Guidance for commissioners of evaluations of education-employer initiatives

The Taskforce vision:

To ensure that every school and college has an effective partnership with employers to provide its young people with the inspiration, motivation, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to help them achieve their potential and so to secure our future national prosperity.

This is Taskforce Paper 2 *Guidance for commissioners of evaluations of education-employer initiatives.* It is a publication of the Education and Employers Taskforce.

Our contact details are:
Education and Employers Taskforce
2nd Floor
Weston House
246 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7EX
Te: 0203 206 0510

Visit our website at: www.educationandemployers.org and for the Guides visit: www.the-guides.org

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The purpose of this document

Education is complex. Success or failure in learning is the product of a great range of different factors. There is a growing body of evidence to show that partnership between schools and colleges and employers can be a factor that has a positive effect on the learning process, increasing motivation, aspiration and understanding of the context of learning and ultimately leading to improved attainment. Equally, evidence is growing of the positive impacts experienced by employers and employees who participate, as volunteers, in educational initiatives. It is a means of reducing the costs and improving the quality of recruits, increasing staff engagement, supporting staff development and helping to build organisational reputation within a community. However, understanding of the impact of partnerships between education and employers is limited. In part, this is due to diversity of organisations engaged in developing and sustaining partnership working, each operating with limited budgets and drawing on limited in-house expertise.

This document draws upon the advice and guidance of members of the Taskforce Expert Group on Research (see annex) who have actively participated in commissioning, and undertaking, evaluations of programmes and activities. It is a guide that is especially relevant to organisations that fund projects designed to improve the educational experience of young people, aged 5 to 19, through initiatives that engage employers and employees, from private, public or third sector organisations. In doing so, it draws upon the Taskforce's definition of effective partnership - that the sum of the best collaborations will provide support for schools and colleges:

- across the breadth of activities defined in the National Framework (see annex),
- with measurable positive impact on participants,
- be of mutual benefit to participants from the worlds of education and employment, and
- be relevant to circumstances that are distinct to the educational institution.

From the employers' perspective, the document provides advice on key areas of impact in terms of recruitment, staff engagement, development and organisational reputation.

How it was created

This document was developed through a series of focused interviews with members of the Taskforce Expert Group on Research and then reviewed and endorsed by the whole group.

Dr Anthony Mann

Director of Policy and Research

Education and Employers Taskforce

Why evaluate?

Evaluations are important but can be expensive and can easily go wrong. Without them, however, it is impossible to assess the true impact of an activity or programme, understand what it is that funders receive for their investment, or to improve the effectiveness of the initiative. Robust evaluations help build our shared knowledge of how employer involvement in the educational process can best improve the lives of participants. They provide the evidence base for future policy initiatives, and can help strengthen the case for action.

Deciding on the type of evaluation

The single most important question for a commissioner of research to ask is: what is the purpose of the commission? Two main options are initially available: a robust evaluation of the project using social science methodologies, or a collation of data about the activity for use primarily in communications. If it is simply to highlight activity in order to showcase work to supporters then the second approach will be attractive. Many organisations, including many PR companies, can help to survey participants and help present the findings publicly. This approach, while building knowledge of perceptions of the activity, is unlikely, however, to lead to persuasive conclusions with regard to impact. PR driven exercises run the inherent risk of being self-serving and uncritical. It is the former approach – the robust evaluation of an activity or project – that is most likely to garner conclusions that provide independent and convincing evidence of impact. This document guides readers through approaches to commissioning such research.

Commissioning research: understanding what is wanted

The clearer the commissioners are on the purpose of the research, the greater the likelihood that the evaluation will be a success. Considerable effort should be devoted to ensuring that objectives are clear. Typically, commissioners determine objectives through a specification which will be incorporated into an 'Invitation to Tender' document which runs through the context and purpose of the research to be undertaken. Developing the tender specification often takes time and ideally will be developed through a series of drafts engaging interested stakeholders from across the commissioning organisation. The process should be designed to capture the range of questions and issues that might be considered within the work, and then collating and distilling these to produce a coherent statement of need.

Many researchers will look at the totality of a programme – considering the relevance and effectiveness of objectives as well as how it is delivered. Such an approach can provide commissioners with especially valuable external assessment of the project.

Deciding on which methodologies to use

Researchers can build understanding of an activity or project through a number of different methodologies. Commissioners should be open minded about which approaches to use and be willing to return to objectives on the basis of initial discussions with researchers over the results that can be expected from different approaches. Researchers will have experience and expertise in understanding the value of different methodologies and should be engaged in discussion to ensure that clarified objectives can be best met within the budget available. Commissioners should expect researchers to challenge back and be clear on what cannot be done within budget or with the datasets in question, as well as offering options for consideration.

Choosing the right methodologies is vital to getting the best value out of the evaluation, but that choice can only be made when the objectives of the evaluation are clearly understood and communicated by both the commissioner and the researcher.

