

The Skills Enhancement Fund

FRAMEWORK ROUTE GUIDANCE NOTES

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Skills Enhancement Fund. This project, funded through the European Social Fund and Yorkshire Forward, has been established to engage employers within Yorkshire & Humber in skills development and, through this, to increase the skills base within the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The '**Framework Activity Route**' is designed to address skills gaps and have a significant impact on the training needs of specific sectors or geographical areas. Providers are invited to apply for funding in response to specific framework specifications. The Skills Enhancement Fund can provide a level of subsidy towards the cost of training as indicated in the framework specification.

Before completing the application form please ensure you have read the guidance which contains application requirements. Unfortunately, failure to observe these requirements will automatically render your application ineligible for consideration.

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1. Guiding Principles

Framework route specifications are based upon the work of the Commissioning Advisors located across the region who work with Stakeholders and delivery organisations to identify specific training needs.

All specifications are approved by the Skills Funding Agency and Yorkshire Forward prior to being released onto the framework. Specifications may be targeted at a specific sector, level of qualification or geographical area.

Unit rates paid by the Skills Enhancement Fund for all outputs listed (based on the number of delegates achieving the required qualification) will be set out in the framework specification.

Framework route specifications will be kept open for up to 3 months after the initial release date or until all required outputs relating to the specification have been contracted.

Applicants do **not** need to name any demand in their applications in terms of companies engaged. Applications will be closely assessed on applicants ability to deliver previously awarded Skills Enhancement Fund projects and all contracts **must** deliver within monthly profiles.

Only applications meeting the requirements set out in the framework specification will be considered for contracting.

All registered applications will be subject to a moderation process which will include, where applicable, an assessment of previous performance against Skills Enhancement Fund contracts

If you have an idea which you would like to see brought forward as a potential framework route specification please contact one of the relevant Commissioning Advisors (details in section 7).

2. Overview of the Application Process

Please note: Before submitting an application to provide training listed on the framework, the training provider must have a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) accepted by the Skills Enhancement Fund. Please see PQQ guidance notes for more information.

- a) Training Provider accesses information on current open Framework specifications listed on www.enhancementfund.co.uk.
- b) If necessary the training provider contacts the relevant Skills Enhancement Fund Commissioning Advisor for further clarification / advice on current specifications.
- c) Training Provider completes application in relation to the specific framework - please complete one application for every framework you intend to bid against.
- d) Training Provider e-mails the completed application form to the Commissioning Advisor (CA).
- e) The CA checks the application and e-mails the Training Provider to confirm registration of the application. If the application cannot be registered the CA will feedback in the e-mail.
- f) The CA forwards the registered application to the moderation panel for appraisal.
- g) The Skills Enhancement Fund notifies the Training Provider of successful progression to the contracting stage or rejection of the application.
- h) Training Provider is invited to a Contracting Meeting with a Skills Enhancement Fund Contracting Officer at which point the hard copy of the original application form is signed, delivery plans and any points raised at moderation are discussed.
- i) Skills Enhancement Fund issues the Contract to the Training Provider for signing.
- j) Training Provider returns the Contract for counter signing.
- k) The project commences.

3. Who is Eligible to Apply

Training Providers, Colleges and other delivery intermediary organisations who have had a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) accepted by the fund may respond to framework route specifications by submitting an application to access the fund. Businesses and individuals requiring training cannot access the funds directly through the framework, but may access funding for training, subject to availability through a Single Business Application (SBA) route.

1. Business Eligibility criteria:-

- a) The fund can support private companies, partnerships, charities and sole traders operating in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Public Sector organisations & their employees are not eligible for support unless this is specified within the relevant framework specification.
- b) Business premises must be located in the Yorkshire and Humber region; eligible businesses are considered to be those who have an autonomous base within the region (i.e. separate accounting function) and the fund is open to staff who are contracted to work from this base.
- c) Further information regarding the businesses to be supported may be given within the framework specification.

2. Participant Eligibility Criteria:-

- a) All participants must be employed by a company supported by the training provider and be contracted to work from premises located within the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- b) All participants must be aged 16+ on the first day of training. (Providers who are delivering training to young people under 18 or to vulnerable adults will be expected to ensure that the delivery team undergo Criminal Records Bureau checks).
- c) Volunteers are eligible for support as long as they work for an eligible company that employs other paid staff.

If required, further information on participant eligibility can be found within the 'Operational Programme' for the European Social Fund. The Operational Programme can be found on www.esf.gov.uk

3. Consortium Applications:-

Applicants from a consortium of providers will be considered however the consortium must appoint a "Lead Applicant" as the sub-contractor to the College.

