

Evidence rubric



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

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 school and ECEC service leaders

	 Level 1 Low confidence	 Level 2 Medium confidence	 Level 3 High confidence	 Level 4 Very high confidence
How confident can I be in the effectiveness of a particular approach in my context?	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.	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. AND/OR I have read research that suggests that high-performing schools or services 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 school or service. This evaluation shows that the approach causes positive effects. AND/OR I have read research conducted in school contexts similar to mine that show this approach causes positive effects.
Given this level of confidence, how should I implement this approach?	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 educators or teachers who want to trial 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 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 schools or services 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 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. 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 across the school or service. I should collect data on how and why the approach works in my school or service to support ongoing improvement. I should continually monitor the approach to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

Evidence rubric for school and ECEC service leaders (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?	<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>