



Education
Endowment
Foundation

EVALUATORS GUIDE: WORKING WITH THE EEF

September 2025

EEF Evaluation Team

Evaluators Guide: working with the EEF

This document provides guidance for evaluators submitting bids to and working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to support in the preparation of proposals as well as the delivery of the evaluation. If there is further information that you would find helpful, or you have suggestions about how this guide could be improved, please feed this back to the commissioning lead or your Evaluation Manager (you can find out more about the EEF evaluation team on our [website](#)).

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May 2025 updates

- Minor update to ‘Data archiving’ section (4.3.6)

November 2024 updates

- Updated ‘Reporting’ section to reflect new process
- Updated ‘ONS publication clearance’ section to reflect change to ONS process

September 2024 updates

- Added list of abbreviations
- Added new section on Recruitment Updates (4.2.8.)
- Added testing updates submission information to Data Collection section (4.3.2.)
- Added detailed information about submitting setting and testing updates to ‘Project management and monitoring’ section (5.2)

August 2024 updates

- Added new section ‘Conditions for EEF grants’ (3.0)

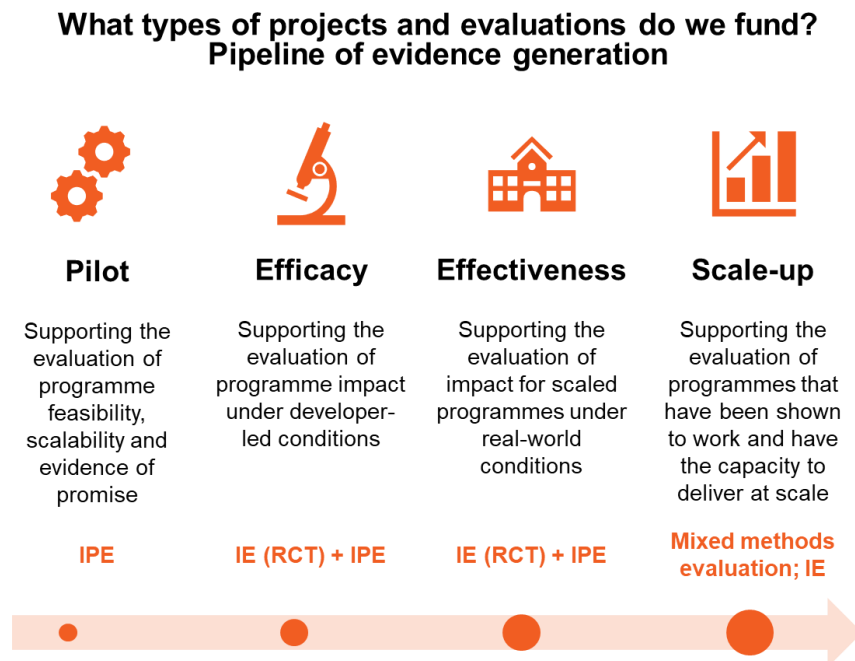
Abbreviations

DfE	Department for Education
DPA2018	Data Protection Act 2018
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DPEG	Data Protection Executive Group
EAG	Evaluation Advisory Group
EM	Evaluation Manager (refers to anyone who manages an EEF evaluation grant)
EoI	Expression of Interest
EY	Early Years
FFT	Fisher Family Trust
IDEA	Intervention Delivery and Evaluation Analysis (workshop)
GC	Grants Committee
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IPE	Implementation and Process Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NPD	National Pupil Database
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PI	Principal Investigator
PM	Programme Manager (refers to anyone who manages an EEF delivery grant)
QED	Quasi-Experimental Design
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SAP	Statistical Analysis Plan
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRS	Secure Research Service (ONS)
TIDieR	Template for Intervention Description and Replication
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation

1. EEF's approach to evaluation

The EEF funds independent evaluations to deliver robust evidence on how effective an intervention is at improving pupil attainment and closing the attainment gap. The evaluation results from all projects are described in an evaluation report (examples of EEF evaluation reports can be viewed [here](#)).

Figure 1 – EEF Evaluations



Independent evaluation is central to the EEF's mission. To date, the bulk of EEF's commissioning has been for programme evaluations, where the focus is on evaluating programmes **from the pilot to scale up** stages of our pipeline.

1.1. Pilot evaluations

EEF pilot evaluations commonly employ a mixed methods approach. The primary objective of these pilot evaluations is to i) test the feasibility of implementation, ii) gather evidence to support the Theory of Change (ToC), and iii) refine specific programme approaches before investing resources in a randomised controlled trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED).

1.2. Efficacy trials

Efficacy trials test whether an intervention can work under best possible conditions. This type of evaluation focuses on estimating the causal impact of the intervention using an RCT or QED, accompanied by an implementation and process evaluation (IPE) to understand underlying mechanisms and implementation factors.

1.3. Effectiveness trials

Effectiveness trials test a scalable model of the intervention under everyday conditions in a large number of schools. Effectiveness trials also estimate the causal impact of the intervention using an RCT or QED, accompanied by an IPE.

1.4. Scale-up evaluations

We are developing our approach to scale-up evaluations. Scale-up evaluations we have funded to date have focused on investigating the effectiveness and sustainability of scaling strategies and mechanisms to reach the intended settings and pupils. Most scale-up evaluations we have commissioned have been IPEs but we may include quantitative assessments of impact in some instances.

1.5. School and Teacher Choices evaluations

In addition to funding evaluations of educational programmes the EEF has introduced a more recent strand of work called Choices evaluations. The purpose of these evaluations is to assess the impact of practices and approaches implemented in schools and/or adopted by teachers. This strand of work is still being developed.

School Choices evaluations typically focus on choices made by school leaders or that are adopted at a school level through policies that may affect practices within schools and the subsequent effects they may have on pupil outcomes. Projects usually examine existing variation in the school system, using a QED, however, we also welcome proposals where an RCT is warranted.

Teacher Choices evaluations aim to explore some of the most common questions educators ask about their practice. These evaluations are often RCTs geared to test the impact of everyday choices made by educators when planning their lessons, activities and support for their students. The overarching goal of the Teacher Choices evaluations is thus to establish pedagogy that is easy to define and implement, intuitively graspable, and readily applicable.

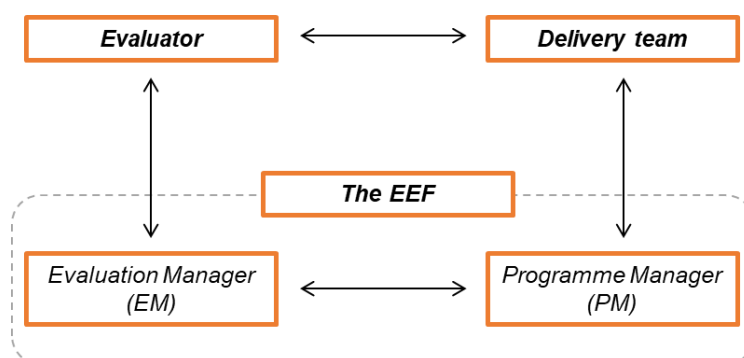
The remainder of this document aims to outline the **EEF's approach to programme evaluation** and provide an overview of the timeline and different stages of our evaluations. If you are submitting a bid for a Choices evaluation and would like to learn more, please contact our Methodological Innovation Lead, or the relevant commissioning lead specified in the invitation to tender.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Educational research endeavours take time and entail many moving parts. Therefore, establishing a good working relationship between the evaluation, delivery and EEF teams is critical.

