

# Evidence rubric



A rubric to help you evaluate the effectiveness of a new or existing policy, program or practice

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## What is the *Evidence rubric*?

The *Evidence rubric* supports education practitioners and policymakers to apply AERO's *Standards of evidence* to new and existing approaches for their context.

The *Evidence rubric* assists education practitioners and policymakers in:

1. self-assessing how confident they can be that a certain approach is effective in their context
2. deciding how to implement the approach given their level of confidence
3. collecting evidence that may increase their confidence in the effectiveness of the approach.

## How do I use the *Evidence rubric*?

The *Evidence rubric* can be used to analyse a particular approach in two ways: to decide whether or not to implement a certain approach in your context or to assess your confidence in the effectiveness of an existing approach.

In either case, first identify the statement in the rubric that best describes the evidence you currently have on the particular approach you are analysing, to assess the confidence you can have in its effectiveness. Once you have identified the level of confidence, you can analyse the suggested guidance on how to proceed. This may include discontinuing the practice in favour of others in which you can have greater confidence or collecting further evidence that may increase your level of confidence. Remember to consult with those who will be affected before you begin or discontinue an approach.

## How much confidence is enough?

Although high or very high confidence in practices, programs and policies is preferable, sometimes there is not enough evidence available to achieve these standards.

In such cases, education practitioners and policymakers must weigh the potential benefits and costs of implementing an approach without full confidence in its effectiveness.

For example, potential benefits could outweigh the costs when inaction may cause greater harm, or the consequences of implementing an ineffective approach are small and/or have been appropriately mitigated. In such circumstances, it may be acceptable to implement an approach that only provides low or medium confidence.

## Which rubric should I use?

AERO has developed three rubrics to ensure that the *Standards of evidence* are appropriately contextualised to the various roles in the Australian education system. You should use the rubric that best applies to your role.

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## Evidence rubric for educators and teachers

	 <b>Level 1</b> Low confidence	 <b>Level 2</b> Medium confidence	 <b>Level 3</b> High confidence	 <b>Level 4</b> Very high confidence
<p><b>How confident can I be in the effectiveness of a particular practice in my context?</b></p>	<p>I can hypothesise why the practice works. I can explain step by step how the practice will lead to positive effects for my children or students.</p>	<p>I have trialled the practice. I have collected data on how my children or students responded to the practice. The data suggests that the practice has positive effects for my children or students.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>I have read testimonials from highly effective teachers working in schools or services similar to my own. These testimonials include data that show the practice is associated with positive effects.</p>	<p>I have read research conducted by trustworthy sources such as AERO that evaluate this practice. This research shows this practice causes positive effects.</p>	<p>I have conducted a rigorous causal evaluation of this practice as implemented in my classroom. This evaluation shows that the approach causes positive effects.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>I have read research conducted in classroom contexts similar to mine that show this practice causes positive effects.</p>
<p><b>Given this level of confidence, how should I implement this practice?</b></p>	<p>I should prefer other practices that I have more confidence in.</p> <p>If I would like to trial it, I should run a small-scale pilot that minimises any potential negative consequences for my children or students. I should do this in case the practice is ineffective.</p> <p>I should seek advice from more experienced educators or teachers who have previously implemented the practice.</p> <p>I should closely monitor how my children or students respond to, identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.</p>	<p>I should ensure that I am not replacing any time or effort that would have been spent on other practices in which I have more confidence.</p> <p>If I choose to increase my use of this practice, I should do so cautiously. I should continue to collect data on how my children or students respond. I should use this data to check that the practice continues to be associated with improved child or student outcomes and to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences from increasing its use.</p> <p>I should seek further implementation advice from more experienced educators or teachers who use the practice more frequently.</p>	<p>I should implement this practice. I should ensure that any other practices that I am replacing or crowding out are ones in which I have less confidence.</p> <p>As much as possible, I should replicate how the practice has been implemented in other contexts where it has been proven to improve child or student outcomes.</p> <p>If I need to adapt the practice for my context, I should first seek insights from the research about how the practice leads to improved child or student outcomes. I should then design any adjustments based on these research insights.</p> <p>I should closely monitor implementation to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.</p>	<p>I should implement this practice as much as I can.</p> <p>I should collect data on how and why the practice works for my children or students to support ongoing improvement.</p> <p>I should continually monitor the practice to ensure ongoing effectiveness.</p>

