**NSW Higher Education Strategy – Collaboration and Innovation Fund**

**Guidelines for Applicants**

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| 1.0 Program purpose | 1.1 The NSW Department of Education has established a Collaboration and Innovation Fund (the Fund) to enhance the impact of university projects, programs and initiatives to meet Education State Outcomes. |
| 1.2 The Fund forms part of the NSW Higher Education Strategy (“the Strategy”) and aims to improve collaboration and enhance partnerships between the NSW higher education sector and the NSW Government to address social, economic and environmental challenges. The Fund provides grants to ‘Priority Partnership Projects’ that address priority actions and goals of the Strategy. |
| 1.3 The Fund is Administered by the Higher Education team within the NSW Department of Education (“the Department”). |
| 1.4 The Fund provides seed-funding or co-investment to identified projects. This approach maximises the effect of NSW Government funding, rewards collaboration and ensures a shared commitment between the Department and the administering organisation/s. |
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| 2.0 Support Available | 2.1 Up to $200,000 for an individual project, and up to $500,000 for collaborative projects with multiple partners.  |
| 2.2 All payments are in the form of one-off grants. |
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| 3.0 Use of grant funds  | 3.1 Funding will take the form of a grant following the execution of a funding deed between the administering organisation and the Department. |
| 3.2 The grant monies must be used primarily on activities within NSW. |
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| 4.0 Eligibility criteria  | 4.1 Applications are only open to NSW universities that are members of the NSW Vice Chancellors’ Committee as lead sponsors (“the administering organisation”).  |
| 4.2 Capital projects are excluded, however small-scale research infrastructure proposals will be considered. |
| 4.3 Research project proposals will not be considered, and should be directed to the [Education Strategic Research Fund](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-people-and-structure/higher-education-and-tertiary-policy/education-strategic-research-fund#tabs2). However, project proposals for the Collaboration and Innovation Fund may involve a research component.  |
| 4.4 Any research component to the project must have ethics approval or be likely to receive ethics approval from the relevant ethics committee at the university. |
| 4.5 If the proposed research project involves schools, the lead researcher must apply through the NSW State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP), or provide evidence of SERAP approval with their application. If a SERAP is unsuccessful, the proposed research will not be funded. |
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| 5.0 Selection Criteria  | 5.1 Applications will be ranked and preference given according to the guiding principles for ‘Priority Partner Projects’ outlined below:**Outcomes Focused:** * The project aligns to the Higher Education Strategy’s outcomes and specifically supports priorities and outcomes in the Education Cluster.
* All projects must take a student-centred approach, and consider the benefit to or impact on student outcomes.

**Evidence and Innovation:*** The project is anchored in a strong evidence-base and/or
* The project is innovative and demonstrates its unique value proposition.

**Collaboration:**  * The project takes a collaborative approach, with major government, tertiary, industry and/or non-government partners.
* Weighting will be given to universities that collaborate with other higher education or tertiary providers, including TAFE NSW or other Registered Training Organisations.
* Proposals over $200,000 will not be considered without multiple partners.

**Contribution (financial or in-kind):** * The administering organisation of the project is co-investing financially or in-kind, and/or has the ability to attract Commonwealth or partner funding.

**Executive endorsement**: * The project is a priority for the administering institution, demonstrated through executive sponsorship (for example Vice-Chancellors or Deputy Vice Chancellors within a university).

**Financial sustainability:** * The project demonstrates its financial sustainability, or supports the sustainability of the higher education sector more broadly.
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| 5.2 The application will be assessed against these criteria by a selection panel to determine whether to award funding to the applicant, and how much funding to award. |
| 5.3 The panel will make a funding recommendation to the Minister for Skills and Training for consideration. |
| 5.4 The Department reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to adopt any strategy in assessing applications received. |
| 5.5 The Department may choose not to award funding under this program. |
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| 6.0 Application process  | 6.1 **Applications for this round of grantsclose at 6PM AEST 19 April 2022.** |
| 6.2 Applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the completed application form to: higher.education@det.nsw.edu.au with the subject line “**Collaboration and Innovation Fund Application**”. |
| 6.3 Applications must be signed by the project lead and endorsed by senior executive and legal within the administering organisation. |
| 6.4 Late applications will not be accepted. |
| 6.5 Unsuccessful applicants may reapply in future funding rounds. |
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| 7.0 Selection process  | * 1. A selection panel will:
1. Assess and rank grant applications according to the Collaboration and Innovation Fund’s eligibility and selection criteria; and
2. Determine which applicants, if any, should receive grants.
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| 7.2 The panel will assess each application relative to the criteria and other applications. |
| 7.3 An applicant may be contacted to clarify their application. |
| 7.4 All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the decision on their applications. |
| 7.5 The timetable for the selection process is as follows: |
| **28 February 2022** | Applications open |
| **6pm (AEST) 19 April 2022** | Applications close |
| **June 2022** | Applicants notified of outcome |
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| 8. Funding Deeds and reporting requirements | 8.1 All successful applicants who accept the offer of a Collaboration and Innovation grant will be required to enter into a formal Funding Deed (“the Deed”) with the Department. The Deed will specify obligations that relate primarily to the recipient’s accountability for the grant, including using the grant for activities occurring in NSW, the return of unspent grant monies and reporting on the use of the grant. |
| 8.2 Payments to successful applicants will be triggered upon the signing of the Deed, which requires an agreed project plan with milestones. |
| 8.3 The Deed must be signed by an authorised signatory of the administering organisation. |