



Government
CAMPUS

An evidence-based and impact-led Government Campus




Our plans for evaluation are rightly ambitious.
Better evaluation is central to government policy.

We want to get it right, and, where we're not getting it right, learn from that and respond quickly.




**October
2021**

**Publication of the
evaluation strategy**



**June
2023**

**Progress review
and acting on
lessons learned**



**April
2025**


Full review

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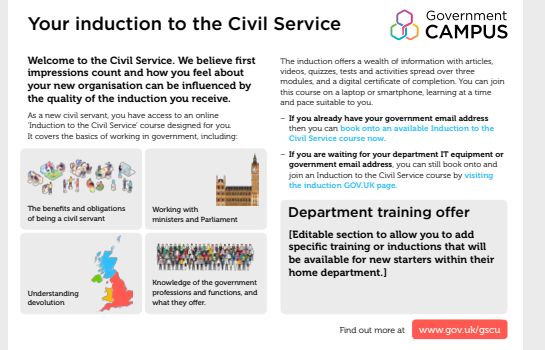
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About the Government Campus

The Government Campus brings all government training and development together, whether provided centrally, or designed and delivered by professions, functions, and departments. Both virtual and physical with different sites across the country, civil servants will be able to source, select and attend training that they may have not previously known about, or been able to access before.

Civil servants can develop the knowledge, skills and networks which they need to develop their careers in public service and deliver the capability the government needs now and, in the future, to solve the most complex policy challenges.

The Government Skills and Curriculum Unit (GSCU), is the central Cabinet Office team which leads and coordinates the Government Campus. Established in September 2020, to improve the capabilities of civil servants, the unit brings together the central teams responsible for training and development, including cross-public sector leadership and talent schemes.



This document outlines how we will evaluate the Government Campus. It is the result of six months of scoping work and systematised social research work. This included more than 300 Campus stakeholders across government. It represents the start of an important and exciting journey that will help us to:



1. Do more evaluation so we can:

- a. find out more about the impact our Campus activities are having;
- b. have a stronger understanding of when things are (or aren't) working and what the reasons for that are; and
- c. be more confident that we are generating a good return on the public funds invested in our work.

2. Do better evaluation so we can:

- a. capture the outcomes that we're really interested in. Going beyond consideration of learners' perceptions and experiences into the actual new knowledge, skills and networks that have been created; and
- b. how these are shaping people's work and our success as a sector and a system.

3. Join up our approaches to evaluation more strongly so we can:

- a. work from a shared knowledge base of what evaluation methods and measures work best to answer strategically important questions about how to build capability in our context, and ensure findings are shared and acted on.
- b. make better use of resources by not 'reinventing the wheel' each time. By taking increasingly similar approaches our data and findings will accumulate. We will be able to reach more definitive answers to what works best, for who, in what contexts, and why, when developing the knowledge, skills and networks that the system and our colleagues across government need.

This will support us in being even more targeted and expert in our work and more confident in meeting the expectations of our senior stakeholders and the public.

We have done a lot of work behind the scenes to the design principles that will guide our evaluation. We draw on the Magenta Book, the cross-government guide to evaluation.

We have also thought carefully about the responsibility we are taking on when we use organisational data, or ask colleagues to provide data, including what the risks might be if we don't use and store that data carefully. This applies to all the data we collect and use, whether that has come through assessment tools, questionnaires, interviews, observations or other means. Central to our evaluation plans is good governance of our research and evaluation activities and we put ethical data collection and use at the heart of what we do. You can find more detail on how we will do this in our **full evaluation strategy**.

