

IEE Employer Fund 2026

IEE Skills Innovation Fund

Eligibility and FAQ

Essential Criteria

- Registered trading address must be within one of the ESES local authority areas (East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian)
- Businesses must be compliant with Scottish Government's Fair Work First Policy (pay Real Living Wage, have Effective Voice channels for all employees)
- Applicants must be over the age of 18
- Must be able to suitably evidence the business need to apply for the allocated funding
- Be able to evidence that this funding will contribute towards either retaining, developing or creating employment or innovative skills pathways
- Businesses must be established with a documented trading history and/or registered with an appropriate body
- As part of the scoring process, a check may be conducted with your local Business Gateway team to confirm and verify your business registration

Project-Specific Criteria

- Applications are welcomed from organisations that have a desire to create and develop career pathways for new entrants into their sector and/or innovative skills solutions for the existing workforce
- Applications targeting new entrants into their sector are encouraged to target specific client groups such as, but not limited to; school leavers, unemployed individuals, workforce returners, ex-armed forces personnel, prison leavers, care-experienced individuals and career changers
- Project delivery must address the skills landscape of at least one of the following sectors; Artificial Intelligence (AI), advanced manufacturing, engineering & robotics, construction: net zero and retrofit
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes. Evidence may be requested. Examples may include: job descriptions, pay increase margins, contractual improvements and examples of career progression, including new roles and salary % uplifts.

Supported by

FAQ

What is the purpose of the fund?

This fund is designed to support local businesses, organisations, and partnerships to develop and deliver innovative skills projects that address workforce and sector-specific skills needs. Funding will enable applicants to create practical skills solutions, strengthen talent pipelines, and help bridge identified skills gaps within the noted industries.

The fund aims to increase opportunities for employees, jobseekers and local citizens to access training, upskilling, and career development pathways, while supporting economic growth and helping businesses build a skilled and resilient workforce for the future.

Where does this funding come from?

Edinburgh and South East Scotland (ESES) City Region Deal, Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) Programme, Integrated Employer Engagement Project.

<http://esescityregiondeal.org.uk/>

Can this be used in conjunction with other grants?

Yes.

What can the fund be used for?

Financial assistance could be used for the following (but not limited to):

- **Collaborative training programmes** where several businesses work together to address shared skills gaps
- **Developing career pathways** for under-represented groups, helping businesses access a wider talent pool
- **Industry-academia partnerships** that connect businesses with colleges, universities or training providers to address skills shortages
- **Creation and development of training programmes** that enhance the workplace readiness of prospective employees, improve industry engagement/knowledge and provide employment opportunities
- **Curriculum and Learning Resource Design** that addresses current gaps in skills training provision and can be replicated across the sector

How many times can businesses apply, how much can be applied for?

Only one application per business will be accepted and they must not have received financial help from IEE over the past 12 months. Businesses can apply for up to £10,000.

Supported by

How will applications be scored?

Scoring will be done against a matrix which has been agreed by Capital City Partnership and the Integrated Regional Employability and Skills Programme's Programme Management Office (PMO).

Who will score applications?

The IEE Employer Fund has a minimum of 2 independent scorers; CCP & ESESCRD representatives. When there is a discrepancy within the two scores, the Head of IEE and IEE Project Lead will be consulted to determine the final outcome, if further moderation is required the scenario will be presented to the Programme Management Office for final decision

How will the funds be administered?

Funds will be administered by bank transfer within 10 working days of receipt of returned grant award confirmation. Business verification checks will be implemented.

How long will you have to spend the fund?

Funding should be spent within 12 weeks of allocation.

What are the next steps once the fund has been awarded?

As the purpose of this year's Skills Innovation Fund aligns with future IRES priorities and existing workstreams within IEE, we are able to offer a comprehensive support package to all successful businesses across the remainder of financial year 2026/27 – a more robust post-fund approach to previous years.

What happens if the full fund amount is not spent?

If you are unable to spend the full value of the allocated funds, please contact IEEemployerfund@capitalcitypartnership.org and the next steps will be discussed.

What constitutes sufficient evidence of fund spend?

Receipt of purchase, itemised VAT receipt or Invoice (e-mail confirmation / bank statement also accepted) will constitute as sufficient evidence.

How will the impact of funding be tracked?

Successful applicants will be required to complete a short survey 3 months after funding has been allocated to allow the funders to record impact. This will be compliant with IEE's monitoring and evaluation framework.

Successful applicants may also be asked to provide a case study.

Supported by

When will the fund open and close?

Applications for the fund can be submitted between Monday 3rd and Friday 14th August. We encourage applications to be sent at the earliest convenience as the fund may close early if oversubscribed.

Late submissions will not be accepted. If the fund is not fully allocated, it may be reopened, subject to uptake.

What do CCP do with the information you provide?

The Edinburgh South East Scotland City Region Deal require CCP to store application data as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework under the Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) programme. Please click [here](#) which tells you how we do this in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

If I have any questions or queries, how do I get in touch?

Please email your enquiry and contact details to

IEEmployerfund@capitalcitypartnership.org and one of the team will get back to you.

Supported by