



## **Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**

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# **Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations**

### **Impact Assessment of Learnerships and Apprenticeships**

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**Date Evaluation was completed:** 01 September 2008

**Name of assessor:** Tim Mosdell

**Evaluation Number:** 32

**Date Assessment Completed:** 28/2/2013

## Evaluation Assessment Details

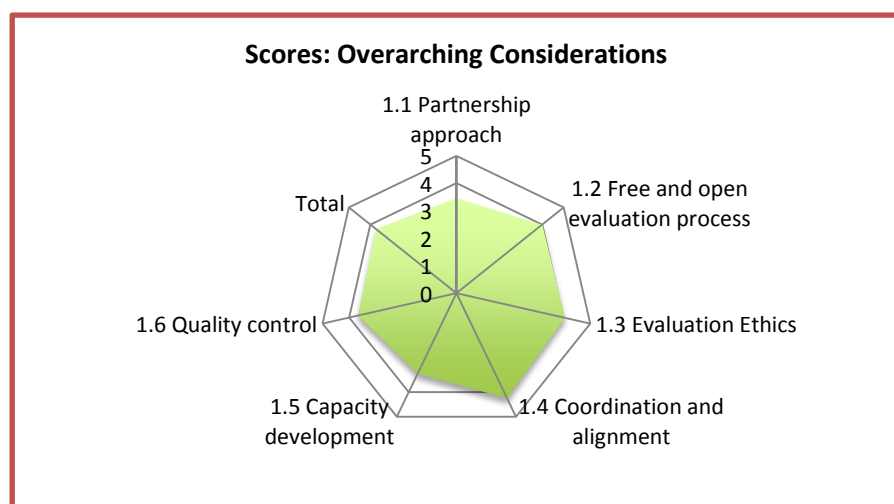
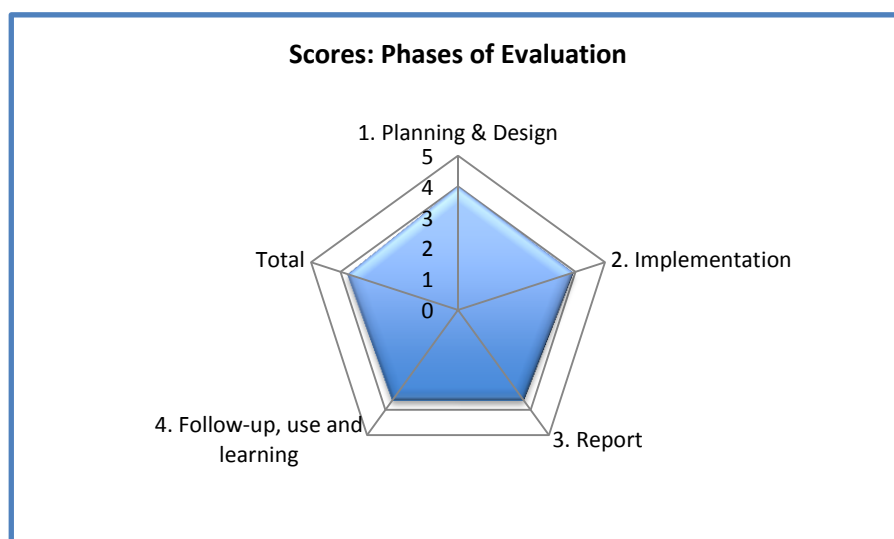
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Title of evaluation report	Impact Assessment of Learnerships and Apprenticeships
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 September 2008
Name of Assessor	Tim Mosdell
Evaluation Number	32
Completion Date of Assessment	28/2/2013
Initiated by	MERSETA
Evaluation undertaken by	Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
Evaluation area / sector	Training, SETAs, FET, higher education
	Additional
National Outcome	Outcome 5
	Additional
Type of Evaluation	Impact
	Additional
What is being evaluated	Programme
	Additional
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	2008
Known Cost of Evaluation	Unknown

### Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.00
Implementation	3.93
Report	3.61
Follow-up, use and learning	3.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.74</b>

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.45
Free and open evaluation process	4.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.06
Coordination and alignment	4.25
Capacity Development	3.25
Quality control	3.68



## 1. Planning & Design

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### 1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products.*

