

# European Social Fund Call 3 project promoters

## Guidance for Call 3 visits from September 2022



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Call 3.....	2
The purpose of the Call 3 visit.....	2
Arrangements for the visit .....	3
Notification .....	3
The visit programme .....	3
Feedback.....	3
Following the visit.....	4
Publication of the report .....	4
Safeguarding .....	4
Response to the report .....	4
Appendix A: Programme outline for a Call 3 visit.....	6
Appendix B: Call 3 Visit report template .....	8
Appendix C: Online protocols for Call 3 visits .....	12

## Introduction

This guidance provides outline information for European Social Fund (ESF) Call 3 project promoters.

## Call 3

A Call 3 visit will be scheduled for the new project promoters\* and those existing project promoters not visited by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) as part of Call 2 during the period from January 2022 to April 2022.

As part of the Call 3 visit, ETI will evaluate and report on the effectiveness and impact of the project's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes<sup>†</sup>. ETI will focus on two of the key areas prioritised for improvement by the organisation at the point of the visit.

A desk-based scrutiny will be undertaken of the effectiveness of quality improvement planning for those existing project promoters visited by ETI as part of Call 2 during the period from January 2022 to April 2022. There may also be a small number of Call 3 visits to these project promoters. A document setting out the [arrangements for desk-based scrutiny](#) can be accessed on the ETI website.

The remainder of this document contains generic guidance around the arrangements for the Call 3 visits. ETI will carry out visits with flexibility to respond to the particular circumstances of each individual project promoter and its participants.

## The purpose of the Call 3 visit

The Call 3 visit, made on behalf of DfE, will give the project promoter the opportunity to demonstrate that it has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision through its quality improvement planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes.

In reaching evaluations, ETI use the key indicators which are available in the Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication (ISEF)<sup>‡</sup>. The visit will enable ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The project promoter's arrangements for safeguarding will be evaluated and reported on as part of the visit. The completed ETI [safeguarding proforma](#) should be available at the time of the visit.

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\* New project promoters will also receive a baseline visit by ETI prior to the Call 3 visit.

† A DfE communication (9 August 2022) advised of the arrangements for the submission by ESF Call 3 project promoters of the annual Quality Improvement Evaluation Update and related Quality Improvement Planning documents.

‡ [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Further Education, Work-based Learning and European Social Fund \(etini.gov.uk\)](#)

## Arrangements for the visit

The individual project promoter and DfE will be informed in advance by ETI's Inspection Services Team (IST) when the Call 3 visit is taking place.

### Notification

IST will notify the project promoter of the Call 3 visit approximately two weeks prior by issuing an email which contains links to the supporting documentation and by a follow-up telephone call. Soon after this, the Reporting Inspector (RI) will be in touch to make the necessary arrangements and answer any queries. The RI will talk through the arrangements for the completion of a confidential online participant questionnaire<sup>§</sup>.

### The visit programme

The programme will be planned with the project promoter, with a proposed plan being drawn up by the RI and the project promoter in advance of the visit.

It is anticipated that the Call 3 visit activities will involve session observations, focus group meetings with participants and other key stakeholders (such as employers, collaborative partners) and, discussions with key staff (to include quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements). Session observations and identification of participants for focus group meetings will be selected through discussion between the RI and the project promoter; the project promoter may wish to identify particular sessions that best demonstrate the impact of actions to effect improvement. Inspectors will also scrutinise relevant data and documentation (within the limits of the time available). An illustrative programme outline for a Call 3 visit is detailed below in Appendix A. Please note any timings are approximate and for guidance only.

The duration of the visit and the size of the ETI team will be proportionate to the size, scope and geographic spread of the project promoter's provision. Where feasible, ETI will deploy Associate Assessors on some of the visits.

### Feedback

At the end of the Call 3 visit, the project promoter will be provided with oral feedback on the findings, including the overall outcome and the evaluation for safeguarding. A representative from DfE will be invited to attend this feedback. Following this oral feedback, the project promoter should begin work on any areas for improvement identified and to be addressed for the remainder of the third Call.

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<sup>§</sup> A confidential on-line questionnaire will be used to collate learner/participant feedback and inform the work to be carried out during the visit.

## Following the visit

### Publication of the report

The project promoter and DfE will receive a pre-publication draft of the report to check for factual accuracy. The report will be published and made available on the [ETI website](#).

### Safeguarding

If safeguarding arrangements are evaluated as 'unsatisfactory', ETI will return to the project promoter within six working weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues which have been identified.

### Response to the report

**Overall outcome:** At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, the project promoter demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for the project.

**Response and follow-up activity:** The project promoter provides IST with written acknowledgement of receipt of the report, stating that the report has been made available to staff, and that both they and the project participants have been informed that a copy can be accessed on the [ETI website](#).