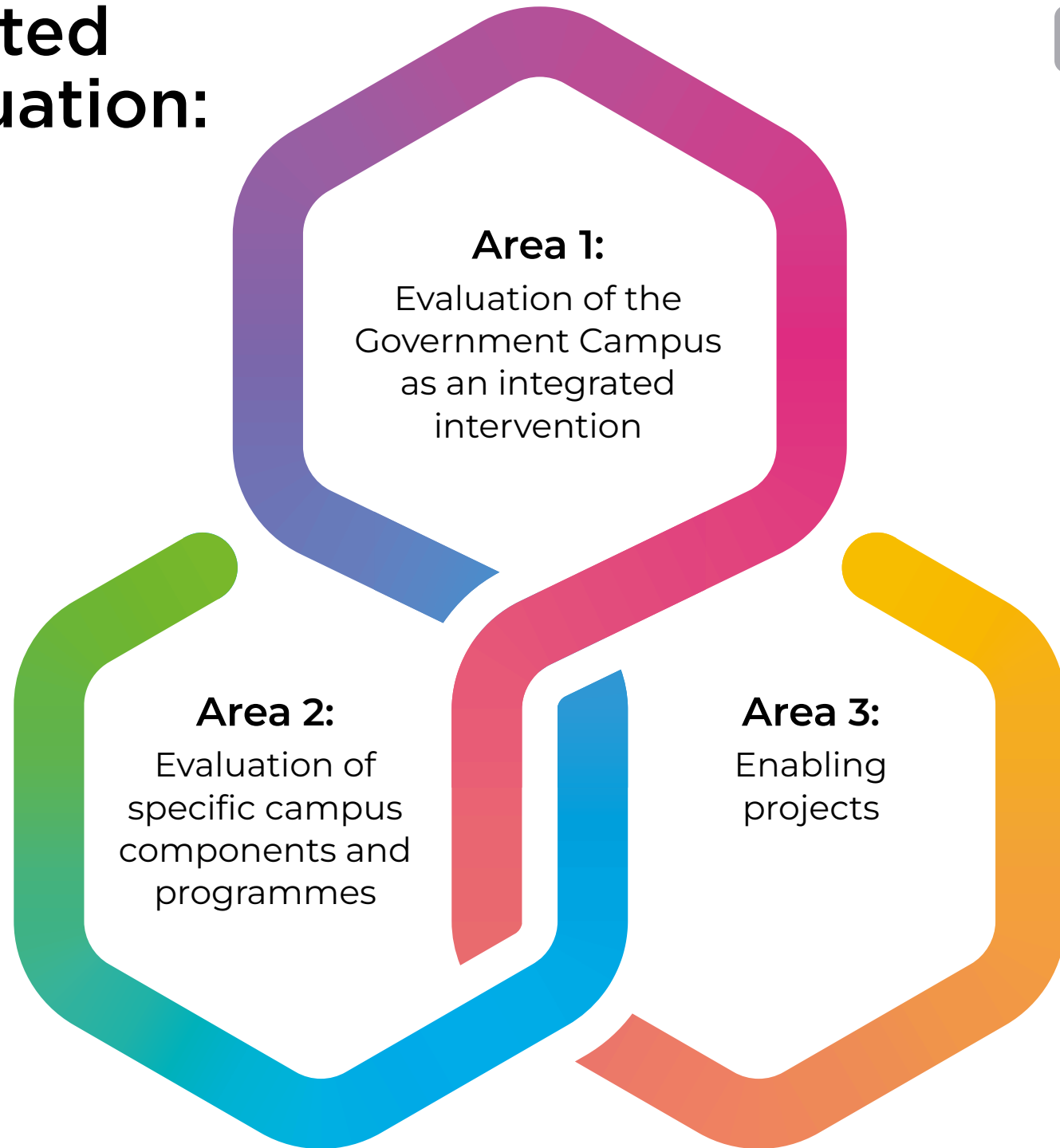
[Read the full evaluation strategy](#)

Evaluation aims to test the efficacy of particular activities or programmes, not to test individuals. We will only ever use our data to test our own assumptions and designs and make them better. We are also committed to working transparently. This means you will see us seeking to publish all the research and evaluation we carry out. We will include accessible summaries for non-specialist audiences.

There will be three main areas to our evaluation activity.



The three interconnected areas of Campus evaluation:



Area 1

Evaluation of the Government Campus as an integrated intervention

Campus evaluation carefully prioritised based on our theory of change, which lays out what outcomes we expect to see, when, and the connections we will need to test.

