



Industry Associate Programme: Phase 2 Expression of Interest

Introduction

The Industry Associate programme has been developed to support industry professionals to contribute their expertise to further education (FE) teaching and learning through a structured 'soft landing' into the FE environment.

The programme was informed by practice in England and international systems and piloted during the 2025/26 academic year. Further background to the programme is provided in Annex A.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation is now inviting expressions of interest from organisations wishing to participate in the next phase of the programme, which will operate through a network-based model from 2026/27 onwards.

This wider roll out will support sustainable implementation of the programme across the FE sector, including programme contextualisation by sector and place, whilst maintaining programme quality at scale, and supporting ongoing evidence generation and shared learning. Networks will involve FE providers and may also include sector bodies, employer representative organisations, strategic authorities, and other relevant local or sector stakeholders.

Networks may be place-based, sector-based, or formed through collaboration between individual organisations following the expression of interest process. Organisations do not need to have existing network structures in place to express interest. Responses to the expression of interest may help identify opportunities for collaboration and support the formation of new networks.

The expression of interest process will enable us to:

- identify place-based and/or sector-based provider networks with a potential interest in joining the phase two Industry Associate rollout to begin from September 2026
- engage with organisations nominated as Network Facilitators, and stakeholder organisations that wish to contribute to the rollout in place- or sector-based contexts in other ways
- inform planning for delivery support (for example, training and quality assurance processes).

Expressions of interest are thus welcomed from both existing networks and those that come together to engage with the Industry Associate programme. We are also happy to receive expressions of interest from individual providers.

To register your interest in the programme please complete **the expression of interest form** by **30 June 2026**.

Information webinars will be held on 9 June, 16 June and 24 June 2026 to provide information regarding the programme to date.

An outline of questions included on the expression of interest form is provided in Annex B.

We will seek to accommodate all organisations that wish to join the second phase of the Industry Associate rollout, however numbers will be limited to ensure robust quality assurance can be provided to reassure participating institutions and Industry Associates.

If you have any questions relating to this expression of interest or the Industry Associate programme more widely, please contact Dr Rory McDonald via email to FEWorkforce@gatsby.org.uk

Timeline

1 June 2026	Expression of interest opens
9 June 2026	Information webinar: Industry Associates (Phase 2)
16 June 2026	Information webinar: Industry Associates (Phase 2)
24 June 2026	Information webinar: Industry Associates (Phase 2)
30 June 2026	Expression of interest closes
July to August 2026	Responses reviewed and follow-up engagement with interested institutions Gatsby may seek further information or clarification, and support discussions regarding other potential network groupings
September 2026	Networks confirmed
October to December 2026	Training for delivery teams; providers begin Industry Associate recruitment
January 2027 onwards	Programme delivery begins

Outline of the networks approach

(i) Network members will:

- have access to the programme materials and facilitation guidance, a communications toolkit to support recruitment and network and shared learning events
- offer contextualised delivery of the programme within their settings, and participate in shared learning, dissemination, quality assurance, and evaluation activity

- agree via memorandum of understanding the expectations for access and engagement with the programme (such as quality assurance and evaluation)
- identify a lead organisation to facilitate network activity as Network Facilitators, who will attend regular meetings with the quality assurance partner and Gatsby.

Quality assurance requirements will include sharing of programme materials, enabling all delivery staff to take part in face-to-face or online programme training, and providing registration information for Industry Associates to support research and evaluation.

(ii) Gatsby will provide overall coordination of the programme infrastructure (training, programme materials, quality assurance and evaluation).

(iii) A steering group provides strategic oversight for the programme. The steering group includes representation from FE providers, Gatsby, Department for Education, the programme quality assurance and evaluation partners, and wider stakeholders where appropriate.

Funding

There is no fee for organisations participating in the programme.

Gatsby does not provide delivery funding for participating organisations, however networks may wish to draw on existing appropriate funding sources for workforce development activity to support local delivery of the programme.

Annex A: The Industry Associate Programme

Industry Associates are typically individuals employed within industry who also contribute to further education (FE) teaching and learning in a range of ways. This may include supporting content design, assessment development and direct teaching (e.g. from masterclasses to delivery of a specialist topic). Industry Associates bring current industry expertise and real-world experience into educational settings and are well-placed to broaden links between providers and industry or act as role models for students.