DfE's Quality Improvement Advisor/Team will then communicate with the project promoter and will indicate, if necessary, any further improvement actions to be taken within a given timescale.

**Overall outcome:** At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, the project promoter demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for the project.

**Response and follow-up activity:** The project promoter provides IST with written acknowledgement of receipt of the report, stating that the report has been made available to staff, and that both they and the project participants have been informed that a copy can be accessed on the [ETI website](#).

DfE's Quality Improvement Advisor/Team will then communicate with the project promoter and will indicate, if necessary, any further improvement actions to be taken within a given timescale.

**Overall outcome:**

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, the project promoter has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for the project. ETI will continue to monitor how the project promoter brings about improvement and the Department may consider further action.

**Response and follow-up activity:**

The project promoter provides IST with written acknowledgement of receipt of the report, stating that the report has been made available to staff, and that both they and the project participants have been informed that a copy can be accessed on the [ETI website](#).

DfE's Quality Improvement Advisor/Team will then communicate with the project promoter and will indicate, if necessary, any further improvement actions to be taken within a given timescale.

## Appendix A: Programme outline for a Call 3 visit

This is an illustrative programme outline for a Call 3 visit lasting three days.

The duration of a Call 3 visit and the size of the ETI team will be proportionate to the size, scope and geographic spread of the project promoter's provision.

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Activity*</b>
9.15 am	ETI arrival and introductions.
Around 9.30 am	Initial meeting with senior leader(s). Short oversight presentation about the project context, its quality improvement plan and two of the key areas which the organisation has prioritised for improvement and ETI focus during the visit (by senior leader). Finalising activities and clarification of any queries.  A proposed plan as appropriate to the project will have been drawn up by the RI and the project promoter in advance of the visit, including session observations, focus groups meetings with participants and other key stakeholders (such as employers, collaborative partners) and, discussions with key staff (to include quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements).
10.30 am (onwards)	Call 3 visit activities.
Around 4.00 pm	Brief update meeting with the senior leader(s).
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Morning	Brief meeting with senior leader(s) to confirm arrangements for day two. Call 3 visit activities continue.
Around 4.00 pm	Brief update meeting with the senior leader(s).
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Morning	Brief meeting with senior leader(s) to confirm arrangements for day three. Call 3 visit activities continue.

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\* The range of activities should be planned in accordance with the time allocated for the visit.

Afternoon	Team moderation meeting. Report writing.
Around 4.00 pm	Short oral feedback to a small group of senior/middle leaders and a representative from the governing body/management committee.  A representative from DfE will also be invited to attend.
<b>Post-visit</b>	Quality assurance, pre-publication factual accuracy check and publication of the report on the <a href="#">ETI website</a> .



## Appendix B: Call 3 Visit report template

### Context

<DN insert provider name> is contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the <DN insert project name> European Social Fund (ESF) project, as part of a third Call for projects which will run from 1 April 2022 for a minimum of 12 months. This project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020 and DfE. The strategic aim of the Programme is to: combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity; and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. It is aligned to the European Union 2020 Strategy for Jobs and Growth.

In <DN insert month> 2022, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Call 3 visit to <DN insert provider name> on behalf of DfE to evaluate the capacity of the project promoter to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

### Views of participants

At the time of the Call 3 visit, xx participants\*\* were registered on the project.

ETI met and spoke with a sample of participants during their learning and development sessions and in a focus group(s).

Xx percent of the participants completed the online questionnaire. They <DN insert detail>.

### Focus of the Call 3 Visit

During the Call 3 visit, ETI evaluated the effectiveness of the quality improvement planning processes and focused on two of the key areas which the organisation had prioritised for improvement through its self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes:

- <DN insert the key area prioritised>; and
- <DN insert the key area prioritised>.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

### Key Findings

The Call 3 visit identified the following key findings < DN If applicable: which include any areas for improvement to be addressed for the remainder of the third Call>.

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\*\* All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter.

- <DN Linked to the key area(s) prioritised, insert key finding on the quality of the curriculum provided (including breadth, balance and appropriateness), including how the quality of provision promotes successful learning and secures outcomes and progression>.
- <DN Linked to the key area(s) prioritised, insert key finding on the effectiveness and impact of planning, engagement/teaching/training and assessment in promoting successful learning, securing outcomes and progression. **To include a comment about any planning for progression and support of participants to move on when Call 3 closes**>.
- <DN Linked to the key area(s) prioritised, insert key finding on the effectiveness and impact of strategic leadership at all levels, including the quality improvement planning processes and that those delivering the provision have appropriate experience and expertise. **To include a comment about any planning to finish out the project and/or for sustainability when Call 3 closes**>.

## Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding participants <DN insert the SG evaluation>.

## Overall outcome

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, <DN insert provider name> has <DN insert the overall outcome>.

