

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Mayor's European Social Fund (ESF) 2019- 2023 Programme

Volume 2, Annex 5 - Specification

Lot 5: English and Maths



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**Greater London Authority
December 2018**

Published by
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA
www.london.gov.uk

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1. Project Specification – English and Maths¹

1.1 Project Overview

This single £2.5m Project will support adults in low-paid work who lack GCSEs at grade C/4 in English and/or maths, to improve their job opportunities and earning potential by achieving these qualifications; particularly within sectors where lack of English and maths skills hinders career progression. It will actively engage employers to ensure they support and invest in their employees. There will be a strong focus on identifying and implementing innovative approaches addressing the barriers that prevent participation and achievement on basic English and maths courses among those in low-paid work. Delivery could include new methodologies, online support, non-traditional venues and one-to-one or small group tuition. This 4 year Project will run from August 2019 to March 2023.

- Key activities: support adults in low-paid work to participate and achieve GCSE English and/or maths at grade C/4 (or an equivalent 'stepping stone' course) and address barriers to investment in English and maths skills among employers
- Target groups: London residents aged 19+, who are in low-paid work, and without GCSE² at grade C (or equivalent) in English and/or maths;
- Funding: £2.5m
- Number of Projects supported: One contract to be awarded
- Geographical focus: Pan-London
- Primary Result: A minimum of 905 Participants will achieve an English or maths qualification, of which:
 - a minimum of 55% achieve a GCSE at Grade 4 or above;
 - a maximum of 24% achieve a pass in a Level 2 functional skills course; and
 - a maximum of 21% achieve a pass in a Level 1 functional skills course.

¹ To be read in conjunction with the Mayor's ESF 2019-23 Programme Specification

² People with Higher Level Qualifications, but who do not hold English and/or Maths at grade C or equivalent, are not excluded from this project because they hold a higher level qualification.

A minimum of 35% of starters will be employed by micro/small employers³ and a maximum of 65% of starters will be employed by medium/large employers⁴.

1.2 Background

Employers often require that employees hold a 'standard pass' in English and maths (GCSE at grade C/4), and the lack of these qualifications often hinders access to additional qualifications that allow employees to progress in work. Research shows that achieving basic qualifications in English and maths is key to improving earnings and labour market returns⁵. Moreover, disadvantaged young people are less likely to secure this level of qualification in English and / or maths at both 16 and 18⁶. Consequently, adults without this level of qualification are likely to be some of the most disadvantaged in the capital. Without the right support to achieve these qualifications, many adults are not getting the opportunity to escape low-pay and are left potentially vulnerable in the face of pending automation.

Though the Government's Adult Education Budget (AEB) provides a fully-funded programme for people lacking these qualifications, participation is low and has fallen further in recent years. Of the 3 million working-age Londoners without a Level 2 English qualification only 78,380 participated on a basic English course⁷ and participation has fallen by 32% between 2011/12 and 2016/17⁸. Of the 4.5 million working-age Londoners who do not have a Level 2 qualification in maths, only 72,320 participated on basic maths courses in 2016/17 and participation between 2011/12 and 2016/17 has fallen by 28%⁹. Furthermore, among Participants, one fifth of adult learners on Level 1 maths and English courses and two fifths of those on Level 2 courses did not go on to achieve their qualification¹⁰. For GCSE courses, 45% of adult learners (aged 19+) achieved at least a grade C / 4 in English and 39% achieve this level in maths¹¹. The GLA anticipate that

³ Having 50 employees or less

⁴ Having more than 50 employees

⁵ BIS (2016), '*Returns to Maths and English Learning (at level 2 and below) in Further Education*'

⁶ DfE (2017), '*Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential*'

⁷ This analysis was produced for the GLA by the Learning and Work Institute, using the 2011 Skills for Life Survey. Consequently, the figures reflect the position in 2011. The figures refer to estimates for the working age (16-64) population with qualifications up to and including level 1. Learning and Work Institute (2018), Greater London Authority AEB Dashboard

⁸ Greater London Authority Economics (GLAE) analysis (2018)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Department for Education, National achievement rates tables '2016 to 2017 apprenticeship NARTs overall headline' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-achievement-rates-tables-2016-to-2017>).