Below is a summary of the main responsibilities of each team:

Figure 3 – Collaboration between the evaluator, the delivery team, and the EEF



Evaluation team

The evaluator will:

- Undergo a competitive selection process before being appointed as evaluator.
- Lead the design of the evaluation in collaboration with the delivery team and the EEF.
- Support the delivery team with the recruitment of settings to the extent discussed and agreed during the set-up process.
- Deliver the evaluation, including leading on data collection.
- Write the evaluation protocol, study plan, and/or statistical analysis plan, and the final evaluation report (including the executive summary). Adhere to reporting timelines, processes, guidances and templates.
- Update the EEF and the delivery team regularly on progress and communicate challenges as early as possible.
- Transfer project data to the EEF's data archive as required for the specific project.

Delivery team

The delivery team will:

- Collaborate with the evaluator and the EEF during the set-up phase.
- Lead on the recruitment of settings with support from the evaluator and the EEF.
- Implement the programme to a high standard.
- Communicate challenges to the evaluator and the EEF as early as possible.
- Comment on the protocols, study plans, and/or statistical analysis plans, and the final evaluation report.

The EEF

The EEF Evaluation Manager (EM) will:

- Appoint the independent evaluator.
- Conduct due diligence checks.
- Be the main point of contact for the evaluator.
- Mediate the evaluation design discussion during set-up, including advising on the EEF's evaluation guidance.
- Review evaluation budgets and grant agreements.
- Monitor the evaluation process.
- Provide support and mediate where challenges arise during project delivery.
- Review the protocol, study plan, and/or statistical analysis plan, and the final evaluation report, and facilitate external peer review of these outputs.

The EEF Programme Manager (PM) will:

- Be the main point of contact for the delivery team.
- Conduct due diligence checks for the delivery team.
- Support the evaluation design discussion during the set-up process.
- Monitor recruitment and programme delivery.
- Provide support and mediate where challenges arise during project delivery.
- Support the delivery team with reviewing the protocol, study plan, and/or statistical analysis plan, and the final evaluation report.

3. Conditions of EEF evaluation grants

3.1. Key terms and conditions

1. Evaluators will work closely with the EEF, using best practice guidance

Evaluators on the panel are requested to work closely with the EEF and delivery organisations to design and deliver high quality, pragmatic evaluations. This includes following the EEF's best practice [guidance](#) for independent evaluators including independent randomisation, analysis and reporting, alongside ongoing input to support the EEF to refine its guidance. Evaluators will also communicate to EEF and delivery teams any risk to the quality and timeliness of the evaluation and will ensure that the risk is addressed as quickly as possible.

2. Evaluators will follow the principles outlined in the EEF's analysis framework

The EEF asks that all evaluators follow the principles outlined in the [EEF Statistical Analysis Guidance](#). The EEF believes that to be most useful to schools and decision-makers evaluations should be as comparable as possible. The analysis framework includes key principles, guidance on analysis, and guidance on presentation of results. Exceptions may be agreed in writing with the EEF.

3. Evaluators will conduct sample size calculations using frequentist statistics

The EEF asks that all evaluators use frequentist statistics to generate sample sizes for trials. The EEF wants all evaluators to work within the same framework to ensure that sample sizes do not vary significantly between evaluation teams.

4. Evaluators will register trials

Evaluators will be expected to register all randomised controlled trials and other evaluations as appropriate. Furthermore, evaluators are expected to update this entry with results of the evaluation once an evaluation report has been published.

5. Evaluators will not make changes to research design or the statistical approach without prior EEF agreement

The EEF asks that evaluators inform the EEF of any situations which may require changes to the protocol, the study plan or the statistical analysis plan as soon as possible. Changes should be discussed and approved before being implemented including written agreement from the EEF.

6. Evaluators will comply with current data protection legislation

Evaluators will observe all current data protection legislation, including (i) the UK GDPR, the Law Enforcement Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/680) (the "LED") and any applicable national implementing Laws as amended from time to time; (ii) the Data Protection Act 2018; (iii) the latest Data Sharing Code of Practice published by the Information

Commissioner's Office as updated from time to time (where appropriate); and (iv) all applicable Laws about the processing of personal data and privacy.

7. Evaluators will follow EEF's reporting and publication policy

The EEF outlines its reporting principles in the [EEF reporting and publication policy](#) and expects evaluators to agree to the principles outlined in that document. In addition, Evaluators are asked to follow the EEF [report template](#) and deliver reports on time and to a high quality.

8. Data archive

Evaluators will be expected to make the data from the evaluation publicly available for research purposes through the EEF data archive. The data archive is a repository for all EEF evaluation data including a standardised and linked dataset that enables longitudinal and other analyses to inform methodological approaches and our understanding of what works in improving educational outcomes.

9. Evaluators will be active members of the EEF evaluation panel

EEF expects members of its evaluation panel to stay engaged with the work of the EEF and to support the methodological development of best practice guidance. EEF requests that each team submit at least one expression of interest per year and will send appropriate team members to attend EEF workshops and conferences where possible.

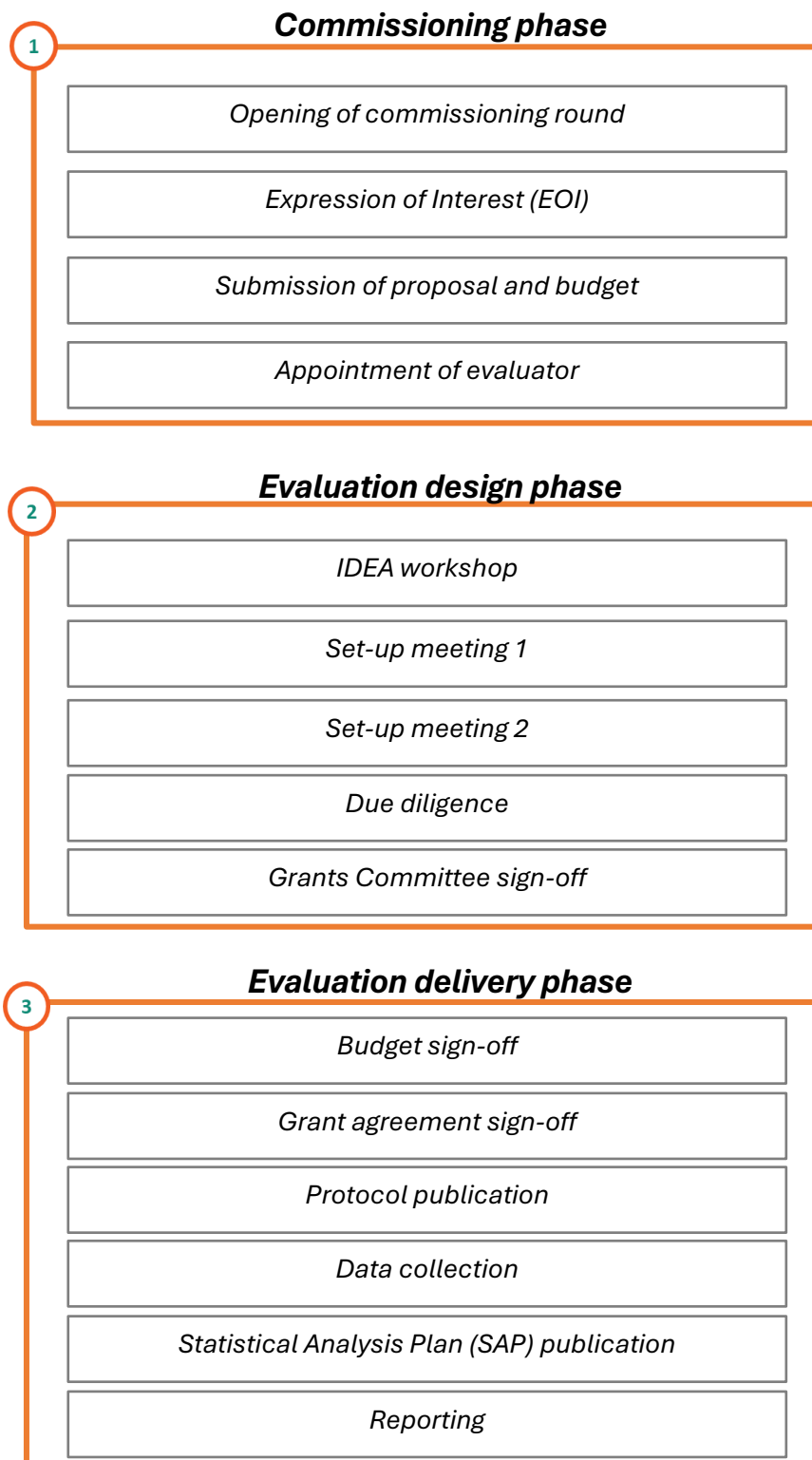
10. Evaluators will co-operate professionally with colleagues in the delivery team and the EEF

