

# WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence



## Innovation Project Funding Collaborative Innovation Projects 2025-2026 Application Form and Guidance



Funded by



Department  
for Education

# WorldSkills UK Collaborative Innovation Projects

WorldSkills UK collaborative innovation projects will enable active experimentation, and the trialling of innovative approaches in two key priority areas highlighted in the government's - Invest 2035: New modern industrial strategy, designed to deliver the certainty and stability business needs to invest in high growth sectors, that will drive the UK's growth mission.

These areas focussing on people and place, throughout our UK cities, regions and nations are:

## 1. Recruiting, retaining and developing technical teachers

## 2. Employer partnerships supporting dual professionalism

For example, a project could aim to trial new approaches to recruiting, retaining and developing technical teachers in STEM subject specialist areas, with alignment to growth driving sectors. Sharing insights between different sector provider types, and between providers situated in different parts of the country.

All project outcomes and learning will be disseminated through the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence membership, and across education sectors throughout the UK, to ensure effective practice sharing, and the raising of standards in further and higher technical education and training. Learnings will also help to inform, shape and design the development of WorldSkills UK training programmes.

Despite extensive welcomed campaigns and initiatives to boost recruitment of technical teachers in our further and higher technical education sectors there remains many jobs unfilled and widespread shortages particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subject specialist areas.

If we are to provide high quality learning opportunities for all age, all level, all sector learners, to increase skills, productivity, innovation, and contribute to sustainable economic development and growth, we need to work collaboratively to find solutions to our technical teacher recruitment and retention challenges. We need to provide genuine opportunities for effective employer partnership working to support dual professional updating, and co-curriculum design, planning and delivery, to support the current and future needs of individuals and businesses, enabling communities throughout the UK to thrive.

## Innovation Projects

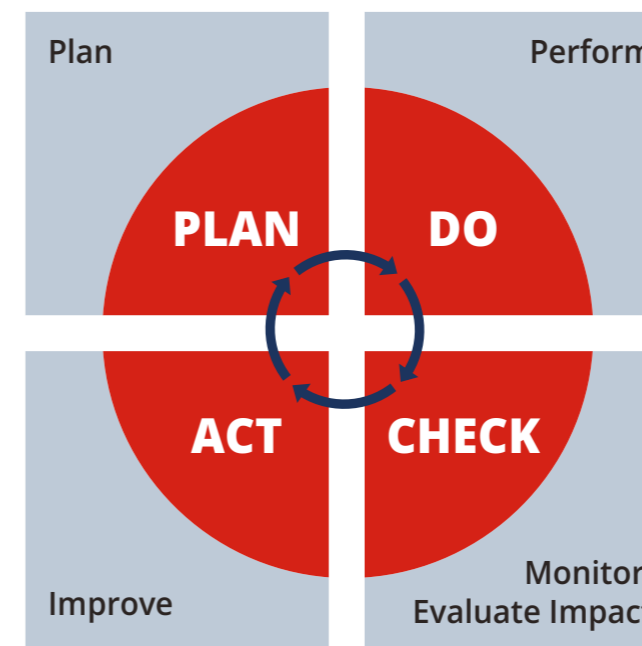
WorldSkills UK in partnership with NCFE, invite you to apply to undertake a group collaborative innovation project, involving a minimum of three further and higher technical education providers, to address one of the priority themes shared.

Funding of **35,000\* inclusive of VAT** is available for each innovation project, subject to agreed terms and successful completion.

The innovation projects are short-term pieces of development work that should be designed to trial new approaches within the 2025-2026 academic year, with the aim of achieving sustainable positive impact. The projects should address either technical teacher recruitment, retention and development, or effective employer partnership working to support dual professional updating, and two-way street working, to raise standards and champion future skills. Projects will develop approaches, trial them, reflect on outcomes, refine them, and share learnings and findings. At the heart of the innovation project approach is the cycle of action- reflection- action.

Innovation projects whilst supporting systems level working should also contribute to partners strategic frameworks and quality improvement planning, to support a whole organisation approach to improving the quality of technical education and training, focussing on positive learning experiences and outcomes for all learners and apprentices.

Innovation project applications must be made naming the project partners, and ensuring the support of senior leaders from each partner organisation. Each partner organisation, to be eligible for funding must be a registered member of the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence.