#### Comment and Analysis

The project was guided by a comprehensive TOR covering objectives, methodology, intended use, etc.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD:** *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

#### Comment and Analysis

The purpose of the evaluation was reportedly clear and explicit in the TOR.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

#### Comment and Analysis

The key evaluation questions were stated in the TOR focusing on the effectiveness of the learnership and apprenticeship systems, and whether industry demands are being effectively met through these systems.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR*****Comment and Analysis**

The approach was suited to the scope and purpose outlined in the TOR.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR*****Comment and Analysis**

The intended users were clear in the TOR, namely the MERSETA and its members.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation*****Comment and Analysis**

MERSETA was involved in scoping the TOR.

**Rating** 3

**1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced**

***STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated***

***Comment and Analysis***

The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocation.

***Rating*** 4

***STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget***

***Comment and Analysis***

The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget.

***Rating*** 4

***STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets***

***Comment and Analysis***

The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets.

***Rating*** 4

**STANDARD:** *Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand*

**Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation planned to include capacity building of an HSRC Doctoral Intern.

**Rating** 3

**1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature**

**STANDARD:** *There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators*

**Comment and Analysis**

There was evidence that planning took into account the policy and programme environments.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD:** *There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators*

**Comment and Analysis**

There was evidence that planning involved a review of appropriate literature.

**Rating** 4

**1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project**

***STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation***

***Comment and Analysis***

At the heart of the evaluation planning was an approach aimed to improving the effectiveness of the learnership and apprenticeship models.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation***

***Comment and Analysis***

MERSETA was involved in the design and methodology of the evaluation.

**Rating** 3

***STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked***

***Comment and Analysis***

The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked.

**Rating** 4



***STANDARD: Planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

The planned sampling, both for the quantitative and qualitative elements was adequate given the focus and purpose of the evaluation.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation - prior to the project.

**Rating** 4

**1.5. Inception phase*****STANDARD: The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented******Comment and Analysis***

An inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented.

**Rating** 4

## 2. Implementation

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### 2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

**STANDARD:** *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

**Comment and Analysis**

The project was taken through the HSRC Ethics Committee for clearance. Confidentiality was offered to participants and informed consent was secured.

**Rating** 5

### 2.2. Evaluator independence

**STANDARD:** *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

**Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest**

**Comment and Analysis**

There was no evidence of conflict of interest.

**Rating** 4

### **2.3. Key stakeholder involvement**

**STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation**

**Comment and Analysis**

MERSETA was consulted through the course of the evaluation.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation**

**Comment and Analysis**

The approach involved the capacity development of an HSRC Doctoral Intern.

**Rating** 3

## 2.4. Methodology

**STANDARD: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned**

**Comment and Analysis**

The methods employed in the evaluation were consistent with those planned.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions**

**Comment and Analysis**

Data collection was not compromised by problems in the field.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation**

**Comment and Analysis**

Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of the evaluation.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation***

***Comment and Analysis***

The data analysis and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purpose of the evaluation.

***Rating*** 4

***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology***

***Comment and Analysis***

MERSETA was engaged as part of the methodology. Other stakeholders were also interviewed as part of the process.

***Rating*** 4

***STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information***

***Comment and Analysis***

The methodology involved interviewing a sample of learnership and apprenticeship participants.

***Rating*** 5

## 2.5. Project management

**STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes**

### **Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation took place without shifts to milestones and timeframes.

**Rating** 4

## 3. Report

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**3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas**

**STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately**

### **Comment and Analysis**

An executive summary captured the key components of the study.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: The context of the development intervention was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation**

### **Comment and Analysis**

The context of the project was explicit in the Report, with two sections dedicated to contextualising the study in policy and literature.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions****Comment and Analysis**

There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report****Comment and Analysis**

The scope of the evaluation was clear in the report.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation****Comment and Analysis**

A detailed section of the report set out the used methodology in detail.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report**

**Comment and Analysis**

Key findings were presented in a clear way, although the report was somewhat bulky and much of the data could have been better presented in the appendices of the report.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated**

**Comment and Analysis**

Conclusions and recommendations were clearly articulated.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings were clearly and succinctly articulated**

**Comment and Analysis**

Acknowledgement of the limitations of the methodology was not explicit.

