

IEE Employer Fund 2025

IEE Skills Innovation Fund

Eligibility and FAQ

Eligibility 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)
- 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

FAQ

What is the purpose of the fund?

In response to the current needs and labour market challenges affecting many businesses and employers, Capital City Partnership (CCP), as the Integrated Employer Engagement (IEE) lead across the Edinburgh and South East Scotland (ESES) City Region Deal will administer a small grants programme to support *micro businesses across the 6 local authority areas (East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, West Lothian).

**micro businesses – 9 employees or less*

Businesses can apply for up to £5,000 which is an increase from the standard minimum and maximum grant award amounts of £500-£1000. This is reflective of feedback we have received from regional Business Gateway teams and directly from industry around fund impact, combating the rising *cost of doing business* and providing the flexibility for micro-businesses to test innovative skills solution projects to enhance workforce and

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business development. Applications should support the core aims of the fund – to create, develop and implement innovative skills projects and solutions which will aim to create and retain jobs, enable staff upskilling and employee career progression.

The proposed Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) 2027+ programme contains an innovative skills grants programme and this year's fund is seen as the ideal precursor to this.

Additionally, this allows IEE to provide a comprehensive support package to successful businesses, helping bring to life their proposed projects, across the remainder of this financial year and beyond.

The focus this year is therefore linked to **Skills Innovation Projects** whose owners are aged 18+ years old and who:

- Businesses must be established with a documented trading history and/or registered with an appropriate body
- May be from under-represented groups
- May need access to funding to develop innovative skills-based projects
- May be a sole trader or have a limited company

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?

Monies granted will offer support to companies to create, development and implement innovative skills projects and solutions which will aim to create and retain jobs, enable staff upskilling and employee career progression. Examples of fund spend are, but not limited to:

- Innovative Skills Projects
- Training and Skills Development
- Curriculum and Learning Resource Design
- Recruitment Practice Development
- Workplace Readiness and Engagement
- In-house training programme development
- Internal Assessor/Verifier upskilling

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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. Due to the limited fund, businesses can apply for up to £5,000.

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?

Representatives from Capital City Partnership and if required, a neutral moderator will score applications. A minimum of two individuals will score every application.

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 2025/26 – 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.

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When will the fund open and close?

Applications for the fund can be submitted between Monday 25th and Friday 29th 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.

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