

# Expression of interest

# Title: Process Evaluation of Additional Support for T Level Industry Placements in 19/20

**Project reference: DFERPPU 2019/036**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 23.59, Monday 16 March 2020**

## Summary

## Expressions of interest are sought to undertake a process evaluation of additional support for T Level Industry Placements 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-1).

A substantial 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.

Employer and provider buy-in to the technical reforms and willingness to offer industry placements is essential to their success. The Department for Education has put in place a substantial programme of support with the aim of helping providers and employers prepare for the phased roll-out of industry placements and T Levels from 2020.

Support put in place by DfE in 2018/19 included:

* Nearly 60m Capacity and Delivery Funding (CDF) to support providers to build their skills and capacity and set up their own systems and processes for industry placements;
* Investing £5m into the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to offer an advice and support service to top levy-paying employers and develop a streamlined referral and matching service to make it easier for employers to connect with local providers;
* Investing £350k in the provision of direct, intensive support to help providers plan and deliver placements and overcome issues and deliver workshops to share best practice;
* Putting in place light-touch support through Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) field teams, answering providers’ questions; signposting to resources and processing quarterly monitoring reports;
* Expanding the existing bursary fund into 2018/19 for CDF providers to support students with travel and subsistence costs whilst undertaking an industry placement.

These interventions are being evaluated currently to explore their effectiveness and indicative findings have helped DfE shape the policy and identify gaps in support. This and the pilot in 17/18 demonstrated ‘one size doesn’t fit all’ and that policy needed to better reflect the breadth of industry practice and accommodate students’ differing circumstances. Based on this evidence and further sectoral engagement, interventions put in place by the Department in 2019/2020, to ensure industry placements are accessible, deliverable and high quality include:

* A framework[[2]](#footnote-2) of additional models and approaches to delivering industry placements, including some general models (e.g. splitting a single placement across a maximum of two employers) and route-specific models (e.g. the use of construction and engineering skills hubs for part of the placement)
* An employer support package which provides additional support for employers through online guidance, workshops and webinars, and hands-on support to increase employer confidence in planning and delivering high-quality placements.
* A revised methodology for the 16 to 19 discretionary bursary fund for students to be introduced in academic year 2020/21[[3]](#footnote-3). This includes an element of funding to account for the additional costs students might face due to participating in Industry Placements.
* A further £55m Capacity and Delivery Funding to continue to support providers to build their capacity in the 19/20 academic year

## Evaluation aims

The purpose of the research is to understand whether the additional support in place for providers and employers in the academic year 19/20 within the context of CDF and NAS support, is effective in enabling providers and employers to plan, design and deliver high quality placements as intended and what further support might be required. This is particularly vital given T Level roll out will commence from September 2020.

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

Framework of Models and Approaches

* Have providers adopted any of the updates to the policy, including the new models and approaches announced in the Industry Placement Policy Framework in May 2019? If so, which and to what extent are they finding these effective in sourcing and delivering quality placements?
* Has the introduction of route-specific models for Digital, Construction and Engineering & Manufacturing made it easier for employers to offer placements in these routes?
* Are there any routes where sourcing placements is still challenging, or placements are not deliverable? If so, why?

Employer Support

* Has the support package enabled employers to better deliver quality placements?
* Has the matching service and support provided by NAS enabled providers to source quality placements?

Discretionary Bursary Fund

* How much of the additional discretionary bursary allocation are providers expecting to spend on students’ costs to participate in placements?
* Has the support provided by the additional bursary funding enabled students to participate?
* Are any particular student costs that are driving the need for additional funds?

CDF

* Was the financial support from the CDF sufficient to help providers build capacity to offer placements? What did providers spend the CDF funding on?
* What processes and resources did providers put in place?

Other

* How confident are providers and employers in offering quality placements?
* Are there any gaps in the support? Is there anything else which can be put in place to ensure the successful delivery of quality placements?

## Methodology

At full tender stage bidders will be invited to submit appropriate and innovative approaches for undertaking this evaluation. We anticipate this evaluation will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore support for industry placements.

We have mapped existing relevant data and evidence; the data is listed below in the data monitoring section and shall be provided by the Department. This evidence does not give us all that we need to know, and further qualitative analysis is required to help us fill important outstanding evidence gaps, contextualising and complementing the quantitative data.

**Data monitoring**

Provider monitoring reports

Termly provider monitoring reports are completed by recipients of the CDF. The reports collect both quantitative and qualitative data and collate information on provider characteristics, progress, funding and spending and learner/employer satisfaction. The data provided in the spreadsheet will be quality assured before it is passed securely by the Department to the Contractor.

**Sample**

The appointed contractor will draw a purposive sample from the providers and employers involved in delivering Industry Placements as part of the Capacity and Delivery Fund.

The sample should include (where feasible):

* All 11 technical education routes,
* Micro, small, medium and large employers representative of different industry types broadly aligned to the technical education routes and
* A mix of provider types to include where possible: General FE colleges, Land-Based colleges, School Sixth Forms, Sixth Form College, UTCs.

## Timing

* The deadline for EOIs is 23.59 on Monday 16 March 2020
* Invitations to tender (ITT) will be issued to short-listed organisations during the week commencing 16 March 2020
* Deadline for ITT submissions Wednesday 8 April 2020 (expected)
* Preferred bidder selected w/c 27 April 2020 (expected)
* Contract end date 31 October (expected)

## 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 evaluation
* Evidence of relevant research experience. This covers an assessment of the suppliers’ expertise and experience of research with providers and employers.

Each of these criteria are equally weighted

**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: 23.59 Monday 16 March 2020**  **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 ‘EOI Form 2018’ 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.

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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-1)
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industry-placements-policy-framework> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/16-to-19-discretionary-bursary-fund-allocation-methodology> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)