**Rating** 2



### 3.2. Writing and presentation

**STANDARD:** *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

#### Comment and Analysis

The quality of the report was adequate from a writing and presentation point of view, although the report was long and could have been more focused with some of the information being presented in the appendices.

Rating 3

**STANDARD:** *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

#### Comment and Analysis

Appropriate conventions were used in the presentation of the data - particularly in the presentation of statistical information.

Rating 4

### 3.3. Presentation of findings

**STANDARD:** *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

**Comment and Analysis**

The use of figures and tables supported communication, although some of the figures did not translate well into black and white.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed**

**Comment and Analysis**

The data analysis appears to have been well executed.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence**

**Comment and Analysis**

Findings were supported by available evidence.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument***

**Comment and Analysis**

The evidence gathered was appropriately analysed to support the project arguments.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations***

**Comment and Analysis**

There was no explicit recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations.

**Rating** 2

***STANDARD: The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws***

**Comment and Analysis**

The report appeared to be free of significant methodological and analytic flaws.

**Rating** 4

### 3.4. Conclusions

***STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence***

**Comment and Analysis**

Conclusions were derived from evidence.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: Conclusions took into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations***

**Comment and Analysis**

Conclusions took into account other work and studies.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions***

**Comment and Analysis**

The conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions.

**Rating** 4

***STANDARD: Conclusions were drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change*****Comment and Analysis**

The conclusions were consistent with the intervention logic underpinning the evaluation.

**Rating** 4

**3.5. Recommendations*****STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts*****Comment and Analysis**

MERSETA saw a draft version of the report containing the findings before the final report was delivered.

**Rating** 3

***STANDARD: Recommendations were shaped following input or review by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders*****Comment and Analysis**

MERSETA saw a draft version of the report containing the findings before the final report was delivered.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: Recommendations were relevant to the policy context****Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations were relevant to the policy context.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Recommendations were targetted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable****Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations were targetted to MERSETA and its members and were aimed at facilitating practical improvements and changes.

**Rating** 5

**3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted****STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

Limitations of the evaluation were not explicitly noted.

**Rating** 2

### 3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

**STANDARD:** *The full report documented procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where this was needed (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)*

#### Comment and Analysis

The report, in the appendices, sets out the questionnaire instrument used. In this instrument, confidentiality and informed consent is explicit.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD:** *There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website*

#### Comment and Analysis

There are no apparent risks to participants in publishing the report.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD:** *There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website*

#### Comment and Analysis

There are no apparent risks to institutions in publishing the report.

**Rating** 4

## 4. Follow-up, use and learning

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### 4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

**STANDARD:** *Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders*

#### Comment and Analysis

The results were presented to MERSETA, its various chambers, its members, and other stakeholders.

**Rating** 4

### 4.2. Resource utilisation

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes*

#### Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed within planned timeframes.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget*

#### Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed on budget.

**Rating** 4



#### 4.3. Transparency

**STANDARD:** *The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns*

##### Comment and Analysis

The report was available via MERSETA's website.

**Rating** 4

#### 4.4. Lessons learnt

**STANDARD:** *After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluation to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations*

##### Comment and Analysis

The study team did reflect on the evaluation process in order to refine the methodology for similar work.

**Rating** 3

#### 4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)*

##### Comment and Analysis

The evaluation served to raise the profile of Learnerships and Apprenticeships.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: *The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice***

**Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation added conceptual value and contributed to a deepening of the discourse around learnerships and apprenticeships.

**Rating** 4

**4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations**

**STANDARD: *There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent***

**Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation has been used by MERSETA in refining sector skills plans.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: *There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term***

**Comment and Analysis**

It is understood that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, but at this stage, there is no direct evidence of this.

**Rating** 3

## **References**

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Human Sciences Research Council, 2008. Impact Assessment of Learnerships and Apprenticeships - Prepared by the HSRC for the MERSETA - September 2008.

## **List of Interviewees**

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MM Visser, Project Team Member - HSRC. Interviewed on 28 February 2013.