

# Comparison of Existing and Updated Guiding Principles

This table compares the Guiding Principles that are now on the AEA website with the updated Guiding Principles that the GPTF is recommending to the AEA board. (May 7, 2018)

## Guiding Principle A. Systematic Inquiry

GUIDING PRINCIPLE A: SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY	
Existing Version	Updated Version
<p><b>GP-A: Systematic Inquiry:</b> Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries.</p>	<p><b>GP-A: Systematic Inquiry:</b> Evaluators conduct data-based inquiries that are thorough, methodical, and contextually relevant.</p>
Sub-statements for Guiding Principle A: Systematic Inquiry	
<p><b>A1:</b> To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the evaluative information they produce, evaluators should adhere to the highest technical standards appropriate to the methods they use.</p>	<p><b>A1:</b> Adhere to the highest technical standards appropriate to the methods being used while attending to the evaluation’s scale and available resources.</p>
<p><b>A2:</b> Evaluators should explore with the client the shortcomings and strengths both of the various evaluation questions and the various approaches that might be used for answering those questions.</p>	<p><b>A2:</b> Explore with primary stakeholders the limitations and strengths of the core evaluation questions and the approaches that might be used for answering those questions.</p>
<p><b>A3:</b> Evaluators should communicate their methods and approaches accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret and critique their work. They should make clear the limitations of an evaluation and its results. Evaluators should discuss in a contextually appropriate way those values, assumptions, theories, methods, results and analyses significantly affecting the interpretation of the evaluative findings. These statements apply to all aspects of the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.</p>	<p><b>A3:</b> Communicate methods and approaches accurately, and in sufficient detail, to allow others to understand, interpret, and critique the work.</p> <p><b>A4:</b> Make clear the limitations of the evaluation and its results.</p> <p><b>A5:</b> Discuss in contextually appropriate ways the values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses that significantly affect the evaluator’s interpretation of the findings.</p>
<p><b>(new)</b></p>	<p><b>A6:</b> Carefully consider the ethical implications of the use of emerging technologies in evaluation practice.</p>

## Guiding Principle B. Competence

GUIDING PRINCIPLE B: COMPETENCE	
Existing Version	Updated Version
<p><b>GP-B: Competence:</b> Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>GP-B: Competence:</b> Evaluators provide skilled professional services to stakeholders.</p>
Sub-statements for Guiding Principle B: Competence	
<p><b>B1.</b> Evaluators should possess (or ensure that the evaluation team possesses) the education, abilities, skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed in the evaluation.</p>	<p><b>B1:</b> Ensure that the evaluation team possesses the education, abilities, skills, and experiences required to complete the evaluation competently.</p>
<p><b>B2.</b> To ensure recognition, accurate interpretation and respect for diversity, evaluators should ensure that the members of the evaluation team collectively demonstrate cultural competence. Cultural competence would be reflected in evaluators seeking awareness of their own culturally-based assumptions, their understanding of the worldviews of culturally-different participants and stakeholders in the evaluation, and the use of appropriate evaluation strategies and skills in working with culturally different groups. Diversity may be in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economics, or other factors pertinent to the evaluation context.</p>	<p><b>B3:</b> Ensure that the evaluation team collectively possesses or seeks out the competencies necessary to work in the cultural context of the evaluation.</p>
<p><b>B3.</b> Evaluators should practice within the limits of their professional training and competence, and should decline to conduct evaluations that fall substantially outside those limits. When declining the commission or request is not feasible or appropriate, evaluators should make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result. Evaluators should make every effort to gain the competence directly or through the assistance of others who possess the required expertise.</p>	<p><b>B2:</b> When the most ethical option is to proceed with a commission or request outside the boundaries of the evaluation team's professional preparation and competence, clearly communicate any significant limitations to the evaluation that might result. Make every effort to supplement missing or weak competencies directly or through the assistance of others.</p>
<p><b>B4.</b> Evaluators should continually seek to maintain and improve their competencies, in order to provide the highest level of performance in their evaluations. This continuing professional development might include formal coursework and workshops, self-study, evaluations of one's own practice, and working with other evaluators to learn from their skills and expertise.</p>	<p><b>B4:</b> Continually undertake relevant education, training or supervised practice to learn new concepts, techniques, skills, and services necessary for competent evaluation practice. Ongoing professional development might include: formal coursework and workshops, self-study, self- or externally-commissioned evaluations of one's own practice, and working with other evaluators to learn and refine evaluative skills and expertise.</p>

