

Erasmus+ Residual and Immigration Visa Sponsorship Administration Services

Prior Information Notice (22 April 2021)

The purpose of this Prior Information Notice is to inform the market that the Department for Education is considering its strategy for concluding delivery of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020 (Erasmus+ Residual Activity) and associated immigration visa sponsorship services. It does not signify the commencement of any procurement process and does not constitute any commitment by the Department for Education. If the Department for Education decides to commence any procurement process(es) as contemplated by this notice, a separate notice(s) will be published at the relevant time.

Although the UK is no longer an EU member state, the Withdrawal Agreement in place between the UK and EU requires that all projects selected and funded under the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020 will continue to operate until their completion on the same basis under which they were selected. Accordingly, the Department as National Authority for the programme in the UK, is required to ensure ongoing delivery of its obligations to the 2014-2020 programme until complete. It is expected that the relevant project activities will continue until the end of the academic year 2023-2024 and will be administered by a National Agency appointed by the National Authority and acting under the delegation of the European Commission.

Information about the Erasmus+ programme can be found here:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en or www.erasmusplus.org.uk

From the 1 January 2021 EU nationals are subject to the new points-based immigration system. The Erasmus+ programme is defined by Home Office as a Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) programme, and EU nationals taking part in Erasmus+ work mobilities (e.g. Higher Education traineeships, Further Education work experience, staff mobilities, etc.) are required to have a Temporary Worker - GAE Visa (T5) before entering the UK. Individuals must secure a "Certificate of Sponsorship", and the Department require an appointed sponsor (who will need to hold or secure a relevant Home Office licence) to administer the certificates and undertake relevant monitoring activity on its behalf.

Further information about the Temporary Work visa can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government-authorised-exchange

Sponsorship obligations, can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators

How to engage

The Department for Education is holding an introductory market engagement webinar via Microsoft Teams at **12.30 on 28 April 2021** which will run for approximately 45 minutes.

To participate in this opportunity and register your organisation's interest in attending the webinar, please register for an account and view the "current opportunities" page at Jaggaer <https://education.app.jaggaer.com> and search for: "Project_5514 Erasmus+ Residual and Immigration Visa Sponsorship Administration Services".

Once you have located Project_5514, please confirm your interest by selecting “Express Interest” to receive full access to the opportunity. All relevant documentation will be made available in the Data Room and this can be accessed via the “Buyer Attachments” section, under “ITT Details”.

Please note, you must answer the question within the “My Response” section and submit your response to ensure registration at the webinar. You can then use the messaging function to provide attendee details.

The Department for Education will hold 1-2-1 engagement sessions with market suppliers on the 5, 6 and 7 May 2021. The sessions will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams and will run for up to 1hr each. There will be a maximum of 12 engagement sessions available over the three days and therefore allocation of these sessions will be on a first come first served basis and will be limited to 1 session per supplier organisation.

Once your organisation has expressed interest, you will be invited to provide details of your attendee list for the webinar and 1-2-1 engagement sessions, via the messaging function within Project_5514. A meeting invitation will then be issued.

All suppliers who have expressed an interest in this opportunity, including those who are unable to attend the webinar or 1-2-1 engagement sessions, will have access to relevant information, supporting notes and a supplier questionnaire which will be made available via the Data Room within Project_5514 Erasmus+ Residual and Immigration Visa Sponsorship Administration Services at <https://education.app.jaggaer.com>.

Suppliers should note that the webinar and 1-2-1 engagement session will also feature engagement on Turing Scheme Administration Services, which have been notified to the market via a separate Prior Information Notice.

Further Information

The main purpose of the market engagement events is to raise awareness of the relevant service elements and to provide high level background information to help the market develop an understanding of the service requirements; and to gather information about the supply market and potential delivery models (with associated benefits).

The Department for Education will use the market engagement events to gather information from market suppliers that will be used to inform decision making on the commissioning of the services.

The specific aspects of interest the Department for Education are seeking supply market feedback on are as follows:

1. Market appetite in bidding for i) Erasmus+ Residual Activity services, and/or ii) Erasmus+ Tier 5 Sponsorship services;
2. The proposed packaging of the service lines; routes to market and procurement timeline(s);
3. To understand any barriers to participation in a procurement for the relevant service lines;
4. To understand key requirements relevant to a successful transition and mobilisation of new services e.g. timescales, information, data;
5. To explore potential cost models; payment mechanisms and treatment of risk.

Erasmus+ Residual Activity Services

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. It aims to modernise these sectors across Europe, including the UK, and offers opportunities for organisations to collaborate to improve the quality of provision. Learners can study, volunteer and gain work experience abroad, to develop new skills, gain vital international experience and boost their employability.

As the National Authority for the purpose of co-ordinating and ensuring management of Erasmus+ obligations in the UK, the Department for Education must appoint a National Agency to manage, audit and administer all stages for existing projects within the UK.

The National Agency must carry out its entrusted tasks in line with Delegation Agreements entered into with the European Commission, and associated Guide for National Agencies issued by the same body.

The primary service function for the Residual Activity are:

- Checks of grant beneficiaries, including compliance checks and assessments
- Interim and Final project report assessments and payments
- Recovery of EU funds from beneficiaries and managing waivers
- Monitoring and support to beneficiaries
- Financial management of relevant EU funds and payment requests
- National Agency reporting for European Commission (e.g. Yearly Reports, Audit Support)
- National Agency governance and reporting with the Department for Education

Temporary Worker - GAE Visa Sponsorship

The primary service function for the Visa Sponsorship services are:

- Assessing applications for Certificate of Sponsorship, ensuring the eligibility of individuals and the role they intended to engage in.
- Issue a Certificate of Sponsorship to accepted individuals – this is not a paper certificate or document, but a database record which confirms details of the worker being sponsored.
- Ensuring compliance with Record Keeping duties, and compliance with Data Protection legislation.
- Undertaking checks to ensure compliance with Sponsorship duties