# Fact sheet

## Reporting on research and evaluation

### About this fact sheet

This fact sheet provides general guidance about issues that staff may wish to consider when reviewing or summarising research or evaluation findings.

Research or evaluation findings may be contained within a report, a journal publication about a research study, a presentation or literature review.

Staff are encouraged to contact the System Performance Division if specific advice or expertise is required in relation to interpreting research or evaluation findings.

### Steps to review a report, a literature review or a research study

1. Summarise the issue(s) contained in the paper, including the aims of the paper, the authors’ method, what they found and the key messages or conclusions that they took away.
2. Assess the relevance/importance of the issue(s), as presented in the paper? Is the authors’ case convincing (do you have unanswered questions)? Consider, the prevalence of an issue, the impact that it has in the long-term, equity, cost, whether there are known ways to improve the issue or not, concern about the issue in the wider community, and government commitments/responsibilities in the area.
3. Assess the ‘program logic’ presented, if available. According to the authors, how does the issue ‘work’? If they are investigating or proposing a solution, would the solution if successful actually address the issue described by the authors? Is their case coherent?
4. Assess the quality of the authors’ methodology. Putting the findings presented to one side, were the aims of the paper able to be addressed or answered using the methodology that the authors used? Consider the measures and study design relative to the aims, the risks of bias, sample size and quality of implementation.
5. Assess the quality of analyses and results. Was the correct analysis undertaken, given the aims? Were the right groups compared in the right way? Were the right results highlighted or omitted? Were the results correctly described?
6. Assess the conclusions and implications presented by the author. Do the conclusions match or relate to the stated aims/program logic? Are the conclusions fair and in line with the evidence? Are there any issues not covered in the paper which are relevant to the Department for Education? If it is appropriate to include an overall assessment of the evidence presented in the paper, the descriptions below are commonly used:

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| A | further research is very unlikely to change our confidence in the estimate of effect |
| B | further research is likely to have an important impact on our confidence in the estimate of effect and may change the estimate |
| C | further research is very likely to have an important impact on our confidence in the estimate of effect and is likely to change the estimate |
| D | any estimate of effect is uncertain |