Centre for Digital Habits

Terms of Reference - Educational Psychology & Digital Learning Advisory Consultant

Project: Beyond Beta — Digital Habits Studio
Contract type: Independent, deliverables-based consultancy
Location: Remote, with a focus on the UK education sector
Duration: Approximately 8–12 weeks, subject to agreement
Contracting organisation: Centre for Digital Habits
Budget: To be confirmed
Application deadline: To be confirmed

1. Background

The Centre for Digital Habits is a research-driven, not-for-profit organisation working to help people develop healthier relationships with technology and exercise greater control over their digital environments.

Building on more than a decade of research and software development at the University of Oxford, the Centre combines evidence-based behavioural interventions, open-source digital tools and educational programmes to support digital self-determination.

Our flagship digital learning platform, Digital Habits Studio, translates this research into accessible, self-paced learning experiences for students, educators and professionals.

As the Centre prepares to expand the reach of Digital Habits Studio beyond its initial beta phase, we are seeking independent specialist consultancy to assess its educational effectiveness, usability, technical feasibility and readiness for institutional adoption.

2. Purpose of the Consultancy

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an independent, evidence-informed assessment of Digital Habits Studio and strategic recommendations for its future development and deployment.

The consultant will draw on expertise in psychology, behavioural science, digital learning, software systems and the UK education sector to evaluate how effectively the existing platform supports learning, motivation, self-regulation and behavioural change.

The consultancy will provide the Centre with actionable recommendations to inform future product, educational and institutional decisions.

This is a strictly advisory assignment. It does not include software development, coding, feature implementation, prototype construction, platform maintenance or other operational product-development activities.

Any subsequent implementation of recommendations will be undertaken separately and will not form part of this consultancy.

3. Scope of Work

Work Package 1 — Psychological and Pedagogical Assessment

Conduct an independent assessment of the existing Digital Habits Studio learning experience through the lens of educational psychology, behavioural science and digital self-regulation.

The assessment should:

- Evaluate the alignment between learning objectives, educational content, activities and intended behavioural outcomes.
- Review how the platform supports learner motivation, reflection, self-regulation and independent behaviour change.
- Assess the suitability of the learning journey for different learner groups, including students and adult learners.
- Identify potential barriers relating to cognitive load, accessibility, learner engagement and comprehension.
- Review how feedback, reflection and self-assessment are currently incorporated into the learning experience.
- Recommend evidence-informed approaches to strengthening educational effectiveness and learner agency.

Output: Independent psychological and pedagogical assessment report, including prioritised recommendations.

Work Package 2 — Technical Feasibility, Usability and Accessibility Assessment

Undertake an independent advisory review of the existing digital learning platform, drawing on practical experience with programming, software development and digital product design.

The assessment should:

- Review the current learner-facing experience, navigation and interaction design.
- Assess usability and accessibility from the perspective of different learner groups.
- Identify technical or architectural constraints that may affect educational effectiveness, accessibility or future scalability.
- Evaluate the feasibility of potential improvements to learning pathways, feedback mechanisms and interactive educational activities.
- Consider the implications of different technical approaches for maintainability, user experience and institutional deployment.
- Provide recommendations that can inform future technical decision-making.

The consultant may review existing technical documentation and relevant code to inform the assessment but will not undertake coding, debugging, implementation or software maintenance.

Output: Technical feasibility, usability and accessibility assessment, including an advisory prioritisation of potential improvements.

Work Package 3 — UK Education Ecosystem and Institutional Readiness

Assess the suitability of Digital Habits Studio for adoption within the UK education sector, including secondary schools, further education colleges and universities.

The assessment should:

- Examine relevant institutional needs and operating conditions across different educational settings.
- Identify barriers to adoption, including staff capacity, learner onboarding, accessibility and curriculum or programme integration.
- Assess how the existing learning experience aligns with institutional approaches to digital wellbeing, study skills and student support.
- Review potential delivery and implementation models, including self-paced learning and institution-led facilitation.
- Identify considerations for adapting the platform to different age groups and educational contexts.
- Recommend practical approaches for supporting institutional adoption while minimising additional administrative and teaching burdens.

The assignment does not include direct sales, business development or implementation of institutional programmes.

Output: UK education-sector readiness and implementation advisory report.

Work Package 4 — Evaluation Framework and Strategic Recommendations

Develop an independent set of recommendations to support the Centre's future decisions regarding the educational and institutional development of Digital Habits Studio.

The work should:

- Review existing approaches to measuring learner engagement, self-regulation and behavioural outcomes.
- Recommend appropriate indicators for assessing learning effectiveness and behavioural change.
- Identify opportunities to improve future user-testing and evaluation approaches.
- Consolidate findings from the psychological, technical and institutional assessments.
- Prioritise recommendations according to educational value, feasibility and likely implementation effort.
- Develop a proposed roadmap for future consideration by the Centre's internal research and product teams.

The consultant will provide strategic and methodological guidance only. The design or execution of new platform features, software development and operational product delivery are excluded.

Output: Consolidated advisory report, evaluation recommendations and prioritised strategic roadmap.

