



<b>Evaluation Policy</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	January 1, 2017
<b>Purpose</b>	To outline standards, processes, roles and responsibilities regarding program evaluation
<b>Scope</b>	Employees and Contracted Experts
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement
<b>Accountability</b>	Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs
<b>Foremost File No</b>	Governance - 110103-13-1
<b>Related Canada Council Policies and Legal Contractual Obligations</b>	Research Policy Procurement Policy Delegation of Authority Policy Code of Ethics Conflict of Interest Policy on the Management of Canada Council for the Arts Information Granting Policy Operational Policies/Procedures of the Arts Granting Programs Division Data Standards (in development) Performance Measurement Framework (in development)
<b>Related Laws and External Policies</b>	Government of Canada – Policy on Results (2016); Directive on Results (2016) <i>Privacy Act</i> <i>Access to Information Act</i> <i>Official Languages Act</i> <i>Treasury Board Secretariat Directive on Open Government</i>

## 1. Objective

This policy outlines the Canada Council for the Arts' (the Council) principles, standards, processes, roles and responsibilities that guide program evaluation.

## 2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

**Director and Chief Executive Officer:** The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for all program evaluation activities. The Director and CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Director of Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement has access to Executive Management as required, and for approving evaluation plans and reports.

**Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs:** For the purposes of this policy, operational accountability for program evaluation is delegated to the Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs. This includes ensuring that this policy is implemented, complied with, monitored, and assessed on a regular basis.

**Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement:** Responsible for all aspects of program evaluation<sup>1</sup>, including but not limited to: developing the Canada Council's Evaluation Plan, determining and managing evaluation budgets, updating the plan annually, approving methodologies and reports, reporting annually on program evaluation and determining publication of reports. The Director will ensure that all programs have appropriate indicators and performance measures in place along with data collection strategies to enable program evaluation

**Executive Management Committee (EMC):** Responsible for oversight of the Council's Evaluation Plan and ensuring that recommendations are responded to and implemented.

**Director, Granting Program Operations:** Responsible for reviewing grant program evaluation reports and recommendations, informing management responses and monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

**Director General, Arts Granting Programs:** Responsible for ensuring that all programs have appropriate indicators and performance measures in place along with data collection strategies to enable program evaluation, and that management responses are developed and implemented. The Director General may also contribute to the development of the evaluation plan. Through the office of the Director General, the Arts Granting Programs Committee will review and discuss program evaluation results and recommendations.

**Director Generals:** Where evaluation is related to policy or procedures or non-granting programs, the responsible Director General is responsible for implementation.

**Program Directors and Managers:** Responsible for ensuring that program performance measurement data and all relevant program documentation is collected according to the Council's standards, policies and procedures; participating in the development of the Evaluation Plan; participating in advisory groups that help develop

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, 'program evaluation' refers to the evaluation of granting programs, including strategic funds, and non-granting programs such as initiatives and services.

evaluation design, as internal program stakeholders; making program staff and program information available to the evaluators in a timely manner during an evaluation; formulating management responses to program evaluation recommendations in consultation with the Director, Granting Program Operations, and implementing those responses.

**Information Technology and Information Management Services:** Accountable for the management of systems which house the data required for research and for corporate memory, information management and Council's data retention and disposition. Responsible for providing and supporting the technology used for evaluation.

**Finance Section:** Responsible for the financial and procedural approval of evaluation contracts according to the Council's Procurement Policy and the Delegation of Authority Policy.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Program evaluation** is the systematic collection and analysis of evidence on the design, delivery and outcomes (results) of programs and initiatives to make recommendations about their relevance, performance and efficiency.

A full evaluation lexicon is available at the end of this policy.

### 4. POLICY

The Canada Council for the Arts undertakes regular program evaluations of all of its programs to evaluate their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Program evaluation is part of the Council's program management process.

The goal of evaluation is to determine program impacts and assess whether or not the program or initiative is achieving its expected outcomes. Evaluation findings and recommendations should lead to decisions about program improvement, future programming, resource allocation and accountability of funds.

The Council will use evaluation for the following main purposes:

- Accountability for public funds
- Demonstrating value and impact
- Knowledge mobilization with partners and stakeholders
- Demonstrating efficient use of resources
- Program planning, improvement and/or resource allocation

The Council will determine its evaluation programming through the development of an Evaluation Plan that considers the following factors:

- Strategic significance and degree of influence
- Risk
- Profile and visibility

- Funding arrangements/partnerships
- One-time or repeat activity
- Size and scope

These factors, along with general state of program readiness – e.g. availability of data – will determine the type of evaluation used as well as the selection of evaluation projects from year to year.

