Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review - VEPR

An Introduction to the extended UKES Pilot

UKES Conference 2017

1

Next step in enhancing professionalism

Guidelines for good practice

Principles for action in evaluation (2003)

↓

Capabilities Framework

Clarifying acceptable capabilities/competence to ensure quality evaluation (2012)

↓

*Peer review
with
reflective practice*
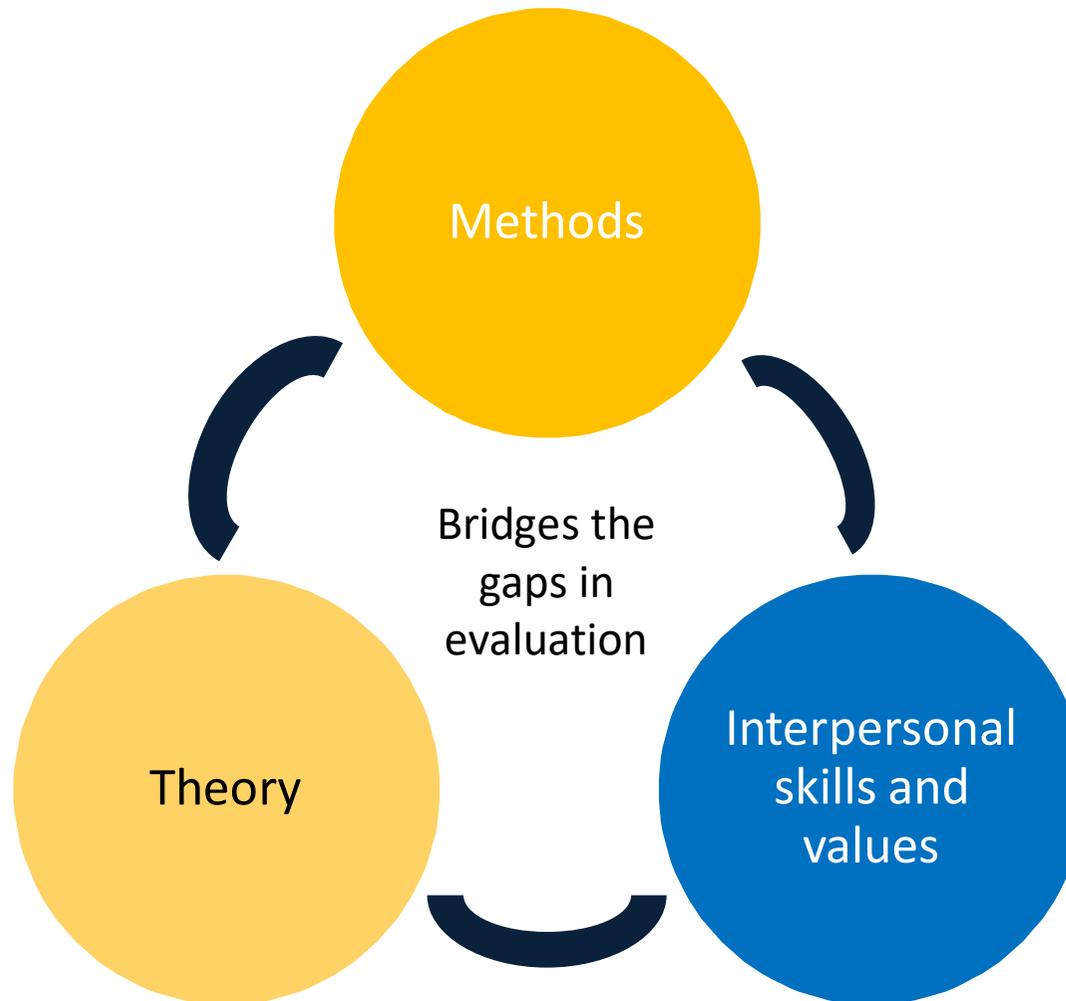
Putting capabilities into action for evaluation