Qualitative and quantitative evidence

A key decision is whether to focus on qualitative evidence, quantitative evidence or a combination of the approaches. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have advantages and disadvantages and commissioners should be aware of these in selecting the methodology that will optimise the chances of securing the most useful conclusions from the project.

Qualitative approaches

Qualitative approaches allow the researchers to achieve a deeper level of understanding of the impact of an activity. Perceptions are important. Qualitative methodologies will rely heavily on interviews with individuals and groups of people, which will allow the researcher to explore in detail how the activity is perceived leading to an in-depth understanding of what has happened, the successes and failing, and how the activity can be made more effective. The approach allows the participants to speak for themselves. The richness of the data that is returned includes a disadvantage as it becomes more difficult, than by using quantitative approaches, to summarise the perspective of different participants.

A primary means of securing qualitative data is through interviews. Interviews are time consuming, and consequently expensive, and commissioners will need to come to a view over how many people should be interviewed, how long interviews should be, the interview format and whether interviews should be in person (which is likely to gain better results), or by telephone (which will be cheaper).

Quantitative approaches

Quantitative approaches allow researchers to ask more questions or more people. Completed through online, paper-based or telephone surveys. While questions for surveys can be developed through initial conversations with participants, and open questions can be included (where the participant's answer is written in, rather than selecting a multiple choice answer option), ultimately, the perspective of the participant is constrained by the decisions made by those setting the questionnaire. Consequently, the evidence returned can be more shallow and more difficult to interpret. An advantage of the quantitative approach is that it allows researchers to compare the impact of the activity or project in context. This might be by replicating the questions asked by surveys of comparable activity , or for the questions to be repeated over a period of time. Quantitative approaches can also be used to factor in external data, such as success in examinations or promotions of employees.

Many commissioners choose to use a combination of the two approaches, recognising their comparative advantages and limitations to build a fuller understanding of their programme or activity and its outcomes.

Choosing the sample

Deciding on whom to question or sample is a key question and is highly influential on the results of the research. For research to be persuasive, it is essential that the sample is representative of the total group of individuals who have taken part in the activity or project. For example, an assessment of the impact of mentoring on young people aged 16-18, could identify young people who have successfully completed level three qualifications (for example, 'A' levels), and ask them if they had been mentored and what impact they felt it achieved, or it could focus on all participants who began the scheme. The different approaches are likely to generate very different conclusions as to the impact of the activity. Commissioners should expect researchers to spend considerable time in ensuring that they get the sampling right.

Deciding whether to use a control group

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of an initiative on a collection of individuals. The activity or project is an intervention in the lives of the participants and researchers aim to try and isolate that impact – from the multitude of other personal characteristics and social circumstances that relate to the different individuals participating – in order to determine the impact of the intervention, for good or ill, on participants.

The most robust way to determine such impact is by creating a control group of individuals who share as many of the personal and social characteristics of the participants as possible. Members of the control group, however, would not participate in the activity or project. Tracked over time, comparisons can be drawn across the two groups in terms of personal development and achievement. On occasion, it is possible to identify a retrospective control group, for example, by using HR records to track activity of employees with similar characteristics within a large organisation in order to understand the relationship between volunteering and vocational success. In theory, the gap between the groups conclusively shows the impact of the activity and this remains the gold standard for academic research.

In practice, however, using a control group is problematic. Neither young people nor employees operate within laboratory conditions and determinants on personal development and achievement are many. In the schools setting, for example, among those characteristics known to have a significant impact on the achievement of young people are: gender, ethnic origin, parental financial status, parental educational success, quality of teaching staff, quality of the educational institution; and, to isolate causality definitively, evaluations should seek to match as many of these criteria as possible. Researchers will match, and track, individuals in the two groups. It requires the agreement of participants in both groups and adds considerably to the expense of the evaluation.

Longitudinal studies

Longitudinal studies – evaluations which take place over a number of years tracking the experiences of participants during and after taking part in an activity or programme over – can provide highly persuasive evidence of impact and are of great relevance to the activities which are the subject of this paper. Employability, for example, remains a theoretical concept until the young person actually goes into full-time work. A longitudinal study can track impact over years, and using control groups, for young people, is a means of understanding the impact of interventions in such areas as wage and employment. Longitudinal studies tend to be the most expensive option open to evaluators as very large samples, often including thousands of people, are needed to ensure that meaningful numbers of participants are still available for questioning in the later years of the study. Contact with people can easily be lost and this needs to be planned for. It may be possible to piggy back on an existing longitudinal study, by entering new questions into an existing regular survey. This approach can be much cheaper for the commissioner, but can be time-consuming to arrange. Competition to introduce questions to longitudinal studies is high and typically a number of different stakeholders will need to agree to any changes to questionnaires used.

