

Invitation to Tender: Review summarising the most successful approaches to designing and delivering professional training and techniques for evaluating their relative efficacy

Overview

The Legal Education Foundation is seeking to commission a review of best practice in designing, delivering and evaluating professional training. The findings of this review will provide our grantees with the tools they need to design effective programmes and materials and to accurately assess the efficacy of the training they are funded to deliver. We will also use the outputs of this review internally, to inform our decision making when awarding grants to organisations who are seeking funding from us to design and deliver training.

The Legal Education Foundation currently funds a number of organisations to deliver training to legal professionals – one-to-one, in groups and increasingly online. This training is focussed on improving the legal skills and legal knowledge of the individuals and groups that participate. The Foundation is keen to understand which approaches to designing and delivering training are likely to be most effective in bringing about lasting improvements in knowledge, skills, behaviour and practice.

We hope that the findings of this review will be used by our current and future grantees to guide them in developing training programmes and adopting appropriate techniques to evaluate whether or not these training programmes have positively influenced knowledge, behaviour and practice.

Background

The Legal Education Foundation, established in 2012, awards grants to organisations to deliver projects that advance our five strategic objectives, which are:

1. To increase public understanding of the law and the capability to use it;
2. To advance high quality thinking, training and practice in legal education and legal services to ensure legal needs are met;
3. To increase access to employment in the legal profession and, in particular, to advance social mobility and diversity;
4. To develop a robust evidence base of needs in each of the areas above and of effective ways of meeting these needs;
5. To understand the role that technology can play in achieving each of these objectives.

The Foundation funds a growing portfolio of projects, many of which involve resourcing organisations to deliver training in particular areas of legal knowledge and skills to a variety of different stakeholders. The training interventions we fund are delivered across a variety of platforms, and range from the provision of online resources to the delivery of face-to-face training in the form of workshops. As a Foundation, we are keen both to support our grantees to evaluate the impact of the training they deliver, and to capture the learning from the different modes of training we fund in order to develop our understanding of which approaches are most effective. To date, the Foundation has made over eighty grants to a range of organisations to support them to deliver training in:

- particular areas of law (for example, asylum and statelessness, welfare benefits, housing) or;
- particular skills that are necessary for practice (such as interviewing vulnerable witnesses)

Many of our grants are awarded to organisations with expertise in particular areas of law but limited experience of either designing training or evaluating the impact of the training that they deliver. As a condition of receiving a grant from the Foundation we request that grantees report on the outcomes of their projects, however, much of the information that is provided to us consists of data on the numbers of people who received the training, rather than evidence as to the efficacy of the particular training intervention in improving knowledge, skills, behaviour and practice. Where evaluation is conducted, this tends to be included at the end of the project and to take the form of questionnaires assessing participants “reaction” to the training (Kirkpatrick: 1976, 1994). Very few grantees move beyond this first stage of the Kirkpatrick model to consider the inclusion of learning measures, behaviour outcomes, indicators or training transfer (Burke and Hutchins:2008) or results/impact. We are seeking to build grantees’ capacity to design effective training interventions and to gather evidence for the impact of their work by providing them with a toolkit of possible approaches that will help them to:

- i) Design training materials, programmes and interventions in line with national and international best practice, and further;
- ii) To assess whether the training they design and deliver is resulting in the outcomes that they aspire to in terms of improving knowledge, skills, behaviour and practice.

The Foundation recognises the lack of standardised tools in this field for measuring changes in competence in different domains of legal skills, knowledge and practice. The Legal Education and Training Review (2011) highlighted issues around the reliability and efficacy of competence based frameworks in Legal Education and Training Models in England and Wales. As such, we are interested in exploring what can be learned from the experience of the healthcare sector, where standardised workplace assessment tools, such as the Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) and Objective Structured Assessment of Technical Skills (OSATS) have been developed to assist in the evaluation of the efficacy of training. We are interested in understanding which, if any, existing standardised tools could be usefully applied by our grantees in the context of legal professional education and training.