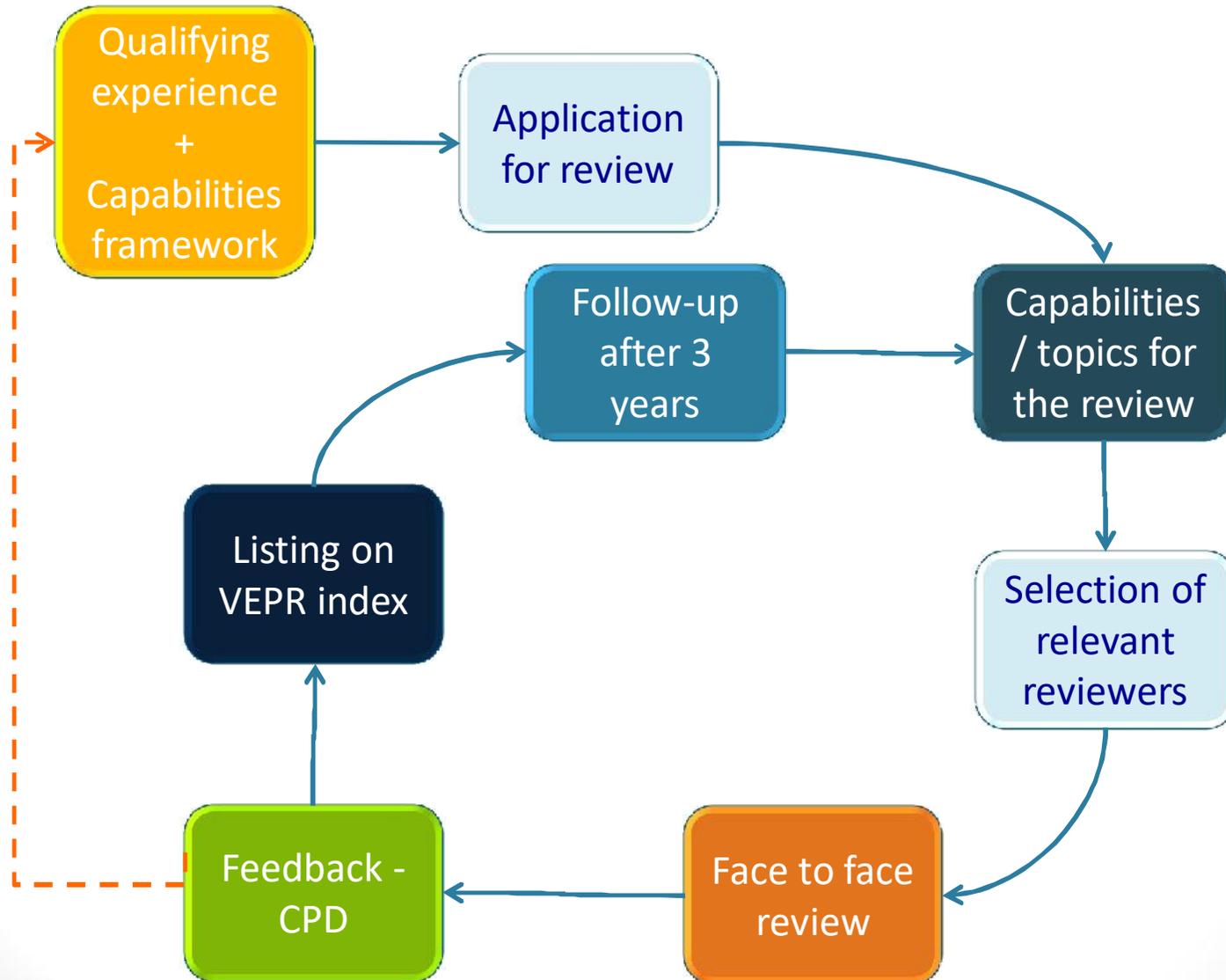**Professional development**

Developing the individual practitioner

2

The capabilities framework

UKES Capabilities domains	
1. EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE	
1.1 Understands the social and political role of evaluation	4 sub domains
1.2 Familiarity with evaluation designs and approaches	5 sub domains
1.3 Comprehends and makes effective use of evaluation methodologies	5 sub domains
2. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	
2.1 Demonstrates ability to manage and deliver evaluations	7 sub domains
2.2 Demonstrates interpersonal skills	6 sub domains
3. QUALITIES AND DISPOSITIONS	6 sub domains

