OTLA apprenticeship standards – collaborative project grants

Questions and Answers *(final updated: 23rd April)*

1. **I notice throughout the document it refers to 'ten projects' - can you confirm if these projects are set for us to join/make proposals against or is a 'project' our proposal based on the themes and aims of this spec? Do 'projects' already exist, or should our proposal form a project?**

   The programme will commission 10 collaborative projects. Although there are four themes, project topics and groups haven't been set. It is the responsibility of those submitting an application to develop a project group and decide on specific topic/research questions (under one or more of the programme themes).

   We've provided, by way of example, some areas that you could explore through a collaborative project under each of these themes on p4-5 of the Prospectus – you are free however to propose your own topic / research questions under one or more of the four themes.

2. **What are the timescales for the projects – when do they start, when do they finish and when are the outputs required?**

   Projects will commence in May (the project leads development day is 9th May) and will run through to January 2019. The practical outputs will be expected in November 2018, and the research outputs will be required in January 2019 (this is reflected in the project plan template within the application form)

3. **The prospectus states that the project group must include at least 10 practitioners from at least three organisations that are involved with apprenticeship standards training or assessment (in progress or scheduled for 2018). We are a large College Group – could the 3 organisations be the colleges (campuses) which form part of that project group?**

   The project group needs to include participants from at least three separate organisations. This for example may be other partner organisations, employers, EPAOs you work with, or other apprenticeship providers in your region, industry or further afield.

   The mix of participants in your group, and the organisations they represent, will need to have the right level of expertise and experience to adequately explore your chosen research question/s.

4. **Are applications only open to those currently deliver apprenticeship standards?**

   Those submitting applications must either be currently delivering apprenticeship standards or end-point assessment, or have standards/end-point assessments scheduled to start within the lifetime of the project.

5. **Are you looking for projects to cover all areas? Will any of the four themes be weighted?**

   None of the four themes will be weighted. We recognise that we won't be able to cover all aspects of standards delivery and assessment. That said, across the 10 projects, we will look to commission a good spread / balance and contrast of projects (reflecting the four themes)

6. **Are there any restrictions on what the money can be spent on?**

   We would expect most of the grant funding to go directly to participants to ensure they are supported and able to fully contribute to the project research process and outputs. We recognise you may want to produce the outputs in a particular format that will require some expenditure (developing a video, for example). Please show these costs within your budget.

   See p16 in the prospectus for more details, including guidance on grant funding and VAT

7. **If the project lead is unable to make the development day on 9th May, can they send a replacement?**

   If your project is successful in being awarded a grant and if, for whatever reason, the project lead is unable to make the development day on 9th May, this should be raised with SDN. We can then agree a suitable replacement from your organisation (or another member of your project group) to attend instead.

8. **I understand that Ofsted were recently interviewed, through the ETF's *Future Apprenticeships* programme, about their inspection approach to apprenticeship standards delivery. Is this interview open access? If so, are you able to share the link?**

   Yes, the interview transcript is open access and can be found here: http://www.strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk/sdm_downloads/fa-ofsted-interview/

9. **We are interested in being part of a project, but we aren't in a position to lead. Are you able to match us up with other project groups or interested partners?**

   To ensure a fair tender process, SDN is unable to match participants or help build project groups. This is the responsibility of interested applicants. See Q3, by way of example, about the kinds of organisations you may wish to contact to help form project groups. Regional provider networks, or other sector bodies, may be able to help facilitate this too.

10. Is the scope of applications limited to pre end-point assessment? Is the formal assessment element and EPAO involvement outside of the scope of the projects or would you welcome bids from those involved in the end-point assessment process?

As set out in the eligibility criteria (prospectus p12), EPAOs can be part of project groups and submit an application. In order to address one of the four programme themes, the findings and outputs from your project will need to be of use / inform the on-programme training.

11. I am concerned that I am unable to meet the deadline. Is there any consideration towards additional day's extension?

To maintain a fair tendering process for all, we are unable to provide any extension to the application deadline.