The Education and Training Foundation in partnership with

The East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (emCETT)

Practitioner-Led Research Programme 2014 – 2015

emCETT Blended Action Research Strand

Information and Application Form

In partnership with the East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (emCETT), the Foundation is inviting those working in the education and training sector in England to apply to take part in a programme to support Practitioner-Led Action Research projects. Applications may be from individual practitioners or from co-applicants who are a small group of practitioners who wish to work together on the same project.

Our approach will build on the significant work in recent years in our sector to champion and design good models of research by practitioners for the purposes of improvement, innovation, and the development of professional practice. The programme also reflects the commitment to reflection, enquiry and evidence based practice as outlined in the new Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in our sector.[1]

The Foundation's aspiration is that taking evidence based approaches to developing their practice be integral to the professional identity of those who work in the education and training sector. The Foundation will champion the role of research in supporting self-improvement, professional development, and improving learner outcomes.

The emCETT action research support programme is a blended learning model consisting of:

- The equivalent of two days mentoring support during the life of the programme from an experienced advisor based in your region

- Attendance at two peer working groups for participants (both are half-day commitments)

- Engagement with three expert webinars, led by high profile experts

- Access to a specially tailored eCPD module: Level 5 Introduction to Action Research module

- Access to a specially designed Multimodal Action Research and Reporting eguide

- Access to a range of multimodal action research reports from the 2014 emCETT Practitioner-Led Action Research programme

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[1] http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standards-review/

In addition, there are a limited number of places for participants to undertake a Level 5 accreditation², and information, advice and guidance for practitioners wishing to access Level 7 modules in action research.

The Foundation will provide opportunities for participants to share and discuss their projects at its annual research conference (Tuesday 7July 2015 at Mary Ward House, Bloomsbury, Central London).

To give you a feel for what is involved in taking part in the programme visit emCETT's Practitioner-led Action Research website showcasing last year's resources and reports.

Applications to the emCETT programme can be from any region in England (not only the East Midlands region).

Any type of provider or practitioner role is relevant as long as Skills Funding Agency-funded (SFA) provision is being delivered.

Bursary

In addition to the free blended learning materials and the support of a Regional Adviser, your organisation will be eligible for a fixed bursary of £1,000 from the Foundation. This bursary will contribute to expenses related to your action research project such as:

- Travel expenses to and from two regional peer working groups
- Staff cover costs for attending the two regional peer working groups
- Staff cover costs for engaging with three expert webinars
- Travel expenses related to attendance at the Foundation's annual research conference in London
- Materials, software and/or training related to your action research project
- Production of an action research poster for the research conference

Please note if you choose to undertake the level 5 accreditation you will need to allocate £200 to pay for the accreditation fee to emCETT.

Commitment needed to undertake the research

On the emCETT programme, you will be expected to:

- undertake an e-learning module in October/ November (0.5 day)

- engage with three expert webinars in October, January and February (1.5 hours each)

- critically engage with a variety of articles and published research related to your project theme (variable)

- support and exchange ideas with other action researchers at two regional peer working groups in November and March (0.5 days each)

- design and carry out your action research (variable)

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²Level 5 accreditation for the QCF unit T/503/5380, from the Certificate/ Diploma in Education and Training.

- engage with your regional adviser both face-to-face and by email/phone/web platform (up to 2 days of advisor support/mentoring time will be available to you)

- produce a multi-modal action research report to disseminate your findings within your organisation and across the education and training sector

Attend the Foundation's Annual Research Conference on Tuesday 7 July 2015 at The Mary Ward House, Bloomsbury, Central London which will provide opportunities to discuss and share your research.

Additionally the programme will help you to consider different routes for publishing your research.

What is action research?

'There are two essential aims to action research: to *improve* and to *involve*. Action research aims at improvement in three areas: first the improvement of *practice*; second the improvement of the *understanding* of the practice by its practitioners; and third, the improvement of the *situation* in which the practice takes place'.

(Carr and Kemmis, 1986. p165[3], original emphasis)

The Foundation is supporting practitioner-led action research because it has been shown to be a successful way for practitioners to conduct small-scale research projects to generate change and improve their practices based on the findings. It is called 'practitioner-led' to emphasise that the questions, the methods and the meaning of the results will be determined by practitioners. There may be academic or professional researchers involved in order to support the practitioners, but they do not lead the project. Instead, they

Figure 1: Action Research Cycles (taken from http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

may act as consultants to address any specific questions about research that the practitioners come up with in the course of their project, to alert participants to other existing research that may be useful, or may assist with analysing findings and editing reports.