## Guiding Principle C. Integrity (was Integrity/Honesty)

GUIDING PRINCIPLE C: INTEGRITY	
Existing Version	Updated Version
<p><b>GP-C: Integrity/Honestly:</b> Evaluators display honesty and integrity in their own behavior and attempt to ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.</p>	<p><b>GP-C: Integrity.</b> Evaluators behave with honesty and transparency in order to ensure the integrity of the evaluation.</p>
<b>Sub-statements for Guiding Principle C: Integrity</b>	
<p><b>C1.</b> Evaluators should negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the costs, tasks to be undertaken, limitations of methodology, scope of results likely to be obtained, and uses of data resulting from a specific evaluation. It is primarily the evaluator's responsibility to initiate discussion and clarification of these matters, not the client's.</p>	<p><b>C1:</b> Communicate truthfully and openly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning all aspects of the evaluation, including its limitations.</p> <p>(second sentence incorporated into Preface)</p>
<p><b>C2.</b> Before accepting an evaluation assignment, evaluators should disclose any roles or relationships they have that might pose a conflict of interest (or appearance of a conflict) with their role as an evaluator. If they proceed with the evaluation, the conflict(s) should be clearly articulated in reports of the evaluation results.</p>	<p><b>C2:</b> Disclose any conflicts of interest (or appearance of a conflict) prior to accepting an evaluation assignment and manage or mitigate any conflicts during the evaluation.</p>
<p><b>C3.</b> Evaluators should record all changes made in the originally negotiated project plans, and the reasons why the changes were made. If those changes would significantly affect the scope and likely results of the evaluation, the evaluator should inform the client and other important stakeholders in a timely fashion (barring good reason to the contrary, before proceeding with further work) of the changes and their likely impact.</p>	<p><b>C3:</b> Record and promptly communicate any changes to the originally negotiated evaluation plans, the rationale for those changes, and the potential impacts on the evaluation's scope and results.</p>
<p><b>C4.</b> Evaluators should be explicit about their own, their clients', and other stakeholders' interests and values concerning the conduct and outcomes of an evaluation.</p>	<p><b>C4:</b> Assess and make explicit the stakeholders', clients', and evaluators' values, perspectives, and interests concerning the conduct and outcome of the evaluation.</p>
<p><b>C5.</b> Evaluators should not misrepresent their procedures, data or findings. Within reasonable limits, they should attempt to prevent or correct misuse of their work by others.</p>	<p><b>C5:</b> Accurately and transparently represent evaluation procedures, data, and findings.</p>

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE C: INTEGRITY

Existing Version	Updated Version
<p><b>C6.</b> If evaluators determine that certain procedures or activities are likely to produce misleading evaluative information or conclusions, they have the responsibility to communicate their concerns and the reasons for them. If discussions with the client do not resolve these concerns, the evaluator should decline to conduct the evaluation. If declining the assignment is unfeasible or inappropriate, the evaluator should consult colleagues or relevant stakeholders about other proper ways to proceed. (Options might include discussions at a higher level, a dissenting cover letter or appendix, or refusal to sign the final document.)</p>	<p><b>C6:</b> Clearly communicate, justify, and address concerns related to procedures or activities that are likely to produce misleading evaluative information or conclusions. Consult colleagues for suggestions on proper ways to proceed if concerns cannot be resolved, and decline the evaluation when necessary.</p>
<p><b>C7.</b> Evaluators should disclose all sources of financial support for an evaluation, and the source of the request for the evaluation.</p>	<p><b>C7:</b> Disclose all sources of financial support for an evaluation, and the source of the request for the evaluation.</p>

## Guiding Principle D. Respect for People

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE D: RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

Existing Version	Updated Version
<p><b>GP-D: Respect for People:</b> Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>GP-D: Respect for People:</b> Evaluators honor the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups.</p>
<p><b>Sub-statements for Guiding Principle D: Respect for People</b></p>	
<p><b>D1.</b> Evaluators should seek a comprehensive understanding of the important contextual elements of the evaluation. Contextual factors that may influence the results of a study include geographic location, timing, political and social climate, economic conditions, and other relevant activities in progress at the same time.</p>	<p><b>D1:</b> Strive to gain an understanding of, and treat fairly, the range of perspectives and interests that individuals and groups bring to the evaluation, including those that are not usually included or are oppositional.</p>
<p><b>D2.</b> Evaluators should abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding risks, harms, and burdens that might befall those participating in the evaluation; regarding informed</p>	<p><b>D2:</b> Abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations (including informed consent, confidentiality, and prevention of harm) pertaining to evaluation participants.</p>

