



VEPR Review Report – William Faulkner

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Reviewee details

Reviewee name: William Faulkner
EES membership number: 37354
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Reviewer details**Lead Reviewer**

Full name: Pam Oliver
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Second reviewer

Full name: Bob Picciotto
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Review details

Date/s of review meetings: 20 December 2016
Medium of review meeting/s: Skype
Comments: [optional]

Review focus areas (summarised in 25 words maximum)

1. Ethics in evaluation practice: moving from theory to decision-making
2. Ethics in evaluation practice: presenting negative findings while maintaining good relations with stakeholders.

Review outcomes

Capabilities explored	Learning by reviewee	Reviewer comments on reviewee learning
<p>1.15 <i>Aims at evaluation independence and excellence in all contexts</i></p>	<p><u>I should develop an ethical framework</u> which makes explicit the professional area to which the company belongs: Flux sources ethical norms from the field of evaluation. Flux and its representatives have an ethical duty to perform all services up to the standards of this field.</p> <p>Below is a draft of the Ethical Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Cultural) sensitivity: actively search for, consider, and take into account the boutique details of a given context and project. • Do-no-harm • Accountability: Responding to concerns multiple stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active effort to understand power dimensions of context, relevant sources of vulnerability for the evaluation. • Accountability Framework <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self – my own conscience 2. Members of vulnerable stakeholders & stakeholder groups directly involved in evaluation 3. Members of vulnerable stakeholder groups not directly involved with evaluation. 4. Team – partners, employees, subcontractors 5. Client 6. Members of less vulnerable stakeholder groups directly involved with the evaluation: e.g. client partners institutions 7. Members of less vulnerable stakeholder groups <u>not</u> directly involved with the evaluation: e.g. institutions funding projects in the same thematic/geographic area. 8. Other audiences likely to be concerned with evaluation results: e.g. academics. 9. Wider community of evaluation practice: e.g. other evaluators <u>not</u> involved in the evaluation. 10. Global society/everyone • Transparency: share evaluation process, data, and findings with as many stakeholders as possible in formats they are likely to understand. • Teach to fish: encourage and empower clients and evaluands to pick up evaluative thinking and skills. <p>I should create a training module for new subcontractors to instill ethical standards they will</p>	<p>RP - Will has demonstrated seriousness and a desire to learn from experience especially during our joint examination of the five life ethical cases that he put forward. Our interchange amply confirmed that FLUX would benefit from a set of ethical principles informed by agreed professional guidelines and standards as well as the evaluation research literature (e.g. Dianna L. Newman and Robert D. Brown, <i>Applied Ethics for Program Evaluation</i>).</p> <p>The draft ethical principles listed here will need refinement and streamlining but they demonstrate Will's determination to engage with his peers and draw hard won lessons from the real life dilemmas he has faced in a variety of evaluation contexts. I would discourage Will from adopting a formal hierarchy of accountabilities since judicious ranking is bound to vary in diverse contexts.</p> <p>Presentation of negative findings being a problem area, upfront agreement about who has ultimate control over the evaluation report and how conflicts about evaluation findings are to be resolved (e.g. through independent advice, dissenting footnotes, etc.) would be desirable.</p> <p>A systematic review of the evaluation ethics literature would help Will crystallize his own ideas about the road ahead: there is nothing more practical than a good theory.</p>

	<p>be expected to uphold. Draft of contents of module:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Flux Ethical Framework • Evaluation Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legal aspects of confidentiality ○ Control over process – what the client defines vs. what we define ○ Practicalities of dealing with client: clearly reference and explain Flux Ethical Framework early & often. • Data collection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can't refer to any other responses (identified or not) until certain conditions met. • Data Storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standards & protocols for data storage. • Results dissemination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish criteria under which it is acceptable to have a partner/subcontractor turn in a deliverable without final review by Flux. ○ Dissemination Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will be emphasized with client ▪ Intellectual Property ▪ Who controls content of deliverables? ▪ Who controls whether it gets disseminated or not? If client doesn't like content, can they just file whole thing away? Can they chop it up and distribute the good pieces? <p>Process: Allow time to apply framework with team/subcontractor(s) to specific project. They may see risks Flux does not.</p> <p>I should add specific sections to standard contract templates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection: default is that no identifiable information will be shared and identifiable will be defined by Flux at its own discretion and that of its representatives. 	<p>PO – William's response to the VEPR review, as represented in his report, has been thorough and multi-faceted. He has devoted considerable thought and effort to developing, already in some detail here, actual strategies for addressing the practice issues that he focused on for his VEPR review. His plans here demonstrate that he has adopted self-reflection as a personal professional development strategy. Some of the ideas he has proposed merit a wider audience, for example through blogs or opinion or 'thought' pieces in journals, and I encourage him to consider doing that.</p> <p>William has also recognised, through the VEPR review discussion and his very thorough VEPR portfolio, the risks of operating alone as a freelance contract evaluator and he has begun to reach out to evaluation colleagues (including the two VEPR reviewers) for support with his professional development.</p> <p>As William works through the various actions that he proposes in this report, he shows that he is also developing his own complex philosophy of evaluation practice, to inform his personalised professional development.</p>
<p><i>2.14 Gathers, uses and interprets evidence with care and judgment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider synthesis of qualitative results as a multi-stakeholder activity. During project design, do not plan project to have one person interpreting evidence to create results alone. • Apply Accountability Framework in deciding how to disseminate results (with, without identification). 	
<p><i>2.23 Uses sound negotiating and conflict</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies for avoiding or constructively managing conflicted conversations with clients and other stakeholders. 	<p>RP - A review of the negotiations literature would also help Will as he works on enhancing his</p>