Reflective practice

Methods

Theory

Interpersonal skills and values

Bridges the gaps in evaluation

The VEPR process

Qualifying experience + Capabilities framework → Application for review → Capabilities / topics for the review → Selection of relevant reviewers → Face to face review → Feedback - CPD → Listing on VEPR index → Follow-up after 3 years → Capabilities / topics for the review
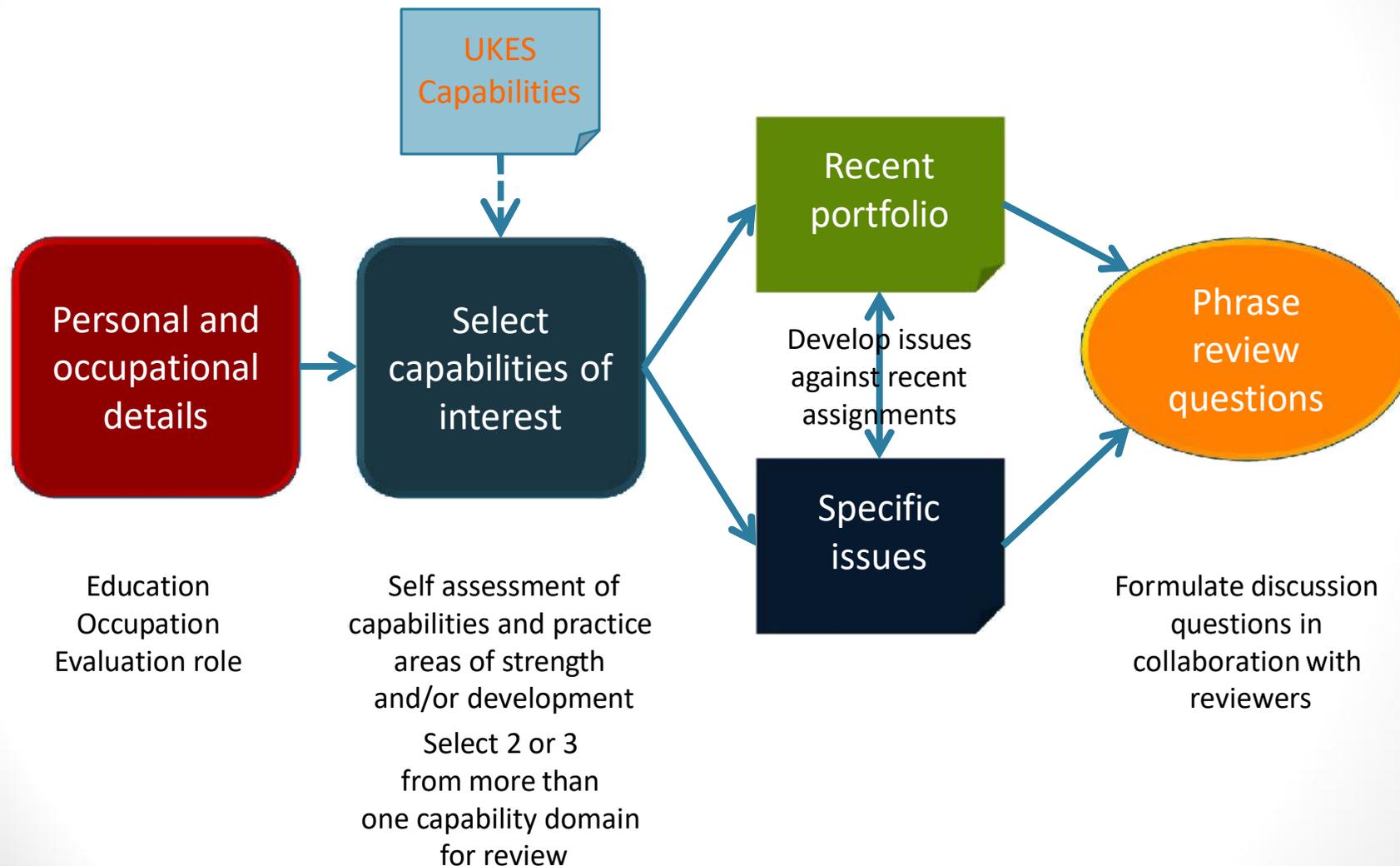
A Charter of Principles*

i. **Voluntariness**
   - *Willing participation, no obligation*

ii. **Autonomy**
   - *Review <u>by</u> evaluation practitioners, <u>for</u> evaluation practitioners*

iii. **Legitimacy**
   - *Explicit capabilities framework endorsed by UKES members*

iv. **Pluralism**
   - *Responsive to diverse roles, cultures, levels of experience and methodological preference*

v. **Transparency**
   - *Public access to review governance and guidelines*

vi. **Quality assurance**
   - *Impartiality; reviewer training and selection process*

* An evolving document, endorsed and further developed by the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)

Preparing for a review

UKES Capabilities

Recent portfolio

Phrase review questions

Personal and occupational details

Select capabilities of interest

Develop issues against recent assignments

Specific issues

Education
Occupation
Evaluation role

Self assessment of capabilities and practice areas of strength and/or development