Benchmarking against the work of others

Many people want to know the impact of an intervention for which they are responsible as compared to the work of others operating in the same field. Positive results can help funders of initiatives to prioritise future work. If this is an objective for the project, commissioners must be explicit on the point as early as possible in the commissioning process. Researchers will look at the questions and samples used in comparable evaluations. This benchmarking approach does make an evaluation more complicated and may well add to the expense as work will need to be undertaken to understand in detail the approaches of the other relevant projects.

What to measure?

The Taskforce paper *Defining Effective Partnerships* draws on work by the National Council for Educational Excellence and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and identifies four criteria for schools and colleges to assess the sum of their relationships with employers. The four criteria – breadth, impact, mutual benefit, relevance – provide an insight to the measures that can be used to assess the effectiveness of a specific initiative or project. The table below gives examples of the type of questions that might be consequently asked within an evaluation:

Breadth	How many people, at which key stages, have taken part in the activity (or programme)? What are the social characteristics of participants? Which areas of the curriculum does the activity have an impact on?

Impact	Do participants in the activity show, as measured against comparable groups, before and after the intervention, higher or lower levels of: • achievement through the whole experience of education • personal learning and thinking skills that are most prized by employers – teamworking, independent enquiry, creativity, reflective learning, effective participation, self-management. • staying on rates at 16 • confidence in finding a job that matches their skills and interests when they leave full-time education • motivation to engage in the educational process as demonstrated through attendance records • wage rates on initial entry to employment • employer satisfaction in their readiness for work
Mutual benefit	How is the activity perceived by different participants and stakeholders? To what extent do: • participants enjoy taking part in the activity • employers agree that the activity has led to clear benefits to their enterprise • school and college leaders agree that the activity has lead to clear benefits to the educational institution and all learners entitled to work-related learning • employers agree that it is easy/it is not difficult to work with schools and colleges – whether engaging directly with the school or college or through a broker • schools/colleges agree that it is easy/it is not difficult to work with employers – whether engaging directly with the employer or through a broker

Relevance	How is the activity perceived by different participants and stakeholders? To what extent do: • employers agree that they understand the range of opportunities open to them and are happy that the partnerships they have formed meet their own objectives • school and college leaders agree that they understand the breadth of potential engagements with employers open to their institution and are content that the partnerships they have formed meet their institutional objectives

From an employers' perspective, questions can be most relevantly asked around the range of benefits identified in the forthcoming Taskforce paper *What is to be gained through partnership? Exploring the value of education-employer partnerships*.[1]

Recruitment	To what extent does the initiative: • raise the awareness of young people in long-term career opportunities in an economic sector or with a specific organisation? • provide the employer with opportunity to spot talented potential employees, encouraging applications for vacancies? • provide direct or indirect evidence of increased interest in recruitment opportunities, and contribute to reduced recruitment costs? Do older job-switchers recognise, and value, the social contribution of the employer in sponsoring employee volunteering with schools and colleges?
Staff engagement/ motivation	How many employees are engaged in the activity or programme? How many employees are aware of the employer's participation in the

[1] Available at: www.educationandemployers.org

	activity or programme? Does engagement in, or awareness of, the activity or programme have an impact on the attitudes of employees to the employer, as recorded, for example, in staff surveys? Do participant employees have higher job satisfaction levels? Are they more willing to describe their employer positively to family and friends? Is there a connection between staff productivity and participation in volunteering activity?
Staff development	What competencies can employees develop through volunteering with schools and colleges? Is competency development in volunteering recognised and valued within staff evaluation and progression frameworks? How much would it cost the employer to provide training opportunities to develop comparable competencies within employees? What impact does volunteering have on the career progression of employees? Can comparable cohorts of new entrants be tracked to isolate positive or negative effects from different types of volunteering?
Reputation of an organisation, product or service	Who is aware of the employers' engagement with schools and colleges? What impact does awareness of the engagement have on the perception of the employer and its business? Was there any media coverage of the engagement? Was it negative or positive? What would be the advertising equivalent value of the coverage?

When to conduct an evaluation?

Consideration of the evaluation should take place as early as possible in the life of the project to which it relates. Considering research priorities within the project initiation process maximises the likelihood of meaningful evidence being collected and/or its collection being integrated into the working life of the project. Successful projects will seek to collect data from the start. Engaging someone with research experience in the project team from the start will maximise the likelihood of success in securing early opportunities to collect data and to build evaluation priorities into the delivery process.

All initiatives subject to evaluation will expect something to be different after the activity or intervention. It is far more effective to question participants on their attitudes and knowledge in advance of the intervention, including a comparable cohort not subject to the intervention, than to ask participants to try and think back after activity has been completed.

How to get the best from of the evaluation

Researchers are not mind readers – the clearer the brief and the easier it is to clarify and confirm as the evaluation progresses, the greater the likelihood of a successful conclusion.