The 'action research' term underlines the expectation that the findings of the research will influence teaching and learning practices in the classroom. They will be put into action! The research is not abstract or theoretical, but designed to look at real-life questions coming up in practitioners' work. Sometimes practitioners will be surprised by their findings and at other times they will confirm what practitioners have understood intuitively, but in a more rigorous and systematic way.[4]

The themes listed below are not intended to be an exhaustive list of research themes and we encourage innovative submissions on other topics and themes.

However, applications will ideally be guided by the priority themes listed below which reflect the sector's identified improvement needs and the Foundation's priorities. In addition, it is a requirement that your application supports your organisation's development and quality improvement priorities.

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[3] Carr, W and Kemmis, S (1986) Becoming Critical Education, Knowledge, and Action Research, Falmer Press

[4] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/12/15095637/16

Working with the Foundation, the emCETT team has designed a programme of ongoing support for successful applicants for action research projects. This programme will encourage and enable these practitioners to use research to improve teaching and learning and professional practice in the sector and help sustain each project through to a successful outcome. Successful applicants will be expected to conduct their research studies with support from a manager and (if possible) a mentor from within their own organisation. Your line manager is expected to support you through releasing you to undertake the activities within the programme plus the time spent on your individual action research project.

The following key dates have been established for this year's emCETT programme, and in which we would expect successful applicants to participate.

Webinar 1: What is action research? **Speaker to be confirmed**	**Wednesday 22 October 2014**
Peer working group 1	**w/c Monday 24 November 2014***
Webinar 2: What is multimodality? **Led by John Sutter: Learning Unlimited**	**Wednesday 14 January 2015**
Webinar 3: How to critically analyse and present data **Led by JD Carpentieri: National Research and Development Centre (NRDC), Institute of Education**	**Tuesday 10 February 2015**
Peer working group 2	**w/c 9 March 2015***
Action research report submission deadline	**Monday 1 June 2015**

* dates for both Peer Working Groups will be confirmed by late October 2014

The model in more detail:

(i) Ongoing support from a team of **regionally based advisers**. Regional Advisers (RA) will guide, support and coach practitioners through the planning, data collection, analysis and reporting stages of the research cycle(s). RAs will coach practitioners in how to use blended (multi-modal) approaches to undertake their research and report on findings. (E.g. using online polls to ask research questions, or participatory video to understand change from learners' perspectives). The practitioner will determine research questions, the methods and the means of carrying out research.

(ii) **Peer support facilitated by Regional Advisors.** The RA will organise and facilitate a minimum of two regional peer support groups to help practitioners refine and finalise their research themes and research question and produce an action plan, with support from other practitioner researchers at a regional level. Practitioners will also provide peer support for each other to critically evaluate their research findings and produce 'multi-modal' research reports.

(iii) **Web 2.0 (online)** support via a national practitioner action research e-forum and a collaborative resource-sharing platform. A platform called

'Pearltrees' has been used during the 2014 programme to share project links and research papers. All practitioners will be required to read compulsory core texts, accessed online, and be encouraged to share wider reading with each other through adding their own links to the platform.

(iv) An **Action Research eCPD module**, developed as part of the 2014 programme and now extended and aligned with the 2014 Professional Standards. The eCPD supports practitioners to learn about action research approaches and identify steps to plan and implement action research cycles. The eCPD will provide practitioners with the knowledge and understanding to gain Level 5 accreditation* for the QCF unit T/503/5380, from the Certificate/ Diploma in Education and Training. It will also provide information, advice and guidance for practitioners wishing to access Level 7 modules in action research.

(v) A **'Multi-modal Research and Reporting' e-Guide**. The e-Guide will help practitioners design multi-modal research approaches and reports, such as videos, blogs or written accounts with interactive graphics. Developed in 2014 it has proved extremely effective, not only in supporting practitioners to plan their research/ reporting techniques but in raising confidence in using these techniques during teaching. The e-Guide will support practitioners to 'be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn'. (2014 Professional Standards No. 4)
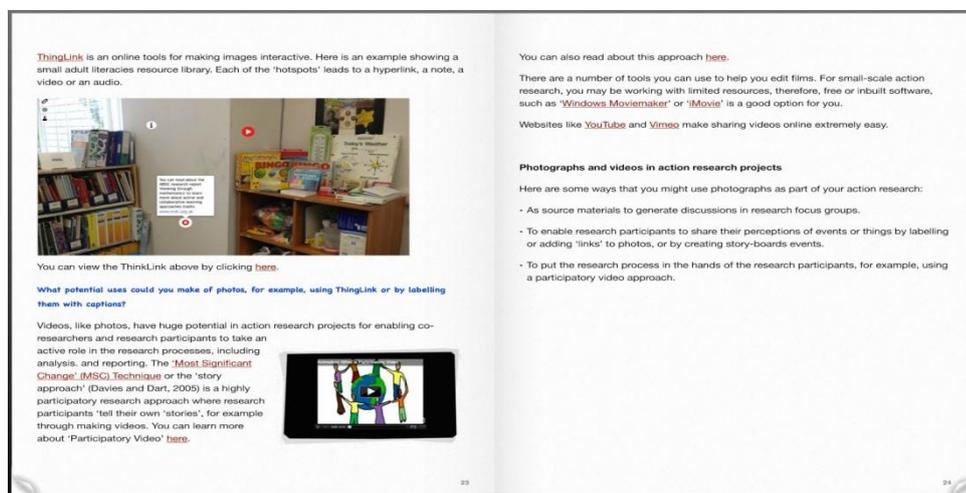
(vi) Expert training. Three national webinars; each led by a recognised expert in the field of action research and in the use of blended learning approaches. These webinars will help practitioners develop a clear understanding of action research methods and help develop practitioners' confidence to transfer blended learning approaches from the research context into their teaching and learning programmes.

