

# Expression of interest

# Title: Research to understand schools’ recovery approaches from lost time in education as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Project reference:** DFERPPU/20-21/019

**Deadline for expressions of interest:** 11:59 on Monday 5th October 2020

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought to undertake the design and delivery of research to understand schools’ approaches to pupils’ recovery from lost time in education as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Department will use this research to better understand the good practise to, and challenges to, recovery – as well as informing decisions on the support schools need.

## Background

Children in England have been without full-time schooling since March 2020. School is the best place for children to learn and grow, both academically and emotionally. The time without face to face schooling during the pandemic has likely led to a reduction in academic and behavioural progress, particularly for disadvantaged children.

To support all children and young people in catching up, the government has announced a £1 billion package for the academic year 2020/21. This includes a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020/21 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time.

The Department also published guidance on school reopening in July 2020, setting out curriculum expectations for schools, including that schools continue to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects, although acknowledging that schools’ curricula may need to be modified at the beginning of the academic year to address gaps in knowledge.

The Department is interested in conducting research to help us understand how schools are identifying the impact of lost time in education on pupils, and what methods they are adopting to enable recovery. This would include how they are identifying the needs of individual pupils – pastoral and academic; how they are making decisions about what interventions are needed; how they are measuring their impact on pupils; and the implications for curriculum planning.

## Research aims and objectives

The Department wishes to understand schools’ approaches to the issue of lost time in education. To do this, we require the bidder to develop an in-depth understanding of schools’ approaches to the issue of lost-learning, the challenges associated, and how these vary from school to school.

Our research therefore has the following objectives, and key sub-research questions:

1. To identify **the approaches schools are using to assess the scale** of lost learning:
	1. How have they determined the size of the problem (e.g. using tests)?
	2. What do they deem the scale of this issue to be?
	3. Is the effect of lost time in education the same across subjects, year groups / other characteristics?
2. To identify **what specific actions, if any, schools are** **implementing** for the catch-up of their pupils – and the **decision-making processes** around this.
	1. How did they decide on these approaches, and who made the decisions?
	2. Did schools use any guidance or other resources to inform this?
	3. Are these methods targeted, or universal?
3. To identify how the ‘**catch-up premium’ funds have been spent**.
	1. Are schools using this money to bolster overall funding, or is it being targeted into specific programmes?
	2. Who decided how the money would be spent, and what was the decision-making process for this?
4. To identify how school’s **curricula** have been affected by the time spent away from school.
	1. Are schools sticking to their original curriculum plans for 20/21?
	2. Have certain subjects been prioritised, particularly in primary schools?
	3. How have schools balanced the need for curriculum ‘catch-up’ with other reintegration activities (e.g. wellbeing)?

## Methodology and requirements

At full tender stage, the Department will ask bidders to detail a proposed methodology, alongside a rationale for the recommended approach. We anticipate that there will be several ways to answer the key research questions. However, we outline a recommended mixed-methods approach below that we consider will appropriately answer our research questions. Whilst we outline broad parameters for a methodology, bidders that are invited to submit a full tender will be free to suggest amendments if, based on their proven expertise, they can provide a clear rationale as to how this will successfully meet the key aims of the research. Similarly if bidders feel additional, innovative elements could be added to this research to better meet the requirements, they are welcome to suggest them at the full tender stage.

**Outlined approach:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Type** | **Sub-type** | **Detail** |
| 1.a. | Qualitative  | Case studies | * 10-15 schools
* Conducted at a minimum of 3 points in time, starting ideally from Winter 2020.
* Winter 2020 case studies would gather detailed information on school decision-making - including school priorities, choices of approach, and impacts on how the curriculum is being delivered as a result.
* The 2021 studies would aim to understand how schools adapt over changing circumstances in a range of contexts.
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| 1.b. | Qualitative | Interviews | * 60-70 schools
* Conducted in Spring or Summer of 2021
* Topic guide should be built around the research objectives outlined.
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| 2. | Quantitative | Survey | * 1,500-2,000 schools
* This survey will also be distributed to a sample of schools that are part of a parallel study within the Department, partner programme’s to allow analysis to be combined.
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At this stage, the Department does *not* expect EOIs to contain a specification or methodology for research. This EOI is looking to establish if interested parties are able to meet the following basic criteria, in order to then make appropriate invitations to tender.

## Assessment criteria for expressions of interest

#### Understanding of the requirement (10%)

Interested parties should present evidence of an understanding of the Department’s requirements, and demonstration of knowledge of the issues surrounding the disruption to schools and children’s learning progression as a result of Covid-19.

#### Experience in quantitative and qualitative research design (30%)

Interested parties must have a proven track record of conducting similar research with schools, as well as ability to conduct complex and robust qualitative studies as well as quantitative research techniques including survey design and analysis.

#### Deliverability from Winter 2020 (30%)

Interested parties should display evidence of organisational capacity and project management skills to deliver this research within the specified timescales, particularly given the challenging operational context within which schools are currently operating. They should be able to commence work on this project as soon as possible in the Autumn term. We expect this research to last for at least one year, with the potential to conduct follow-up research at a stage after this 12 month period. We anticipate the majority of the research will be conducted and analysed in Spring-Summer 2021.

#### Experience working & engaging with schools (30%)

Interested parties should have experience working with and engaging with schools in a research capacity, as well as a good understanding of how schools operate. This includes understanding the best ways to approach and communicate with school leaders and teachers, and retain involvement over a sustained period of time for schools that may be involved in case studies.

**Expressions of interest should succinctly confirm the ability of an interested party to meet the above set of criteria, rather than present a methodology for research.**

The following scoring system will apply for each assessment criteria within EOIs:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mark** | **Description** |
| 0 | Fails to meet the criteria |
| 1 | Meets some of the criteria |
| 2 | Meets most of the criteria |
| 3 | Fully meets the criteria |
| 4 | Exceeds the criteria |

## Timings

Deadline for EOIs – 11.59 on Monday 5th October 2020

Review EOIs – w/c 5th October 2020

Invitations to Tender (ITT) – Friday 9th October 2020

Deadline for ITT – Friday 30th October 2020

CVs and references are not required at this stage.

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1000 words overall. Please do not include website links or references. Anything longer than 1000 words will be disregarded.

Collaborative/ consortia expressions of interest are welcome and may be advisable to score highly across the criteria.

We will produce a short Q&A during the EOI, with responses to any questions asked. Questions will be anonymised and any commercially sensitive information removed. Should you wish to ask a question and/or receive a copy of this note, please email anna.scholes@education.gov.uk and jobshare.allsopp-williams@education.gov.uk

| **Closing date for EOIs: 11:59 on Monday 5th October 2020****Send your EOI form to:** **anna.scholes@education.gov.uk** **and** **jobshare.allsopp-williams@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’ form which can be found under attachments in the ContractsFinder 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 ContractsFinder listing. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

By submitting an Expression of Interest the Department is not bound in any way and does not have to accept any submission that does not meet the requirements set out within this document, or where a decision is taken to not continue the with procurement exercise.

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