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What should be included in an ATE proposal's evaluation plan? What do reviewers want to see? While both of these are important questions, it is also important to make sure you have an evaluation plan in place from the beginning that will provide good information about how well your project is going and what impact you are having. Based on my experiences as a reviewer and participant in many panels, I recommend you consider these things when preparing the evaluation section of your ATE proposal. **A good evaluation plan almost always raises the proposal ratings.**

10 Helpful Hints

1. Identify an evaluator in advance; include his or her name and qualifications.

2. Carefully match the evaluation with project goals, objectives, and activities.

3. Design the evaluation to provide evidence about what is working and where adjustments and improvements are needed. Make sure evaluation information is useful and important and describe how it will guide the project.

4. Remember that while accountability is important, evaluation of impact and effectiveness is vital.

5. Evaluate both short- and long-term goals, develop indicators to use to measure progress, and create timelines.

6. Develop the evaluation plan jointly with the evaluator(s). You know the project, but the evaluator provides evaluation expertise and an outside perspective. Your evaluator can help you translate your goals and objectives into measurable questions.

7. Assign responsibilities for various components of the evaluation. Where and how will you get the data and from whom?

8. Use the evaluation literature (e.g., EvaluATE website and NSF resources) to create an evaluation plan based on best practices and include evaluation references and, if appropriate, information about your instruments.

9. Develop indicators for project goals and objectives with your evaluation stakeholders in mind (e.g., project personnel, administrators at the college, faculty, NSF, and others).

10. Use at least 1 (up to 2.5) of 15 proposal pages to develop and explain the evaluation. Write the evaluation plan in plain English.

10 Fatal Flaws

While the helpful hints will help you write better evaluation sections, many proposals often have fatal or near fatal flaws. Among these are:

The evaluation section …

1. Is missing.

2. States "after we get the funding, we will develop an evaluation plan" or that the evaluation will be developed using the *NSF User Friendly Guide to Project Evaluation*.

3. Only evaluates easy things (e.g., attitudes).

4. Has an unreasonable or unrealistic budget (e.g., a complex plan with a tiny budget or vice versa) and fails to explain how costs were estimated.

5. Does not align with the priorities of the funding program.

6. States PIs will do all the evaluation.

7. Is too short and lacking in details.

8. Was cut and pasted from another proposal with few changes to make it relevant.

9. Uses too much jargon for reviewers to easily read or understand; is too complex.

10. States that the evaluation will be done using "name your favorite evaluation method," but fails to explain this method or why it is appropriate.

It is hoped that these suggestions may prove useful as you prepare your proposals and that you will contribute to the revision of this list. If you have a helpful hint or a fatal flaw that you would like to share with the author, please send it to ejteles@yahoo.com. For more information and further development of these ideas, see an expanded version of these hints at http://evalu-ate.org/resources/.