Evaluators will work in a collegiate and professional fashion with delivery teams and the EEF and expect the same in return. Further details on expectations pertaining to this relationship can be found in the EEF's grant agreement template.

4. EEF evaluation phases

The following diagram shows the core elements of EEF evaluations, grouped into three distinct phases. Each box is described further in the following sections.

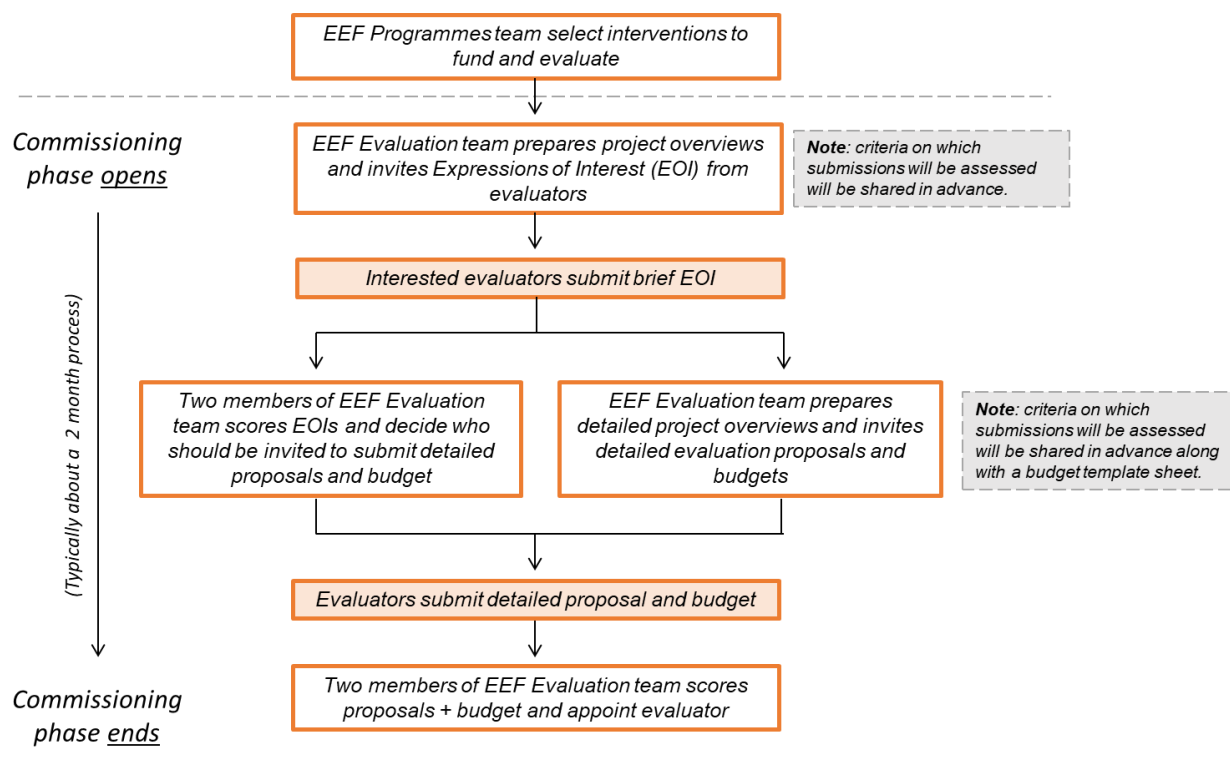
Figure 2 – Three phases for EEF evaluations



4.1. Commissioning phase

This diagram shows a breakdown of the typical commissioning process for EEF evaluations.

Figure 4 – Commissioning phase



4.1.1. Invitation to tender and opening of commissioning round

Once an intervention to be evaluated has been selected, the EEF will circulate an invitation to tender with the scoring criteria for the initial expression of interest and a project overview of the intervention. This includes a description of the programme, an understanding of the existing evidence base that supports it, and key information necessary to inform the evaluation design coupled with EEF's evaluation considerations. The evaluation design should be based on the programme's logic model, and on any prior evidence supporting its potential for impact. The invitation to tender and project overviews are sent to members of the [EEF panel of evaluators](#). In some circumstances, where the EEF's assessment is that there may be limited expertise or capacity amongst panel members to ensure a competitive process, the invitation to tender may also be released publicly.

4.1.2. Expression of interest

Interested evaluators are asked to submit a brief expression of interest (EOI), which should closely follow the specific scoring criteria that have been circulated. Once EOIs have been received, at least two members of the EEF evaluation team assess applications against the scoring criteria. The EM responsible for the project informs evaluators of the outcome of the EOI stage and asks shortlisted evaluators to prepare a more detailed proposal.

4.1.3. Proposal

The EM will share a more detailed project overview and scoring criteria with shortlisted evaluators to support the proposal drafting process. In line with our scoring criteria, proposals are expected to provide a description of the type of evaluation, methodology and approach.

Similar to the EOI stage, once proposals and budgets (more on budget below) have been received, at least two members of the EEF evaluation team assess applications on the basis of the scoring criteria. The EM responsible for the project informs evaluators of the outcome of the proposal stage.

In some cases, elements of the successful proposal may need to be reconsidered (e.g., budget, outcome measures, design). The EM may reach out to evaluators to ask for clarification and/or to negotiate different options.

4.1.4. Drafting budgets and what EEF funding covers

We request evaluators submit a budget for the project together with their proposals, using the budget template provided by the EEF. The EEF does not usually provide budget ranges or ceilings for evaluations. We assess proposals on the value for money they represent. Where a budget range or ceiling is provided, this will be clearly specified in the project overview.

Evaluators should spell out key assumptions underlying their budgets in the template provided. This should include assumptions around the administration of assessments, such as the number of assessments completed per day, and in what proportion of schools mop up visits will be conducted. We anticipate that evaluators factor into their day rates any inflationary increases that they anticipate over the course of the project.

We expect evaluators to be responsible for the collection of all pupil-level data and this should be factored into evaluation budgets. If it is agreed during the set-up meetings that the delivery team will support with the collection of some pupil-level data, the budget can be revised accordingly at this stage.