1. What is action research? Speaker to be confirmed

2. What is multimodality? John Sutter, Learning Unlimited

3. How to critically analyse and present data. JD Carpentieri**, NRDC, Institute of Education

emCETT Blended Model of Practitioner-Led Action Research 2014-15

Expert and peer support to plan and undertake action research projects

Regional Adviser (RA) support

Total of two days of support provided flexibly to each practitioner / group of practitioners

Peer support facilitated by RA

Two days of peer support through a regional network of practitioner-researchers

Web 2.0 support

Online support via practitioner action research forum and collaborative resource sharing platform

126 practitioners from 63 projects,

reflecting the diversity of the sector, and across England) receive support from the practitioner–led action research programme to design and undertake their own action research projects. Projects will support the practitioners' organisational improvement strategies and the Foundation's commitment to delivering better outcomes for learners.

Blended learning to develop research skills and support accreditation

eCPD module

Accreditation pathways: - Level 5 Cert/ Diploma in Education & Training (module T/503/5380) - Facilitate access to Level 7

Action Research e-Guide

Reporting on action research outcomes and learner impact using multi-modal approaches

Expert training

Three webinars delivered by experts on action research methods and measuring impact

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The Foundation's Annual Research Conference
Tuesday 7th July 2015, Mary Ward House, Bloomsbury, Central London
Providing opportunities for participants to share and discuss their projects.

Research project themes

We encourage practitioners to identify research ideas within the seven listed themes. These themes are the Professional Skills elements from the 2014 Professional Standards (PS). Additional ideas that sit outside these themes can be proposed, but we will give priority to these areas first:

a) Motivate and inspire learners to **promote achievement** and develop their skills to **enable progression** (PS 13)

b) Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for **diverse** groups or individuals in a **safe and inclusive** environment (PS 14)

c) Promote the benefits of **technology** and support learners in its use (PS 15)

d) Address the **mathematics and English needs** of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning (PS 16)

e) Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that **stretch and challenge** (PS 17)

f) Apply appropriate and fair methods of **assessment** and provide constructive and timely **feedback** to support progression and achievement (PS 18)

g) Maintain and update your teaching and training expertise and vocational skills through **collaboration with employers** (PS 19)

Plus all projects are expected to:

Contribute to **organisational development** and **quality improvement** through collaboration with others (PS 20)

Whether this is your first step in action research or you are an experienced researcher, our blended learning programme will offer you and your organisation the opportunity to undertake some applied research to improve your learners' outcomes.

Eligibility criteria

emCETT's practitioner-led action research projects are open to practitioners, working in any role in organisations in England whose primary function is as a provider of further education and training. They are available for organisations delivering provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency only. The practitioners that we are seeking to support must be presently employed by a learning provider, and must presently be delivering, or supporting the delivery of Skills Funding Agency funded courses (this may be direct or indirectly funded.)

Application details

The projects will **begin in October 2014** and will **end in July 2015**. You are invited to submit your completed application form (found at the end of this document) by: **5pm on Friday 3 October 2014** to Jo Byrne, emCETT at support@emcett.com

You will be informed as to whether you have been successful by **Monday 13 October 2014**. If you have any queries, please contact: **Jo Byrne, Project Administrator**.
Telephone: 0116 264 3521 or **Email:** support@emcett.com

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emCETT Blended Action Research Programme

Application Form 2014-15

Successful applicants will receive free e-learning materials, face-to-face/remote support from a Regional Adviser and will also attend two peer working group meetings and a project dissemination event at no additional cost to them or their institutions (the associated bursary of £1,000 from The Foundation is to contribute to participants' travel costs to these events, any staff cover that may be required, and costs associated with conducting their research projects).Guidelines to assist applicants are given at the end of the application form.