\*funding is subject to change.

## Key success factors

Successful innovation projects must clearly plan to address one of the two priority areas shared. Projects are likely to be more successful if they are focussed on addressing challenges that are evidenced-based and aligned to key growth driving sectors.

- Projects must have clear objectives, milestones, and measurable outcomes
- Projects must have performance indicators to measure impact
- Projects must align to organisational improvement plans
- Projects must have the support and commitment of senior leaders in all partner organisations, and all organisations must be members of the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence to be eligible for skills innovation funding
- Projects must be collaborative in nature, so learning is shared, and impact maximised throughout the UK, and through international partnership meetings and international exchange visits.

Project leads will be supported by expert mentors to develop action plans for activity, producing projects with clear and measurable outcomes. Project leads will be responsible for completing monthly reports, interim and final reports, and for disseminating learning and findings widely across further and higher education sectors throughout the UK, and through WorldSkills UK international partnership meetings and exchange visits.

## Project approval and support

Project proposals should be submitted on completion to-  
centreofexcellence@worldskillsuk.org

Should you require further guidance and information please contact colleagues at the Centre of Excellence team.

The closing date for submissions is **23 May 2025**. Senior management support from all participating providers must be included at the outset.

All partners must be WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence members to be eligible for skills innovation funding.

The first payment (60%) will be made at the beginning of the project in July 2025, following the acceptance of a satisfactory plan. A second payment of 25% of the project funding will be made following submission of the first interim report in December 2025. A final payment will be made at the end of the project on receipt of the final report and project outputs, and following the collaborative innovation project dissemination event in July 2026.

Successful collaborative group innovation project applicants will be invited to attend an in- person "getting started" workshop in June. This will facilitate action planning and enable participants to discuss and identify impact measures for their projects, as well as clarifying outputs, timescales, and plans for dissemination. The workshop will also provide successful applicants with an opportunity to meet their project mentor, and peers, as we will work as a technical community of practice sharing ideas, challenges, solutions and learnings.

Guidance notes to assist applicants are provided at the end of the application form.

# WorldSkills UK Collaborative Innovation Projects 2025-2026: Application Form

Guidance for completing the application form is provided on page 9.

## 1. Name of Project Lead

Name:

Job Title:

Employer:

Address:

Tel. No:

Email:

I confirm that my organisation has registered for membership with the WorldSkills Centre of Excellence.

YES  NO

## Executive / leadership approval

Name and Signature:

Job Title:

Email:

## 2. Name of Project Partner

Project Partner

Name

Role

I confirm that my organisation has registered for membership with the WorldSkills Centre of Excellence.

YES  NO

## Executive / leadership approval

Name and Signature:

Job Title:

Email:

## Name of Project Partner

Project Partner

Name

Role

I confirm that my organisation has registered for membership with the WorldSkills Centre of Excellence.

YES  NO

## Executive / leadership approval

Name and Signature:

Job Title:

Email:

## 3. Proposed project title

## 4. Proposed focus of activity (Maximum 150 words)

## 5. Context for activity (Maximum 250 words)

## 6. Outcomes and Impact (Maximum 150 words)

## 7. Costings

Please submit your project application form for your Collaborative Innovation Project to the following address below

**Centreofexcellence@worldskillsuk.org**

# Application - Guidance Notes

## 1. Name of Project Lead

Please complete the contact details for the Project Lead. For joint applications include the details for all partner project leads.

## 2. Executive Leader approval

Please provide the name and contact details (including email address) for your line manager or a senior manager, and their signature to confirm that they are aware of this application and support project activity. Please confirm that your organisation has registered with the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence.

## 3. Proposed focus of activity

Please provide a brief summary of your proposed activity. (Maximum 150 words).

## 4. Context for activity

Please provide a short rationale for what you want to do and why. What are the aims of your project and what activity do you propose to carry out? Which key theme does your project align with? Please include the details of any partners or key stakeholders involved in your project. (Maximum 250 words).

## 5. Outcomes and Impact

What will the outcomes of the project be? How will you measure impact? Please describe what outputs and resources will be shared with the sector. (Maximum 150 words).

## 6. Costings

Please give an outline of how the funding will be spent. Please note that funding cannot be awarded for capital costs, equipment etc.