Settings are often provided with an incentive payment for taking part in the evaluation and completing data collection activities. For projects that include a delivery team, setting-level incentive payments do not need to be included in the budget as they usually sit in the delivery team's budget and are administered by the delivery team. Incentive amounts will be discussed between the evaluator, delivery team and the EEF and agreed during the set-up phase. If evaluators propose to include any individual-level incentive payments, for example for the completion of IPE activities, the evaluator should propose an amount proportional to the burden incurred and include this in the budget. For projects that do not include a delivery team, we expect the evaluator to propose an amount for incentive payments (if relevant) and to include this in the budget.

The EEF will fund reasonable equipment costs (e.g., recorders, tablets) where the work cannot be delivered without these items and where these items are not already available to the research

team. However, standard office equipment such as laptops, hard drives, telephones cannot be charged without explicit agreement.

The EEF does not generally fund participation at academic conferences or preparation of academic articles.

Value added tax (VAT)

Our grants can be treated as research, as we evaluate the projects we fund independently with an aim to make research accessible to the public. Some research is outside of the scope of VAT, in particular research that is collaborative or for public good. Our grant would therefore usually be treated as outside the scope of VAT. However, the evaluator is responsible for making the VAT assessment and the EEF cannot advise you on this.

Input VAT is the value added tax added to the price when you purchase goods or services that are liable to VAT (where the evaluator is VAT registered). If evaluators are including testing, materials, or other items in their budget, and those items include input VAT that the evaluator cannot recover (because the EEF grant is outside the scope of VAT), that input VAT can be charged to EEF and should be included in the submitted budget. Examples of items that may incur input VAT are the purchase of assessments or the subcontracting of test administration to a testing provider. We will assume that the budget the evaluator submits to us includes any VAT that the evaluator considers to be due, and EEF cannot be held responsible for any failures to account for input VAT once a budget has been signed off by the EEF Grants Committee. Evaluators are encouraged to check this element of their budget carefully particularly for subcontracting arrangements.

Budget changes

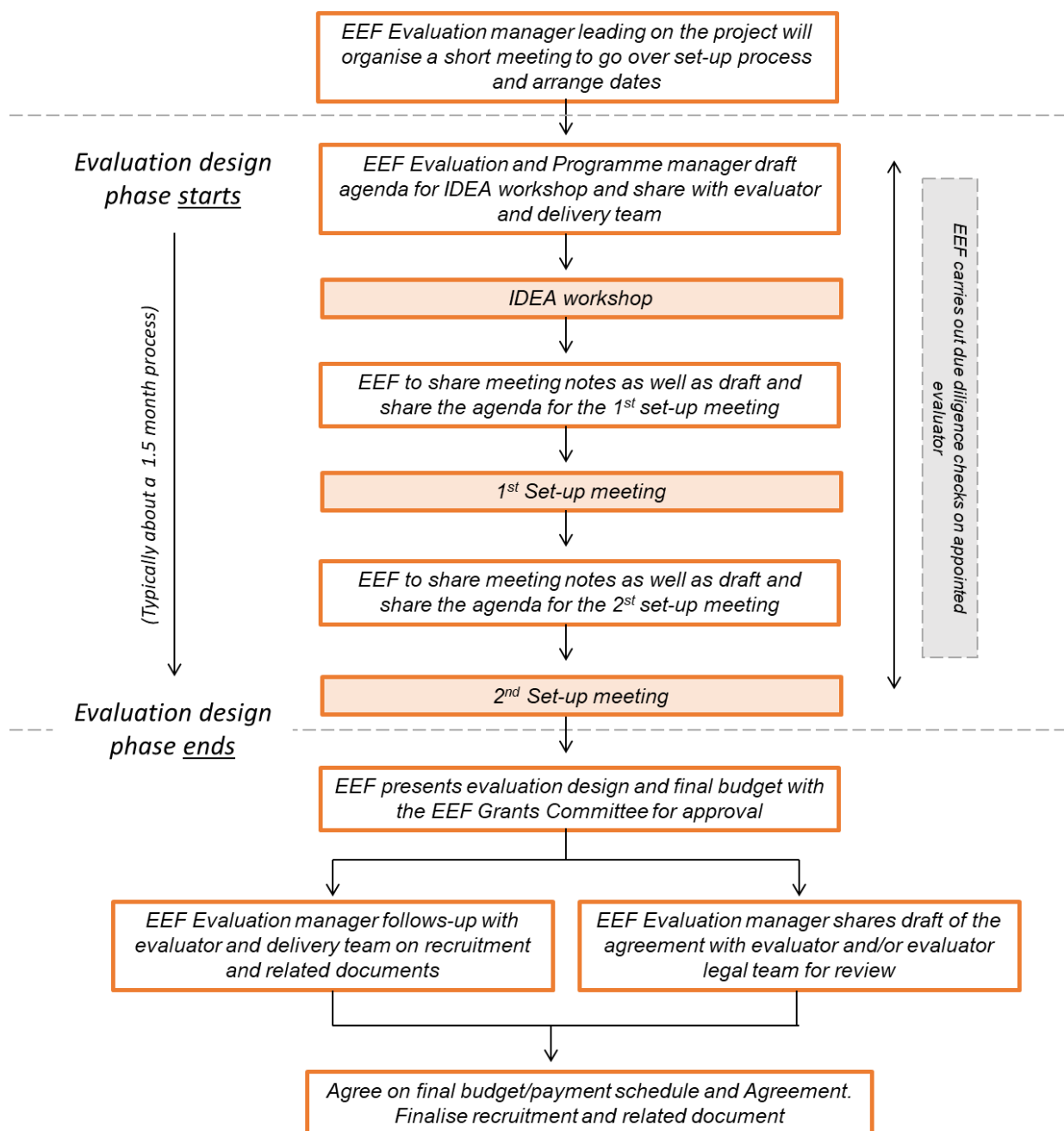
We encourage evaluators to read through this guidance document and the commissioning materials carefully to ensure they have allocated adequate resources to the evaluation, including for example resources needed for data access requests, protocol and report revisions, and data archiving. Where changes to the evaluation design are agreed during the evaluation set-up phase, evaluators have the opportunity to make appropriate budget amendments ahead of the budget being submitted to the EEF's Grants Committee. The budget presented to the EEF's Grants Committee for sign-off at the end of the set-up period is considered final, and the EEF cannot be held responsible for covering any errors or omissions in this budget.

We appreciate that evaluations do not always go according to plan and that changes to the design and methods may, on occasion, need to be made. We encourage evaluators to raise any adaptations to the evaluation design and methods that may be required with their EM as soon as they become aware of these, so that both the adaptations and any resulting budget changes can be discussed and agreed. Budget increases below £10,000 can be signed off by the EM but should be agreed in writing before the costs are incurred whenever possible. Increases over £10,000 require sign-off from EEF senior management and, for increases that go beyond £50,000, approval from the EEF Grants Committee must be sought. Any virements across line items in the final statement of spend (see [Appendices](#) for template) larger than 10% should be discussed and agreed with the EEF.

4.2. Evaluation design phase

This diagram shows a breakdown of the typical programme evaluation design and set-up process for EEF evaluations. This process may vary for pilot evaluations and scale-up evaluations. However, each evaluation involves a series of set up meetings with the delivery team and the EEF to finalise the design and budget for Grants Committee approval. It is our preference to have at least one of these meetings in person. However, we recognise that this might be logistically difficult and can accommodate for these to take place virtually.

Figure 5 – Evaluation design phase



4.2.1. IDEA workshop

Once an evaluator has been appointed, an IDEA (Intervention Delivery and Evaluation Analysis) workshop is held between the evaluator, the delivery team and the EEF to ensure the evaluator has a full understanding of the intervention, and to finalise the logic model. To support your preparation for this meeting, please see the EEF [Theory of change and logic model guidance](#).

