return home of the 1st students and 6 months after the end of the FIPSE grant. You may plan to make different types of findings available at different times.</p>
<p>Options A, B, and C: Pick a date prior to the departure of your first group of students. Option D: Prior to the students' final semester at your institution.</p>	<p>Options A & B: Prior to the departure of your students and again immediately upon their return home. Option C: When grading the senior projects. Option D: In the final semester that the students are at your home institution.</p>	<p>Options A & B: During the month or two after the first students return home in year 2. Options C & D: In year 3, upon graduation of the students who studied abroad in year 2.</p>	<p>Options A & B: Findings will be reviewed over the summer between years 2 and 3. Options C & D: Findings will be reviewed over the summer between years 3 and 4. If there is insufficient evidence of the expected knowledge gain, then P.D.'s will discuss options for the next group such as: organizing a seminar/lecture series on the professional life of the engineer in Mexico, organizing field trips to government agencies, foreign firms, and professional associations, or asking professionals to mentor your students.</p>	<p>Some date between the return home of the 1st students and 6 months after the end of the FIPSE grant. You may plan to make different types of findings available at different times.</p>

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Step 4: Thinking about Dissemination - Who needs to hear about your project findings and why?

Campus	Local Community	Similar Institutions	Professional Groups	Professional Colleagues	Local, State, Federal Agencies and Officials	Interested Others
<p>For example: Dean, Provost, Dept. Chairs, Head of Computing, Head of the Library, Faculty Senate, professional school faculty, students, prospective majors.</p>	<p>For example: Local community leaders, parents, alumni, the superintendent of schools, etc.</p>	<p>For example: Your colleagues at a neighboring institution, professional associations of like institutions, etc.</p>	<p>For example: Professional associations in your field, multi-field professional associations, etc. Are you planning to make a professional presentation, write for an association newsletter, post on an association blog, or write to the Chronicle of Higher Education?</p>	<p>Can you identify a few professional colleagues who work on similar projects who should be aware of your findings?</p>	<p>In addition to the Dept. of Education what state and local leaders might be interested in your findings? Did you know that the National Governors' Association has a website and a committee on education, for example?</p>	<p>Will/have you created a website, hosted an exhibition, held a conference, etc. to let the public know what you found?</p>
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<p>The Dean is looking for evidence that study abroad adds value to the engineering curriculum. Prospective majors need to hear about the finding so that they will see that engineering is an international field.</p>	<p>Engineering alumni need to know about this program because perhaps they would like to be involved in hosting the reciprocal visits of students to our campus. Alumni may also be more interested in hiring our new students if they knew about this project.</p>	<p>My colleagues at Engineering Tech across the state need to hear about this project because they might want to consider a similar program. If we could get them interested, perhaps we could expand the project or find ways to become self-sustaining.</p>	<p>The national engineering association needs to hear about our results so that other schools can use our data to convince their deans that international study enhances engineering training.</p>	<p>Using their employee performance data on past hires, Boeing has implemented a program to rank schools in terms of their ability to produce the best engineers for Boeing. We didn't fare so well in their initial rankings. We should let them know that we have changed our program to make our graduates more competitive.</p>	<p>While abroad, our students learn a lot about certain engineering issues that are directly relevant to some engineering challenges that our state is trying to address. Perhaps a letter to the right state committee would open professional doors for my students and colleagues.</p>	<p>We are going to create a website with a section for student alumni to post resumes and announcements of professional achievements. We are going to publicize this website and our program to local businesses that hire engineers.</p>
<p>The Dean is looking for evidence that study abroad adds value to the engineering curriculum. Prospective majors need to hear about the finding so that they will see that engineering is an international field.</p>	<p>Engineering alumni need to know about this program because perhaps they would like to be involved in hosting the reciprocal visits of students to our campus. Alumni may also be more interested in hiring our new students if they knew about this project.</p>	<p>My colleagues at Engineering Tech across the state need to hear about this project because they might want to consider a similar program. If we could get them interested, perhaps we could expand the project or find ways to become self-sustaining.</p>	<p>The national engineering association needs to hear about our results so that other schools can use our data to convince their deans that international study enhances engineering training.</p>	<p>Using their employee performance data on past hires, Boeing has implemented a program to rank schools in terms of their ability to produce the best engineers for Boeing. We didn't fare so well in their initial rankings. We should let them know that we have changed our program to make our graduates more competitive.</p>	<p>While abroad our students learn a lot about certain engineering issues that are directly relevant to some engineering challenges that our state is trying to address. Perhaps a letter to the right state committee would open professional doors for my students and colleagues.</p>	<p>We are going to create a website with a section for student alumni to post resumes and announcements of professional achievements. We are going to publicize this website and our program to local businesses that hire engineers.</p>