An early planning session

After tenders have been received and the decision over who will carry out the work agreed, an early planning meeting is highly desirable. This will be a key opportunity to understand, clarify and confirm objectives, contexts and ways of working. Commissioner should be frank about their budget ranges. The initial planning meeting should involve as many people who are involved in the project from both sides as possible, as it will be a key means of agreeing how the project will work, the outcomes that can be expected and milestones through the project. By involving as many people as possible, it reduces the chance of key questions not being addressed, confirms the appropriateness of the methodologies to be used, and helps to manage expectations all round. In the early planning meeting, the schedule of activity for the evaluation should be discussed and confirmed with clearly defined outputs such as interim and final reports. The confirmed workplan which comes out of the planning meeting will be the key document against which the performance of researchers should be managed.

Contract management

A key agenda item for the planning meeting should be ways of working. Commissioners will need to determine how frequently they require updates on progress. The meeting should also identify individuals (and back up) who will be points of contact for the project on both sides. Regular contact sessions between the two leads will prevent misunderstanding occurring that might ultimately undermine the quality of the evaluation. Regularity of contact will depend on the complexity of the evaluation and should be linked to any key decision making points – such as confirmation of questionnaires, sampling or report drafting.

For large projects where there are a number of different people with an interest and investment in the research project, a steering group that regularly brings together key participants from both sides will mitigate the risk of the project failing to meet the needs of different stakeholders.

Reporting back

Typically, towards the end of the project, a draft report is submitted to the commissioners. For the final report, researchers will typically agree to change anything in the draft report that is inaccurate, but will be reluctant to make substantive changes. Many commissioners want a presentation of evaluation conclusions to be included as part of the reporting back. This can be an excellent opportunity for results to be shared, and clarifying questions to be asked, by stakeholders across an organisation. If a presentation is required, that should be factored into the joint workplan.

What needs to be published?

It is the commissioner of the research who pays for the evaluation owns it once completed. It is the commissioner's decision what, if anything, to publish. Many organisations choose to publish the full reports they receive, warts and all. It makes the report's conclusions more convincing and presents the organisation as one that is confident and self-critical, striving to improve activities to ensure maximum effectiveness. Many researchers will ask permission to use findings in academic publications and this is an approach that should be supported to help build the evidence base of what works and what doesn't. The commissioner can agree for data from the evaluation to be used on the basis that they and participants are not identified in any academic piece. The final report will typically include a summary of conclusions that could be easily turned into a publication, but this should be planned for in advance. Unless otherwise agreed, the commissioner will need to cover the costs and manage the process for creating a new public document. Commissioners will often use a specialist communications agency to take results from the evaluation and, working with the researchers, turn the report into a publishable document.

How much does it cost?

The cost of evaluations depends primarily on the scale of the activity or programme to be evaluation and the ambition of the commissioners. As an indicative *guideline*, commissioners can expect:

c.£5k- £15k	a small online survey of with limited number of questions with basic analysis of the results
c.£50k-75k	a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches including individual or group interviews, surveys of participants and detailed analysis
c.£100k+	an evaluation of a national programme over a period of years, drawing on a large initial sample of participants to allow effective tracking over time

Typically, payments will be made in stages and this will be built into the contract. Triggers for payment are usually marked by completion of the outputs of the evaluation.

Who to approach to undertaken an evaluation

Ideally, commissioners will invite a range of different organisations or individuals to tender to undertake the evaluation. The best way to do this is through an advertisement inviting interested organisations or individuals to respond. They will then be sent an Invitation to Tender pack including the specification for the project. An example Invitation to Tender document is annexed.

Commissioners will find a range of organisations and individuals potentially able to undertake the work in question. Many universities undertake evaluations, as do private sector and third sector organisations that can demonstrate such desirable qualities as impartiality and independence, technical expertise and robust project management.

Advertising is expensive and many commissioners choose instead to approach directly a small number of organisations and individuals known to be interested in the work and likely to be able to undertake it. The annex of this document includes a list of organisations and individuals who have been used successfully in the past by members of the Taskforce's Expert Group on Research. The Taskforce itself will publicise Invitation to Tender advertisements, free of charge, on the research pages of its website: www.educationandemployers.org. Organisations interested in having an advertisement displayed, please contact the Taskforce directly or through info@educationandemployers.org.

The Invitation to Tender (ITT) document

Each individual or organisation responding to the Invitation should be sent the Invitation to Tender document which will set out the objectives of the evaluation with details of activity or programme to be assessed, including prospective outputs and key milestones/deadlines. Tender documents should typically include details of the budget available, even if presented as a range, to help researchers tailor their responses realistically. An example ITT document – commended by Expert Group members – is annexed below.