4.2.2. Set-up meetings

Following the IDEA workshop, the EEF, the evaluator and the delivery team have the **first set-up meeting** to discuss and agree the evaluation design. The set-up meeting is scheduled for three hours and is chaired by the EM. External teams are asked to bring no more than three people per team. If they wish to bring more than three people a case needs to be made for why this is necessary (in our experience, it can be difficult to chair a meeting and cover everything on the agenda if there are too many participants). The EM and PM will organise these meetings and share an agenda in advance.

The role of all parties is as follows, and key decisions are taken by all of them together:

- The delivery team provides information on the intervention, its delivery, and advises on the practicalities of the evaluation in schools.
- The evaluation team advises on the best design and evaluation methods.
- The EEF brings experience of running multiple education trials, promotes evaluation best practice, and mediates between the two parties.
- The EEF take notes of everything discussed during the meeting and circulate those across participants. The notes will include a clear series of actions for each of the parties involved.

The second set-up meeting goes into more detail about the intervention and evaluation, confirming design elements discussed during the first set-up meeting as well as covering key implementation and evaluation decisions. This meeting is also scheduled for three hours and mediated by the EM and PM in the same way as the first set-up meeting. The role of the three parties is as above and key decisions involve all participants.

Occasionally, more meetings or conference calls may be needed to agree any outstanding points. Detailed meeting notes will be taken and circulated to keep track of everything discussed during these meetings.

4.2.3. Due diligence

The EEF carries out due diligence on all prospective grantees and throughout the lifetime of any grant. We will conduct due diligence on evaluation teams at the organisation level - at the point they are accepted on the evaluator panel or when they are awarded their first evaluation grant, whichever comes first - and at the project level - at the point when they are awarded an evaluation grant for any new project.

- At the organisation level, we conduct due diligence checks on the organisation's data protection and safeguarding policies and on their accounts and financial management processes.

- At the project level, we conduct general project checks and assess evaluation teams on their approach to data protection at the proposal stage. In addition, before final sign-off from the EEF Grants Committee (see below), our team conducts data protection and safeguarding due diligence on evaluators. If a project is rated high risk for safeguarding, the EEF safeguarding team may recommend that the evaluator names a safeguarding contact, who then submits a quarterly safeguarding log via the CRM. The EEF may also conduct grantee audits on an ad-hoc basis after a grant agreement has been signed in line with the clauses set out in the grant agreement.
- If the evaluator partners with, subcontracts to, or subawards to another organisation, we may also carry out due diligence checks on the partner organisation(s). Where partner organisations process personal data or come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, we will ask about grantees' processes for conducting data protection and safeguarding due diligence on the partner organisations and for cascading relevant standards and processes. If the budget going to any one partner organisation represents more than either £100,000 or 20% of the overall budget for the evaluation, we will also carry out financial due diligence checks on the partner organisation(s) if we have not previously conducted them.

The EM assigned to each project will be in contact to request the relevant due diligence information.

4.2.4. Data protection

We take data protection very seriously and aim to be fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Our ancillary data processing activities and related safeguards are detailed in the [privacy notices](#) published on our website.

Although we publish guidance and advise on evaluation design, evaluators determine the purposes and means of processing personal data for EEF evaluations. They determine the legal basis for processing and the procedures for collecting, storing, analysing and disposing of the data. Therefore, final decisions regarding evaluation design with relevance to data processing are made by the evaluator in collaboration with the delivery team and the EEF during the set-up meeting process.

For EEF evaluations, relevant parties usually have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Evaluators: **data controllers** for data collected for the evaluation throughout the evaluation period, up to and including successful submission of evaluation data to the archive (having passed internal checks by Fischer Family Foundation - FFT Education¹) and deletion of the data; independent evaluators must be able to demonstrate GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 compliance for all data processing carried out during the data collection, evaluation and archive submission stages.
- Delivery teams: **independent data controllers** for data collected for delivery purposes, or **joint data controllers** with the evaluator when they make decisions together with the

¹ The EEF's data archive is managed by FFT Education.

evaluators about what data will be collected and how they will be processed, in which case they will also share data controller responsibilities up to the point of data archiving and deletion; in some cases, delivery teams may be **data processors** for specific types of data (e.g., recruitment).

- EEF: **data controller** for the archive
- FFT Education (FFT): **data processor** for the archive

Visit the EEF our website for further [guidance on data protection](#).

4.2.5. Grants Committee sign-off

After the set-up meetings have been completed, the agreed evaluation design and budget will be taken to the EEF Grants Committee for approval. This is a necessary condition for any evaluation to begin.

4.2.6. Grant Agreement

An evaluation Grant Agreement is signed once the project has received final sign-off from the Grants Committee and the final evaluation budget has been agreed. The EEF will prepare the agreement and share an initial draft for evaluators to review.

The following is needed before signing a Grant Agreement:

- Final approval for the project from the Grants Committee.
- The proposal, which needs to be updated after the set-up meetings to reflect any agreed changes to the scope of the work.
- An agreed payment schedule broken down by payment phases upon the completion of key evaluation tasks.

4.2.7. Preparing recruitment and related documents

Although, recruitment is typically led by the delivery team, evaluators support with drafting some of the required documentation. During the set-up process all parties will discuss recruitment plans and agree on a clear list of who is responsible for what recruitment document, and when these will be shared with the EEF.

The [recruitment and retention guidance](#) describes the process of recruiting schools into the evaluation in detail, including the recruitment documents that the evaluation and delivery teams need to prepare. It is important to note that these documents often must be cleared as part of the evaluators' ethical approval processes (and in some cases, also the delivery team's), and therefore should be produced as quickly as possible after the set-up meetings so not to delay the recruitment for the project.

Typically, recruitment of schools into the evaluation begins shortly after the set-up meetings and upon approval of the project by the EEF's Grants Committee. For projects that aim to start delivery in schools in September, the EEF would expect recruitment to begin in February.

Table 1 – Common documents that will likely need to be developed following the set-up process

Document	Description	Who is responsible?
School information sheets	This form outlines the intervention and evaluation process to schools. It often also serves as a means for schools to express interest in participating in the evaluation.	Both teams, but usually the delivery team leads.
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	Describes the roles and responsibilities of settings involved in delivering the intervention/evaluation	Both teams, but usually the evaluator leads.
Privacy notice	Describes what will happen with all personal information processed during the project	Both teams – each team is responsible for covering the personal data for which they are the data controller.
Participant information sheets and withdrawal forms	Describes each participant’s involvement in the intervention and evaluation	Both teams, but usually the evaluator leads.
Data sharing agreement and/or data processing agreement	Describes how data will be safely shared during the evaluation	Both teams (if needed).
Ethics approval process	The evaluation design and recruitment documents will need ethical approval	Typically, the evaluator uses their standard ethical review process. In some cases, delivery teams will also submit the evaluation for ethical review.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Describes the data protection risks of a project and how these will be minimised. See the ICO website for more information, including guidance on when to complete a DPIA and a sample template .	Both teams should independently review whether it is necessary for them to complete a DPIA for the personal data they will process during the evaluation and inform the EEF of their decision. Where the team completes a DPIA, this should be shared with the EEF for our records.