The Government Skills and Curriculum Unit (GSCU) analytical team, will lead our evaluation activities. They will work closely with the wider GSCU to determine timing and prioritisation.

This will help prioritise the most pressing evaluation questions and ensure we make most efficient use of the data already collected across Government. We all benefit from this close working because it gives us the assurance we need that the Campus is achieving what it was set up to do, right across Government.

Area 2

Evaluation of specific campus components and programmes

Evaluation of programmes, projects, schemes and components of the Campus using a tiered approach, guided by tier-specific design principles which can be accessed in Annex 1 to our evaluation strategy.

This refers to programmes and learning and development and capability building activities owned by GSCU. 2021 – 2025 will be a transitional phase as we implement our new, tiered approach. The Campus analytical team will initially support the leads of our most strategically important programmes/activities or those with a high spend to scope out the most purposeful, robust and feasible approaches to evaluation. This might include randomised control trials, pre/post assessment, powerful statistical methods and qualitative data collection. Evaluation will be targeted at capturing the difference an activity has made, and what factors have shaped its success.

[Read Annex 1](#)

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Area 2 – our tiered approach to evaluation

Tier 1

Most robust and independent evidence and evaluation (e.g. experimental or quasi-experimental; in-depth process evaluation). Areas of greatest spend, most strategically important areas and those where more evidence will make the greatest difference.

Tier 2

Always evaluated and evidence-informed, using robust, educative and practical tools and templates co-designed by analysts and programme teams. Evidence often aggregated across programmes or themes.

Tier 3

Formal evaluation unlikely to be needed, but standardised monitoring data (MI) collected and regularly analysed. Programmes and activities which are smaller in scale or where the evidence-base is already very secure.

Area 3

Enabling projects

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To ensure we are full equipped to deliver purposeful, robust and expert evaluation of our learning and development and capability building activities we will:

- Ensure we have the networks of internal and expertise we need to ensure up-to-date knowledge of the evidence base, methods and measures, and make sure we use those relationships as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Invest in the expertise of our own people to build capacity, capability and confidence within and beyond the Campus team, supported by readily available, tailored tools and resources.
- Optimise our commercial learning and development partnerships (the learning framework contracts) as a lever for our evaluation goals.
- Work collectively with the learning and development, capability and people analytics communities across Government to share and define best practice and ensure the right evidence is available at the right time to support key decisions.

How long will this take?

Our plans for evaluation are rightly ambitious. They are expected to be – better evaluation is central to government policy, and it is an area where we will be held to account. They also need to be.

The Campus represents a huge investment of public funds and is central to the future of the Civil Service. We want to get it right, and, where we're not getting it right, learn from that and respond quickly. We are all curious people, experts in our field, and committed to delivering the very best and most effective L&D and capability-building opportunities to the remarkable and diverse people that make up the Civil Service. Evaluation is one critical tool in our belt to help us to meet this ambition.

We won't achieve this ambition overnight. We expect it to take around five years to transition all our Campus programmes onto the new, tiered system. The nature of the changes we are trying to deliver means that many of them won't reach fruition for at least a couple of years. This means that for our theory-of-change driven Campus evaluation we'll be mainly focusing on capturing outputs in years 1 to 2. Checking we're on track and