## Evidence rubric for educators and teachers (continued)

	 <b>Level 1</b> Low confidence	 <b>Level 2</b> Medium confidence	 <b>Level 3</b> High confidence	 <b>Level 4</b> Very high confidence
<b>How can I collect evidence that may increase my level of confidence?</b>	<p>I could undertake a review of the research literature to identify whether there is any evidence that the practice is associated with positive effects.</p> <p>I could run a small-scale pilot of the practice and observe whether it is associated with any improvements in outcomes.</p>	<p>I could undertake a review of the research literature to identify whether there is any evidence from other contexts that the practice causes positive effects.</p> <p>I could identify a comparison set of classes that are similar to my own, but with educators or teachers who do not implement this practice. I could compare the outcomes of my children or students before and after I implement the practice, as well as with the outcomes of children or students in the other set of classes.</p>	<p>I could randomly assign half of my classes or half the children or students in my class(es) to receive this practice. I could then compare the outcomes of children or students who receive the practice with the outcomes of those who do not.</p> <p>I could randomly assign the timing of the practice. I could have half my class(es) or half my children or students in my class(es) randomly receive the practice in the first unit, while the other half receive it in the second unit. I could then compare outcomes of children or students during units when they receive the practice, with outcomes during units when they do not.</p> <p>I could randomly determine when I implement the practice. Depending on how much planning is required, I could flip a coin at the beginning of every day or every week to decide whether I should implement the practice in my class(es). I can then compare the outcomes of children or students on days when the practice is implemented with outcomes on days when the practice is not implemented.</p>	<p>I could analyse the practice to understand how exactly it leads to improvements in my children's or students' outcomes.</p> <p>I could compare children or students for whom the practice seems more and less effective, to try to identify the key features of the practice and related enabling conditions.</p>

## Evidence rubric for school and ECEC service leaders

	 <b>Level 1</b> Low confidence	 <b>Level 2</b> Medium confidence	 <b>Level 3</b> High confidence	 <b>Level 4</b> Very high confidence
<p><b>How confident can I be in the effectiveness of a particular approach in my context?</b></p>	<p>I can hypothesise why the approach works. I can explain step-by-step how the approach will lead to positive effects in my school or service.</p>	<p>Members of my school or service community have given me positive feedback about the approach, and I have outcome data that suggests the approach has positive effects.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>I have read research that suggests that high-performing schools or services use this approach.</p>	<p>I have read research conducted by trustworthy sources such as AERO that evaluate this approach. This research shows this approach causes positive effects.</p>	<p>I have conducted a rigorous causal evaluation of the approach as implemented in my school or service. This evaluation shows that the approach causes positive effects.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>I have read research conducted in school contexts similar to mine that show this approach causes positive effects.</p>
<p><b>Given this level of confidence, how should I implement this approach?</b></p>	<p>I should prefer other approaches that I have more confidence in.</p> <p>If I decide to trial it, I should run a small-scale pilot until I have better evidence of its effectiveness. The pilot should be led by experienced educators or teachers who want to trial the approach.</p> <p>I should undertake a risk assessment to plan for and mitigate any consequences should the approach not work.</p> <p>I should closely monitor implementation to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.</p>	<p>I should allocate limited resources to the approach. I should ensure that any resources allocated are diverted from other approaches that I have less confidence in.</p> <p>I should replicate what has been done in other schools or services where the approach is associated with positive effects.</p> <p>I should undertake a risk assessment to plan for and mitigate any consequences should the approach not work.</p> <p>I should closely monitor implementation to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.</p>	<p>I should allocate resources to the approach. I should ensure that any resources allocated are only diverted from other approaches that I have less confidence in.</p> <p>I should replicate what has been done in other contexts where the approach has been proven to have positive effects.</p> <p>If I need to adapt the approach for my context, I should first seek insights from the research about why the approach was found to be effective. I should then design any adjustments based on these research insights.</p> <p>I should undertake a risk assessment to plan for and mitigate any consequences should the approach not work.</p> <p>I should closely monitor implementation to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.</p>	<p>I should allocate resources that support implementation of the approach across the school or service.</p> <p>I should collect data on how and why the approach works in my school or service to support ongoing improvement.</p> <p>I should continually monitor the approach to ensure ongoing effectiveness.</p>

