

# Expression of interest

# Title: Process Evaluation of Support for T-level Industry Placements in 18/19

**Project reference: DFERPPU 2018/074**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 16.11.18**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought to undertake a process evaluation of support for T-level Industry Placements in 18/19.

## Background

A substantial, high-quality industry placement will be an essential part of every T Level and a requirement for a young person to pass their programme. Industry placements are critical to ensuring that young people on predominately classroom-based courses can develop the range of knowledge, skills and behaviours required for skilled employment in their field of study and have the potential to transform the skills of young people leaving further education.

The T Level industry placement was a key recommendation of the Sainsbury Panel Report and an integral part of the reforms outlined in the Skills Plan. Industry placements will be external to the college environment; linked to the skills related to their course; and for a minimum duration of 45 working days. This is a significant change from what the sector currently offers. Ensuring that providers and employers can make this step change is critical to T Level delivery as the student can only secure their certificate if they have completed an industry placement.

In academic year 18/19, almost £60m Capacity and Delivery Funding (CDF) is going to 400 providers to help build their capacity to offer industry placements. Alongside this, DfE has put in place a substantial programme of support to help providers and employers. This includes:

* Putting in place light-touch support through the ESFA field force, answering providers’ questions; signposting them to resources and processing quarterly monitoring reports;
* Investing £350k in the provision of direct, intensive support to help providers plan and deliver placements and overcome issues and deliver workshops across England to share best practice;
* Investing £5m into the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to offer an advice and support service to employers and develop a streamlined referral and matching service to make it easier for employers to connect with local providers;
* Putting in place additional bursary funding (in addition to their normal annual bursary allocation) for providers to support students to travel further to their placement and cover subsistence costs.

The aim of the CDF and the associated support is to build providers’ capacity to deliver placements, ensure providers feel supported and confident with placement delivery, increase the number of relationships providers have with employers, increase employer understanding of what quality placements are, ensure learners are able to access placements and enable providers to deliver 10% of their vocational cohort on placements in academic year 18/19.

## Evaluation aims

The purpose of this process evaluation is to understand if the CDF is being implemented and used by providers and employers to plan, design and implement work placements as intended and whether the approach needs to be adjusted. This evaluation will also provide an understanding of how the current Industry Placements policy works, the key challenges of implementing placements within different contexts (location, industry/route, employer size), and whether any flexibilities in the policy should be considered. In particular, we anticipate research questions to include but not limited to:

* What did providers spend the CDF funding on? What processes and resources did they put in place, including how they approached the planning and implementation of industry placements (e.g. curriculum planning, securing buy-in across the institution etc.)?
* What challenges were identified in implementing placements? How did these challenges vary by context (location, route, employer size, learner type) and to what extent did CDF help overcome these challenges versus other measures?
* Why did some employers ‎decide not to engage with industry placements?
* Why did those employers initially reluctant to engage change their minds and what was the persuading factor for them?
* Why did some employers engage without any persuasion and what was the persuading factor for them?
* Would participating employers choose to offer placements again next year?
* Was the financial support from the CDF sufficient to help providers build capacity to offer placements? Did CDF funding cover all needs, and if not, what was not covered and how much more would be needed? Did this vary across geographies and industries?
* Did CDF enable providers to increase the number of relationships with employers willing to offer placements?
* Was CDF used to cover employer costs? If so, what costs were these? How many employers would not have engaged without costs being funded – did this vary across routes? Did employers have any upfront concerns around the costs of providing a placement? What were these and how much were they? Did these costs prevent employers from taking a placement?
* Did providers and/or employers feel sufficient support was available to deliver placements? If so, how? If not, would additional support have helped providers/employers to overcome these challenges and what would this look like?
* Did providers or students report travel costs as a barrier or requiring substantial funding? If yes, what costs were incurred?

## Methodology

At full tender stage bidders will be invited to submit appropriate and innovative approaches for undertaking this evaluation. We anticipate this evaluation will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore support for industry placements.

We have mapped existing relevant data and evidence; the data is listed below in the data monitoring section and shall be provided by the Department. This evidence does not give us all that we need to know and further qualitative analysis is required to help us fill important outstanding evidence gaps, contextualising and complementing the quantitative data.

**Data monitoring**

The Department will provide the contractor with Provider Quarterly Monitoring reports, Progress reports and Employer and Student Satisfaction feedback.

**Sample**

The appointed contractor will draw a purposive sample from the providers and employers involved in delivering Industry Placements as part of the Capacity and Delivery Fund.

The sample should include:

* All 11 technical education routes
* An appropriate balance between different geographical areas
* Micro, small, medium and large employers
* A range of providers to include General FE colleges, Land-Based colleges, School Sixth Forms, Sixth Form College, UTCs
* Stakeholders to include, DfE, NAS,ESFA fieldforce and Intensive Support staff

## Timing

* The deadline for EOIs is 12 noon on Friday 16 November 2018
* Invitations to tender will be issued to short-listed organisations during the week commencing 19 November 2018
* Deadline for receipt of completed proposals Friday 7 December 2018
* Award of bid and project inception meeting week commencing 17 December 2018

## Assessment criteria

* Evidence of suppliers' understanding of the policy area
* Evidence of suppliers' technical/professional ability to undertake the work
* Evidence of relevant research experience. This covers an assessment of the suppliers’ expertise and experience in evaluation
* Evidence of relevant research experience. This covers an assessment of the suppliers’ expertise and experience in vocational education policy

**CVs and references are not required at this stage**

**Please note there is a 1000 word limit for Expressions of Interest**

| **Closing date for EOIs: 16.11.18**  **Send your EOI form to: sarah.mcloughlin@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expressions of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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