

# Expression of interest

# Title: Assessing the online learning landscape for upskilling and reskilling adults: the current market and the use of artificial intelligence

**Project reference: DFERPPU/2018/029**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 5pm, Wednesday 2nd May 2018**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought to conduct a market study looking at the current online learning landscape, and the use of artificial intelligence and educational technology (AIEd) in skills provision.

The study should evaluate the current market for online learning and AIEd, from both a supply and demand perspective, and consider its applicability to upskilling and retraining low-to-medium skilled adults.

## Background

The Government is interested in the potential that online learning, artificial intelligence and educational technology may have for upskilling and retraining large numbers of adults, particularly in intermediate skills[[1]](#footnote-1).

This will be important as the labour market faces a number of challenges over the coming years, such as the growing automation of jobs, longer working lives and relatively slow productivity growth. This market study will explore the possible role of online learning and AIEd in helping to overcome these risks, and enabling people to re-skill and up-skill as the economy changes.

## Project aims

The aim of the project is:

* To gain a deeper understanding of the online learning and AIEd markets for intermediate skills in England[[2]](#footnote-2), and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. The study will use economic frameworks to understand how the market operates, what incentives drive behaviour, and if there are any market failures that would warrant government intervention.
* To identify existing and potential modes of delivery and technologies to inform the possible future design of a Government online learning offer for upskilling/retraining adults in valuable intermediate skills.

The research must describe:

**a) The current market for online intermediate skills courses for adults, which are accessible in England[[3]](#footnote-3):** the market structure, current incentives, supply of content, volume of learners, business models and cost structures, pedagogical approaches and whether there are market failures and their underlying causes.

**b) The current and potential use of Artificial Intelligence in supporting online learning:** the ways in which it supports learners, market structure, business models and cost structures, its effectiveness in upskilling low-to-medium skilled adults, past and future trends in development and whether there are market failures and their underlying causes.

### Methodology

### The market study will be broken down into two strands:

### Depth interviews

The first strand will consist of approximately 20 depth interviews split between providers and developers of online learning and AIEd, and academics with expertise in both. Depth interviews will provide information that is not available in the public domain, such as cost breakdowns for the running of online learning courses, costs of developing AI, and a deeper understanding of both the effectiveness of different types of online learning and the incentives that drive the behaviour of market participants.

We recognise that some information regarding cost structures may be commercially sensitive, so we will expect the contractor to demonstrate they have previously conducted research which gathers similar information.

#### Desk research

Following the depth interviews, the contractor should conduct a desk review of research, broken down into a review of secondary literature and an analysis of primary sources:

1. A review of published literature pertaining to online learning and AIEd, including reports, evaluations of initiatives, academic papers and articles in the media.
2. An analysis of MOOC platforms and online courses, online learning provider websites, course catalogues and AIEd developer/provider websites.

#### Outputs

* **Interim report –** Emerging findings arising from depth interviews, especially pertaining to business models, cost structures and market incentives, should be presented to DfE in a short document as well as in a meeting between the contractor and DfE officials to discuss results so far.
* **Full report –** Detailed findings, bringing together both research strands, will be presented to DfE in a report of publishable standard. The report will outline the market structure for online learning and AIEd, the existing incentives and how they influence behaviour, as well as whether there are any market failures that would warrant government intervention.

## Timing

* Deadline for EOIs – 2nd May 2018
* ITT issue – 8th May 2018
* Deadline for ITT – 21st May 2018
* Clarification interviews if needed – 24th May 2018
* Successful bidder notified – 25th May 2018
* Inception meeting – 30th May 2018
* Interim report – Mid-August 2018
* Full report – End September 2018

## Assessment criteria

* Expertise in conducting market analysis
* Knowledge and understanding of the policy area
* Expertise in carrying out depth interviews and collecting sensitive information
* Expertise in conducting desk research and analysis of websites
* Value for money

**EOI’s must not be longer than 1,500 words in length**

| **Closing date for EOIs: 5pm, Wednesday 2nd May 2018**  **Send your EOI form to: jaimin.tailor@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. Between RQF Levels 2-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Meaning provision that can be accessed in England [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For example, MOOC platforms like FutureLearn and Coursera, or online provision by colleges [↑](#footnote-ref-3)