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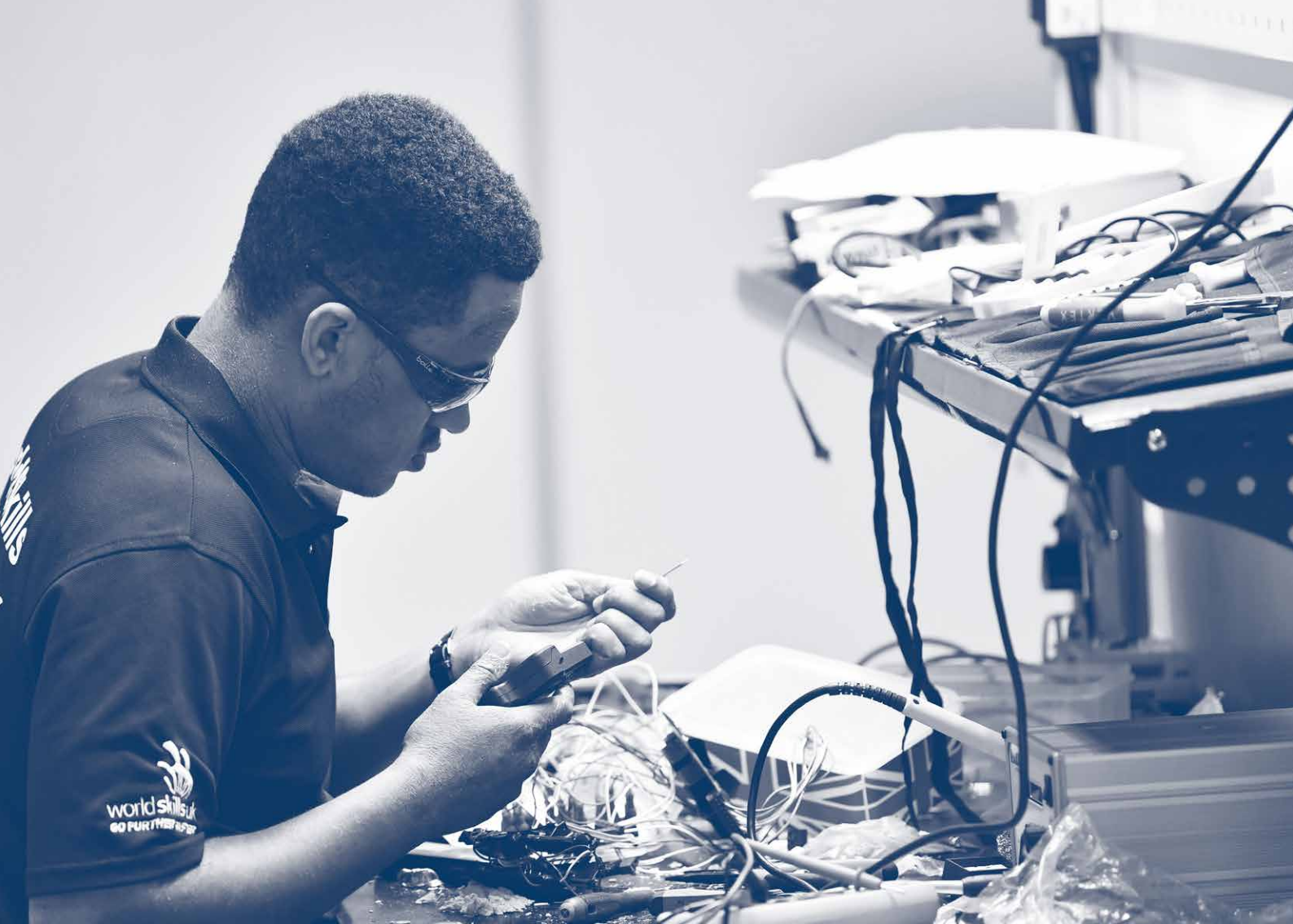
**Please email your completed application form to [Centreofexcellence@worldskillsuk.org](mailto:Centreofexcellence@worldskillsuk.org)**

**The closing date for applications is 23 May 2025.**



# Collaborative Innovation Project Timeline





WorldSkills UK is registered at  
52-54  
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Charity number 1001586, Company number 02535199  
VAT registration number GB945610716



**Funded by  
UK Government**