



# ATE PI Checklist for Getting Started with Your Evaluation Post-Award

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All ATE-funded projects (except planning grants for centers) require evaluation. This checklist contains key tasks to help PIs and co-PIs get their ATE evaluation off to a strong start. Evaluation of your ATE project should begin as soon as you get notification of your grant award. In most cases, these tasks should be completed within the first six months of the project.

A strong evaluation involves collaboration across several groups of people. The main groups include:

- An **external evaluator** is independent of your project, although they can be internal to your organization. An external evaluator leads the evaluation design and implementation. A project may also have an internal evaluator, a member of the project team who helps implement evaluation activities to support the work of the external evaluator.
- The **project team** consists of the principal investigator (PI), co-PIs, and others specified in the proposal who help manage, plan, and implement the project activities.
- **Partners** are organizations or individuals external to your institution or organization who help you to implement the project or provide you with information to aid the project.
- **Institutional research (IR) offices** at colleges gather and maintain data on student retention, demographics, and academic performance. (The relevant office at your institution may also be known as the institutional research and effectiveness, institutional effectiveness, or institutional research and assessment office.)

The checkmarks indicate the groups of people who should be involved in each task, in addition to the PI or co-PI carrying out the task.

	Evaluator	Project Team	Partners	IR Office
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>If an evaluator was identified in your proposal: Notify your evaluator of the project award.</b> As soon as possible, let the evaluator know the project start date and confirm their participation.	✓			
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>If an evaluator was not identified in your proposal: Select an evaluator.</b> Work with your institutional purchasing office to complete the necessary steps to find and select an evaluator through your college’s bid process.		✓		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Get an evaluation contract in place.</b> Request that your college initiate a contract or memorandum of agreement for evaluation services. This will likely necessitate a purchase request. Ask your evaluator for a scope of work with a timeline to append to the contractual document. As part of this process, identify when your evaluator will send invoices. You are responsible for ensuring your institution pays your evaluator.	✓			

	Evaluator	Project Team	Partners	IR Office
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Work with your evaluator to create a detailed evaluation plan.</b> The evaluation plan included in your ATE proposal may need to be expanded to serve as an effective action plan. The more detailed plan may also serve as the scope of work in the contract. Meet with the evaluator to review the plan (e.g., expectations, process, activities, timeline, intended use of the results) and refine and clarify as needed.	✓	✓		✓
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Create an evaluation communication plan.</b> The plan should identify primary contact people for the project and evaluation teams; set out a schedule for evaluation meetings; and outline processes for reviewing materials and disseminating reports.	✓	✓		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Review and refine goals for project success.</b> Review the project goals and objectives specified in the proposal. Set interim benchmarks to help gauge progress towards the end-of-project goals/objectives. Note: If the goals/objectives you identified in the proposal need to be changed, approval from your NSF program officer is required.	✓	✓	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Identify data you need to report for your project.</b> Work with the evaluator to determine what data needs to be collected, how data will be collected, who will collect the data, and when the data should be collected. Also, note the data you will need for preparing your NSF annual report <sup>i</sup> and the annual <a href="#">ATE Survey</a> . <sup>ii</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Determine which data team members need to collect.</b> Evaluators and project teams often collect different types of data. Project teams typically focus on data related to the implementation of project activities (e.g., activities that occurred, number and characteristics of participants) and the dissemination of project results (e.g., materials downloaded, curricula implemented).	✓	✓	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Discuss with the evaluator what data collection instruments will be used.</b> Your evaluator can identify or develop project survey instruments. Use uniform surveys or other tools across project activities and partners to ensure that data can be aggregated. Make sure to capture participants' demographics and other information needed for the <a href="#">ATE Survey</a> .	✓	✓	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Discuss evaluation reporting expectations.</b> Tell your evaluator in what format you want information about the evaluation process and findings communicated (e.g., technical reports, verbal presentations, slides, executive summaries, infographics). Specify when you want to receive draft and final reports. Make sure these dates align with deadlines for your reporting needs (e.g., NSF annual reports, <a href="#">ATE Survey</a> , project meetings, advisory meetings, etc.).	✓	✓		

	Evaluator	Project Team	Partners	IR Office
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meet with staff from the institutional research office.</b> Explain your project goals and the need for specific data for NSF reporting and to support external evaluation. Make sure to clearly define the data variables, time frames (use specific dates), and due dates for your request. If not previously used in your proposal, don't forget to obtain baseline data (i.e., data on the current status or recent history). Involve your evaluator in these meetings to help define variables and specify populations and parameters. This will provide the evaluator with a clear understanding of the available institutional data.	✓			✓
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Communicate data needs to your project partners.</b> Be clear about what data you need, how data variables are defined, your timeline for data analysis, and your reporting deadlines. Responsible parties might include partner institutions, collaborating organizations, or business and industry partners.	✓		✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Review institutional review board (IRB) requirements.</b> Review the IRB determination letter for your project. This letter will indicate if or when you need to contact the IRB as surveys or other evaluation activities are being planned or before using the project results for peer-reviewed publications. Partnering institutions might have additional IRB requirements that were determined during proposal development.	✓		✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Review and adhere to the data management plan.</b> Verify that project staff and partners are familiar with the project's data management plan. If needed, put in place measures to secure and share project data and materials in accordance with your data management plan.	✓	✓	✓	

## Acknowledgments

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<sup>i</sup> Project [annual reports](#) are due to NSF within the 90-day period prior to your project anniversary. The anniversary date is set by the grant award (see Award Period of Performance in your grant award notification from NSF) and is typically the start date that was requested in the proposal. Reports become past due on the anniversary of your grant start date. Since your NSF program officer needs to review your annual report before it is submitted, it is recommended that you submit the report three to five weeks prior to the anniversary.

<sup>ii</sup> PIs are required to complete the ATE Survey annually in February/March. The survey asks about ATE project and center activities and achievements. You can view the survey questions on the [ATE Survey website](#).

