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## Program Evaluation Policy

Aligned with Federal guidance, DoD STEM Strategic Plan, and the Army's strategic plan, the AEOP calls for the evaluation of all elements based on specific metrics and evidence-based approaches to achieve key objectives of Army outreach; increased efficiency and coherence; the ability to share and leverage best practices; and a focus on Army goals and objectives. An objective set forth in *AEOP's Priority Three* is the development and implementation of cohesive program metrics for individual programs and across the AEOP, and assessment to collect evidence of best practices and inform program changes. AEOP program evaluation is critical to sustainment of program funding and is a requirement of DASA(R&T) to allow the AEOP Office to make data-driven decisions. To view past AEOP evaluations, please refer to <http://www.usaeop.com/eval/index.htm>.

## Human Use Protocol

AEOP conducts annual evaluations of its programs through the cooperative agreement. Purdue University as the program evaluation IPA, on behalf of the AEOP cooperative agreement, develops and submits a plan to Army for implementation. The IPA also secures IRB approval for the human subjects' research protocol. It is critical that LPCs comply with all aspects of the human use protocol and evaluation plan. Any program evaluations conducted outside of the AEOP evaluation efforts conducted by Purdue University must seek approval from ASA(ALT) prior to publication.

## Mixed Methods Evaluation

In an effort to conduct extremely robust program evaluations, the LO takes a mixed methods approach to gather multiple data points and types of evidence. This effort will include student and mentor surveys, sample site visits, student and mentor interviews, focus groups, and targeted observations.

AEOP programs predominantly assess participants' perceptions of the program activities and their potential effects. AEOP Evaluation addresses questions related to benefits to participants, program strengths and challenges, and overall effectiveness in meeting short term objectives. The annual evaluation studies seek to answer these questions:

- To what extent is an AEOP element being implemented according to the annual program plan?
- What program characteristics do participants perceive as most critical to the success of the AEOP element?
- What are the potential effects of an AEOP element on students' interest and engagement in STEM; skills, abilities, and confidence to engage in STEM research; awareness of and other AEOP opportunities; awareness of STEM and Army/DoD STEM



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research and careers? What recommendations do participants have for increasing program impact and efficacy?

- What aspects of an AEOP element’s structure, resources, and processes are working well and what aspects could be improved?
- What recommendations from previous evaluations have been implemented and what changes in participant perceptions and outcomes have resulted from those program revisions?

As AEOP and its elements mature, more rigorous studies of outcomes and impact are necessary. Future evaluation should include longitudinal studies to study the impact of well-established programs and/or pipelines of programs. LPCs are encouraged to provide feedback on AEOP evaluation efforts.

### **Student Abstracts**

SEAP and CQL students must submit an abstract upon completion of their term. Abstracts will be submitted through the centralized application portal to the LPCs and CLCs. Student abstracts must include the information below and be completed in the appropriate format. Additional information can be collected at each laboratory. For the purposes of publishing an AEOP abstract book, all abstracts submitted to the CLCs will be sent to the IPA and LO.

- Student Name
- Mentor(s)
- Project Title
- Abstract (300 words)