

IEE Employer Fund 2025

IEE Skills Innovation Fund

Specification

Introduction

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 business development.

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.

Monies granted will offer support to companies to create, development and implement innovate 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

Supported by

1. Invite for Applications

Applications are invited from micro-businesses (9 employees or less) for those individuals who are aged 18+ years old. Applicants must adhere to the fund's eligibility criteria and demonstrate clearly, how their application supports 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. Each company can only make one application to the fund and must not have received financial help from IEE over the past 12 months.

Applications should be emailed to IEEemployerfund@capitalcitypartnership.org

The deadline is 5pm, Friday 29th August 2025.

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

2. Use of Grant Monies

Financial assistance could be used for the following (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

3. Fund Administration

IEE will partner with Business Gateway to promote this small grant fund for micro businesses within East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian, the Scottish Borders and West Lothian.

Whilst potentially investing in those ideas listed, these should simultaneously support: the maintenance of employment contracts; prevention of job losses; the growth of staff; the creation of new posts; developing trading ability; and building upon an already clear business plan.

The grant award for each application is up to **£5000**, which is the maximum award threshold. Monies are to be spent and evidenced within 12 weeks of receipt. The total available fund to be distributed is **£45,000**.

4. Funding Allocation Split & Impact

The administering of grant funds of up to £5,000 per businesses has resulted in a change to the overall funding allocations across the City Region. Rather than allocating each local authority with a portion of the fund based on population, the fund will be an open application process across all six local authority areas, with no limitations in relation to business' location. This underpins the region's need and ability to develop innovative skills solutions to support industry and grow our workforce.

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.

5. Additional Information

For more information on eligibility criteria and administration of the fund, please consult our Eligibility and FAQ document.

6. What do CCP do with the Information Provided?

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.

Supported by