

General FAQs

Can you help me complete my application?

Of course! Drop us an email at aif@ncfe.org.uk and we are happy to chat about any aspect of your idea over a Teams call with someone from the Assessment Innovation team. We can also set up meetings with colleagues at NCFE if we both think that would be helpful.

I don't know if my idea is innovative?

Please get in touch on aif@ncfe.org.uk to book in a call with the Assessment Innovation team who are here to discuss your ideas and can help you understand what is happening in the "assessment world" at the moment.

Which assessment stage does the Assessment Innovation Fund target?

We are passionate about changing the end-to-end learner journey experience to create a fairer and more inclusive society. We welcome applications that show innovative assessment ideas that relate to any stage of that journey. This includes pre-programme, on-boarding, on-programme, summative assessment and post-programme stages.

Does my pilot need to focus on a particular age range or education space, for example in post-16 technical education where NCFE predominantly works?

In short, no! We are a leading education charity with a purpose to promote and advance learning to help create a fairer society. We are investing this money on behalf of our beneficiaries who are our current and prospective learners. We welcome any innovative idea that benefits learners wherever they might sit in the education system.

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

Yes please! We will give you some feedback after Stage 1 and more detailed feedback if you are selected to move through to Stage 2 which we hope will be useful to you. You are welcome to re-apply in future windows and you can get support from us on your application ahead of the submission.

How do I track my application?

All applications successfully received are acknowledged via an email. Successful applicants at Stage 1 are invited to present at Stage 2 on the designated dates within the AIF Guidance Pack. Unsuccessful applicants at Stage 1 receive quantitative feedback on their scoring. Following Stage 2,

successful applicants are invited for further discussions at the post-award stage and unsuccessful applicant are provided detailed feedback.

Can my pilot be longer than 12-months?

Yes, it can. Following successful evaluation in Stage 2, we will work with applicants on a case-by-case basis to agree project length and budget.

Can I bid on more than one window?

Yes, you can! Your pilot ideas should be sufficiently different from each other. Please get in touch to talk through whether your ideas could be combined or if separate bids are a better fit with the purpose and amount of funding we have for each pilot.

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

Your application needs to have sufficient detail to allow our Expert Panel to judge it against the criteria we publish. This includes scoring applications on the feasibility, robustness and research methodology included within the application. Please include as much detail as you can on your methods.

That said, we do expect to work with successful applicants to refine and agree on methodology following the selection process. We can also provide you with some time from experts in our Research and Insights team whilst you are writing your application. If you would like this help, please just get in touch.

If I am involved in the Expert Panel, can I still apply?

Yes absolutely! We will make sure that we don't involve you in the selection process or to support applicants and decisions in a particular window if you decide to put in a bid. With multiple Assessment Innovation Fund windows and a fantastic/flexible group of panel members, we are confident we can swap you around to accommodate your bid without losing out on your expertise for fund decisions in future windows.

Legal and Financial FAQs

I'm not comfortable with the terms and conditions in your draft contract. Are you open to discussion on these?

We understand that each applicant may have varying needs and as such we can work with applicants on a case-by-case basis to discuss their needs. To organise these discussions, please email us an email at aif@ncfe.org.uk with some high-level thoughts on the arrangements and your preferred proposal for moving forward.

Do you have any guidance on how much of the funding should be used for various elements of the pilot?

We don't have set stipulations in this respect because we hope that pilot ideas will come from a range of different organisations who will naturally have a range of fixed and variable costs. The purpose of our fund is to innovate in assessment and so if your funding breakdown is aligned to that purpose, we are happy.

What can the funds be spent on?

NCFE is a charity and so we must ensure that any funding given demonstrates benefit to our beneficiaries who are our current and prospective learners. It is because of this that we won't fund day-to-day overheads or staffing, and we won't fund other organisational costs unconnected to the project. We will fund anything that is connected to the pilot including people's time, equipment and technology development. We expect that budgets set out in the application form should cover the minimum requirements to deliver the project.

What is involved in the Technical Design Authority check and how can I prepare?

Our NCFE Technical Design Authority are responsible for ensuring that our technology infrastructure works efficiently and in-line with our technology principles. Even if your pilot doesn't involve "plugging in" to our systems, we would like to check that your technology solutions stay within our guidelines. This check involves the submission of a set of questions that we will supply you if you are successful in your bid and will need to be completed by a technically minded person.

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 in the post-award stage.

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.