

## SEHEEF principles

The scope and design of the SEHEEF is underpinned by a set of key principles (see *Table 1*). A smaller set of principles were identified for the Project Proposal based on the team's professional experience. These have since been refined and expanded, informed by the literature review and stakeholder consultations. These principles should remain an important consideration during the implementation phase of the SEHEEF. They provide a basis for decision making when universities and the Department are planning, managing, and conducting evaluation activities, and when reporting and disseminating findings. A principles-based approach to evaluation was also recently highlighted as particularly relevant to the Indigenous Higher Education context (Smith et al., 2018) and underpins the national Indigenous Evaluation Strategy (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2020).

*Table 1. Principles underpinning the SEHEEF.*

<b>Credible</b>	The Higher Education sector is more likely to accept and implement the SEHEEF if they perceive it to be credible. The SEHEEF has been developed by drawing on insights from a range of sources, including: existing relevant literature on equity in higher education; previous equity frameworks; insights from practitioners currently designing, implementing and/or managing equity programs; academics currently engaged in equity-related research; stakeholders engaged through a series of consultation activities.
<b>Implementable</b>	For an evaluation framework to be useful, it must be implementable. The SEHEEF takes into consideration key barriers to implementing and sustaining robust and systematic evaluation activities, identified by previous research and feedback received from key stakeholders. At the university level, it has been designed to be practical and user-friendly for equity professionals and administrators, while providing the necessary guidance required for more specialised forms of evaluation. At the national level, it has been designed to refine and complement existing reporting structures, while also supporting longer-term ambitions to better harness existing and forthcoming data opportunities.
<b>Flexible</b>	For the SEHEEF to create an enduring impact on the equity evaluation landscape in Higher Education in Australia, it must balance the need to promote consistency and standardisation (where appropriate), while also enabling flexibility to ensure relevance and application to the diverse uses of HEPPP funding. The SEHEEF has been designed to incorporate systematic and standardised planning and reporting, alongside more generic guidelines that are adaptable to different contexts and to programs and activities of different scales and intents. It is therefore anticipated that the SEHEEF will continue to have relevance when the IRLSAF is implemented from 2024.
<b>Useful</b>	The SEHEEF draws on the key principle of utilisation-focused evaluation (UFE), which is that that an evaluation (and evaluation frameworks) should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users. This underpins the level and range of stakeholder consultation as part of the development of the SEHEEF. The SEHEEF also proposes mechanisms through which the findings from continuous quality improvement and evaluation activities can be shared and synthesised, to maximise learning and improvement opportunities for the government and HEPPP-funded universities.
<b>Inclusive and culturally appropriate</b>	The extension of the HEPPP to IRLSAF will bring a sharper focus on the need for culturally appropriate evaluation methods. The SEHEEF has been designed to incorporate and value evaluation designs and methods that are consistent with the national Indigenous Evaluation Strategy and the Framework of evaluation in an Indigenous Higher Education context. Furthermore, there is scope within the Framework for success and impact to be defined by the intended beneficiaries of HEPPP-funded programs, rather than relying purely on a list of pre-defined outcomes. Such participatory approaches enhance inclusivity across all equity groups and can help to ensure that evaluation practice embraces an equity and culturally informed.
<b>Transparent</b>	The importance of evaluation findings being made available was a recommendation of the previous evaluation of the HEPPP (which itself is publicly available) and is consistent with the Australian National Audit Office Guidance. Transparency

improves accountability and enables evaluation lessons to inform decision making. The development of the SEHEEF has been a transparent one, with stakeholder feedback and how it has informed the framework, summarised, and shared. This allows others to understand the process through which the SEHEEF was developed and the reasons for its design and content. Publishing evaluation plans and findings (positive or negative) will maintain this 'spirit of transparency', expressed as desirable by stakeholders during consultation activities.