



## STEP 1: Make starting considerations

Before undertaking a quality control evaluation, a clear understanding of what you are seeking to measure and why needs to be established. The following questions should be considered to help frame the purpose of the quality control evaluation.

- What is important and relevant to your environment?
- What is the target group you are seeking to evaluate?
- What are you attempting to assess?

## STEP 2: Select an evaluation method

Many different evaluation types are available to the user, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. The method that is most appropriate will vary depending on the needs of the evaluation and the type of environment. Some of the options are presented below, with some of the strengths and weaknesses highlighted.

### Self-assessment

This is where an evaluation is conducted with the responsible officer assessing the environment against an established set of criteria.



**Advantages:** Encourages the responsible officer to take ownership; encourages the responsible officer to reflect on the role and contribution that the environment is having; simple and quick to undertake as it only requires input from one person who can own the whole process.



**Disadvantages:** Self-evaluation has a risk of perception impacting the results (the responsible officer could score too highly to too harshly depending on their viewpoint); only considers one person's opinion.

### 360 degree

This is an evaluation that seeks to gain insight from everyone (or as many as possible) who interacts with the environment to gain a complete picture from all viewpoints, hence the name 360 degree.





**Advantages:** More complete assessment as it collects feedback from many different sources, resulting in a broader and potentially more accurate assessment; In theory it could facilitate a collective ownership to collaboratively address the outputs from the evaluation as all stakeholders have had an opportunity to contribute to the appraisal.



**Disadvantages:** It could create a damaging culture if negative feedback is received resulting in resentment or inducing emotions like fear and anger; feedback might not be 100% accurate (individuals might have different agendas, feedback might not be honest – either too critical or not critical enough); could be difficult and time consuming to gather feedback from multiple stakeholders.

## Quantitative feedback

This is where the feedback collected focuses on numbers or areas that can be quantified. Typically, this would be conducted using closed-ended or forced-choice questions for examples using feedback scales, predetermined options and assessing numerical metrics.



**Advantages:** usually quick and easy to collect data; allows for objective comparisons to take place; can be used to reach a large number of respondents; can be analysed using statistical methods; can identify “what” or “how many” but does not tell you “why”. Is repeatable.



**Disadvantages:** restricts the feedback to a pre-determined set of answers which may not represent the true opinion of the assessor; does not allow for a deeper understanding of why the assessment opinion is held.

## Qualitative feedback

This type of feedback focuses on getting detailed answers in order to gain a deeper understanding. Open-ended questions and interviews can be used to gain insight into opinions and behaviours.



**Advantages:** Can allow for the richer feedback resulting in a deeper understanding; might receive different feedback to that which you were expecting.



**Disadvantages:** Can be more time consuming to collect; less measurable than quantitative making it harder to interpret; not repeatable.





## STEP 3: Develop questionnaire and conduct the evaluation

With a clear understanding of what is being evaluated and what type of information you are seeking to obtain, the next step is to develop the evaluation questions that will be used. Existing surveys and templates for monitoring dual career environments already exist and could either be used or developed to meet your needs. The download section of “Quality Control” provides one ready-made self-assessment (“My System Quick Check”) whose questions might fit (some of) your requirements.

Once the evaluation questionnaire is completed, it is then time to conduct the evaluation, using the chosen method from Step 2, to collect the feedback data.

## STEP 4: Use the output

After the data has been collected it then needs to be collated and analysed. This will be different depending on your method of evaluation. The evaluation should highlight an environment's strengths and weaknesses. If you have used our “System Quick Check”, the programme will automatically help your analysis by colouring the results for you.

You should use these results to determine an action plan to continue to exploit and celebrate the strengths, while addressing the weaknesses. You may identify areas that could be improved quickly, and these could be tackled first. However, there may be a large weakness (or weaknesses) that will take a great deal of work to address that may need to be rectified as a priority to enhance your environment. Use the evaluation results to formulate an environment enhancement action plan.

Repeat the quality control evaluation periodically to check whether actions have enhanced weaknesses in order to continuously develop your dual career environment.

### References

- European Commission (2016): Study on the Minimum Quality Requirements of Dual Career Services. Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e06e5845-0527-11e6-b713-01aa75ed71a1>