Aims and outputs of the review

The review should culminate in a written report containing the following elements:

- **A typology of different methods of training professionals to enhance their knowledge, skills, behaviour and practice:** We understand that evidence relating to the training of legal professionals specifically may be limited, as such we are keen to explore what can be learned from the evidence for training to improve the knowledge, skills and practice of other professional groups such as medical professionals, accountants and architects. We are also interested to learn from other jurisdictions such as the USA, where the evidence base around approaches to training appears to be fairly developed. We are particularly interested in understanding the different approaches to designing and delivering online training.
- **An overview of the different approaches to measuring the impact of professional training that aligns with the typology of training methods constructed.** Many of our grantees struggle to find best practice approaches to evaluating the efficacy and impact of their training on the people they deliver training to. We would be keen to explore best practice in evaluating professional training, what elements should be included in evaluating training to improve knowledge, skills, behaviour and practice and whether there are tools or approaches that can be adopted by our grantees to assist them in developing the evidence base for the efficacy of their work.

- A discussion of the extent to which the existing evidence base enables us to compare the cost efficacy of different approaches to designing and delivering training.** In designing the specification for this research we have been greatly impressed by the approach adopted by the Education Endowment Foundation in developing their teaching and learning toolkit (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>). This toolkit, compiled by academics at Durham University, compares strategies for improving attainment in maths and literacy amongst five to sixteen year olds. Within the toolkit, each different approach or strategy to improving attainment (for example, feedback, one-to-one tuition, reducing class sizes and school uniform) is described and compared according to average cost, strength of evidence for efficacy, and average impact on attainment. The toolkit is based on evidence from meta-analysis of the impact of different strategies on tested attainment. We are keen to explore whether a similar exercise could be undertaken for approaches to professional training.
- An overview of the factors that should be taken into account when designing and delivering training that is intended to improve knowledge and skills, change behaviour and influence practice.** We are very interested in the concept of training transfer (Burke and Hutchins:2008) and keen to understand which approaches to training make this most likely. We would also be keen to learn how different delivery modes (i.e. in person (small groups vs seminars), online, workplace learning) are most likely to bring about behaviour change in the longer term.

A further output may include a seminar with grantees to discuss the findings of the research.

Timetable

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| Tuesday 31 st May 2016 | Invitation to tender published |
| Monday 4 th July 2016 | Deadline for Invitation to Tender submissions |
| Thursday 7 th July 2016 | Interviews |
| Mid July/Early August 2016 | Project starts |
| February 2017 | Project end date |

Estimated budget

Up to £50k

Assessment criteria

- Delivery of a project outline setting out the approach to be taken to address the aims and outlined above. (20%)
- Knowledge of existing research in the field of human resources development/management/behavioural psychology/professional education in the UK and other jurisdictions (30%)
- Experience of undertaking meta-reviews of evidence (30%)
- Ability to write for a range of audiences (10%)
- A track record of successful project management, delivering research or consultancy projects to time and to budget (10%)

Instructions for submission

- The Legal Education Foundation's Director of Research welcomes discussions with applicants prior to the deadline, please email Natalie.Byrom@theLEF.org to arrange a convenient time.
- Applications to tender must be submitted by email to Natalie.Byrom@theLEF.org by **5.30pm on Monday 4th July 2016**
- The substantive section of the tender application should be structured under headings reflecting the assessment criteria outlined above.
- The tender application must specify which people and organisations would be involved in delivering the project and provide CV's for each project member. It should also set out the budget for the project.

References

Burke, L. and Hutchins, H (2008) "A study of best practices in training transfer and proposed model of transfer" *Human Resource Development Quarterly* Vol. 19, Issue 2, pages 107-128, Summer 2008

Kirkpatrick, D. (1994) "Evaluating Training Programs" BK Publishers Inc. California.