In considering tenders, it is very reasonable for commissioners to ask for referees to attest to the quality of previous work undertaken and/or to request examples of previous work, and to ask if the researcher has ever failed to deliver on a project or been asked to stop work due to client dissatisfaction. Tendering organisations and individuals will have varying strengths and weaknesses when it comes to applying different research methodologies, and commissioners should consider these in judging the suitability of tenderers. Tender documents should press researchers to provide details of risk assessments against non-completion of the project, including indemnity insurance, and equality and diversity statements. It is also helpful to be clear on the criteria to be used to judge the tenders.

Many commissioners will pull together a panel of interested stakeholders from within the commissioning organisation to consider the tenders and decide on a preferred bidder. It's good practice to include at least one person who has a degree of independence from the project under evaluation, but who has an understanding of research methodologies. There is a tendency in some organisations always to use the same research organisation, regardless of the character of the activity or project to be assessed or the likely methodologies to be used. Inclusion of an external member can help mitigate against unwitting complacency.

Assessment of tenders should be a transparent process and designed to ensure comparability to help the selection process. An example proposal assessment form is annexed below. Commissioners typically highlight the key requirements identified in the ITT and needed to provide reassurance that the work will be completed to timescale, resource and specification. Evaluatory grids might include such assessment categories for subject knowledge, experience of comparable evaluations, research team quality (qualifications and experience), risk management, as well as value for money.

It is not unusual for a commissioner to speak to a number of tenderers to confirm understanding of proposals before agreeing the tender. Typical questions to inform such discussions are also annexed to this document. Once a preferred bidder has been selected, it is common practice to hold post-tender negotiations to revise the bid further.

Getting more help

Members of the Taskforce's Expert Group on Research are happy to share their own experiences of evaluation and research commissioners. A number of research organisations, including the Centre for Education and Industry at the University Warwick run short workshops aimed at commissioning organisations taking them through the tendering process and contract management in detail. Details of such events can often be found on the Education and Employers Taskforce website research pages – www.educationandemployers.org/research.

Annexes

A. National Framework of priority activities for partnership between education and employers

B. Example Invitation to Tender document

C. Proposal Assessment Framework: third sector organisation

D. Model questions to better understand research proposals

E. Terms of reference and membership of the Education and Employer Taskforce Expert Group on Research

A.National Framework of priority activities for partnership between education and employers

Leadership and Governance inc.
Governors
Expert help to schools and colleges
Professional development for teachers
Supporting the Curriculum inc.
Literacy and numeracy
Diploma support
Supporting STEM subjects
Supporting languages
Developing learning materials
Enterprise and employability skills inc
Work experience
Mentoring
Workplace visits
Supporting projects
Classroom talks to students
Supporting enterprise and employability activities
Supporting information, advice and guidance/careers
Young apprenticeships
Online support

B. Example Invitation to Tender document

Enterprise Education Evaluation: from a Government Department

1. Background and rationale for the work

'The purpose of Enterprise Education is to 'help young people be creative and innovative, to take risks and manage them, and do this with determination and drive'. £55 million per year has been made available since 2005 for Enterprise Education in secondary schools and this will continue until at least 2011. The funding is part of the school development grant. A further £30 million over the next 3 years will help extend Enterprise Education from secondary to primary and tertiary - creating an 'enterprise journey' for all.' (Budget 2008).

1.1 The spend on Enterprise Education (EE) is significant overall and set to increase. While there are a number of studies highlighting good practice in EE we do not know how the majority of schools spend this money and what they feel they get out of it. We need to know more about how schools utilise the funding, the value added to the experience of pupils and, if possible to draw some inferences as to how this may translate into benefits for the economy in the longer term. The project aims to:

- bring together existing evidence on Enterprise Education, including international evidence where appropriate;
- to provide evidence on how schools utilise the Enterprise Education funding they receive;
- to assess how schools are supported in their development and delivery of Enterprise Education;
- to assess perceived impact of Enterprise Education, and
- to draw out good practice and make recommendations as to how we can help schools achieve greatest value for money from this scheme.

1.2 The research will establish what, in general, we are getting for our money. Through the exploration of good practice it will suggest ways in which we may get more for our money and further improve the standards of education in this policy area. Specifically, we are looking for an indication of whether ring fencing the relevant funding would have a positive impact. The work will help inform policy as to whether guidance on the use of the funding is required, over and above the demonstration of the benefits of good practice. The focus of this work is on Enterprise Education in secondary schools.

2. Objectives:

1. to bring together existing evidence on Enterprise Education, including international evidence where appropriate in a succinct and policy focussed format;
2. to provide evidence on how schools utilise the Enterprise Education funding they receive (from DCSF and from other funding streams such as from RDAs or LEGI);
3. to assess what value, or otherwise, schools and pupils perceive Enterprise Education to have;
4. to assess how schools access support for Enterprise Education (eg through Young Enterpise, Make your Mark etc) and the percived usefulness of such support bodies;

5. identify good practice and establish how widespread it is within schools. If Enterprise Education funds are not being fully and effectivly utilised it will allow us to estimate the scale of any problem and enable us to direct appropriate resource and policies to ensure best value from the money, and
6. to produce an accessible and user-friendly good practice guide for schools and LEAs which will guide schools in their spend on EE in the future and ensure value for money.