¹¹ Department for Education, National achievement rates tables '2016 to 2017 education and training NART overall GCSE pass rate and achievement rate' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-achievement-rates-tables-2016-to-2017>)

these achievement rates can be improved upon for Participants who are not currently engaging in delivery.

Many adults with poor basic skills are in the workplace, but employers do not invest in developing their basic skills or are reluctant to do so owing to time constraints and the reluctance to release staff if resources are scarce.¹² This both limits job opportunities and earning potential for individuals in low-paid jobs and negatively affects capital growth and productivity.

Frequently-cited barriers to investment in skills emerged from a recent qualitative study¹³. This explored the perspective of both employers and employees.

From the perspective of employers:

- Over-confidence and confirmation bias mean poor basic skills are not likely to be identified as an underlying problem and more tangible causes of business problems are likely to be identified instead;
- Many managers face time constraints and experience a 'scarcity' mindset, generating a mismatch between the perceived and actual benefits and costs of training. This reduces the attractiveness of skills investments.
- The complexity of the skills landscape means that employers are faced with support and provision choice overload when trying to make a decision about training.

From the perspective of employees:

- As people have a tendency to use groups around them as reference points, some employees with low skills overestimate their skills.
- The stigma associated with poor basic skills and low confidence tends to prevent people from signing up for training, and fixed mindsets and perceptions around recognising skills shortfalls reinforce these barriers.

Despite this, recent trials have demonstrated that some workplace approaches are effective in increasing participation rates.¹⁴

1.3 Objectives

¹² DfE (2017), '[Annex B: Basic skills in workplaces – a behavioural insights perspective](#)'

¹³ Note, this is not a comprehensive list of all barriers and instead includes only those that were mentioned frequently. DfE (2017), '[Annex B: Basic skills in workplaces – a behavioural insights perspective](#)'

¹⁴ Note, this was from a low base so overall rates remained low. However, given that most adults with poor basic skills are in the workplace and very few participate in English and maths courses, even small increases across the whole working population would lead to a significant increase in total participation rates. DfE (2017), '[Annex B: Basic skills in workplaces – a behavioural insights perspective](#)'

The overall aim of this Project is to:

Add value to the English and maths statutory entitlements funded through the AEB by supporting adults in low-paid work in key sectors to attain higher completion and achievement rates for basic English and maths courses than the national average. The Project will do this by identifying and implementing innovative approaches to overcome barriers to participation and completion on the courses, addressing barriers to investment in English and math skills by employers, and providing a route map to progression in employment.

The Objectives are to:

- support a minimum of 905 Participants to achieve a Basic Skills qualification;
- promote the benefits of learning English and maths to employers and employees;
- add value to statutory provision funded through AEB by trialling complementary innovative approaches to engaging Participants and employers;
- achieve higher course completion and achievement rates for basic English and maths courses than the national average.

Wider benefits, to be measured through evaluation, include;

- support Participants to progress into higher paid work and maintain this for at least 6 months;
- improve health and well-being for Participants;
- improve willingness among employers to provide training;
- tackle barriers to employer investment.

1.4 Project Specific Eligibility and Target Groups¹⁵

Specific eligibility criteria for this Project are as follows:

Eligible Participants will be:

- London resident adults who are in low-paid work (earning below the London living Wage) who are aged 19+ and are without a GCSE qualification at grade C/4 in English and/or maths; and who
 - work in sectors where progression is dependent on individuals holding GCSE grade C/4 in English and maths (e.g. health and social care, construction and early years); or

¹⁵ Please also see the requirements outlined in section # of the ESF Programme Specification and relevant sections of the Evidence Handbook.

