# EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

# FOR

# DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION:

# Turing Scheme Year 4 Assessment Service

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

We require information on your capability and capacity to provide the services detailed below.

The purpose of the EOI is to share the department's current thinking on the development of the 4th Year of the Turing Scheme (Academic Year 24/25); and the requirements for an independent and transparent assessment service to assess applications against set criteria to award funding. We additionally want to seek expert views from the sector to inform its further development.

Through this Expression of Interest (EOI), suppliers are required to confirm whether they can meet the criteria and timescales to deliver the requirements set out at section 3 and 4. We would like to understand market interest and gather insight on our delivery approaches, and your responses will inform a potential future procurement activity planned for Q3 2023/2024.

Please note the Department for Education (DfE) reserves the right to only invite those that have submitted an EOI to any further tender stage(s). This will be dependent on responses to this EOI. Please advise if you are interested in bidding for this opportunity. If you are not interested in bidding, please provide your reason(s), as this will be valuable feedback.

If the DfE pursue this exercise to an ITT (Invitation to Tender), we will likely compete via the [CSS Framework RM6322](https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM6322) DPS. We encourage suppliers who intend to bid, to register on the CCS [Fund Administration and Disbursement Services](https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM6322) DPS asap as we understand that the on boarding process will take around 3 weeks. If this EOI is carried through to an ITT, potential bidders will be informed if there is a TUPE impact. If you intend to register on the DPS, please contact Chris Chamberlin at: chris.chamberlain@crowncommercial.gov.uk.

We intend to publish the ITT in mid-late October, which will be released via Jaggaer. If you intend to bid, please ensure you are registered on Jaggaer: [Register to use Jaggaer](https://education.app.jaggaer.com/web/login.html).

## PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

### EOI publication date: 18 September 2023

### EOI return date: On or before 25 September 2023, by 9am

### Return date for this EOI

Any suppliers who do not respond to this EOI within the stipulated timescales may exclude themselves from the bidding process for this project**.**

### Next steps: DfE will review responses to the EOI before making decisions on next steps. DfE aim to have the contract in place by January 2024.

## BACKGROUND TO THE REQUIREMENT

### Customer organisation overview:

The DfE is responsible for children’s services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. DfE is a ministerial department supported by 18 agencies and public bodies and non-ministerial departments.

**Background:**

The UK Government is committed to providing international education and training opportunities to students, learners and pupils. [The Turing Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/turing-scheme-to-open-up-global-study-and-work-opportunities) was formally announced by the Prime Minister in December 2020. The first funded activities under the Scheme took place during the 2021/2022 academic year with funding provided for over 40,000 students to undertake placements in over 150 countries. The second year of the Scheme has recently concluded, and placements for the third year of the scheme covering the academic year 23/24 have just commenced, where funding has been provided for over 40,000 students to benefit from international placements.

Since the Scheme’s introduction, DfE has contracted out the administration of the Turing Scheme to a third-party supplier. Part of this contract includes the assessment of bids for funding. **The department has now decided to in-source the administration of the scheme but is seeking a lead provider or consortia or similar entity provide the independent assessment element**, which will include:

- Fair and objective assessment and scoring of applications in line with agreed criteria, independent of the Department for Education

- Quality checking and moderation of applications once assessed

- Provision of qualitative feedback to enable applicants to improve their applications in future years.

**Specification of requirements:**
Successful supplier will be expected to adhere to the following approximate schedule:

The provisional timetable is that all applications will be submitted by the middle of March 2024. The DfE will assess the eligibility of all applications. All eligible applications will need to be assessed within a six-week assessment window over April to May. The supplier will be provided with the assessment criteria for each of the questions.

The supplier will be responsible for identifying, recruiting and training assessors, this will need to be done prior to the closing of the application period.

We anticipate 750-800 applications will be submitted, with a typical application containing answers to approximately eight questions with a limit of 500 words per question, and information on costs relating to the planned project. The questions will be centred around how education settings will benefit from Turing Scheme funding in the following areas:

* How they intend to build or strengthen international partnerships
* How they will support students from disadvantaged and low income backgrounds
* What positive impact the project will have on the students undertaking placements
* How they intend to administer and deliver their project to ensure value for money

Applications will be scored, and the score will determine if the application is eligible for funding.

The DfE will require robust assessment, moderation and quality assurance procedures. While the DfE is open to innovative approaches these procedures will need to be agreed with the authority. For example, we would advise each application to be double assessed, and in cases of discrepancies for applications to be assessed by a senior assessor. Discrepancies will be defined in agreement with the DfE. The supplier will need to provide feedback on each application that can be shared with applicants to help them improve their applications in future years.

DfE will require the supplier to provide further assessments for unsuccessful applicants who appeal the initial decision. Following initial assessment, applicants will have a right to appeal. Appeals are expected to be processed after the initial 6 week application window.

Applicants will have a defined window in which to appeal following notification of an unsuccessful outcome. These appeals will need to be reassessed within a two-week window. The appeal criteria will be defined by DfE and any appeals received will be assessed for eligibility by DfE before being sent to the supplier for further assessment.

The supplier will also ensure the progress of all assessments are made available, in real time, to the DfE delivery team.

The supplier will need to ensure they comply with GDPR legislation and will be expected to enter into a data sharing agreement with the DfE to determine the use, storage and retention of any data that is shared.

The supplier will provide an end of service evaluation report to the DfE, recording the lessons learned during the provision of the service.

**Expectations of supplier:**

Essential criteria

* To provide UK based assessors from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with experience across the three education sectors; Schools, Further Education and Vocational Education and Training providers, and Higher Education providers.
* Assessors must have experience of: grant management, assessment, exams management, and an understanding of international educational mobilities.
* The outcome of the assessments and assessment process will need to be reported on and presented to the DfE and relevant parties.
* To provide independent assessments, within the timeline set out in the specification of requirements, which will uphold the following principles:
	+ Fair and objective assessment and scoring of applications in line with agreed criteria, independent of the Department for Education
	+ Quality checking of applications once assessed.
	+ Provision of qualitative feedback to enable applicants to improve their applications in future years.

### Contract start date: January 2024

**Contract duration:** Competition of Turing year 4 programme (approx. 6 months) + Potential to extend the contract for Turing year 5 programme (subject to funding and internal governance)

### Is there an incumbent supplier:

The Turing Scheme has been managed by a third-party supplier for the first 3 years of the programme's life. For the 4th year of the service, the DfE intends to in-house the Turing Scheme, except for the assessment of applications.

### Budget per annum: £540,000 approximately

## INFORMATION REQUIRED

Prospective suppliers submitting an Expression of Interest should set out:

 **Supplier interest:**

1. Would you have an interest to bid? If you are not interested, what are the barriers to your organisation bidding?

 **Market Insights:**

1. We envisage that 750-800 applications can be assessed within a 6 week window, considering the above specifications;
	1. What capacity do you have to deliver the programme?
	2. Could your organisation reasonably exceed these expectations?
	3. What risks have you identified?
2. How would you manage assessment accuracy between assessors?
3. How would you manage cases of discrepancies between assessors?
4. Is there anything else we should be considering as part of this work?

## RIGHT TO CANCEL OR VARY THIS EOI

We reserve the right to amend, clarify or cancel any part of this EOI at any time. The posting of this EOI is not a guarantee of business, neither is participation in this exercise.

## EOI CUSTOMER CONTACT

### Name: Robert Alexander, Associate Commercial Practitioner, DfE Core Procurement Team

Please raise any queries via the Jaggaer messaging function and send your response to Jaggaer project\_8567 on or before the deadline. Thank you.