3. Methodology

3.1 Literature review.

A literature review will bring together the available evidence focussing on good practice in EE and the results of any attempts to measure impact. The review will include examples of how EE is organised and how it works (when it does) why and in what circumstaces. It will also cover examples of effective provision and embedding within the curriculum. The review will also cover international evidence so we can make judgements about our activity compared to other countries. It will also explore if any links with enterprise already exist in the Primary and Tertiary sectors.

3.2 Representative survey of secondary schools.

There are a number of small studies which look at good practice in Enterprise Education but nothing that brings them together in a useful and accessiable way for practitioners. Nor do they provide a picture of what the average school does or any difficulties they may face. The Ofsted work on EE, while very uesful, covers a very small number of schools meaning we cannot get a rounded picture of overall activity and any differences between types of school, rural or urban location.

3.3 This survey will be with key staff involved in delivering EE to get an overview of how schools utilise the funding. The research will cover questions such as whether EE is delivered in short, isolated sessions or embedded into the curriculum. How do schools balance EE with other demands? The questionnaire will be developed in consultation with the steering group but will inculde some key questions from the recent work in Yorkshire. Potential contractors will be asked to keep the burden on schools to a minimum. This may involve email / online questionnaires with some telephone follow up.

3.4 A sample size of around 300 schools is suggested, although tenderers are invited to suggest alternatives. The work should enable us to analyse by urban / rural (DEFRA classification) and by types of school, eg 11-16 11-18, Business and Enterprise Specialist, Other Specialist, Non-specialist

4. Case studies.

There is a need for detailed information on the perceived impact of the scheme. This will be collected through a case study method in a limited number of schools. These will involve depth interviewing with teachers and pupils (a sample size of around 30 is suggested but suggestions are welcomed for alternative sample sizes).The case studies will start with reviewing documents from the school on their activities relating to EE and their response to the questionnaire. This will be followed by some depth interviewing in order to gain greater insight into the challenges, problems and sucesses experienced by those delivering Enterprise Education. Finally views of pupils at KS4 will be sought.   What do they feel they get out of it? Has it challenged their ways of thinking about enterprise? Has it made them work differently?

5. Sample sizes

The suggested sample sizes are given to indicate the scale of the project. Tenderers are invited to provide their own suggestions, with rationale, for sample sizes as appropriate. You may wish to present a range of cost options if appropriate, Tenderers should give estimates of responce rates based on previous evidence and present strategies for maximising response.

6. Analysis

Ideally we would like to measure the impact of EE, however this is highly problematical given that the amount of money per school is not that large and the difficulty in isolating EE effects. Also, impacts could be long term and therefore difficult to measure. This is why we have opted to measure perceived impact at pupil, teacher and school level. One possible way of assessing impact would be for some comparison between perceptions of impact between those schools deemed to be implementing good practice and those not.

Any other suggestions for analysis of this complex area are welcomed.

7. Steering arrangements

A steering group will be set up involving representatives from …………………………. Tenderers should allow for up to 3 steering group meeting throughout the life of the project.

8. Timescales

Tenders to be submitted:…………….

Decision by …………….

Project start ………………

Fieldwork …………….

Early findings……………

Draft report ………………….

Tender evaluation

Tenders will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
knowledge and experience of the research team	15%

Criteria	Weighting
extent to which the proposal meets the objectives set out in the research specification	25%
extent to which the proposal shows creativity, and awareness of the opportunities and limitations impacting upon the research design	10%
feasibility and efficacy of the methods proposed	20%
ability to meet the timescale outlined in this specification	15%
due consideration of the risks involved in the work and the measures proposed to reduce these risks	5%
value for money	10%

Risk Management

Tenderers should submit as part of their proposal a one-page summary on what they believe will be the key risks to delivering the project and what contingencies they will put in place to deal with them.

A risk is any factor that may delay, disrupt or prevent the full achievement of a project objective. All risks should be identified. For each risk, the one-page summary should assess its likelihood (high, medium or low) and specify its possible impact on the project objectives (again rated high, medium or low). The assessment should also identify appropriate actions that would reduce or eliminate each risk or its impact.

Typical areas of risk for a research project might include staffing, resource constraints, technical constraints, data access, timing, management and operational issues, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Dependencies

You should indicate if you are reliant on any third party with any information, data or undertaking any of the work specified.

Monitoring techniques

You should indicate how you will monitor the project to ensure it is delivered in terms of quality, timeliness and cost.

Data Collection

Researchers will be expected to clear any data collection tools with the Department before engaging in field work and ensure that in all cases the respondent documentation and/or interviewer briefing notes clearly state that the data is being collected for and on behalf of the Department and that no reference is made, implied or otherwise, to the data being used solely by or available only to the Contractor.

