

International Year of Evaluation
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EVALUATION
PROFESSIONALIZATION AND THE
VOLUNTARY EVALUATOR PEER
REVIEW INITIATIVE (VEPR)

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How does a discipline turn into a profession?

Through a competitive process vs. allied disciplines that works best when:

- Occupational group members display expert knowledge, mastery of skills and ethical dispositions (capabilities)
- The group assumes control over designation and ensures compliance with behavioural norms (self management)

What are the implications for evaluation professionalization?

A challenge for evaluators plus joint actions towards:

- *Demonstrated expertise and judgment* : high quality tertiary education; extended exposure to practice; theoretical knowledge; mastery of techniques; etc.
- *Ethical dispositions*: independence of mind and appearance; orientation to the public interest; loyalty to the group; collegial behaviour, compliance with professional guidelines
- *Professional autonomy*: control over designation, ethical standards, quality assurance criteria. control mechanisms and disciplinary processes

Is professionalization the same as credentialing?

No: it does not guarantee success in the professionalization race ...but it is a competitive advantage since:

- It straddles all three dimensions of professionalization
- It confirms that an individual has acquired the competencies needed to carry out work to an adequate standard of quality

Where does evaluation stand in the professionalization race?

- Evaluation is at best a fledgling profession: its market is being captured by auditors, economists and management consultants
- Exposure to expert practice is improving but the number of graduate programs in the evaluation domain is still limited
- Commitment to ethical values is strong but there are no generally agreed ethical guidelines
- Autonomy: This is where evaluation lags seriously behind its competitors.

What has EES done?

- The Society has approved an *evaluation capabilities* framework
- A Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review (*VEPR*) initiative is being piloted
- Draft EES *guiding principles* for VEPR have been endorsed by UKES and IDEAS
- A thematic working group for *training* and a *European Evaluation Excellence Award* are planned

What is the VEPR?

- A review process where evaluators apply to their evaluation society to undergo a structured review of their capabilities and self improvement plans
- Two senior evaluation practitioners selected with applicants' input conduct the review
- Two outcomes: (i) a *report* that is the property of the applicant; (ii) *listing* of the applicant's name on the society's website
- Should the peer reviewers conclude that the applicant has not demonstrated an acceptable level of competence a development plan is suggested with an invitation to a further review

What the VEPR is not

- It is **not** a test - something that the applicant might 'pass' or 'fail'
- It is **not** a pre-requisite for practicing evaluation
- While consistent with the capabilities framework it does **not** seek to meet rigid prerequisites of practice
- It does **not** seek to displace other qualification or certification schemes

Where do we go from here?

- The VEPR concept was presented at the 11th EES Biennial Conference in October 2014
- The *Dublin consensus*: VEPR should be adapted to diverse regional and national contexts and coherence should be encouraged based on a charter of guiding principles
- A panel attended by Riitta will be held in Bangkok in October (*IDEAS Conference*) to pursue the dialogue and the results will be fed into the Global Evaluation Agenda

Will you get on board?

(Thank you for your attention!)