4.2.8. Recruitment updates

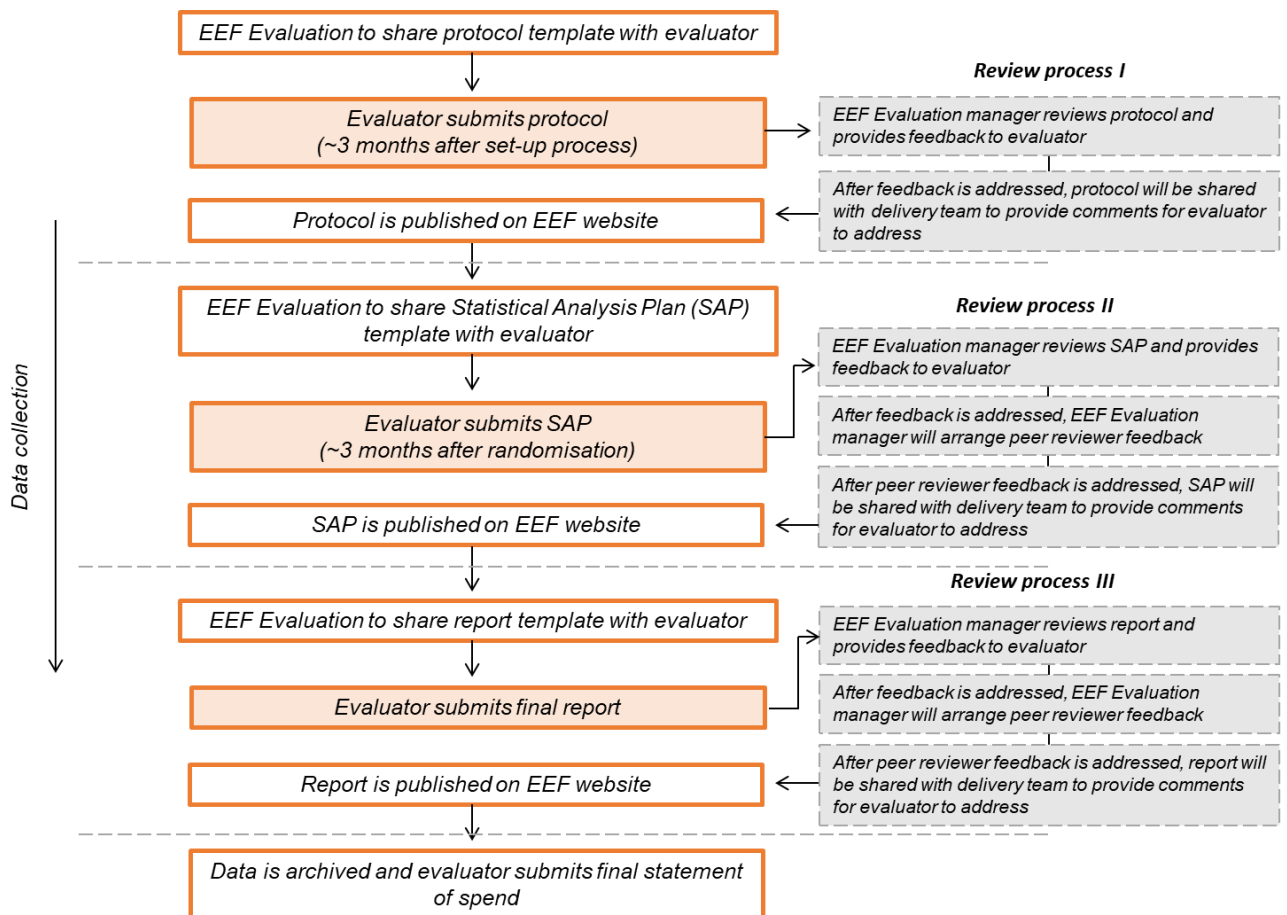
Measurement attrition and failing to recruit the required number of settings are two of the biggest issues facing evaluations. To mitigate, all evaluators should keep us up to date with a weekly progress update during the recruitment and testing periods.

During the recruitment period, delivery grantees will be responsible for submitting weekly updates using the EEF Portal. All setting-level updates after the recruitment period is finalised (e.g., withdrawals) will be informed to the EEF by the evaluator using a ‘setting updates spreadsheet’ submitted directly to our CRM system. The EM assigned to the project will be responsible for sharing relevant information and instructions for the submission in due course (for further details please go to section 5.2.).

4.3. Evaluation delivery phase

This diagram shows a breakdown of the typical evaluation delivery phase and the related key outputs for EEF evaluations. For revisions of protocols, study plans, statistical analysis plans, and evaluation reports, we usually work with turnaround times of approximately two weeks between each round of revision (e.g., the EM provides feedback to the evaluator two weeks after receiving a draft of the protocol, and the evaluator responds to feedback two weeks after receiving it). However, timelines for each project are always agreed between the relevant parties.

Figure 6 – Evaluation delivery phase



4.3.1. Protocols and study plans

After the evaluation design has been finalised, the evaluator develops a first draft of the protocol / study plan within approximately three months from the last set-up meeting. The latest [templates](#) for each type of evaluation (pilots, RCT, QED) can be downloaded from the EEF website.

The EM reviews the protocol / study plan against the set-up meeting notes, template, and relevant [EEF Guidance](#), ensuring all details are as agreed and the description is as clear as possible. The EM then sends comments back to the evaluator and allows two weeks for a revised version to be submitted. Pilot evaluation plans, QED study plans and the IPE section of trial protocols are also peer reviewed by an external peer reviewer. Once the EM and the evaluator have agreed a final version, this is shared with the delivery team to provide any comments or clarifications.

The final version is published on the EEF website. If the evaluation design is amended later on, the protocol should be updated; all versions will be kept on the website and labelled accordingly.

4.3.2. Data collection

The evaluator is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the outcome measures, as well as IPE data collection. Where evaluators work with testing providers or data collection agencies for the collection of outcome data, the EEF expects the evaluator to be responsible for quality assuring their activities and for the overall quality of the evaluation data. Subcontractors must adhere to relevant contractual obligations as outlined in the EEF's grant agreement. Organisations that have indicated interest in providing data collection services for EEF evaluations are listed on our [EEF data collection panel](#). They are independent of the EEF and have not been through an EEF vetting or recommendation process, but they do agree to Data Collection Panel terms and conditions. These T&Cs and the expressions of interest summarising the prior expertise and capacity of each Data Collection Panel member can be found [here](#). Evaluators should contact members of the Data Collection panel directly if they would like to work with them.

The EEF requests regular updates on progress during testing windows (pre-testing and post-testing) to ensure that any potential challenges are picked-up and discussed as early as possible. In Summer 2024, the EEF launched a portal for evaluators to submit testing progress updates directly to our CRM system. The EM responsible for the project will send relevant login information and instructions (see [section 5.2](#) for details about testing updates submission through Salesforce). In case of any questions do not hesitate to contact our data monitoring team at monitoringdata@eefoundation.org.uk.

4.3.3. Statistical Analysis Plan (SAP)

For trials, statistical analysis plans (SAPs) should be submitted approximately three months after randomisation and before the analysis starts. The latest [SAP template](#) can be downloaded from the EEF website. The SAP should detail the statistical procedures to be employed as part of the analysis, ensuring alignment with the pre-specified design in the protocol, and in adherence with the EEF's guidance (see the EEF's [Statistical Analysis Guidance](#)).

The EM reviews the SAP and provides feedback to evaluators. SAPs are also reviewed by an external peer reviewer. As with the protocol, the SAP will be shared with the delivery team to provide comments. The final SAP is published on the EEF webpage.

4.3.4. Reporting

The final output of the evaluation is an evaluation report. The latest [Report templates](#) for the different types of evaluations (pilot, RCT, QED) can be downloaded from the EEF website. The template as well as documents detailing the post-submission process are shared with evaluators six months before the report is due. It is also important to factor in NPD applications and access requests in reporting timelines.