The respondent documentation and/or interviewer shall ensure that the respondent clearly understands (before they give their consent to be interviewed) the purpose of the interview, that the information they provide will only be used for research purposes and, in the case of interviews (telephone or face-to-face), that they have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

The Department seeks to minimise the burdens on schools and Local Authorities (LAs) taking part in surveys. It is therefore important that tenders should set out how the proposed methodology will minimise the burden on schools and/or LAs and a justification for the proposed sample size.

When assessing the relative merits of data collection methods the following issues should be considered:

- only data essential to the project shall be collected;
- data should be collected electronically where appropriate and where schools and/or LAs prefer this;
- questionnaires should be pre-populated wherever possible and appropriate;
- schools must be given at least four working weeks to respond to the exercise from the date they receive the request;
- LAs should receive at least two weeks, unless they need to approach schools in which case they too should receive 4 weeks to respond; and
- The Contractor shall clear any data collection tools with the Department before engaging in field work.

Researchers shall check with the Department whether any of the information that they are requesting from schools can be provided centrally from information already held.

All researchers working in schools will need to be CRB checked.

THE USE OF INCENTIVES

With some important exceptions, the Department believes that the routine use of respondent incentives in surveys is, in general, not justified as they are rarely cost effective in either increasing participation or reducing non-response biases. If you are proposing the use of respondent incentives in your tender proposal you must set out why you feel they are necessary, why it is not possible to achieve the required sample sizes or response rates without the use of incentives, how and to what extent they will raise the overall response rate, how you will mitigate any specific biases that could be introduced, and provide a cost comparison with non-incentive methods. Your arguments should be supported by empirical evidence from past use. The exceptions are payment for participation in group discussions or in-depth qualitative interviews, payment to cover respondent expenses e.g. travel and childcare costs, and compensation for excessive demand on respondents, e.g. taking basic skills tests, diary keeping, panel maintenance and compensating schools for the respondent’s time. If you wish to use a prize draw incentive then you must also set out in your tender how you will comply with all relevant legislation and codes of practice (e.g. the British Code of Advertising and

Sales Promotion), state that you shall be solely liable for any breach of these and that you shall indemnify the Department against any claims that may be made under them.

Data Protection Act 1998

If the project will involve the collection of personal data please state how you will ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

CERUK Database

In order to ensure that the scope and outcomes of the Department's funded educational research projects are made available to as wide an audience as possible the successful organisation will be required to update the Current Education Research in the UK database with a statement of intent giving title of project, contact names and brief summary of aims/purpose and methodology. This will be required within six weeks of exchange of contract.

The database is being administered by the National Foundation for Education and Research (NFER). Details of ways of accessing and supplying information are available on NFER's website (www.nfer.ac.uk/ceruk).

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Department is committed to open government and to meeting their responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2005. Accordingly, all information submitted to the Department may need to be disclosed in response to a request under the Act. If you consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. You should be aware that, even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, we may still be required to disclose it under the Act if a request is received. Please also note that the receipt of any material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by the Department should not be taken to mean that we accept any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking. If a request is received, we may also be required to disclose details of unsuccessful tenders.

C. Proposal Assessment Framework: third sector organisation

	Points awarded
1. Addressing the brief (To what extent would the proposal produce the desired outcomes specified in the brief – both in terms of quality and comprehensiveness?)	**/20**
2. Development of the brief (To what extent does the proposal appropriately develop and extend the ideas in the brief and demonstrate engagement with the concepts?)	**/10**
3. Technical Content (An assessment of the quality of approach, methodology and analyses, and their appropriateness for the task.)	**/20**
4. Milestones and deliverables (To what extent will the proposal produce timely report with appropriate quality control and opportunities for feedback built in?)	**/10**
5. Quality of staff and support (An assessment of the level and relevant expertise of staff involved, related to their time allocation and type of input to the project.)	**/10**
6. Treatment of risks (To what extent does the proposal demonstrate awareness of the relevant risks associated with the research, and take appropriate measures to address these?)	**/10**
7. Value for money (To what extent does the proposed outcome offer value for money, in terms of quality of content, level of input, and associated costs?)	**/10**

8. Fit to research programme / additional opportunities for research (To what extent would the proposed report match the research programme aims, feed into other reports and offer additional research / dissemination opportunities)	**/10**
Overall rating	**TOTAL** **/100**
Any additional points to note: **Any additional feedback for the consultants:**	

D. Model questions to better understand research proposals – provided by Freshminds www.freshminds.co.uk

Confirming the aims

- Can you confirm what you understand to be the objectives of this project / evaluation?