<i>resolution skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having an ethical framework should help to clarify expectations with future clients and partners, team members. 	capabilities , e.g. <i>Getting to Yes</i> by Fisher and Ury (http://www.fd.unl.pt/docentes_docs/ma/AGON_MA_25849.pdf)
2.24 <i>Demonstrates gender awareness and cultural sensitivity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The subcontractor training module above should include specific subsections on gender sensitivity and culturally responsive evaluation. The subcontractor training module should be developed with an awareness of gender and cultural differences among subcontractors. 	
3.1 Upholds ethical standards and democratic values in the conduct of evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Ethical Framework including Accountability Framework (see 1.15) Create & apply training for team members Specifications privacy of data in all contracts. 	<p>PO – William has picked up on the core value of having a clear understanding of one’s own ethical stance in relation to one’s work. His proposed actions in this section reflect both (i) an enhance understanding of how ethics applies to all areas of evaluation practice and (ii) some proposed practical applications that will improve his own practice.</p> <p>RP – Accountability hierarchies being contested and dependent on the cultural context I would encourage Will to design his own set of principles reflecting good evaluation practice by drawing on the frameworks he has listed and other sources.</p> <p>Regarding value hierarchies in the medical profession see:</p> <p>http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17496530802117680 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3528420/</p> <p>RP- Habermas’ procedural view of standards has been challenged. For a concise utilitarian rebuttal (i.e. standards should be judged by their results) see:</p> <p>https://benjaminstudebaker.com/2014/02/05/a-critique-of-habermas/</p>
3.3 Evinces independence of mind and appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include new sections on privacy and results dissemination in contract template (see 1.15) 	
3.4 Displays self-awareness and pursues continuous professional development	<p>Sources to Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morris – Evaluation Ethics for Best Practice David Fetterman – Empowerment Evaluation ICCM – organization set up by mining companies <p>Frameworks to draw upon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habermas: standards cannot be derived from logic, only conversation between principled individuals UNICEF Evaluation Standards Medical profession: Lumin & Brown UK Evaluation Standards: in particular, responsibilities of the commissioner 	
3.5 <i>Contributes to the evaluation community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I should develop an ethical framework which makes explicit the professional area of the company (see 1.15). Applies to capability 3.5 by helping to clients view the field of M&E as a coherent, rigorous core of professionals with common standards. Focus on my sphere of control. Interactions with clients, partners, and other stakeholders which uphold these protections are main contribution. 	

Other gains from the VEPR review	Catharsis: the opportunity to openly discuss ethical concerns has an emotional benefit beyond the practical solutions offered.	
Other comments on the review outcomes or process	<p>The VEPR process is essential because it is an opportunity to provide a confidential window onto past actions to professionals in my field. Ethics is a sensitive, often emotional subject.</p> <p>The VEPR process has allowed me to zoom in on cases from my own experience. Working through this through back-and-forth discussion with other evaluators yields applicable paths to build my own capacity and change future actions.</p>	PO – I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to listen to William thinking through some of the practice issues he encounters that are particular to the sector he works in, because it differs from the type of evaluation work that I have mostly been involved in. I also appreciated William’s openness to new ideas.

Declaration

We declare that the VEPR review for WILLIAM NATHANIEL FAULKNER was completed on 18 January 2017 to the satisfaction in all aspects of the reviewee and the two reviewers.

Signed

Applicant:



Lead reviewer:



Second reviewer: Robert Picciotto, confirmed via email.