

# Expression of interest

# Title: EdTech Demonstrator Programme – Phase 2: Evaluation Partner

**Project reference: DFERPPU/ 20-21/050**

**Deadline for expressions of interest:** **09:00 Monday 15 March 2021**

## Summary

Expressions of interest (EOI) are sought to conduct an interim and final evaluation for a second phase of the EdTech Demonstrator programme. Throughout 2021-22, the existing support network will continue to provide advice, guidance and training on effective use of technology. This support will act as key pillar to catch-up and recovery plans and will also help schools and colleges secure a sustainable digital strategy that sits at the heart of wider improvement plans.

Evaluation of this programme will support future policy considerations, specifically on the ways technology can boost pupil attainment, reduce teacher workload, and find wider cost efficiencies. As such, applicants should have:

* Experience and expertise in conducting robust programme evaluations.
* A knowledge of the use of technology in schools and colleges, both to support delivery of the curriculum and day-to-day operations.
* Experience working directly with schools and colleges.

An allocated budget of up to £150,000 to complete this work. Following assessment of the EOI, successful bidders will be invited to submit an invitation to tender (ITT).

The expression of interest was posted 03/03/21**.**

## Background and Next Steps

Since March 2020 the Government has invested over £400 million to support schools and colleges in their remote education plans. This has included securing over 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children, securing internet access for pupils most in need, and rolling out digital platform set up to schools.

The EdTech Demonstrator programme has been a critical function in ensuring that schools and colleges are able maximise on this investment and employ technology in a way that bolsters remote education and catch-up plans. Early evaluation, led by Sheffield Institute for Education, indicates that the programme is having a positive impact, showing increases in teacher confidence to use technology, competence in the way technology is embedded across a school/college, and maximising pupil and parental engagement in the curriculum.

Looking to the future, we know that technology has the potential to secure long-term change when used effectively. This includes improved pupil outcomes, reductions to unnecessary teacher workload and cost / time savings. The next stage for the Demonstrator network will be to bridge the gap between crisis response and long-term implementation of technology, focusing on upskilling the profession to realise the wider benefits. To do this, we are making two changes to the programme:

1. **Introduction of a diagnostic tool**: In their discussions with schools and colleges, the Demonstrator network will use a diagnostic tool to help structure discussions and ensure that any introduction of technology is driven by pedagogical / organisational need. This tool will also be used as part of the evaluation for the programme. The tool is under development, led by DfE, but we will require our chosen evaluation partner to critique, finalise and help to embed the tool across the network.
2. **Support from EEF**: The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will provide light-touch facilitation training to all demonstrators to secure consistent, evidence-based support. This will include ways to implement a logic model support approach.

## Role of the evaluation partner

The evaluation partner will be required to work directly with the Demonstrator Network (c.48 schools / colleges), using the diagnostic tool to gauge programme success. The evaluation partner will be responsible for:

* 1. The diagnostic tool, including:
		+ Working in collaboration with DfE, delivery partner and EEF to finalise the tool.
		+ Training with the network of demonstrator schools / colleges on ways to use the tool to secure consistency in practice.
		+ Gathering intelligence taken from the diagnostic tool to evaluate the success of the programme.
	2. Supporting self-evaluation, including:
		+ working with the network, and drawing on tools from EEF, to design self-evaluation tools. These should allow demonstrators to assess the quality of their support and secure effective implementation of the training received from EEF, whilst being mindful of the need to reduce workload and not impose any unnecessary additional reporting or processes.
	3. Reporting findings, including:
		+ Working in partnership with the delivery partner to provide soft intelligence to support monthly progress reports to DfE.
		+ Attending regular monthly meetings, and quarterly review meetings, with DfE officials.
		+ Collaborating with EEF and working with the programme delivery partner and DfE to determine how best to disseminate findings to a wider network of schools / colleges.

**Diagnostic tool**

From April 2021 a diagnostic tool will be introduced to aid the support network in their discussions with schools / colleges accessing training. It is the intention that this tool will be used both at the start and end of training to illustrate where technology is offering the greatest gains.

The DfE are leading the development of the diagnostic tool, drawing on the content from the DfE’s recently published ‘Review your remote education provision’ framework, and intelligence from the existing cohort of demonstrators. It is envisaged that the headline indicators will be the programme KPIs, alongside headline measures and descriptors.

The evaluating partner will not be responsible for the development of the tool, but we expect them to provide input and offer any final refinements to ensure the tool supports evaluation. It is also envisaged that the evaluating partner will support implementation of the tool across the network to secure consistency in its use.

**We are seeking innovative suggestions for how the diagnostic tool can be fully utilised by all partners, including demonstrators, the department and potentially schools. This could include the development of a matrix of indicators that allows schools to see where they are across a number of metrics or dimensions. We are also very keen to hear any ideas for digitalisation of the diagnostic tool, to optimise access.**

**Evaluation Methodology**

The self-selecting nature of participation in the programme restricts the type of evaluation that is possible. We envisage a before and after design, whilst recognising the limitations. EOI responses should outline experience and understanding of the following methodologies. (Further details will be required for applications at Invitation To Tender (ITT) stage). Bidders should clearly explain their methodology, including any strategies to establish that any observed changes did not occur by chance or due to other factors/noise. We welcome designs that would include a counterfactual/control group. For example, this might involve measuring pre/post change on aspects where support was provided versus aspects where no support was provided.