1. **Title of project** (max 20 words)

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| |

2. **Project theme (a – g)**

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| |

3. **(a) Name of applicant/project leader**

Name:	
Job Title:	
Employer:	
Address:	
Region:	
Tel. No:	
Email:	

(b) Name of co-researcher

Name:	
Relationship to applicant:	
Job Title:	
Employer:	
Address:	
Tel. No:	
Email:	

4. **Overall aim of the project**

   Why do you think this research is needed? (max 150 words)

5. **How will your project support the current organisational development or quality improvement priorities in your organisation?** (max 150 words)

6. **Research objectives** (max 100 words)

7. **Methodology – initial proposals** (max 150 words)

8. **Brief description of what you expect to change or improve as a result of the project and how you will record this so as to be able to document the impact of your project.**
   Please include any environmental and sustainability issues related to your research. (max 250 words)

9. **How do you plan to analyse and present this evidence of impact?** (max 150 words)

10. **How will the research outcomes of the project be disseminated for the benefit of :**
    Your organisation
    Other organisations in the sector (max 150 words)

11. **Details of Senior/Line Management support for your project**

Name:	
Job Title:	
Employer:	
Address:	
Tel. No:	
Email:	

Do you intend to undertake the:

Level 5 accreditation option? Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

Information, advice and guidance to access Level 7 modules in action

research?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

Please confirm whether you have obtained support of this manager for your project.

Yes ☐   No ☐

12. **Confirmation of SFA funding (direct or indirect)**

Application Form – Guidance Notes

In developing ideas for your proposal you may find it useful to visit:
Introduction to Practitioner Action Led Research
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/12/15095637/16
Teaching and Learning section of Excellence Gateway
www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/18070
www.practitionerledactionresearch2014.wordpress.com/

1. **Title of project -** Please do not exceed 20 words

2. **Project theme –**Please give the reference letter(s) for the theme(s), based on the 2104 Professional Standards, most closely linked to your research plans.

3. **Name and contact details of applicant / project leader(s) / co-applicant**

   Please complete the contact details of applicants/ project leaders on the project.

4. **Overall aim of the project**

   The aim of these action research projects is to improve an aspect of professional/organisational performance. Please detail how your project contributes to this aim. Please do not exceed 150 words

5. **How will your project support:**

   - The current organisational development or quality improvement priorities in your organisation?
   Please do not exceed 150 words

6. **Research objectives**

   These may need to change slightly once the project is underway as your understanding of the issue deepens. We suggest you put these as bullet points. Please do not exceed 100 words

7. **Research methodology (access and approach)**

   - This is likely to to change once the project is underway as your understanding of the issue and approach deepens
   - Specify how you will secure the involvement and consent of those who participate in, and those who will need to approve, this research
   - Explain your research approach, why the methods/approach you have chosen are appropriate, given the issue(s) under investigation for example:
     - Explain how you plan to carry out your 'change' (intervention)
     - What will you do that is different?
     - What, and how much, data will you collect before and after your intervention and will it be enough to make a reasonable and valid judgement about what is going on?
     - Describe how you will analyse the data (e.g. quantitative - mean, median or modal average; qualitative - sorting quantitative data into factors / categories, etc.)
     - Do you plan to use any questionnaires, data collection or ethics/ consent forms?
   Please do not exceed 150 words

8. **Brief description of what you expect to change or improve as a result of the project.**

This is about how you will show that your research has made an impact and been used to make improvements.

- Explain why the issue(s) you have selected are important
- What change or improvement you expect/ hope to see as a result of the project
- Please include any environmental and sustainability issues related to your research
- Please specify how you intend to collect evidence of change or improvement and how you will present evidence of impact
  Please do not exceed 250 words

9. **How do you plan to analyse and present this evidence of impact?**

This is about how you will analyse and present the findings of your research in order to implement change. You should provide a brief description of how you plan to analyse and present your data.

- Please specify how you plan to analyse the evidence you will collect
- How you intend to present your evidence and findings in an engaging and convincing way
  Please do not exceed 150 words

10. **Dissemination plans**

At this stage we only want initial ideas as this is an area of the research that the support programme will help you to develop further.
Please do not exceed 150 words.

11. **Details of Senior/Line Management support for your project**

Please provide the name and contact detail (including email address) for your line manager or a senior manager. Confirmation is required that the Line or Senior Manager is aware of this application, supports the need for this research and the applicant's ability to commit the required time and resources.

12. **Confirmation of SFA funding (direct or indirect)**

Please confirm details.