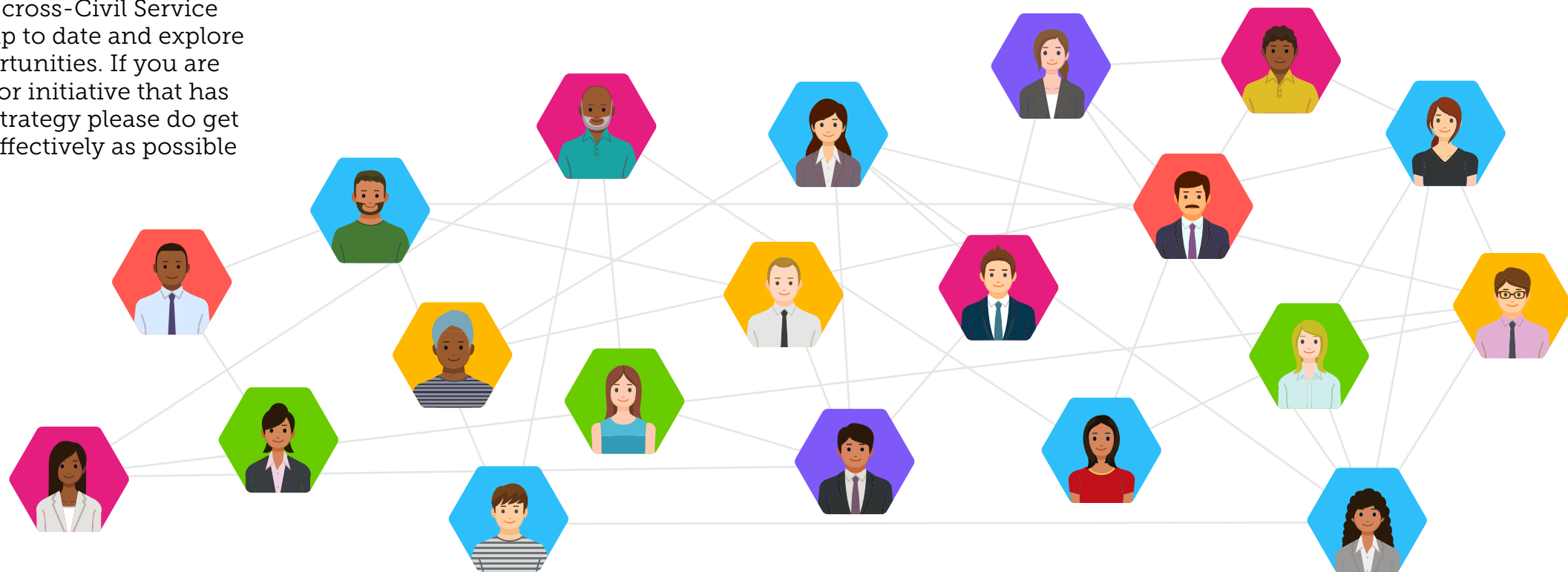
have delivered the short-term changes we said we'd deliver. After this, we'll be able to focus on outcomes, which will give us much stronger reassurance that we're making a difference.

We started work on our enabling projects right away and continue to focus on these alongside our evidence and evaluation projects. Do look out for opportunities to get involved, for example through consultation or co-design work. We will give you regular updates through our Campus communications channels.



How does this fit in with other strategic activities we're being asked to contribute to?

We have carefully designed our approach to evaluation to take into account relevant cross-government strategic priorities. We maintain a map of relevant policies and initiatives we need to address in our work and our governance arrangements, as well as our cross-Civil Service networks, help us keep this up to date and explore interdependencies and opportunities. If you are responsible for a policy area or initiative that has relevance to our evaluation strategy please do get in touch so we can work as effectively as possible towards shared priorities.



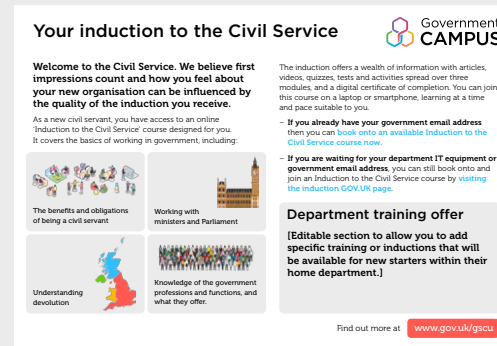
Building on success

There are already great examples of high-quality evaluation of L&D and capability-building activities across government, and we are excited to build on these and to learn from one another.