Bidders should outline how they would use the diagnostic tool in their evaluation, including how they would account for variations between schools in the type and level of support they have received.

The evaluation could also include a process evaluation and mixed methods research in addition to analysis of the data collected from the diagnostic tool.

Bidders should describe their approach to data analysis and how their analytical approach would ensure robust estimates of the programme impact (including any caveats and/or limitations), but also be manageable for the participating schools and colleges (within their capability and without adding unnecessary workload).

Bidders should also describe in detail their assumptions on response rates to any data collection exercises, and sample size requirements, including their strategies for achieving the optimum response rate, how they will incentivise or encourage respondents to participate, and evidence of how they have achieved this in similar surveys.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Evaluation partner**

To provide DfE the assurances that the evaluation is on track, we will expect the evaluator to meet a number of KPIs. These are shown for illustration of the timelines and core deliverables – the final KPIs will be linked to the agreed deliverables:

**End of April / Early May**

1. Diagnostic tool agreed and in place.
2. Network trained on use of diagnostic tool.
3. Development and introduction of a self-assessment tool for Demonstrators to measure quality of provision.

**End of November 2021**

1. Interim report to be delivered.

**July 2022**

1. Final evaluation to be complete.

**Throughout 2021-22**

1. Reporting on output from the diagnostic tool.
2. Close collaboration with the delivery partner, supporting status reporting of the programme.
3. Attendance at monthly keep-in-touch meetings with DfE.

**Role of The Support Network**

Over 2021-22, the network of c.48 Demonstrators will continue to upskill teachers and leaders to embed digital tools and approaches in their systems and practices. This includes ensuring that any adoption of technology is bound by strong pedagogical rationale and business need. The number of schools supported in phase 2 is dependent on schools’ needs, depth of support required and demonstrator capacity; the first phase supported almost 4,000 schools, and the number of schools supported in phase 2 is expected to be similar.

The existing cohort of Demonstrators will be critical to ensuring that the investment in technology made by government is maximised, supporting schools/colleges to adopt longer-term, sustained use of technology. This will accelerate and enhance wider school strategies, including school improvement drives and resource and business management. Over 2021-22, the network will demonstrate to participating schools the ways in which technology can improve educational delivery, including:

* **Recovery**. Demonstrating the ways in which technology can bolster pupil/student progress and outcomes and support catch up and recovery activities, making education boundless anytime, anywhere; for example, through online and in-person teaching and tutoring, development of independent and individualised learning, and supporting high-quality assessment and feedback.
* **Teacher workload**. Demonstrating the ways in which technology can remove unnecessary workload burdens, support more flexible teaching practices, improve access to excellent curriculum resources and developing professional bonds and communities.
* **School and college improvement plans**. Ensuring that the adoption of technology has a clear plan and supports the wider aims of the school/college. This will include use of devices, and how to overcome any barriers to moving to a 1:1 device model.
* **School and college resource management**. Ensuring that the adoption of technology provides the best value for money for their existing resources, for example through cloud-based education platforms and management information systems, and securing informed procurement decisions; and
* **An accessible and inclusive curriculum**. Ensuring that the adoption of technology includes a strong focus on improving access for pupils with SEND and exclusions, and removing barriers to the effective use of assistive technology.

The support model that demonstrators provide to participating schools will vary in terms of the number of hours of support provided and the number of schools engaged. This will need to be factored into the evaluation. The demand for support from schools/colleges also varies, from schools that are just beginning to consider ways technology can be embedded, to schools whose emphasis is on specific areas of improvement, through to schools requiring more sustained support over a longer period. With this in mind, the support model will run across three tiers:

* **Light touch support (c.6 hours of training delivered over a term):**
* **Medium term support (c.15 hours of training delivered over the academic year):**
* **Long-term support (c.30 hours of training delivered over the academic year):**

## Timing

Expected indicative timings are as follows

* Deadline for EOIs – 15 March 2021
* Review EOIs – 17 March 2021
* Invitations to Tender (ITT) issued – 18 March 2021.
* Deadline for ITT – 2 April 2021

The research project is expected to run from April 2021 to July 2022.

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

* An understanding of the Department’s requirements, and demonstration of knowledge of the issues surrounding technology in schools. (20%)
* Evidence of experience and technical ability in designing, conducting, analysing and reporting a large-scale independent evaluation. (40%)
* Evidence of organisational capacity and project management skills to deliver the project in the specified timescales.(40%)

Scoring

1. No evidence/very poor
2. Poor evidence
3. Some evidence
4. Good evidence
5. Excellent evidence

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1500 words overall; this includes any website links. Anything longer will be disregarded.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 09:00 Monday 15 March 2021****Send your EOI form to:** **edtech.team@education.gov.uk** **and cc:** **helen.connolly@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expression 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 in the Contracts Finder listing. 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 & Conditions, a copy is available attached to the Contracts Finder listing. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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