Exploring the methodology

- Why have you chosen your suggested approach / methodology?
- How will your suggested approach / methodology help us to achieve our objectives?
- What other methodologies (if any) did you consider and why did you reject them?
- Why have you suggested a [qualitative / quantitative / qualitative & quantitative] approach to the evaluation?
    - If quantitative – what data will you base the evaluation on? Why have you suggested 'x' number of [interviews / survey responses]?
    - If qualitative – how will you ensure a robust evaluation is conducted? (If both qual and quant ask both of the above)

- Why have you not suggested a qualitative / quantitative approach?
- Why [have you / have you not] included a control group?
- How will you recruit participants for the research?
- There may be unexpected impact of the [programme / activity / organisation] which we are currently unaware of – will your research be able to reveal this?
- Will your approach allow us to understand the "conditions for success" for this [programme / activity / organisation]? How?
- How will your approach take into account the [varying] context in which the [programme / activity / organisation]? operates?

Project risks

- What are the greatest risks that you associate with this project?
- How will you overcome these?

Outputs

- What final outputs we can expect?
- Will you report anything differently if the research reveals negative findings about the [programme / activity / organisation]?? i.e. Probe supplier's integrity and independence

The agency / bidding organisation

- Where do you think you can add real value?
- How are you different from the competition?
- Who will do the work?
- How have you calculated your costs?
- What input do you need from us?

E. Terms of reference and membership of the Education and Employer Taskforce Expert Group on Research (January 2010). For current membership, visit www.educationandemployers.org

Background

The Taskforce needs to come to a view on what an "effective partnership" actually consists and to identify means of ensuring that all schools have an effective relationship with employers which provides all young people with the inspiration, motivation, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to help them achieve their potential. The Taskforce also needs to consider how support from employers can be mobilized to support schools, identifying the tangible benefits, and the circumstances under which these are most likely to be secured, to partners on both sides.

Objectives of the research strategy

- develop shared understanding of current and planned research across partners and wider stakeholders, creating a research strategy that is relevant and useful to partners
- develop a shared understanding of the characteristics of an effective relationship between employers and schools/colleges
- ensure that the Taskforce, its partners and wider stakeholders are aware of the most compelling and robust evidence demonstrating the real benefits of partnership to young people, teachers, schools, employers, employees and to the nation as a whole
- enable future research commissions by the Taskforce, partners and other stakeholders to draw on shared understanding of the developing evidence base
- ensure that Taskforce communications are informed by an evidence base which is relevant and compelling to target audiences
- ensure relevant and appropriate benchmarks for the current level of quality and quantity of partnerships between education and employers are identified

The role of the Taskforce Expert Group on Research

The Taskforce is committed to supporting the work of partners and other stakeholders by bringing them together to provide a forum to share and discuss information of mutual interest, identifying opportunities for future collaborative working.

The Taskforce Expert Group on Research will include:

- nominated representatives of the members of the Partnership Board
- nominated representatives of the Trustees
- nominated representative of the Taskforce executive

The Group will also include representatives from:

- stakeholder groups
- academic community

The members of Expert Group on Research will:

- report to the Partnership Council and Board of Trustees, providing advice on policy matters related to research
- meet quarterly, unless members agree otherwise
- provide advice and guidance to partners, and other stakeholders, on research proposals in relation to the agreed Taskforce research strategy
- support the objectives of the Taskforce in ensuring that communications, and other activities, are informed by relevant and robust research
- review the continuing relevance of the Taskforce Research Strategy after 12 months of operation
- review the continuing purpose and effectiveness of the Taskforce Expert Group on Research after 12 months of operation

Membership

Taskforce	Dr Anthony Mann (Chair)

Partnership Board nominees

BITC	Peter McNulty
CBI	Matt Sheldon
DCSF	Vikki McAuley
	John Edmunds
Edge/IEBE	David Harbourne
SSAT	Gary Forrest
STEMNET	Dr Rachel Crossley

Co-opted members

From academia

Dr Steve Brammer	University of Bath
Professor Prue Huddlestone	University of Warwick
Professor Chris James	University of Bath
Dr Desiree Lopez	Institute of Education/Edcoms
Dr Ciaran Sugrue	University of Cambridge

From the private sector

Joanne Dooley	BDO Stoy Hayward LLP
Carolyn Housman	City of London
Tanya Kuveljic	B-live
John Lakin	PWC
Desiree Lopez	Edcoms/Institute of Education
Bea Malleson	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
Graham Rowlands	McDonalds
Matthew Sparkes	Linklaters LLP
Catherine Skilton	Freshminds
Liz Watts	Edcoms

From the public sector

Michelle Brassell	CILT
David Butler/Gwen Coates	Ofsted
Rhian Dent	QCDA

From the third sector

Andrew Grimley	Young Enterprise
Amanda Jordan	Smart Company
Raj Patel	Learning and Skills Network
Stephen Shields	Shine Trust
Derek Kozel	Young Chamber
David Walker	Career Academies
Anne Evans	HTI

Observer

Sefika Mertkan-Ozunlu	University of Cambridge