EMs will be drafting the reporting timeline 2-3 months prior to the first draft of the evaluation report being submitted, and this will be agreed with by the PM, evaluators and delivery teams². Evaluators are responsible for drafting executive summaries. To ensure there is consistency in language and style across reports we ask that evaluators follow EEF guidance on writing executive summaries which is included within the reporting template. Prior to sharing the report with EEF, evaluators should request ONS clearance if data has been analysed in the ONS' SRS.

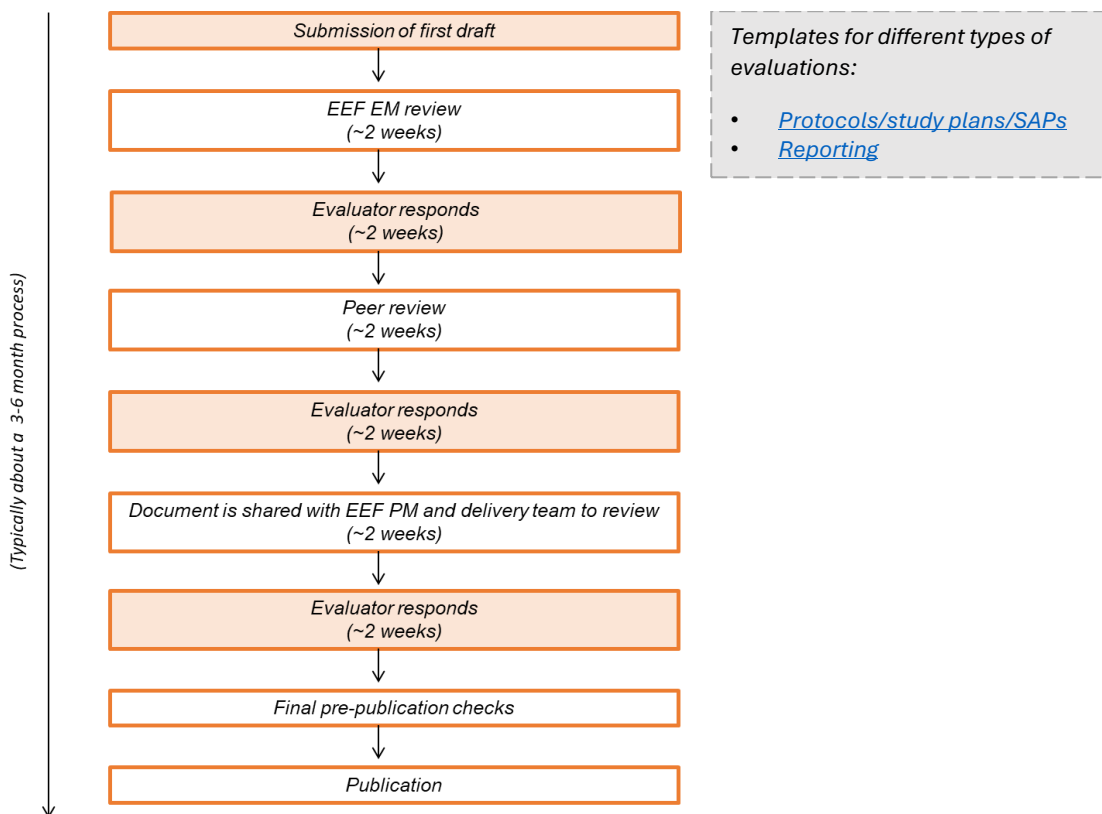
After the report is shared, the EM will review the report to ensure it meets quality standards and follows the report templates. If the EM is not satisfied with the report and major adjustments are required, then the report will be returned back to the evaluator to address changes. If the EM is satisfied with the draft report submitted they will conduct a technical review of the report against the EEF reporting template, the latest protocol / study plan, SAP, and [EEF Guidance](#), whilst the PM will complete a non-technical review of the report and executive summary. The EM will share feedback with the evaluator and evaluators are usually expected to address comments within a two-week time window, or in line with the timeline that has been agreed in advance.

The report is then shared with two independent peer reviewers, who are carefully selected by the EEF on the basis of their expertise. Peer reviewers review the report and (for impact evaluations) provide a padlock rating aimed to signal the internal validity of the evaluation by adhering to the EEF's [Padlock Guidance](#). The EM consolidates peer review comments, reviews the padlock rating, and shares those with the evaluator to respond. EMs will review to see that peer reviewer feedback has been satisfactorily addressed. The report is then shared with the delivery team for comment.

The EEF conducts final proof-reading and formatting of reports, although evaluators should aim to submit reports that have undergone internal quality assurance, proof-reading, and formatting checks. On occasion, reports will be returned to evaluators after proof-reading if there are specific issues which need to be addressed. The report is published on the EEF website and in accordance with the EEF's publication batches, which are generally congruent with school terms: Autumn, Spring and Summer.

Figure 7 – Usual review timelines for pilot study plans, protocols, SAP, and reports

² The technical review process for reports varies. Typically, this process takes between 3-6 months.



4.3.5. ONS publication clearance

For evaluations using data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), evaluators must ensure to request single tier clearance for any outputs from the Secure Research Service (SRS). Note that from 29 May 2024, all approved outputs from the SRS will receive “SRS output clearance”. SRS output clearance is intended for project development, or any intermediate or final research output of the project. Any material with SRS output clearance can be kept indefinitely and shared or used freely in-line with project permissions and scope from which they are derived (barring any specific restrictions applied to your project and its datasets). Evaluators should review each report revision and assess whether additional clearance is needed. If evaluators deem that the disclosure risk has changed, additional clearance will be required.

4.3.6. Data archiving

Datasets from all impact evaluations are archived in the EEF archive³. The EEF data archive is currently managed by FFT and sits in the Office for National Statistics (ONS)’s Secure Research Service (SRS). Please refer to the EEF [archiving evaluation data website](#) for more information and guidance on archiving.

Upon project completion, evaluators must work with the EEF and FFT to archive the datasets used for analyses. This final step, as well as the submission of the final statement of spend, are

³ The privacy notice of our archive manager (data processor), FFT, can be found [here](#). The EEF’s own archiving privacy notice is located [here](#).

an important requisite for the EEF to approve the final 'payment phase' as per the grant agreement.

Please note that the EEF conducts a reanalysis of the primary outcome model used in the impact evaluation as part of our quality assurance process. For capacity reasons, this is usually conducted after publication of the report. On very rare occasions, a potential error may be identified through this process and the EEF will bring this to the evaluator's attention.

5. Administrative information

5.1. Invoices and payments

Payments to evaluators are scheduled over the life of the project as payment phases are completed. The EEF can only make payments in line with the payment schedule and amounts included in the grant agreement and/or subject to sufficient progress being made.

If a payment is due and the payment phases have been met, we ask that you please issue us with an invoice. The EEF has recently launched a new evaluator invoicing portal (the EEF portal). Nominated contacts at your organisation will be able to enter the portal and submit invoices for EEF's approval directly to our CRM system (see summary below). The nominated contacts will have access to the portal throughout the approval process, being able to check the status of the payment request. If you or your finance team have any questions regarding invoicing through the portal, please do not hesitate to contact the EEF data team at monitoringdata@eefoundation.org.uk.

Summary of the invoicing and payment process through the EEF portal:

- Once your nominated contact details have been shared with the EEF, they will receive instructions and credentials to log in to the EEF portal and submit invoices.
- The nominated contact(s) will need to add invoice details (see table 3 below) and supporting documentation for the invoice to be processed.
- Invoices should be split by milestone and project e.g., if evaluators are invoicing for project A milestone 2 and project B milestones 6 and 7, they should be producing and submitting three invoices through the system.
- After an invoice is submitted successfully, the EM assigned to the project approves the invoice if they have received evidence from the evaluator that activities linked to the invoice have been completed. After our Director of Research approves the payment, our accounts team process the payment. To make the transfer, we will need your organisation's bank details.