Evaluations may be conducted internally through the Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement section or by external contractors as required. Program evaluation or evaluative type exercise (e.g., program reviews) may only proceed with the approval of the Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement. All initiatives and contracts that include a program evaluation component must be approved by the Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement Section. In addition to formal documentation, this approval is reflected in the POPS system.

Evaluations are done periodically during the life of a program or initiative. Evaluations will examine the performance of a program or initiative utilizing a program logic model. Generally, evaluations will look at process, design and delivery, efficiency and other contextual factors in order to understand program results or achievements. This model will generally also assess comprehensiveness and accessibility as well as particular stakeholder needs.

#### 4.1 Principles

**Credibility:** Evaluations should strive to meet the following professional standards:

- accuracy – i.e. based on reliable data and solid analysis
- appropriate design and methodology (suitable to stakeholder needs and context)
- employs multiple lines of evidence
- appropriate in-depth analysis based on empirical data
- produce evidence-based and objective findings
- articulate reasonable and clear recommendations

**Ethics:** The Council will adopt the code of ethics for evaluation as published by the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), whether evaluations are conducted internally or by external consultants:

- Evaluators are to be competent in their provision of service
- Evaluators are to act with integrity in their relationships with all stakeholders
- Evaluators are to be accountable for their performance and their product

**Neutrality:** Program evaluation is a neutral, independent function at the Canada Council, characterized by impartiality in behaviour and process. Evaluators will not allow professional or personal relationships or interests to influence or limit the scope of the evaluation or evaluation questions and the rigour of their methodology. In addition, they will not allow preconceived ideas, prejudices or social/political biases to affect their analysis, weaken or bias evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations or affect the tone and content of an evaluation report.

**Quality.** The Council ensures that program evaluation is of high quality, reliable, consistent and rigorous.

**Transparency.** Program evaluations are undertaken in a transparent manner and, generally, are made publicly available. Generally, results will be published on the Council's website and, where appropriate, participating stakeholders will be informed of evaluation results.

**Utility.** Program evaluation is focused on the needs of intended users including, but not limited to, program directors, Executive Management Committee, and clients of the program. The Council employs the *Utilization-focused Evaluation (UFE)*, an internationally-accepted approach.

## 4.2 Approaches and Methodologies

The Council makes use of a variety of commonly used program evaluation approaches and methodologies. The following are some types of Evaluation that may be considered.

- **Summative Evaluation** – Summative evaluations are undertaken well into the life or at the end of a program or initiative. They focus on providing a summary of the program's performance and impact.
- **Developmental and Formative Evaluation** – Both of these evaluations take place before or during the life of a program or initiative. These types of evaluations are provided for learning purposes and focus on informing/improving the intervention.
- **Cluster Evaluations** – Suitable for larger, complex programs or suites of programs, this type of evaluation examines several projects or programs with similar focus for the purposes of identifying patterns and drawing lessons from the whole cluster.
- **Impact Evaluation** – Evaluation focused solely on assessing results and outcomes, the influence the organization had on observed change (attribution, contribution) and issues such as alternatives and improvement.
- **Delivery Evaluation** – Evaluation here is focused on the implementation of a program or policy, its production of outputs and ways to improve program efficiency.
- **Reviews**<sup>2</sup> – Reviews are often conducted in response to a pressing or immediate need of management and as such, the emphasis is usually on quick generation of sufficient information to inform decision-making or reassure senior management of the dimensions of a problem or situation.

All program evaluations at the Council will utilize a **mixed methods** approach. This methodology combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in the design, collection and analysis of data. As the Council is a granting organization, a strong emphasis is placed on the qualitative aspect of the inquiry, balanced with clear and comprehensive quantitative data sets. Qualitative data gives depth and narrative to the

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<sup>2</sup> While listed with other types of evaluation, it is recognized that 'reviews' are not full program evaluations; rather they are a means of gathering evidence informing *partial* aspects of a program and are limited in scope.

numbers and can be particularly effective in supporting the determination of outcome and impact results.

### **4.3 Evaluation Plan**

The Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement will prepare a rolling five-year evaluation plan, updated annually, that ensures coverage of all major programs and initiatives. This includes:

- Granting Programs
- Non-granting programs, i.e. the Art Bank, Prizes and Fellowships, Public Lending Right
- Special initiatives, services
- Partnerships

The Evaluation Plan will be developed in consultation with the Executive Management Committee in conjunction with its business planning, budget and operating planning processes, and approved annually. The plan will prioritize those programs or initiatives identified as high risk or in need of immediate review. Modifications to the plan will be communicated to EMC in a timely manner.