- work in key sectors for growth or sectors with acute skills needs in London, as identified in the Skills for Londoners Strategy¹⁶

The Project should aim to recruit, as a minimum, proportions of Participants from the Equality Groups set out below.

Equality Groups	Project Target (%)
Participants from ethnic minorities	43%
Female Participants	50%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	14%
Participants aged 50+	15%

Bidders must describe how they will identify, recruit and support eligible Participants from these groups, taking into account any particular barriers to participation.

1.5 Geography¹⁷

The contract area for the Project will be pan-London.

¹⁶ Key sectors for growth or with acute skills needs in London mentioned in the Strategy include: tech and digital, life sciences, low carbon and environmental goods and services, creative and cultural industries, advanced urban services, financial and business services, tourism, construction and health and social care. GLA (2018), '[Skills for Londoners Strategy](#)'

2. Service Requirements

2.1 Project Deliverables – Expected Stages

The GLA considers successful delivery will incorporate the stages and activities outlined within the table below.

Bidders must demonstrate how they will meet specific criteria. However, there is an expectation that bidders will choose how they deliver their Project, bringing their expertise and unique approach to delivery.

Stage	Activity
Identify and recruit suitable Participants	<p>ESF Providers should develop and implement a targeted and personalised outreach plan to increase participation, through information sessions that share objectives, benefits and administrative aspects of the Projects with potential Participants. This should be extended to key partners also. Organisations could include, but are not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers; • unions; • Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches (where relevant); • industry/employee groups • community organisations. <p>A minimum of 35% of Participants will be employed by micro/small employers.</p>
Needs assessment and Bespoke Training Plan	<p>ESF Providers must complete a Bespoke Training Plan (BTP) for all Participants as part of their enrolment on the Project. The first weeks of a course are a critical period. Bidders must set out how they intend to ensure that all Participants have a positive start to the Project and early experience of success in order to foster motivation. For each Participant, key activities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial engagement with Participants and diagnostic assessment to identify key areas of upskilling required, including the use of Training Needs Analysis as required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with employers in order to diagnose performance problems in relation to basic skills and make the business case for investment in basic skills, including the use of Organisational Needs Analysis as required. The training must be aligned with the business needs of employers. • Ensuring Participants are matched to an appropriate course and receive adequate information, advice and guidance in relation to their course. • Liaison with both Participants and employers to provide flexible training that caters to the needs and schedules of both. <p>Engagement with employers needs to be embedded throughout delivery. Work with employers needs to incorporate general principles that encourage investment in skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification of training as a need: making underlying skills gaps and their performance implications more visible to managers and provide benchmarks to the managers • Encouraging the prioritisation of training: providing realistic and accessible information on Return on Investment, increase the sense of ownership that employers have in training, and make use of mental accounting. • Simplifying the sourcing and setting up of training: reducing overload of choice and addressing collaboration and time constraints rather than cost. • Encouraging employees to take part, using role models, framing training positively, building trust, removing frictions in delivery, using chunking and investing in face to face interactions.
English and maths support	<p>Bidders need to specify how their interventions address the common barriers to investment in basic skills training. These could include:</p> <p>Among employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overconfidence and confirmation bias that lead employers to ignore poor basic skills as the underlying problem. • Time constraints and a scarcity mindset among managers leading to a misperception of benefits and costs of training. • Choice overload among employers when choosing training due to the complexity of the skills landscape.