To enable us to approve your invoice as soon as possible and to avoid delays, please include the following information in every invoice you submit to the EEF:

Table 3 – Invoicing details

Required information	Notes
Project name	The specific project name agreed at set-up and included in the grant agreement, recruitment documents, project webpage, protocol, etc.
Organisation name	The name of your organisation, which is issuing the invoice to the EEF.
Name of the EEF EM	The EM responsible for the evaluation grant and the main point of contact for the external evaluator. Please ensure invoices reflect the current the EEF EM responsible for the project; this is the person who

	approves the invoices; therefore it is important that up-to-date information is provided.
Milestone phase and date	Whether it's the first/ second/.../ final milestone from the agreement and the date specified in the agreement for this milestone. Please submit one invoice per milestone.
Milestone description	The actual description of the milestone from the agreement. Please do not change the description agreed with the EEF.
Your bank details etc.	Full details to enable the payment to be made, and any other details you wish to add (e.g., internal reference number).

Once all activities on the project have been completed, we ask the evaluator to submit a final statement of spend (see [Appendices](#) for screenshot). This spreadsheet is a requisite for your EM to approve the final project invoice.

5.2. Project management and monitoring

In addition to ongoing email and phone communications, we have several ways in which we monitor the progress of evaluations: key evaluation activities ('phases') updates, targeted weekly monitoring during recruitment and testing periods, setting-level updates. For many projects, the EEF arranges a monthly meeting between the evaluator, the delivery team, and the EM and PM to update on project progress. Additional ad hoc meetings between the evaluator and the EM may also be arranged.

Testing updates

Evaluators will be asked to submit weekly updates via the [EEF portal](#) during the testing (pre- and post-testing) periods. The EEF portal is linked to our CRM system (Salesforce), so we can access 'live' testing updates. The EEF portal is a new process, launched in Summer 2024, which allows a streamlined process for submitting updates, making it easier for evaluators to send them and for the EEF to more easily monitor progress across projects.

EMs managing the project will contact evaluators in advance of the testing period to coordinate testing submissions and set up the portal. Evaluators will need to select a nominated person for the project. This should be the person who is primarily responsible for submitting updates. Full name and email address will be requested to set them up with an account. If there is a generic project email address, you can provide this as the login, but we will still need the name of a nominated person. When an account has been created, nominated contacts will receive an automated email inviting them to login the portal. For any issues or additional ad-hoc logins, please email monitoringdata@eefoundation.org.

Through the portal evaluators will be asked to submit aggregate information on data enumeration, screening, pre and post-testing (where relevant). In particular, we ask evaluators to share details of:

- the number of settings where testing has been arranged/tests have been sent,

- number of settings that have completed testing/tests have been returned to the evaluator,
- number of children tested,
- number of settings that have dropped out, etc.
- A list of the fields evaluators complete will be sent by the Evaluation Manager in advance. None of the fields are mandatory so evaluators only complete the ones that are relevant at that stage in the project.

Testing updates should be submitted during the update period previously agreed with the EEF Evaluation Manager.

Setting-level updates

Evaluators will also be asked to submit setting-level updates to the portal by uploading a CSV file. This step is not mandatory, but we require evaluators to provide this information when there are any setting-level updates e.g., after randomisation/ group allocation, matching or when a setting has withdrawn (where relevant).

The CSV file is created using a project-specific Setting Update Template which includes step-by-step instructions for evaluators. The EM assigned to the project will provide the evaluator with this template, a spreadsheet containing a list of the settings recruited to take part in the evaluation based on the data previously submitted by the delivery team during the recruitment phase (see section 4.2.8.). The spreadsheet includes columns for evaluators to provide the aforementioned information on randomisation, matching, group allocation and withdrawals (as applicable). You will use the template to prepare a CSV file, which you then upload on the EEF Portal following the step-by-step instructions.

Setting updates should be submitted throughout the lifetime of the project. However, note that you only need to complete this step if/when there is an update (e.g., withdrawals). The same nominated person should be responsible for submitting testing (see above) and setting updates. For any issues or queries about the EEF Portal, please email monitoringdata@eefoundation.org and/or the EM assigned to the project.

5.3. EEF brand guidelines

The following table summarises key brand guidelines to adhere to for the purpose of any EEF-related publication.

Table 4 – EEF branding guidelines

Item	Guideline note
The EEF’s name	Please always refer to ‘the Education Endowment Foundation’ and only use the abbreviation ‘the EEF’ if the full name has already been used once.
The EEF’s description	If you wish to refer to the EEF more fully, please use the following wording:

	<p><i>“The Education Endowment Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement through better use of evidence.”</i></p>
The EEF’s role	<p>If you wish to refer to the EEF’s role, please use the following wording:</p> <p>.</p> <p>The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is committed to improving teaching and learning for two-to-19-year olds, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, through better use of evidence.</p> <p>They do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarising evidence. Reviewing the best available evidence on teaching and learning and presenting in an accessible way. • Finding new evidence. Funding independent evaluations of programmes and approaches that aim to raise the attainment of children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. • Putting evidence to use. Supporting education practitioners, as well as policymakers and other organisations, to use evidence in ways that improve teaching and learning.
The EEF logo	<p>Where appropriate, please use the EEF’s logo, which can be downloaded here: EEF Brand Guidelines EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>
The EEF online	<p>When referring to the EEF on your website, please link to the following address: www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk</p> <p>If referring to the EEF across different platforms, please use the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEF on Twitter - @EducEndowFoundn • EEF on Facebook - www.facebook.com/EducEndowFoundn • EEF on LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/company/the-education-endowment-foundation • EEF on YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5-jDNhzw1ySqP42gCv23IQ

Appendix

Figure 8 – Final statement of spend (August 2023)

Final statement - EEF Evaluation

Instructions:
Please report total actual spend on the evaluation (the grey cells are the input cells) adding notes where necessary. Please also state how the overall cost of the evaluation was funded if not 100% funded by the EEF grant.

Evaluator name:
Project name:

Total spend for the project

	£	£	Notes
Staff costs			
1. Evaluation management & monitoring			
2. Evaluation planning & design			
3. Implementation of evaluation			
4. Analysis & report writing			
Other (please describe)			
Other (please describe)			
Other (please describe)			
Total staff cost		0	
Non-staff costs			
<i>If applicable, please split costs into the following activities</i>			
Testing			
Travel			
Project assets			
Other (please describe)			
Other (please describe)			
Total non-staff cost		0	
TOTAL SPEND		0	
Funded by:			
EEF Grant			
Your own contribution			
Third party contribution			
Other (please describe)			
TOTAL		0	
<i>Check - Total spend must equal Total funding</i>		0	

Assets
"Assets" refers only to those Assets which are used in relation to the delivery of the Evaluation, and does not include standard office and other supplies used by the Evaluator.

Assets refers to those assets which the Evaluator purchases or improves using the Grant Award, where either: (1) the purchase price, development cost or market value of the asset is in excess of £500; or (2) the purchase is of a group of lower value items where the combined value is in excess of £500; or (3) the asset(s) can be considered an attractive item regardless of cost (e.g. mobile phones, flash drive, hard drive, cameras, laptops, tablets, etc), in each case, regardless of whether the assets are treated as assets by the Evaluator's accounting policy

Description of asset	Date of Acquisition	Value (£)