The annual evaluation plan update will indicate the evaluation activities to be undertaken in a specified 12-24 month period. The number of specific evaluations launched each year will depend on the number of evaluations (and related activity) already underway, the complexity of the current evaluation needs, time, budget and other resources available.

The Evaluation Plan will detail the scope, scale and type of each planned evaluation, timelines, budgets and resources. These will be aligned with the size and complexity of the programs being evaluated.

While Council is not formally required to follow Treasury Board guidelines, it should be noted that this Council policy reflects the *Standard on Evaluation* within the Government of Canada's 2016 Policy on Results and Directive on Results. Specifically, this policy adheres to the notion of a rolling five-year evaluation plan that responds to the assessment of risk, needs and priorities identified by the Council.

### **4.4 Evaluation Findings and Recommendations**

Evaluations undertaken by the Canada Council are expected to produce recommendations which are judgment-based and useful in policy or program design and implementation.

Evaluation recommendations require a management response and a plan for implementation, including timelines and accountabilities. The management response should be developed by the responsible program director or manager and approved and presented by the divisional Director General to EMC for approval. Where evaluation is related to granting programs, the Arts Granting Committee may review the evaluation results and recommendations. Where the evaluation is related to policy or procedures or non-granting programs, the responsible Director General is responsible for

implementation. The Director General of Strategy and Public Affairs is accountable for tracking and monitoring evaluation recommendations, through the Director of REPM, and reporting on this to EMC.

#### **4.5 Program Modifications**

Programs should not be subject to major changes<sup>3</sup> without having been evaluated, unless directed by the CEO in exceptional circumstances<sup>4</sup>. Programs will be evaluated on a regular basis in alignment with the Council's Program Evaluation Policy and Plan. However, should a problem with the program be identified through the analysis of performance measures, staff and peer input or other environmental developments, a program evaluation or review could be triggered. All major program modifications must be approved by the Director and CEO and/or the Board as per the Council's Governance Policy.

The results and recommendations of program evaluations and the corresponding management responses and action plans will be the principal driver for major changes to program design.

Further, all proposed granting program modifications will be approved by the Director General, Arts Granting Programs Division and incorporated in the relevant granting program charters and policies to ensure consistency where the recommendations impact more than one program<sup>5</sup>. If any changes are required in the operational policies as a result of evaluation findings, the Director, Granting Program Operations is responsible making the changes, also to be approved by the Director General of Arts Granting Programs Division.

#### **4.6 Publication of Program Evaluations**

The Council will make the executive summaries of evaluation reports available on its website in both official languages and in accessible formats. The following criteria will restrict this principle:

- Evaluation that is incomplete or deemed to have methodological issues and/or erroneous or subjective findings.
- Evaluation that includes protected information according to the *Privacy Act* and *the Access to Information Act*, such as personal information, sensitive information or internal corporate information.

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<sup>3</sup> Program modifications as defined in the Operational Policies of the Arts Granting Programs Division (see 7.3. Program, Strategic Fund or Profile Modifications section).

<sup>4</sup> Situations where circumstances might warrant such a situation include a government-wide directive, OAG special examination recommendation, or a CEO/Board directive.

<sup>5</sup> This process is described in 7.3. Program, Strategic Fund or Profile Modifications section of the Operational Policies of the Arts Granting Programs Division.

#### **4.7 Reporting and Monitoring of Evaluation**

Reporting on program evaluation will be prepared by the Director, Research, Evaluation and Performance Measurement for discussion at EMC along with the presentation of an annual update of the Evaluation Plan, through the Director General of Strategy and Public Affairs. Such a report would include an overview of all evaluations undertaken in the previous year, resource expenditures, the status of recommendation implementation, issues or concerns with program evaluation at the Council, including compliance, organizational evaluation capacity, and a review of external trends or issues pertinent to the Council.

**Approved by Executive Management Committee: November 1, 2016**

## Evaluation Lexicon

- **Evaluation** is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation or results of an initiative for the purposes of learning or decision-making. (Canadian Evaluation Society, CES - <http://evaluationcanada.ca/>)

### **Activities:**

The services provided by a program (to fulfill the mission of the organization). Activities describe how a program uses its inputs (resources): e.g. along the operational lines of the eight 'A's.

### **Baseline:** (measurement)

An analysis describing the situation prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed and comparisons made.

### **Cluster Evaluation:**

An evaluation approach that looks across a group of projects (or programs) to identify patterns and factors that might contribute to variations in outcomes across the sample.

### **Data:**

Facts and statistics that are systematically collected and from which you can draw conclusions. Data collected will be both quantitative and qualitative.

### **Deliverology:**

A method by which a government or institution ensures that desired results/outcomes are implemented. The Canada Council for the Arts uses the term *results and delivery*.