The Lead Applicant:

- will be responsible for recruitment, quality of provision, learner support and delivery of all contractual requirements.
- shall be the responsible body for the delivery of the project
- should hold all the relevant awarding body approvals and deliver at least 51% of the project
- must be responsible for the remaining 49% of delivery but can buy in the services to facilitate this.

4. What Training Is Eligible For Support

The specific training supported will be described in the framework specification.

Unit rates for the training supported will be detailed in the specification; only training given at the prescribed unit rate will be supported.

Additional marketing costs will be allocated proportionally depending upon the nature and value of the contract.

5. Submitting an Application

In the first instance, providers wishing to submit an application for framework activity must have had a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) passed by the Skills Enhancement Fund within the previous 12 months. If you wish to submit a PQQ, please download the questionnaire from the Skills Enhancement Fund Website and submit this electronically to the fund at any time.

Application forms for Framework Route applications can be downloaded from the Framework Route page on the Skills Enhancement Fund Website.

You may submit applications to deliver all or part of a framework specification unless otherwise stated on the specification.

Completed applications should be sent to the Commissioning Advisor named within the specification before the stated closure date.

The Commissioning Advisor will review the application and will email you to confirm registration of the application with the fund. Your applications will be assigned a unique reference number which must be quoted in all future correspondence/paperwork. If, for any reason, the application cannot be registered with the fund at that time, the Commissioning Advisor will feed this back to you.

Once the application is registered with the fund, it will be submitted for moderation by the fund managers. The moderation panel will meet weekly to assess all applications to meet framework specifications.

During the moderation process the Skills Enhancement Fund team may request further information to support your application. This may include audited accounts or financial statements to confirm the financial stability of your organisation.

You will be informed of the outcome of the moderation stage by email no later than 15 working days after confirmation of registration with the fund.

a) Guiding Principals

These instructions are designed to ensure that all organisations wishing to apply to deliver training against a framework specification are given fair and equal consideration.

Applications must meet the requirements set out in the framework route specification.

Applications will be accepted at any time up to the closure date for applications given in the specification, please refer to each framework for the relevant timetable.

Applicants should ensure they provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.

Applicants must not alter the documentation. Incomplete responses will not be considered.

Applications will be assessed on what has been submitted within the application, failure to answer all questions fully will render the applications incomplete.

All applications for funding **MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE OF TRAINING UNDERTAKEN**. No applications for retrospective funding of training will be accepted.

Please also note that any applications that contain inaccuracies will be rejected or may be subject to repayment of claimed funds at a later date.

The Skills Enhancement Fund reserves the right to alter & change guidance and application forms throughout the programme, up to date guidance can be found on www.enhancementfund.co.uk

The applicant is not entitled to claim from the Skills Enhancement Fund any costs or expenses which may be incurred in the preparation of the application.

b) Notes on completing the Application Form

Documents are in Microsoft Word and must be returned in this format

A minimum font size of 11 should be used in clear type face/font type.

You will be asked to provide evidence of current awarding body approval to deliver the qualifications listed in your application. Please do not submit any other supporting information unless specifically requested.

Please ensure that you do not exceed the specified word limit in any section.

Provider Details: Please ensure that all information is correct, particularly the contact email address, as this will be the main method of communication used by the Skills Enhancement Fund. Initially the application will be submitted in electronic format, but we will require a senior member of your organisation to sign a paper copy of the application at contracting stage.

Q1: Please specify what training you are intending to deliver under the specification and why.

Q2: Please provide a summary of all intended training and the total amount of funding you wish to access.

Q3: In this section you need to show that you have thought about who you intend to deliver the training to and how you will ensure that you meet their particular training needs. Please state within this section if young people under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults could be included within the target group.

Q4: Please state how you intend to market the courses and recruit the remaining companies/ participants. Please note; the size of the companies to be engaged may be specified within the framework.

Q5: Please indicate how you will intend to manage the proposed training programme to ensure that a high quality of delivery to participants is maintained and that contract requirements are met.

Q6: Please describe the process from the learner point of view; what can they expect from the training programme and how will you evaluate the programme from the learner's perspective.

Q7: Please ensure that you describe the quality assurance processes in place that are applicable to the training programmes listed in the application. You will be asked to confirm the qualification status of the trainers you intend to use in the training programme in this section. Please note that from 2010, anyone in receipt of government funding to deliver training, either in a classroom or at a business premises is required to hold a teaching qualification or a PTLLS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) certificate as a minimum qualification. We will expect any training company in receipt of Skills Enhancement Fund support to ensure that the trainers used to deliver the programme hold a PTLLS or equivalent qualification as a minimum standard.