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE D: RESPECT FOR PEOPLE**

Existing Version	Updated Version
<p>consent for participation in evaluation; and regarding informing participants and clients about the scope and limits of confidentiality.</p>	
<p><b>D3.</b> Because justified negative or critical conclusions from an evaluation must be explicitly stated, evaluations sometimes produce results that harm client or stakeholder interests. Under this circumstance, evaluators should seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur, provided this will not compromise the integrity of the evaluation findings. Evaluators should carefully judge when the benefits from doing the evaluation or in performing certain evaluation procedures should be foregone because of the risks or harms. To the extent possible, these issues should be anticipated during the negotiation of the evaluation.</p>	<p><b>D3:</b> Strive to maximize the benefits and reduce unnecessary risks or harms for groups and individuals associated with the evaluation.</p>
<p><b>D4.</b> Knowing that evaluations may negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.</p>	<p>incorporated into lead GP-D statement</p>
<p><b>D5.</b> Where feasible, evaluators should attempt to foster social equity in evaluation, so that those who give to the evaluation may benefit in return. For example, evaluators should seek to ensure that those who bear the burdens of contributing data and incurring any risks do so willingly, and that they have full knowledge of and opportunity to obtain any benefits of the evaluation. Program participants should be informed that their eligibility to receive services does not hinge on their participation in the evaluation.</p>	<p><b>D4:</b> Ensure that those who contribute data and incur risks do so willingly, and that they have knowledge of and opportunity to obtain benefits of the evaluation.</p> <p>also see GP-E</p>
<p><b>D6.</b> Evaluators have the responsibility to understand and respect differences among participants such as differences in their culture, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity, and to account for potential implications of these differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting evaluations.</p>	<p>incorporated into D1</p>

## Guiding Principle E. Common Good and Equity (was General and Public Welfare)

GUIDING PRINCIPLE E: COMMON GOOD AND EQUITY	
Existing Version	Updated Version
<p><b>GP-E: Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that may be related to the evaluation.</p>	<p><b>GP-E: Common Good and Equity:</b> Evaluators strive to contribute to the common good and advancement of an equitable and just society.</p>
Sub-statements for Guiding Principle E: Common Good and Equity	
<p><b>E1.</b> When planning and reporting evaluations, evaluators should include relevant perspectives and interests of the full range of stakeholders.</p>	See D1
<p><b>E2.</b> Evaluators should consider not only the immediate operations and outcomes of whatever is being evaluated, but also its broad assumptions, implications and potential side effects.</p>	<p><b>E2:</b> Identify and make efforts to address the evaluation’s potential threats to the common good especially when specific stakeholder interests conflict with the goals of a democratic, equitable, and just society.</p>
<p><b>E3.</b> Freedom of information is essential in a democracy. Evaluators should allow all relevant stakeholders access to evaluative information in forms that respect people and honor promises of confidentiality. Evaluators should actively disseminate information to stakeholders as resources allow. Communications that are tailored to a given stakeholder should include all results that may bear on interests of that stakeholder and refer to any other tailored communications to other stakeholders. In all cases, evaluators should strive to present results clearly and simply so that clients and other stakeholders can easily understand the evaluation process and results.</p>	<p>see D2 and Preface</p> <p><b>E4:</b> Promote transparency and active sharing of data and findings with the goal of equitable access to information in forms that respect people and honor promises of confidentiality.</p>
<p><b>E4.</b> Evaluators should maintain a balance between client needs and other needs. Evaluators necessarily have a special relationship with the client who funds or requests the evaluation. By virtue of that relationship, evaluators must strive to meet legitimate client needs whenever it is feasible and appropriate to do so. However, that relationship can also place evaluators in difficult dilemmas when client interests conflict with other interests, or when client interests conflict with the obligation of evaluators for systematic inquiry, competence, integrity, and respect for people. In these cases, evaluators should explicitly identify and discuss the conflicts with the client and relevant stakeholders,</p>	<p><b>E1:</b> Recognize and balance the interests of the client, other stakeholders, and the common good while also protecting the integrity of the evaluation.</p> <p>see D1 and Preface see C2</p>

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE E: COMMON GOOD AND EQUITY**

<b>Existing Version</b>	<b>Updated Version</b>
<p>resolve them when possible, determine whether continued work on the evaluation is advisable if the conflicts cannot be resolved, and make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result if the conflict is not resolved.</p>	
<p><b>E5.</b> Evaluators have obligations that encompass the public interest and good. These obligations are especially important when evaluators are supported by publicly-generated funds; but clear threats to the public good should never be ignored in any evaluation. Because the public interest and good are rarely the same as the interests of any particular group (including those of the client or funder), evaluators will usually have to go beyond analysis of particular stakeholder interests and consider the welfare of society as a whole.</p>	<p><b>E3:</b> Identify and make efforts to address the evaluation’s potential risks of exacerbating historic disadvantage or inequity.</p> <p><b>E5:</b> Mitigate the bias and potential power imbalances that can occur as a result of the evaluation’s context. Self-assess one’s own privilege and positioning within that context. see also GP-E lead statement and E1</p>