Select 2 or 3 from more than one capability domain for review

Formulate discussion questions in collaboration with reviewers

Being a reviewer

Application form

Application Form

Desirable characteristics

- Sound knowledge of evaluation theory and practice
- Practice base that includes work in relation to complex evaluation projects
- Good communication skills and teamwork
- Ability to adhere to a schedule
- Supervision, mentoring or peer review skills and experience
- Ability to report constructively and succinctly on a colleague's learning
- Participation in reflective practice experience or training course and/or have been VEPR reviewed

The Review

- Applicant & reviewers agree schedule
  - Dates
  - Portfolio information
- Medium of interaction and duration
  - Face to Face or 'Skype'
  - 90 minutes to 2 hours
- Recording
  - All parties to take notes
  - Option to audio record the discussion
- Discussion
  - Role of the co-reviewer to keep time …
  - … and to cover all the questions
- Completion
  - Draft and agree the report within agreed time afterwards

Reflection during the review

Reflection

Evaluation (1):
What went particularly well in this element of the project? What was particularly good about the way you addressed it, and handled your role?

Evaluation (2) What was challenging in this particular element of the evaluation? Was there anything you felt you might have done differently?

Analysis:
What sense can you make of the situation? What theoretical or external body of knowledge can help you make sense of the experience?

Conclusions (general):
What can be concluded, in a general sense, from these experiences and the analyses you have undertaken?

Conclusions (specific):
What can be concluded about your own specific, unique, personal situation or ways of working?

Personal Action plans: What have you learnt from this experience?
Does it indicate any additional training or development would you like to undertake to support you going forward?

Review report form

Applicant details
Reviewer details
Primary reviewer
Second reviewer

Review details

Capabilities explored	Learning by applicant (750 words)	Reviewer endorsement (500 words)
1. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
2. [Capability]	[Brief outline of learning]	[Reviewer comment]
Etc.		
Other gains from the VEPR review	[Applicant benefit]	[Reviewer benefit]
Other comments on the review (outcomes or process)	[Applicant comment]	[Reviewer comment]

Declaration
We declare that the VEPR review for [applicant full name] was completed on [dd/mm/yyyy] to the satisfaction in all aspects of the applicant and the two reviewers.

Signed
Applicant: _____
Primary reviewer: _____
Second reviewer: _____

What have we learned?

- Peer review using RP is different from supervision, mentoring or coaching – it is anchored in the reflection that is a fundamental feature of evaluation

- Self reflection against the UKES Capabilities Framework was valuable in itself

- Review should be part of a process with follow-up, not a single point in time

- It is open-ended and has agency compared with assessment against a framework (like the CES approach)

- Value is in the wider process of evaluation, it's not about skills training

Demonstration role-play – Review topic

Capability

- **1.3 Comprehends and makes effective use of evaluation methodologies**
  - 1.33 Understands participatory approaches and the contexts in which most appropriate

- The topic for review discussion:
  - *"How to maximise the benefits of participatory approaches in evaluation, particularly those involving young people. Reflecting on recent experiences evaluating two Talent Match employability programmes for young people, including designing an evaluation / research approach that makes use of input from programme participants; and involving young people in other elements of the research process."*

Focus questions

- **What did it appear that the participants got out of the review? (*Benefits*)**

- **Was there anything in the discussion process that you personally might not feel comfortable with or would have wanted to do differently? (*Improvements*)**

- **In what ways do you think a VEPR process can improve evaluators' professionalism? (*Value*)**

Issues arising from the initial pilot

- Need robust data protection and security
- Some small changes needed to the forms, but they mostly worked well
- Pilot benefited from face to face briefing and training at the start for reviewers and reviewees
- Need to balance the cost of administering a scheme – such as recruiting a coordinator, and reviewee willingness to pay for the review
- It would be of great value to institutional members of the society