## APPENDIX

### A Call 2 Performance Data

European Social Fund – xxxx	Since 1 April 2022 <sup>††</sup>
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Numbers of enrolments and % against target	xxx (xx%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	xxx (xxx%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	xxx (xxx%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	xxx (xx%)

<sup>††</sup> 1 April 2022 - <DN Insert date of visit>.

## B. Methodology and evidence base

ETI <DN: include detail as applicable in respect of session observations (online or face-to-face), focus group meetings with participants and other key stakeholders (such as employers, collaborative partners) and, discussions with key staff (to include quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements). Inspectors also scrutinised relevant data and documentation.

ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the [ETI website](#).

## C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

## Overall outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the project promoter:

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx project.

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for xx project.

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx project. ETI will continue to monitor how the project promoter brings about improvement and the Department for the Economy may consider further action.

## Safeguarding outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the project promoter's arrangements for safeguarding the participants:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx project reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to: ....

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx project are unsatisfactory. <DN insert detail>.

ETI will return to the project promoter within six working weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues which have been identified.

## Appendix C: Online protocols for Call 3 visits

### Online meetings

To comply with possible data sharing and other confidentiality requirements, ETI would be grateful if attendees would abide by the following protocols for any online aspects of the Call 3 visit:

- the preferred online video conferencing platform (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom, Webex, etc.) should be agreed by ETI and the project promoter in advance of the meeting;
- the project promoter will be asked to invite representatives to the meeting and forward the invitation, but only to those who have been agreed by ETI and the project promoter (the project promoter will be aware of diary commitments before confirming a meeting and will know exactly who will attend when a member of staff has accepted an invitation);
- ETI will chair each meeting;
- ETI, in agreement with the project promoter, will reserve the right to control access to the meeting and to bring the meeting to an end in the event of any concerning behaviours;
- ETI inspectors will, where possible, use an official online backdrop during meetings. Other participants should also use appropriate backgrounds during meetings;
- no meeting or any part of it is permitted to be recorded by either party. ETI does **NOT** agree to any recording being made at any time;
- attendees should use their name and project promoter as their profile for identification purposes;
- attendees are asked as far as reasonably possible to stay present during the meeting by keeping their camera turned on, unless otherwise directed by the chair;
- attendees should be aware of their surroundings and any background noise or activity;
- all attendees apart from the speakers or facilitators shall be put on mute when necessary;
- attendees are asked to use the 'hand up' function and go through the chair during meetings and respect the right of other participants to speak without interruption;

- attendees are asked to be aware of the appropriate use of the chat function. No personal comments or opinions should be included; further, the live chat stream should only be used during the meeting to note relevant website links and other information with the consent of the chair of the meeting; and
- opportunities for questions and answers will be agreed with the chair at the beginning of the meeting.

### **Online discussions/focus group meetings with participants**

A key part of the Call 3 visit will be engagement with participants. Any online discussion/focus group meeting with participants should normally last no longer than 25-30 minutes (depending on group size). Two members of ETI will be present for the online discussion/focus group meeting. One inspector will take the lead, particularly in relation to introductions and sharing protocols with the participants (see below) and one inspector will take notes as pre-agreed.

Prior to an online discussion/focus group meeting, the lead/reporting inspector will agree with the project promoter:

- the date and timing of the online meeting;
- group size (up to a maximum of 12) and the selection of the participants;
- the online platform to be used and who will share the link with the participants; and
- the sharing of the protocols below with the participants in advance.

During an online discussion/focus group meeting, the lead inspector will:

- open the meeting by introducing both inspectors, share a few general comments about meeting online as opposed to face-to-face, and express thanks to the participants for joining the focus group;
- outline to the participants the purpose of the meeting – ‘to collate their views on their experiences in the project promoter to allow ETI to share key messages and continue to improve your learning and teaching experiences’;
- remind the participants of the protocols (see below);
- adopt a listening stance to allow participants to answer questions and ensure that all of them have an opportunity to participate; and
- conclude the discussion by thanking the participants.

At the beginning of an online discussion/focus group meeting, the lead inspector will:

- provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves using a first name only;
- ask the participants to keep their camera on if possible and only turn it off if there is a connectivity issue; also ensure that they 'blur' their screen or have a 'neutral' background (If the participants are not sure about this function, the project promoter can provide instruction in advance of the meeting);
- ask the participants to keep their audio on mute unless they are speaking;
- ask the participants to use the 'raise hand' function (or equivalent) to ask a question;
- emphasise to participants that feedback to the project promoter will be general and they will not be directly quoted, except if there is a concern for an individual's welfare, including a safeguarding disclosure (in these situations the ETI will talk to the participant directly and follow safeguarding procedures);
- state that the meeting will not be recorded, and that recording by them is not permitted; and
- advise that a short written note of key points raised will be kept by the inspectors.

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