	<p>Among employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-estimation of their own skills through using peers and others as a reference point. • Stigma and low confidence due to lack of skills preventing enrolment in training. • Fixed mindsets reinforcing these barriers. <p>Training could include one-to-one instruction or small group instruction in order to enable tailored support for workers with varying abilities and backgrounds, based at appropriate locations that could include, but are not limited to, community settings and employers' premises. It could also include online, bite-sized support for Participants to facilitate independent, self-paced study.</p> <p>Contextualising training, such as through core literacy and numeracy skills training for given occupations, to support with business alignment and transfer of learning to the workplace, should be an integral part of the offer, although any contextualised training must adequately prepare Participants for the qualifications specified.</p> <p>Tools to prepare and support educators to deliver the training (e.g. train-the-trainer workshops) must be integrated into delivery.</p> <p>Timeframes for interventions need to align with course schedules, examination dates and enrolment processes for AEB providers.</p> <p>Training activities must be accompanied by regular reviews of the Participant's progress and feedback to reinforce a sense of continuing achievement. There must be regular recognition of small and large gains in Participant progress. Participants should be supported in understanding how these gains can benefit other areas of their lives. A clear process must be in place for providing appropriate and timely support where progress updates indicate that the Participant may not be making satisfactory progress.</p>
Wrap around support	<p>ESF Providers must establish appropriate, high quality wrap around support to address the specific barriers Participants may face and enable them to engage in and sustain their involvement in the Project. This could include one-to-one instruction and online programmes to support Participants to achieve their qualifications. Bidders must demonstrate that additional teaching,</p>

	<p>training, assessment and feedback delivered through their proposed intervention(s) is high quality and meets the needs of both employed adult Participants and their employers.</p> <p>This wrap around support will be crucial to supporting Participants in building confidence to access further learning opportunities and employment.</p> <p>Participants who are parents will need to be reimbursed for any additional childcare costs incurred where they are required to be funded by the Participant and are, not covered by any other funding source.</p>
Delivery of English and maths courses	<p>Each activity (training and wrap around support) must clearly demonstrate relevance in terms of its potential positive impact upon participation, completion and/or achievement rates, evidenced by effective practice and relevant research. To maximise engagement, and to allow the delivery to be funded by and reported to the GLA, delivery through this ESF Project (training and wrap around) will need to be designed, structured and delivered differently by an accredited organisation outside of mainstream provision.</p>
Career support and planning to achieve wage progression	<p>Participants will need to be provided with an understanding of how to achieve career and wage progression. This could include support with selling skills in application forms/writing CVs and mock interviews/assessments.</p>

2.2 Project Specific Partnership Working

The Project will be underpinned by strategic partnerships. ESF Providers will be required to establish links with local stakeholders, have an understanding of their needs, and develop strong connections with them.

ESF Providers must have appropriate measures in place for referring to other provision that can provide support alongside this Project to address any additional barriers that Participants may have in engaging fully and productively with the Project.

3. Budget and Payments

3.1 Overall budget framework and parameters

The budget allocated for the work described in this specification and for the Referral Incentive Fees to Micro and Small Employers is £2.5m. It is expected that one contract will be awarded.

Available budget	Primary Result
£2.5m	<p>A minimum of 905 Participants achieve a Basic Skills qualification.</p> <p>Micro and Small Employers will be provided with a Referral Fee for each Starter.</p>

3.2 The Payment Model

Payments will be made on the achievement of results set for each Participant who progresses through the key stages of the Project. All payments are based on a model which reflects the payment stages indicated in the table below.

Anticipated Proportions of Funding for Trigger Payment Activities	
Input/Output/Results	% of payment
Advance payment (to be reclaimed from Participants that complete the Basic Skills training)	10%
Referral Incentive Fee of £600 to be passed onto Micro and Small employers with less than 50 staff for each Participant who enrolls onto the programme	
Participants starting on the Project	30%

Participants completing a Basic Skills course	30%
Participants achieving a Basic Skills qualification	40%

By completing the Payment Trigger Calculator (PTC)¹⁸, bidders will be able to determine the value that they are paid for each individual output by selecting the volume of Participants whom they think will engage at each paid stage of delivery.

¹⁸ Please also see the requirements outlined in section 4 of the ESF Programme Specification, paragraph 179 of the Delivery Handbook, and Volume 4, Annex 17.1 of the Tender

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