4. Expected Deliverables

Deliverable	Description	Indicative timing
D1. Psychological and	Independent review of learning design, motivation, self-regulation and behavioural	Weeks 1–3

pedagogical assessment	effectiveness	
D2. Technical and usability assessment	Review of technical feasibility, accessibility, learner experience and platform constraints	Weeks 3–6
D3. UK education-sector readiness report	Assessment of institutional needs, adoption barriers and potential deployment models	Weeks 5–8
D4. Strategic recommendations and roadmap	Consolidated findings, evaluation recommendations and prioritised future actions	Weeks 8–11
D5. Final advisory presentation	Presentation of findings and knowledge-transfer session with the Centre's team	Weeks 11–12

The precise schedule will be agreed during the inception phase.

All deliverables will consist of independent consultancy analysis, recommendations and advisory documentation.

No operational product-development deliverables are included.

5. Required Consultant Profile

The Centre seeks an independent consultant with interdisciplinary expertise across psychology, education and digital technology.

Essential qualifications and experience

- Academic background in psychology, educational psychology, behavioural science or a closely related discipline.
- Demonstrated understanding of motivation, learning processes, self-regulation and behavioural change.
- Experience assessing, researching or advising on digital learning environments or educational technology.
- Practical understanding of the UK education ecosystem, including secondary schools, further education and/or higher education.
- Technical literacy supported by hands-on programming or software-development experience, enabling informed assessment of technical feasibility and platform constraints.
- Ability to translate psychological and educational findings into actionable recommendations for digital learning environments.
- Experience conducting structured reviews, evaluations or consultancy assignments.
- Strong analytical, communication and report-writing skills in English.

Desirable experience

- Experience with learning management systems, online courses or self-paced digital learning.
- Familiarity with user-centred design, usability assessment and accessibility principles.
- Knowledge of digital wellbeing, attention, technology use and behavioural interventions.
- Experience working with interdisciplinary teams of researchers, educators and technology professionals.
- Familiarity with educational evaluation methods and responsible learner-data practices.
- Experience advising organisations on digital learning strategy or institutional implementation.

6. Methodology and Working Arrangements

The consultant will be expected to propose an appropriate methodology for undertaking the assignment.

This may include:

- Desk review of existing research, educational materials and platform documentation.
- Independent expert assessment of the current platform.
- Structured consultations with relevant members of the Centre's research and programme teams.
- Review of relevant UK educational practices and institutional requirements.
- Comparative assessment against recognised educational and usability principles.
- Preparation of written recommendations and a final advisory presentation.

The consultancy will be undertaken primarily remotely.

The consultant will work independently while maintaining regular coordination with the Centre's designated project contact.

Access to relevant documentation and technical materials will be provided where necessary and subject to appropriate confidentiality and security arrangements.

7. Proposal Requirements

Interested consultants should submit:

1. A brief expression of interest outlining their understanding of the assignment.
2. A CV or professional profile demonstrating relevant qualifications and experience.
3. A proposed methodology and indicative workplan.
4. Examples of comparable advisory or evaluation assignments, where available.
5. A financial proposal stating the total consultancy fee, estimated number of working days and any applicable taxes.

The financial proposal should cover the full advisory assignment and its specified deliverables.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Expertise in psychology, learning and behavioural science	25%
Digital learning and technical assessment experience	25%
Knowledge of the UK education ecosystem	20%
Quality and feasibility of the proposed advisory methodology	20%
Value for money	10%
Total	**100%**

The Centre may invite shortlisted consultants to a clarification discussion.

Selection will be based on the quality of the proposal, relevant expertise and demonstrated ability to deliver the assignment.

9. Consultancy Boundaries and Excluded Activities

To ensure the assignment remains an independent specialist consultancy, the following activities are explicitly excluded:

- Software coding or development.
- Building or modifying platform features.
- Developing prototypes or minimum viable products.
- Platform maintenance, debugging or technical operations.
- Creation or production of new digital learning modules.
- Routine content production or course administration.
- Direct implementation of recommended platform changes.
- Ongoing internal staffing responsibilities.
- Sales, marketing or business development activities.

The consultant's role is limited to independent assessment, analysis, expert advice and recommendations.

The Centre's internal team or separately commissioned providers will remain responsible for any subsequent implementation.

10. Intellectual Property, Confidentiality and Data Protection

All reports, analyses, recommendations and advisory documentation produced under the assignment will be subject to the intellectual property provisions of the consultancy agreement.

Pre-existing intellectual property, software, research materials and third-party resources will remain subject to their existing ownership and licensing arrangements.

The consultant must maintain confidentiality regarding non-public organisational, technical and research information.

Any access to platform information or learner-related data must comply with applicable data protection requirements and the Centre's internal policies.

The consultancy should ordinarily rely on existing documentation and appropriately aggregated or anonymised information rather than requiring access to identifiable learner data.

11. Expected Outcomes

At the conclusion of the consultancy, the Centre for Digital Habits expects to have:

- An independent assessment of the psychological and pedagogical effectiveness of Digital Habits Studio.
- A clearer understanding of the platform's usability, accessibility and technical constraints.
- Evidence-informed recommendations for improving learner engagement, self-regulation and behavioural outcomes.
- An assessment of the platform's suitability for different UK educational environments.
- A prioritised advisory roadmap to guide future decisions and separately funded development activities.

The assignment will support the Centre's broader mission of making evidence-based digital self-regulation education accessible to more people and institutions.

The consultancy is intended to strengthen the Centre's evidence base and strategic decision-making, not to finance product development or implementation.