

## General FAQs

### Can you help me complete my application?

Yes! We are running applicant workshops to guide you through the application process and eligibility criteria before the window closes:

19 February 2025, 12.30pm – [Book now](#)

5 March 2025, 4pm – [Book now](#)

### How do I know if my idea is innovative?

Please attend an applicant workshop with the Innovation and Investments team who are here to discuss your ideas and can help you understand what is currently happening in the assessment space.

### Which stage of the learner journey does the Assessment Innovation Fund target?

The fund supports the deployment and evaluation of learner-centric and adaptable assessment solutions that use digital technology to create a more inclusive, robust, fair, and reliable assessment experience.

### Does my project need to focus on a particular age range or education space?

Yes. Projects must primarily support adults in the UK aged 16 and above, focusing on workplace-related skills and vocational training. While we welcome diverse learner profiles, projects must demonstrate a clear impact on vocational assessment. The learner sample in your project's evaluation must reflect this focus.

### If my bid is unsuccessful, can I apply for future windows?

Yes! We will provide feedback to help you refine your application. You are welcome to re-apply in future windows, and we encourage you to seek support from us before resubmitting your proposal.

### Can my project be any length of time?

Projects must be ready to launch upon funding approval and will typically last 12 to 18 months. Each project is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and a final project report will be required upon completion.

### Can I submit more than one application in one window?

Yes! However, your project ideas should be distinct from one another. If you are considering multiple applications, we recommend attending an applicant workshop to discuss whether your ideas could be combined or if separate applications are the best approach.

## What is your application process?

### Stage 1: Expression of Interest (Eoi)

All organisations submit an Eoi form (available [here]), which is evaluated by a panel of NCFE and Ufi VocTech Trust colleagues.

### Stage 2: Written Application

If successful at Stage 1, applicants complete a written application, which is pre-filled with their Eoi details to avoid duplication. Applications are assessed by a panel of internal and external experts.

### Stage 3: Presentation

Shortlisted applicants present their proposal and answer questions from the Expert Panel.

## How much detail do I need to provide on my proposed methodology?

At Stage 2, we expect sufficient detail in your application for the Expert Panel to assess the feasibility, robustness, and research methodology. We encourage applicants to include:

- a clear methodology for measuring impact
- a comparative group (ideally randomised) to generate meaningful evidence.

If selected for funding, we will work with successful applicants to refine and agree on methodology before deployment.

We have also teamed up with What Worked Education to support our own understanding of good evidence-based decision making. If you need support with your proposed research methodology, we suggest you take a look at their [website](#).

## Can I apply if my organisation is based outside the UK?

No. The Assessment Innovation Fund is only available to UK-based organisations or organisations with a registered UK presence that can demonstrate a clear impact on UK learners.

## Do I need to have 1,000 learners confirmed before I apply?

Not necessarily, but you must have a credible plan to reach at least 1,000 learners during the project. Your application should include:

- a clear recruitment strategy for learners
- evidence of demand or interest from partners, providers, or employers.

If your project cannot realistically scale to 1,000+ learners, it is unlikely to be funded.

## Can I work with other organisations as part of my project?

Yes! We encourage collaboration, particularly where it helps:

- extend project reach and impact
- strengthen expertise in assessment innovation
- improve scalability.

You must clearly define roles, responsibilities, and funding allocations for all partners in your application.

## **Do I need to submit progress reports during the project?**

Yes. Funded projects must provide:

- regular progress updates (aligned with milestone payments)
- a final project report detailing outcomes, impact data, and lessons learned.

NCFE may also request additional insights or case studies to help inform future assessment innovation work.

## **If I already have partial funding for my project, can I still apply?**

Yes, as long as you can clearly demonstrate how AIF funding will add value. We may ask:

- what activities AIF funding will specifically support
- how existing funding aligns with AIF priorities.

For-profit organisations must provide match funding, but charities and non-profits are not required to co-fund.

## **How does the funding process work?**

Funding is not provided upfront. Instead, payments are made in arrears, linked to project milestones. If your project cannot operate on arrears-based funding, AIF may not be the right fit.

## **Can I talk to someone about the terms and conditions in your draft contract?**

Yes. We understand that each organisation has different needs, and we are open to discussions. Please email [aif@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:aif@ncfe.org.uk) with an overview of your queries, and we can arrange a conversation to explore possible solutions.

## **Do you have any guidance on how much of the funding should be used for various elements of the Impact project?**

No fixed stipulations exist, as we recognise that different organisations have varying fixed and variable costs. However, your funding breakdown must align with the fund's purpose—innovating in assessment.

## **Will we receive the full amount of funding requested?**

The level of investment may vary from the funding applied for. This may be because you've included costs that we're unable to fund or we may believe that the project can be delivered more cost effectively. Where we feel that the amount of funding needs to be adjusted, we will discuss this with applicants.

## **Do you require match funding or co-funding?**

If your organisation is 'for profit', we will require match funding or co-funding to demonstrate a shared commitment to the project. This could be equivalent to staff time, or funding for specific activities within the project.