

RESEARCH ETHICS AND METHODOLOGY FOR SOCIETAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Course Overview

Course Title	Research Ethics and Methodology for Societal Impact Assessment
Provider	DATALIT (A division of Green Publications)
Target Audience	University QA directors and Managers, SETA ETQA Managers, research programme coordinators, public sector M&E officers, NGO researchers, corporate CSI/ESG managers, and policymakers
Duration (Notional Hours)	Total: 120 hrs Contact: 24 (3 session of 8hrs each) Self-Study: 96
Exit level outcomes	While this professional development programme does not carry formal NQF credits, its curriculum is designed to align with the competencies expected at an NQF Level 7 exit level
Delivery Mode	Blended (online modules and 3 face-to-face/online workshops)
Prerequisites	Bachelor's degree (NQF Level 7)

Course Purpose

This course equips participants to design, conduct, and ethically review societal impact assessments for educational qualifications, public programmes, corporate social investments, and community development interventions. It addresses the critical national need for reliable data on graduate employability and community impact, not only to illuminate youth unemployment but also to equip participants with practical toolkits for designing interventions that restore pride, dignity, and social cohesion in fractured societies.

Crucially, the course responds to the growing requirement for departments and universities to align their strategic objectives and annual performance plans with measurable societal impact. Participants will learn to assess whether institutional strategies, programme outcomes, and public investments are achieving their intended social and economic goals; and to design evidence-based interventions that address systemic challenges.

The course is grounded in contemporary theories of Pan-African development, BRICS cooperation, Global Value Chains, and Institutional Governance to ensure assessments are contextually relevant and methodologically robust. Participants will develop the applied competence to:

- Design holistic, cross-cutting interventions that address the root causes of social dysfunction and link rural-urban and formal-informal economies.
- Develop comprehensive research proposals and logic models for societal impact studies.
- Apply established frameworks, including BGA (MBA) accreditation rubrics for societal impact.
- Design ethical, POPIA-compliant studies involving graduate tracking, community engagement, and cross-border trade impact assessment.
- Critically evaluate the societal impact of qualifications, public investments, and regional integration initiatives.
- Align impact assessments with institutional strategic objectives and annual performance plans, providing evidence for planning, budgeting, and reporting cycles.

The course is grounded in contemporary theories of Pan-African development, BRICS cooperation, Global Value Chains, and Institutional Governance to ensure assessments are contextually relevant and methodologically robust. Participants will develop the applied competence to:

- Design holistic, cross-cutting interventions that address the root causes of social dysfunction and link rural-urban and formal-informal economies.
- Develop comprehensive research proposals and logic models for societal impact studies.
- Apply empirically valid frameworks and rubrics to assess societal impact.
- Design ethical, POPIA-compliant studies involving graduate tracking, community engagement, and cross-border trade impact assessment.
- Critically evaluate the societal impact of qualifications, public investments, and regional integration initiatives.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

LO1: Design a theory of change and logic model for a university programme, public sector initiative, corporate CSI project, or holistic community development intervention.
LO2: Select and apply appropriate societal impact indicators and rubrics
LO3: Develop a POPIA-compliant research ethics protocol for a longitudinal graduate tracking, community impact, or cross-border economic study.
LO4: Construct and justify a mixed-methods research design for assessing employment, social, or economic outcomes of a programme.
LO5: Critically assess a draft impact assessment proposal for ethical and methodological rigour, using relevant theoretical frameworks to inform the evaluation.
LO6: Design holistic, cross-cutting interventions that explicitly link rural-urban and formal-informal economies, addressing the root causes of social dysfunction to develop youth holistically
LO7: Prepare a comprehensive research or intervention proposal for government, university, corporate, or donor clients, incorporating budgets, timelines, and stakeholder engagement strategies.