### **Effectiveness:**

The extent to which a program is achieving expected outcomes.

### **Efficiency:**

The extent to which resources are optimized to achieve expected outcomes.

### **Evaluation Questions:**

The critical questions you want the evaluation to answer. These should be brainstormed/gathered from key users at the start of any evaluation process.

### **External Data:**

Information collected by external bodies such as Statistics Canada, or through specific data collection projects (surveys, focus groups, etc.).

### **Goals:**

A broad, high level statement outlining the purpose/aims of the program and what you want it to accomplish. Often 'visionary' in its articulation, goals are usually described by words such as create, develop, support, strengthen, increase, promote and provide, etc. Goals describe a 'desired state' outcome and may not be measurable or tangible.

**Indicators:**

The specific items of information – quantitative or qualitative data - that track a program's success on outcomes and/or tracks progress made toward targets. A variable that provides a simple and reliable means to demonstrate change and answer **the degree to which** defined outcomes have been achieved. It answers the question "**how will you know?**" It is important to make sure that indicators truly relate to the program's desired outcomes (objectives) and are reasonable, useful and meaningful.

**Inputs:**

Human, financial and material resources invested in a program/intervention to achieve its program objectives – e.g. staff, facilities, budget, time, training, research.

**Internal Data:**

Information collected by the Canada Council, from grant applicants and recipients through its electronic systems and databases including application forms, budgets, and final report forms in either electronic or hard copy format, Canadian Arts Data/Données sur les arts au Canada (CADAC), and other internal applications/sources.

**Logic Model:**

A conceptual 'roadmap' or description of how the program theoretically works to achieve desired results. It is the "**If...Then**" sequence of changes that the program intends to set in motion through its inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. Logic models *reflect* rather than dictate how a program functions.

**Objectives:**

Objectives answer the question of "How will your organization/program accomplish its goals?", "What steps does this program take to accomplish your goal?" Objectives are more tangible, concrete and specific than goals, and most importantly, they are *measurable*. Objectives express intended outcomes in *specific* terms – changes in skills, attitude, knowledge and behavior. They should be realistic and achievable within a specific timeframe. You should be able to demonstrate whether or not they were achieved.

**Outcomes:**

The **changed state** toward which we strive – i.e. a change in (a client's, community's): circumstance, behavior, knowledge, attitude, skill, practice, functioning, values, conditions, status - for participants during or after their involvement in the program. Sometimes broad, sometimes specific, the **benefits** resulting from a program's intervention are measured against the program's goals and objectives.

**Immediate Outcomes:**

The first benefits or changes a participant experiences and are most closely related to and influenced directly by the program.

**Intermediate Outcomes:**

The secondary benefits or **changes in participant (program's clients) behavior** that build on initial outcomes but set the stage for more complex change.

**Long-Term Outcomes:**

The final goal or ultimate outcome (sometimes called desired state) that the program

strives to achieve for its participants. These outcomes represent meaningful change in behavior for clients – but still related to/influenced by the program.

**Outputs:**

The direct products and services of the program, usually measured in actual work done, that are expressed in numbers: e.g. # of deadlines, # of information sessions, # of applications received, # of grants processed, approved etc. They are always countable.

**Participatory Evaluation:**

A form of evaluation that engages a range of stakeholders in the design of the evaluation and tracking results to ensure the evaluation is useful and relevant to all involved.

**Performance Measurement:**

The process and systems of selection, development and on-going use of performance measures to guide decision-making. It is part of a continuum of performance monitoring activities that takes place through the entire life of a policy, program or initiative.

**Program:** A group of related activities that are designed and managed to meet a specific public need and are often treated as a budgetary unit.

**Qualitative Data:**

Information that describes a situation by using words (sometimes ideas, stories and other media). This data is usually gathered from the participants themselves through interviews or focus groups.

**Quantitative Data:**

Information gathered to describe a situation using numbers. This data typically is retrieved from questionnaires, surveys, forms and other statistical data systems.

**Relevance:**

The extent to which a program addresses a demonstrable need, is appropriate to the Canada Council's mandate, Program Alignment Architecture and Strategic Plan, and is responsive to the needs of the arts sector and Canadians.

**Recommendations:**

Evidence-based directions for the improvement of program performance.

**Results:**

An impact or effect of a policy, program or initiative. This could include outcomes, outputs or changes in inputs (e.g. resource reallocations or reductions) that are of a particular interest to Canadians.

**Stakeholders:**

Individuals or organizations that can affect or is affected by a project or program. They include those that make decisions, participate, influence or are affected directly by the program or project.

**Targets:**

Numerical objectives for a program's level of achievement on its outcomes. There is a direct connection between targets and establishing indicators.