They may be motivated by supporting workforce development, personal or professional development, corporate social responsibility, or an interest in contributing their expertise to education. Some may also be interested in exploring future progression into FE teaching, while others may wish to contribute to FE alongside their existing industry roles over a longer period of time.

The Industry Associate programme has been developed to support these industry professionals to contribute their expertise to FE teaching and learning through a structured 'soft landing' into the FE environment.

The programme distinguishes between being a dual professional and being on the journey towards becoming one. Industry Associates are recognised as individuals beginning to develop educational expertise while contributing valuable industry knowledge within FE settings.

The Industry Associate programme was developed through an iterative design process with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, Edge Hill University and five pilot FE colleges. It is a 12-session training programme, delivered by FE providers, designed to introduce industry experts to the FE environment while developing understanding of topics such as planning and delivering learning sessions, student motivation and engagement, behaviour management, creating positive learning environments, feedback and communication, and sequencing learning experiences. The programme also includes opportunities for reflection, evaluation, and consideration of next steps as an Industry Associate.

Across the 2025/26 academic year, the pilot recruited 65 Industry Associates from a range of industry sectors. Evaluation findings identified positive outcomes within the cohort, including increased confidence in supporting FE teaching, increased readiness to engage in delivery, stronger professional identity as Industry Associates, and for some, positive next steps towards FE teacher training pathways. The evaluation also suggested potential wider benefits relating to communication, mentoring, and knowledge-sharing skills used within industry settings.

Annex B: Expression of Interest Questions

Section One: Organisation Details

1. Organisation name
2. Organisation type
 - a. FE College/Provider
 - b. Independent Training Provider
 - c. Employer Representative Body
 - d. Sector Body
 - e. Combined Authority/Local Authority
 - f. Employer
 - g. Other (please indicate)
3. Name of lead contact
4. Job title of lead contact
5. Email address of lead contact
6. Geographic region/location

Section Two: Interest in the Industry Associate Programme

7. Please briefly describe your organisation's interest in the Industry Associate programme (250 word limit).
8. Please indicate how your organisation is interested in delivering the Industry Associate programme (select all that apply)
 - a. Participating in a place-based network in your local region
 - b. Participating in a sector-based network for one or more subject areas
 - c. Supporting a network as a stakeholder organisation
 - d. Exploring participation as an individual organisation without an existing network
 - e. Acting as a potential Network Facilitator organisation
9. If relevant, please indicate the sector area(s) your organisation is most interested in supporting
 - a. Construction
 - b. Engineering
 - c. Agriculture
 - d. Digital
 - e. Health and Social Care
 - f. Manufacturing
 - g. Creative Industries
 - h. Other (please indicate)
10. If relevant, please indicate the geographical area your organisation is interested in supporting

11. If known at this stage, please indicate the approximate scale at which your organisation may initially wish to engage with the programme. For example, anticipated number of Industry Associates, curriculum areas involved, or scale of delivery activity (250 word limit).

Section Three: Existing Networks and Partnerships

12. Does your organisation currently participate in, convene, or have access to existing place-based or sector-based networks that could support the adoption of the Industry Associate programme?

13. If yes, please outline the network or structure, including the scope, participating organisations, sector or geographic focus, and how it could support programme delivery (250 word limit).

14. Please briefly outline any existing employer, sector or industry partnerships that may support your engagement with Industry Associates (250 word limit).

Section Four: Participation Requirements

15. Please confirm that your organisation understands that participation in the Industry Associate programme network model would involve:

- a. Participation in shared learning and dissemination activities
- b. Engagement with light-touch evaluation and evidence generation activity
- c. Participation in quality assurance processes, which may include activities such as reporting programme attendance, sharing materials, or a site visit
- d. Participation in delivery team training activity
- e. Engagement with network meetings and collaborative activity
- f. Supporting registration of participating Industry Associates to the Industry Associate register
- g. Signing a memorandum of understanding relating to programme participation

Section Five: Additional Information

16. Is there any additional information you would like to share to support your expression of interest (250 word limit)?