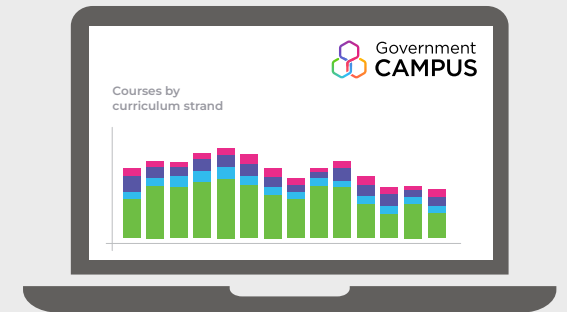
National Leadership Centre (NLC) evaluation – an example of Tier 1 evaluation



Evaluation of renewed Civil Service Induction – an example of Tier 2 evaluation



Standardising data collection tools within the learning frameworks – an example of Tier 3 monitoring



National Leadership Centre (NLC) evaluation – an example of Tier 1 evaluation

The National Leadership Centre carried out an integrated programme of impact, process and economic evaluation, underpinned by review of relevant research evidence, throughout the lifetime of this policy. A Theory of Change was used throughout the evaluation to identify where expected outcomes and impacts were being realised, where they weren't, and to help establish why. Practically, it helped the team identify expected outcomes for each element of NLC activity, and to design survey and interview questions, and analysis frameworks.

The final evaluation report has now been concluded and is available on our website. It highlights some valuable insights as we develop our provision for civil service and wider public sector leaders. These included:

1. The importance of informal interaction and reflection as well as formal provision
2. The impact different groupings of leaders can have on collaborative projects with different aims
3. The programme is more effective when all objectives are shared with participants from the outset

We are now taking these findings forward as we develop the Leadership College for Government.

Sahana Quail, formerly Research Officer, National Leadership Centre and **Diarmid Campbell-Jack**, Evidence and Impact Lead, Leadership College for Government



Evaluation of renewed Civil Service Induction – an example of Tier 2 evaluation

In May 2021 GSCU started piloting a new online induction course to support the approximately 40,000 new staff who join the Civil Service each year, using the FutureLearn online learning platform and a completely fresh set of materials. By November 2021 over 2,000 new civil servants had participated in the course. Evaluation has been key to understanding whether we are helping more people understand what it means to be a civil servant and how the Civil Service operates as a whole.

We've collected qualitative data within the course through ongoing commenting by learners and periodic reflection questions. The FutureLearn 'stats dashboard' also provides quantitative data which gives detailed insights into learner behaviour across the course and engagement with specific pieces of content. We've also used pre- and post-course questionnaires designed to test increases in confidence across eight key knowledge areas, as well as get wider feedback on the course and a "net promoter score". A key finding is that reported confidence levels – eg "are you confident that you could explain the main points of the Civil Service Code?" – are increasing consistently by


40-50 percentage points across the two surveys.

This is just the start of our induction evaluation journey. We're also talking to some partner departments about the possibility of integrating the evaluation of this central course with departments' wider evaluation of induction. We'll be able to then better understand how it contributes to departments' wider objectives and interrelates with other induction activities. We're also planning to

go back to the pilot groups in 6 to 9 months' time and ask them to provide qualitative data on how the induction contributed to their overall learning and development during this period.





Jonathan Marshall and Carrie Griffin,
Campus and Curriculum Team

Your induction to the Civil Service



Welcome to the Civil Service. We believe first impressions count and how you feel about your new organisation can be influenced by the quality of the induction you receive.

As a new civil servant, you have access to an online 'Induction to the Civil Service' course designed for you. It covers the basics of working in government, including:

-  The benefits and obligations of being a civil servant
-  Working with ministers and Parliament
-  Understanding devolution
-  Knowledge of the government professions and functions, and what they offer.

The induction offers a wealth of information with articles, videos, quizzes, tests and activities spread over three modules, and a digital certificate of completion. You can join this course on a laptop or smartphone, learning at a time and pace suitable to you.

- **If you already have your government email address** then you can [book onto an available Induction to the Civil Service course now](#).
- **If you are waiting for your department IT equipment or government email address**, you can still book onto and join an Induction to the Civil Service course by [visiting the induction GOV.UK page](#).

Department training offer
[Editable section to allow you to add specific training or inductions that will be available for new starters within their home department.]

