



CCF wave 2: wave 1 follow on funding FAQs

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Scope

1. What activities are in scope of Connecting Capability Fund (CCF) wave 1 follow on funding?

- The CCF is revenue funding only, but capital contributions can be included in bids as leverage.
- The CCF wave 1 follow on funding is intended to further projects with aims and objectives as set out in original CCF guidance, focussed on delivery of the Government's Industrial Strategy. The focus continues to be on partnering with business/investors and delivering economic and commercial benefit. However, activities may include other relevant partners in addition to businesses, for example the NHS or the Environment Agency.
- The CCF is part of our overall Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) programme. Activities that are not in the scope of HEIF, for example mainstream support for postgraduate students (studentships or curriculum), cannot be funded through CCF follow-ons.
- The CCF comes from the science and research budget. Hence projects focussed on substantially teaching-related knowledge exchange (such as student enterprise or employer engagement) cannot be supported. Bids including an element of teaching-related knowledge exchange should explain how this furthers the science and research budget's objectives for research commercialisation.
- We do not fund business support – that is, the provision of advice to businesses that is not linked with specifically university-related expertise (staff or students).
- All activities that link academic expertise with businesses/investors are in scope. This includes technology transfer (licensing intellectual property and establishing spin-off companies) and all forms of academic partnering with business, such as collaborative research, contract research, consultancy and advice, including those linked with regional economic development or physical equipment and facilities.
- Activities can include those delivered by external/non HE partners. The bid should detail the partners and how funds will be used for these, and why this is the best approach to deliver the activities and achieve the objectives. If projects intend to sub-contract any work, this intention and any further details available on the nature of the sub-contracting should be specified in the bid.

2. When considering financial plans, what staff costs and overheads can we claim for?

When planning your finances, staff costs should reflect actual pay rates plus on-costs incurred. All bids should set out the costs and make the case how different contributions (from partner universities, CCF and businesses) will cover these. The costs should be proportionate to the benefits and relevant to the particular project. You can set out FEC but you should still ensure you use an appropriate funding mix for the project, and make all costs and funding contributions clear in the bid

Follow-on Funding Bids

3. Who can bid for follow on funding?

Lead HEPs of existing wave 1 CCF projects. (Subject to CSR, further information will be provided at a later date on new CCF awards in wave 2 which will be open to all eligible HEPs.)

4. How are non lead HEPs involved in bidding for follow on funding?

Lead HEPs are expected and required by us to inform all their CCF partners of the opportunity, and to involve all these partners in the development of the follow-on funding proposal.

We will publish information on the follow-on funding competition for all HEPs, for information. Any HEPs not involved in a CCF, or interested in joining a CCF that they are not currently partnered in, should approach the relevant lead HEP on joining that partnership. Partnerships need to be formed of the willing, so it is a matter for each CCF partnership to decide on any new partners that approach them.

5. How many bids for follow on funding can Higher Education Providers (HEPs) be part of?

Universities can be a partner in as many CCF projects seeking follow-on funding as their own capacity to engage and deliver allows

6. Can a CCF bid for follow on funding with fewer than three partners?

No – the minimum three UK HE partners are required as in the original CCF guidance.

7. Can HEPs lead on more than one bid?

No. HEPs are restricted to leading only one bid (and any HEP leading must currently be in receipt of HEIF, HEPs below the threshold for receiving HEIF can participate as a partner).

8. What if my HEP has been leading a project but no longer wants to lead?

In most cases we would expect the original lead university to remain the lead, however if a compelling case to change the lead institution is submitted, this will be considered.

9. Will bidding for follow on funding affect my HEPs opportunity to bid for a new wave 2 CCF project in future?

Participation in wave 1 projects and the award of follow-on funding will not exclude or affect in any way any university from bidding for wave 2 projects

10. Can two existing CCF projects merge to apply for follow-on funding?

Bids for follow-on funding can be submitted by two or more CCF projects seeking to merge, in which case one of the lead institutions will need to step down and become a partner, as joint leadership applications cannot be accepted.

Merged projects applying for follow on funding CCF projects can increase the word limits stated in Annex A by number of projects in the merger and increase the total amount bid for by number of projects in the merger too.

11. Do you need letters of support alongside the bid for follow-on funding?

We are not asking HEPs to submit letters of support at this application stage, but we may request these as part of due diligence at the awards stage (for example, if there is significant additional leverage from a new partners).

12. Do you need detailed financial profiles alongside the bid for follow-on funding?

At this stage HEPs need to state the total amount of follow on funding requested per annum (the amount requested can be different for year 2 if applying for 2 years of funding).

We expect requests for follow-on funding to be at similar levels per annum as the final year of wave 1 expenditures (between £1-2million per annum). The amount of funding requested should though reflect the needs of the project, including appropriate levels for merged projects.

We are not asking HEPs to submit detailed financial plans at this application stage, but we will request detailed financial profiles from projects that are recommended for funding.

13. Will projects need to create a new set of KPIs to cover the period of follow-on funding?

Projects seeking follow-on funding will be expected to build on success criteria for wave 1. RE do not require projects to provide updated KPIs at application stage, but key milestones, expected impacts and outcomes should be outlined in Annex B. RE will work with projects that are recommended for funding at the award stage to update project KPIs.

14. When will I get confirmation of successful follow on funding?

Decisions on follow on funding awards can only be taken after confirmation of budgets in the Autumn 2020 Spending Review. These are made by the Exec Chair on recommendation of the CCF panel. We expect to notify successful CCFs by early 2021, if not earlier.

15. When can follow-on projects start?

Subject to CSR outcomes and dependent on their wave 1 plans, we expect follow on projects to start between 1 April and 1 July 2021.

Partners

16. Can bids include new HEP partners that were not involved in the wave 1 project?

Yes – projects will be expected to build on the partners delivering the existing project, but there can be some changes, particularly additions to engage and disseminate good practices more widely.

17. Can new HEPs include HEP partners from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in their bid? Can international university partners be included? Can we include additional non-HE partners?

Yes – and all UK HEPs count toward the minimum three HEP partners required in a bid. However, RE CCF funding cannot be used to fund knowledge exchange in non-English HEPs.

Yes – overseas partners of all kinds, including universities, can be included, although the bid must explain why this is the best approach to achieve the objectives of CCF which focus on the UK industrial strategy.



Yes – additional non-HE partners can be included and the bid should explain how these best deliver the activities and achieve the objectives.

18. Can bids have joint HEI leads?

No – we need a single lead HEP that will be responsible to RE for accountability and administration of funds on behalf of the partnership.