Next steps

- Advertise for further volunteers including as coordinator

- Seek support from institutional members

- Ensure VEPR listing on website for those who have been through the process

- Plan timetable for 2017

Comments from our volunteers

Discover shared issues or problems

Restorative

Brings professional self acountability

Excellent, a really good process
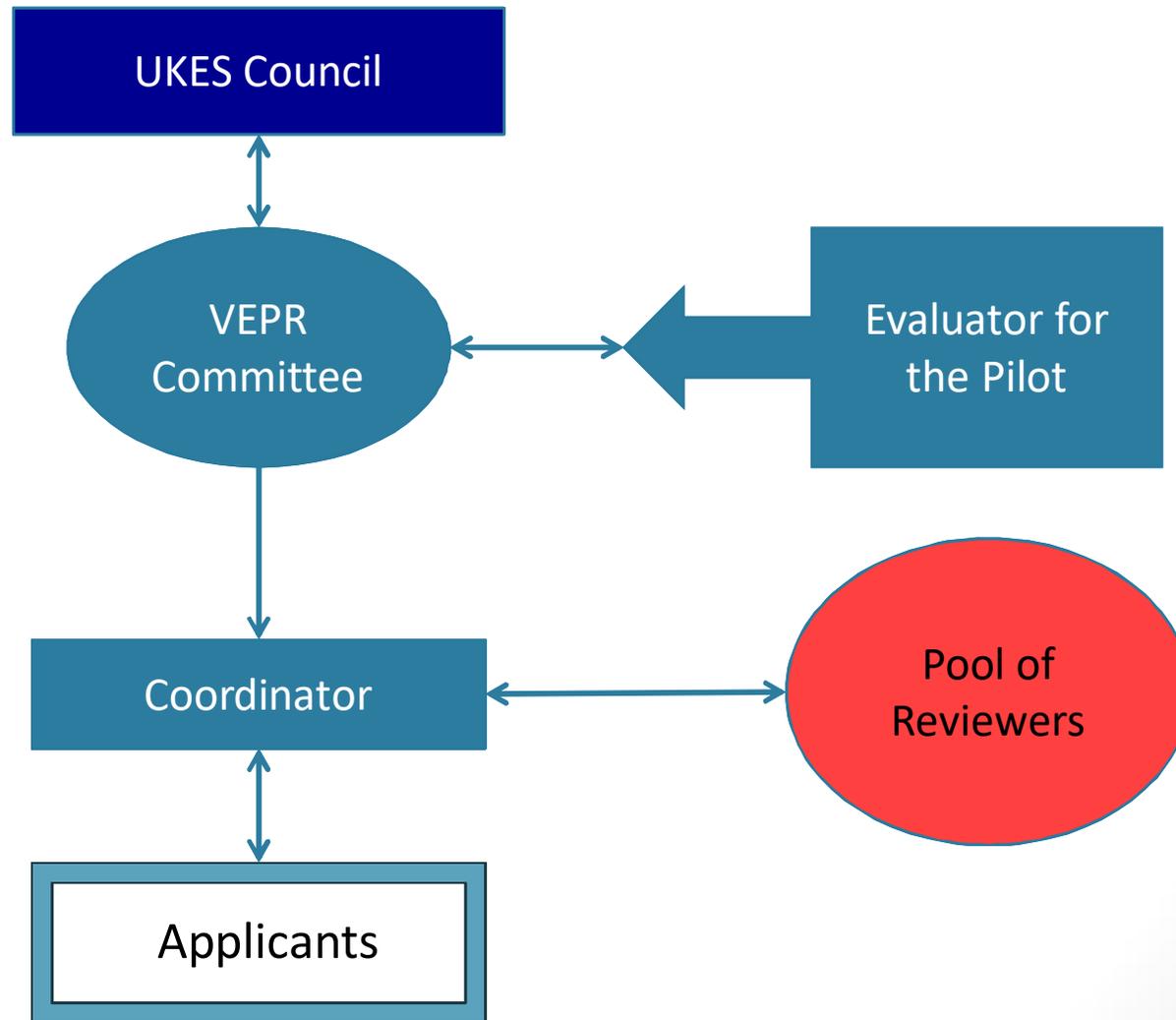
Valuable at any stage in a career

Builds trust

OPEN, FRANK DISCUSSION

Support from reviewers builds confidence

End

THE FOLLOWING ARE SPARE SLIDES

Key roles

Review application form

Application Form

- Personal details

- Professional statement

- CV – Education & professional experience

- Referees

- Self assessment of capabilities and practice areas for review

- Issues for review & document reference

Why an extended pilot for VEPR?

Reviewer skills

Protocols

Review reports

Administration & management

Feedback

Forms and procedures

Review design

Listing

22

Comments from our volunteers

Discover shared
issues or problems

Therapeutic

Brings professional
self acountability

Excellent, a really good process

Builds trust

Valuable
at any stage
in a career

OPEN, FRANK DISCUSSION

Support from reviewers
builds confidence

23

Listing

- Primary reviewer informs the Coordinator that the review has been completed to a satisfactory standard

- Coordinator sends an acknowledgement to the applicant and both reviewers, and uploads the listing details onto the UKES VEPR Index

- Listing on the VEPR Index is dated, and lapses automatically after three years unless renewed via a further VEPR.

24

Potential benefits

Evaluation community	• Promoting the discussion of appropriate quality and ethical practice and standards across the evaluation profession
Institutional	• Access to an endorsement process as an indicator of professional standards
Individual	• Impartial reflection and support for accountability & professional development