Find out more at www.gov.uk/gscu

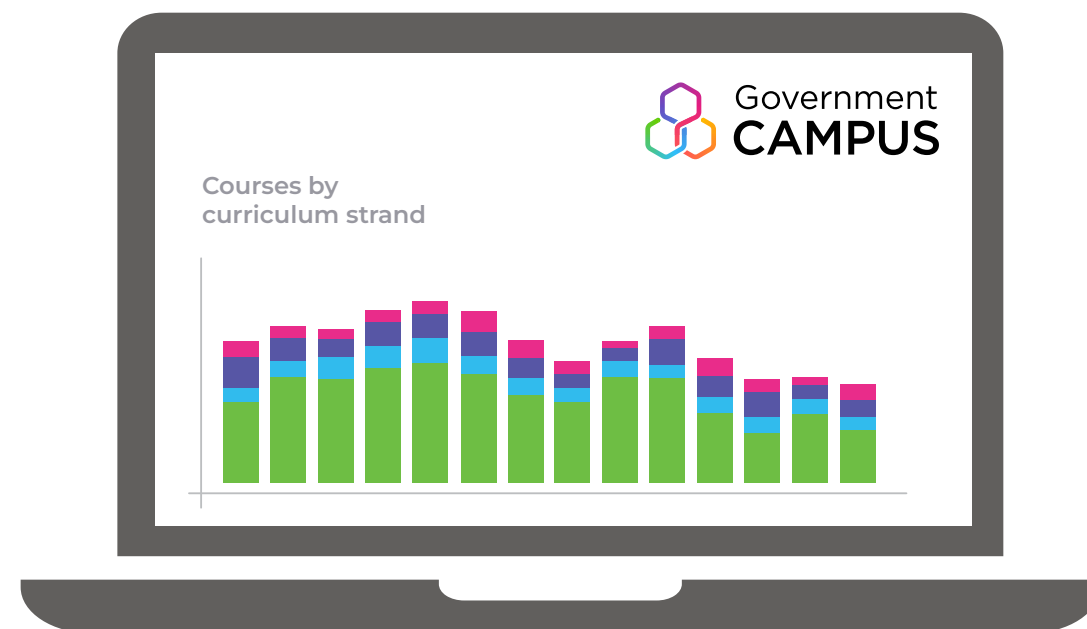
Standardising data collection tools within the learning frameworks – an example of Tier 3 monitoring

The vast majority of our external L&D commissioning happens through our 'Learning Frameworks' – that is, our contracts with external suppliers. This covers everything from some of our most popular courses to very distinctive, small-scale products. The scale and variety of the offer present a challenge, but also an opportunity, in relation to monitoring and evaluation. It wouldn't be proportionate to evaluate every single Learning Framework 'product' with a resource-intensive design, but we have built monitoring from the start.

Crucially we collect data in a standardised way; the numbers of attendees per course, the geographical location, the commissioning department, the relevant curriculum 'strand' it links to and the perspectives and views of the course participants. The focus of the participant insight gathered is whether the course met its objectives and whether the individual feels more confident to undertake their role back in the workplace as a result of the training. These measures might seem basic, but

because we collect them at scale in a standardised way we can do a lot with them. This helps us give ministers and senior stakeholders better updates and helps us work in partnership with suppliers to make sure we are getting the highest quality, most relevant offer possible.

Nick Walker Programme Director, Campus and Curriculum Delivery Team





HM Government

To find out more about the Government Campus, visit www.gov.uk/gscu.

Contact us if you have any enquiries about this strategy, including requests for alternative formats, at: gscu-external@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Any questions?

If you'd like to chat further about evaluation or ask us any questions, you can contact GSCU on gscu-external@cabinetoffice.gov.uk and we'll make sure your email gets to the right person.

If you'd like to read our full evaluation strategy and/or theory of change for the Government Campus you can access it [here](#).

The Evaluation Taskforce is a central source of expertise and advice on evaluation in general, and each main Civil Service organisation has a representative they can contact.