## Evidence rubric for school and ECEC service leaders (continued)

	 <b>Level 1</b> Low confidence	 <b>Level 2</b> Medium confidence	 <b>Level 3</b> High confidence	 <b>Level 4</b> Very high confidence
<p><b>How can I collect evidence that may increase my level of confidence?</b></p>	<p>I could undertake a review of the research literature to identify whether there is any evidence from other schools or services that the approach is associated with positive effects.</p> <p>I could run a small-scale pilot and observe whether the approach is associated with any improvements in outcomes.</p>	<p>I could undertake a review of the research literature to identify whether there is any evidence from other schools or services that the approach causes positive effects.</p> <p>I could support an evaluation in another school or service that is similar to my own where the approach is more established.</p> <p>I could identify a comparison set of schools or services similar to my own. I could compare the outcomes of schools and services before and after they implement the approach as well as with the outcomes of schools and services that have never implemented the approach.</p>	<p>I could randomly assign some of my educators or teachers to implement the approach. I could then compare the outcomes of those who implement the approach with those who do not.</p> <p>I could randomly assign the timing of the approach. I could then compare outcomes during periods when the approach is implemented with outcomes during periods when it is not.</p> <p>I could use statistical techniques to ensure that any effects identified using the above methods are not simply due to chance.</p> <p>I could commission an evaluation of the approach to generate evidence that it causes positive effects in my school or service.</p>	<p>I could conduct or commission an evaluation to better understand why the approach is effective in my school or service, for whom it is most effective, and/or the conditions that enhance its effectiveness.</p>

## Evidence rubric for policymakers

	 <b>Level 1</b> Low confidence	 <b>Level 2</b> Medium confidence	 <b>Level 3</b> High confidence	 <b>Level 4</b> Very high confidence
<b>How confident can I be in the effectiveness of a particular approach in my context?</b>	I can hypothesise why the approach works. I can explain step by step how the approach will lead to positive effects in my system.	Early adopters in my system think the approach is successful, and can show me data that suggest there have been positive effects.  AND/OR  I have read research that suggest high-performing systems use this approach.	I have read research conducted by trustworthy sources such as AERO that evaluate this approach. This research shows this approach causes positive effects.	I have conducted a rigorous causal evaluation of the approach as implemented in my system. This evaluation shows that the approach causes positive effects.  AND/OR  I have read research conducted in system contexts similar to mine that show this approach causes positive effects.
<b>Given this level of confidence, how should I implement this approach</b>	I should prefer other approaches that I have more confidence in.  If I decide to trial it, I should run a small-scale pilot until I have better evidence of its effectiveness. The pilot should be led by experienced leaders, teachers, and/or educators who want to trial out the approach.  I should undertake a risk assessment to plan for and mitigate any consequences should the approach not work.  I should closely monitor implementation to identify whether the approach is working and manage any unintended negative consequences.	I should allocate limited resources to the approach. I should ensure that any resources allocated are diverted from other approaches that I have less confidence in.  I should replicate what has been done in other systems where the approach is associated with positive effects.  I should undertake a risk assessment to plan for and mitigate any consequences should the approach not work.  I should closely monitor implementation to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.	I should allocate resources to the approach. I should ensure that any resources allocated are only diverted from other approaches that I have less confidence in.  I should replicate what has been done in other contexts where the approach has been proven to have positive effects.  If I need to adapt the approach for my system, I should first seek insights from the research about why the approach was found to be effective. I should then design any adaptations based on these research insights.  I should begin implementation in places in my system that are most similar to those where the approach was found to be effective.  I should undertake a risk assessment to plan for and mitigate any consequences should the approach not work.  I should closely monitor implementation to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences.	I should allocate resources that support implementation of the approach at scale.  I should collect data on how and why the approach works in my system to support ongoing improvement.  I should continually monitor the approach to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

## Evidence rubric for policymakers (continued)



**Level 1**  
Low confidence



**Level 2**  
Medium confidence



**Level 3**  
High confidence



**Level 4**  
Very high confidence

**How can I collect evidence that may increase my level of confidence?**

I could undertake a review of the research literature to identify whether there is any evidence from other systems that the approach is associated with positive effects.

I could collect data on early adopters of the approach in my system and assess whether the approach is associated with improvements in outcomes.

I could undertake a review of the research literature to identify whether there is any evidence from other systems that the approach causes positive effects.

I could commission an evaluation of the approach to generate evidence that it causes positive effects. This evaluation could be of a small-scale pilot in my system, or it could be conducted in a different system where the approach is already well-established.

I could compare the longitudinal outcomes of schools or services that have implemented the approach, with similar schools or services that have not.

I could randomly stagger or stage implementation of the approach and then compare the outcomes of schools or services that start implementation at different times.

I could determine a school's or service's eligibility based on a particular standard or cut-off, and then compare the outcomes of those who are just above and just below the cut-off.

I could use statistical techniques to ensure that any effects identified using the above methods are not simply due to chance.

I could commission an evaluation of the approach to generate evidence that it causes positive effects in my system.

I could conduct or commission an evaluation to better understand: why the approach is effective; for whom it is most effective; and/or, the conditions that enhance its effectiveness.