Q8: Please state your success record in delivering the proposed training programmes. If you have not delivered a particular qualification / programme before, please explain why you are proposing to deliver this now, and give details of any similar training you have delivered. Please ensure that you give full details as requested in the bullet points.

Q9: Please give sufficient detail in this time-table, listing all milestones and dates for completion. If contracted, this will form the basis for your delivery plan with the Skills Enhancement Fund.

Q10: In this section you will need to record the details of all your intended training, including the Learning Aims Database (LAD) codes for all accredited training to be delivered. Please take care to ensure all details are correct as this will form the basis for your contracted outputs. The unit rates are listed in the specification and we would expect all trainers to charge these rates for the training listed. The employer contribution per participant is also defined in the specification. Please ensure that you attach evidence of current awarding body approval to deliver **the specific qualifications listed** to your application (eg letter / certificate from awarding body confirming approval to deliver qualification, screenshots from awarding body database naming your organisation & qualification or latest EV report from awarding body) certificates showing general awarding body centre approvals are not sufficient. If you do not have awarding body approval to deliver the qualifications listed at the time of the application, please explain why and give timescales for gaining the necessary approvals.

6. If Successful

- a) Successful applicants will be notified of progression to the contracting stage by email.
- b) The Training Provider will be invited to attend a contracting meeting. At this meeting you will be asked to sign a paper copy of your original application form and the following will be confirmed/provided:
 - o Clarification on any issues raised by the Moderation Panel.
 - o Confirmation of training to be delivered.
 - o Clear guidance on the requirement to deliver to profile and implication if profiles are not met with regard to engaging companies and learner starts.
 - o Confirmation of marketing costs to be allocated and evidence to substantiate payment of such.
 - o Confirmation of intended businesses to be supported and location within the Yorkshire and Humberside region.
 - o Provided with paper and electronic copies of all documentation and information required during the term of the contract.
 - o Guidance on completion of evidence requirements.
 - o Delivery plan to be completed by the Training Provider.

Please note: Final approval may be subject to satisfactory clarification of issues raised by the moderation panel at this contracting meeting.

- c) The Training Provider will receive a contract with Calderdale College (as Accountable Body for the Skills Enhancement Fund). The contract must be signed by the Training Provider and countersigned by Calderdale College before training can commence. Please note that approval of the application is subject to the signing of a Contract by both parties within agreed timescales.



Training must not commence before contracts have been signed.

- d) Payment to the Training Provider is dependent upon an ongoing review of satisfactory performance. A Payment Profile is agreed with the Training Provider at the point of contract and this document is an important part of the contract. Payment to the Training Provider is made on learner starts and achievements. Please note that individuals who do not complete the training will not be considered as eligible for reimbursement.
- e) The Skills Enhancement Fund will only support training as detailed in the contract. Any changes to the training programme that alters the terms of the contract must be requested and approved by the Skills Enhancement Fund in advance of the proposed training (requests for amendments should be made by emailing the assigned Contracting Officer. Failure to do this may mean that we are unable to refund training costs to the level you were expecting as retrospective changes will not be accepted.
- f) To comply with European Regulations on State Aid / Training Aid, employers are required to contribute a cash contribution as identified in the initial specification towards the training cost. The Skills Enhancement Fund will require providers to collect and submit details of companies whose employees participate in Skills Enhancement Fund provision, using the 'Training Aid Company Data Capture form'. **All providers must provide evidence to substantiate the appropriate employer cash contribution prior to release of any Skills Enhancement Fund money.**
- g) Please note that the Skills Enhancement Fund cannot support training which is sub contracted by the provider.

- h) The Provider should deliver to profile; any variations should be discussed with your contracting officer in advance of delivery. Contract delivery must commence in line with the delivery plan profiles otherwise funding will be withdrawn.
- i) Training providers will be required to work closely with Business Link to ensure effective referrals and marketing.
- j) The Skills Enhancement Fund reserves the right to withdraw outputs from any contract if delivery is more than 10% behind schedule at any point

7 Contact Details

If you require any help to complete and submit the application form or any further information about the Framework Route, please contact

 01422 399339
 Email info@enhancementfund.co.uk
 www.enhancementfund.co.uk

The Framework Route is supported by a number of Commissioning Advisors located across the region. All applications must be checked by a Commissioning Advisor prior to submission to the Fund. Please remember to contact the appropriate Commissioning Advisor (named in the framework specification document) before submitting an application.

Commissioning Advisor	Email	Contact telephone number(s)
Jeremy Boye	jeremyb@calderdale.ac.uk	0113 3861862 / 07595 088082
Jas Hayre	jash@calderdale.ac.uk	0113 3861863 / 07948 320818
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