

# Expression of interest

# Title: Impact and Process Evaluation of T Levels Employer Support Fund pilot in 19/20

**Project reference: DFERPPU 2019/008**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 5pm on 10.07.19**

## Summary

## Expressions of interest are sought to undertake an impact and process evaluation of the T Levels Employer Support Fund pilot in 19/20.

## Background

## T Levels are new two year technical programmes for young people aged 16 to 19. They have been developed with employers and will combine classroom study with workplace experience, from which students can progress directly into work or further study. T Levels, alongside apprenticeships, will provide young people with a high-quality technical alternative to A levels[[1]](#footnote-2).

A 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 studyand have the potential to transform the skills of young people leaving further education. Industry placements will be external to the classroom; linked to the skills related to their course; and for a minimum duration of 315 hours.

There is currently significant support in place for providers to help them deliver industry placements through the Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF)[[2]](#footnote-3) and additional intensive support. However research and feedback from extensive employer engagement has identified costs associated with offering placements are a barrier to employers offering industry placements.

In order to better understand these financial barriers reported by employers and how these differ across industries, DfE will run a small-scale pilot in the 2019/20 academic year to trial the limited provision of employer financial support for tangible costs.

The funding pilot will take place in the South West and the West Midlands with approximately £7 million available for the trial. The funding will be disseminated to CDF providers in the South West and West Midlands regions only at the start of the 2019/20 academic year based on their target placement numbers. These providers will be responsible for distributing this funding to employers that have stated costs as a barrier to hosting placements. The fund[[3]](#footnote-4) will compensate employers for the tangible costs, training costs and costs of setting up their systems to deliver placements at a maximum of £750 per placement; this can be split between two employers if the placement is being completed with two employers in line with allowable industry placement models.

## Evaluation aims

The objective of the evaluation is to test the impact of the pilot funding on industry placements and to understand whether there is a need for future employer financial support to enable placements to happen at scale and how to best deploy this funding.

The principle aim of this pilot is to test and get a better understanding of whether the funding will increase engagement and willingness from employers to offer industry placements, resulting in increased numbers of placements (and, sample permitting, to what extent this varies across routes/industries, employer types, employer sizes and locations etc).

In particular, we anticipate research questions to include but not limited to:

* Has the funding resulted in more industry placements than would have been the case in the absence of funding?
* Does funding increase engagement and willingness from employers to offer industry placements? How does this vary across employer sizes/industries/locations?
* Is cost more of a barrier for employers in some industries, sizes or locations?
* How is funding being spent?
* What type and what amount of costs did employers typically claim for when providing placements? Which were the most common? How did this vary across employer sizes/industries/locations?
* Were tangible, training and administration costs the main barriers to offering placements?
* Do micro employers and SMEs need funding (or larger amounts of funding) than large employers?
* Does funding enable employers to increase the number of placements they offer?
* Is funding (and the funding amount) meeting the needs of employers?
* Did providers administer funding as intended?
* Was channelling funding through providers an effective dissemination method?
* Did providers tend to split the payments, or pay upon completion of the placement? Which worked better?
* What has worked well?
* What could be improved?

## Methodology

At full tender stage bidders will be invited to submit appropriate and innovative approaches for undertaking this process and impact evaluation. We anticipate this evaluation will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques incorporating quasi-experimental methods to establish impact. Please note a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) method is not feasible for this evaluation due to the nature of the pilot and has already been discounted.

We have mapped existing relevant data and evidence; the data is listed below in the data monitoring section.

**Data monitoring**

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Monitoring Information (MI) Data

DfE will give the contractor access to the provider monitoring reports which are completed by recipients of the CDF and include termly reports, progress records and satisfaction forms etc. DfE will also give the contractor access to the data capture tool. This tool has been developed by ESFA to capture employer spending costs, not reported in the CDF provider MI; this data is collected quarterly.

We envisage that the monitoring data will be also used alongside the IndividualisedLearningRecord (ILR)[[4]](#footnote-5), Higher Education Statistics Agency data (HESA)[[5]](#footnote-6) and School Census[[6]](#footnote-7). These datasets will provide data on external work experience placements. **It is likely that analysis of the ILR, HESA and School Census will be completed in-house due to data sharing agreements.**

**Sample**

The appointed contractor will draw a purposive sample from the providers and employers involved in delivering Industry Placements.

The sample drawn from funding and control regions should include (where feasible):

* All 11 technical education routes,
* Micro, small, medium and large employers and
* A range of providers to include General FE colleges, Land-Based colleges, School Sixth Forms, Sixth Form College, UTCs.

## Timing

## The deadline for EOIs is 5 pm on Wednesday 10 July 2019

Invitations to tender will be issued to short-listed organisations during the week commencing 15 July 2019

Deadline for receipt of completed proposals Friday 9 August 2019

## Award of bid and project inception meeting week commencing 19 August 2019

## 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 process and impact evaluation
* Evidence of relevant research experience. This covers an assessment of the suppliers’ expertise and experience in vocational education policy

**Each one of these criteria has equal weighting.**

**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: 5pm on Wednesday 10 July 2019**  **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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1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/779002/T\_Level\_action\_plan\_2018.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-placements-capacity-and-delivery-fund-from-april-2018-to-july-2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/802703/Industry\_placements\_policy\_update.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ilr-specification-validation-rules-and-appendices-2019-to-2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/796583/2019-20\_School\_Census\_Business\_and\_Technical\_Specification\_Version\_1.2.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)