



The Portal Trust

Monitoring & Evaluation Policy

November 2020

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Introduction

Under Charity Law, the Trust has an obligation to demonstrate its impact on the wider public benefit. The Trust's main area of work is its grant-making and as such impact is generally demonstrated through the monitoring and evaluation of funded projects. Evaluating impact can help the Trust, and the people and charities it supports, to:

- plan how its work will make a difference and determine how much difference it is making
- understand what does and does not work and why
- build an evidence base to share with others, thus influencing and informing debate, and increasing the sector's body of knowledge
- challenge itself and others by looking critically at its work in order to improve, to replicate good work or to innovate and develop new ideas
- inspire and motivate staff, trustees and stakeholders (including volunteers, beneficiaries, service users, policy informers or makers, other practitioners, funders or investors);
- communicate added value and raise the profile of its work;
- Secure or leverage resources.

For the purpose of this policy the below definitions are being used:

Monitoring is the collection and analysis of information about a project or programme, undertaken while the project/programme is ongoing.

Evaluation is the periodic, retrospective assessment of an organisation, project or programme that might be conducted internally or by external independent evaluators.

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Organisation Grants

The Trust requires grantee organisations to monitor and evaluate funded projects throughout the lifecycle of the grant. This is to ensure that funds are being spent appropriately, legally and in accordance with the Trust's amended Scheme.

All funded organisations, including The Aldgate School and the Stepney All Saints CofE Secondary School and other partner institutions, must provide information relating to the anticipated outputs and outcomes with their proposal, along with the cost and methodology to be used to collect and analyse this information. These performance benchmarks are then used when it comes to reporting on the grant.

Grantee organisations must submit interim evaluation reports throughout the life of the project and future payments of grants are contingent upon receiving effective reports. The Trust has an Interim

Report Template which should be used, although supplementary material may be submitted as appendices where necessary or appropriate. Grantee organisations must also submit a Final Report once the full grants cycle has come to an end. The Trust has a Final Report Template for this but again, supplementary evaluation materials may be included.

The Trust's reporting forms ask for progress updates against project milestones, as well as financial progress to ensure the grant is being expended in an appropriate and timely manner.

The reports also require organisations to confirm that there are no safeguarding concerns or risks associated with the project, and if there are that these must be highlighted to the Trust immediately.

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw funding where an organisation has not submitted an evaluation report or where the project has not achieved its objectives.

In cases where a report is received and the project has experienced significant changes from that outlined in the funding application (e.g. delays to a project, or re-allocation of funds), the Chief Executive or Chair of the Grants Committee can make a decision as to whether the grant need to be withdrawn or not, depending on the degree of change

Monitoring and evaluation should wherever possible be undertaken by the organisation in receipt of funding rather than by the Trust. This can be undertaken by the organisation themselves, an independent body or by an external consultant hired by the Trust.

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Organisation Grants Continued.

The cost of the evaluation should be included in the applicant's budget, and each application will be considered on a case by case basis, with the Grants Committee deciding how the Trust will proceed on this matter and what will be considered as proportionate.

All grants in excess of £0.5m should be independently monitored and evaluated by an external consultant.

It is the responsibility of the grantee organisation to ensure that it submits monitoring reports in a timely fashion and this is made clear in the Trust's terms and conditions of grant.

However, the Grants Officers keep track of when interim reports and final reports are due and/or overdue and can remind an organisation if necessary.

The Grants Officers and sometimes the Chief Executive may also conduct monitoring visits from time to time to see how a particular project is progressing.

Monitoring visits are not measured in a formal or structured way but can be a highly effective way of understanding the challenges faced by delivery organisations. Notes from such monitoring visits should be kept on file detailing any significant learning from the visit.

Individual Grants

The monitoring and evaluation of individuals is generally undertaken by the colleges and universities with whom the Trust works. The institutions must provide written reports indicating whether a student's academic progress, attendance and attitude is of a satisfactory nature.

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw funding where an individual is failing to meet the agreed standard or where they have made a false declaration with regards to their financial situation.

Universities and colleges are encouraged to arrange Scholars' Evenings which Board members can attend and will undertake destination surveys on a periodic basis or when requested by the Trust.

Some bursaries are awarded directly to individuals who meet the published Trust priorities. Upon an initial application, and for each subsequent release of funds, a reference is sought from the applicant's tutor, with comments on the applicant's attendance record and progress on the course.

The Trust will also request that the applicant provide confirmation of enrolment on to the course. This should be in the form of a letter from the university's registrar, validated with the university stamp. If the applicant is enrolled on the course and exams have by this time been taken, a transcript of grades will be requested.

If the student wishes to defer a year, change course, or has any other significant change in their circumstances, approval should be sought from the Chief Executive or Chair of the Grants Committee.

Applications from individuals seeking a bursary or a scholarship will be monitored in terms of disability and ethnicity to ensure that funding is available to all communities within the Trust's area of benefit.

Regular Review

This policy to be reviewed annually.