

GM Skills Capital Fund FAQs

	Question	Answer
1	<i>Can you bid for more than one strand?</i>	Yes. We would expect to see one full business case clearly indicating the different strands being applied for
2	<i>Is the purchase of land included?</i>	No. In line with GMCA practice for other capital programmes the purchase of land will not be considered as eligible expenditure even where there is a restrictive covenant for educational use. Nevertheless, land can be used as match funding providing there is an up to date independent valuation.
3	<i>What period does the funding cover?</i>	Spending is for the period from 2017 to September 2020 and facilities should be ready for that time. We do recognise that there may be a requirement to run-out funding beyond this time, but the bulk of expenditure should be made by Sept 2020. Possible extension periods would be looked at on a case-by-case basis and subject to financial regulations for the Skills Capital/Local Growth Fund
4	<i>How many bidding rounds will there be?</i>	The current plans are for two main bidding rounds. Round 1 launched in September 2017 and Round 2 in January 2018. It is anticipated that Round 1 will be for projects already developed and that the timing for Round 2 will allow for preparation of new projects including collaborative and innovative proposals Up to 50% of funds will be held back for this round.
5	<i>Will there be any future Bidding rounds after Round 2?</i>	At this stage the intention is to allocate the bulk of the funding in the first two rounds given the need to spend by 2020 and the relatively long period of planning and application required for capital projects. However, the situation will be reviewed in January and further rounds will be considered depending on remaining funding available
5	<i>Round 2 – What is a collaboration? What does it look like?</i>	We are looking at different ways of working; e.g. college lead with business & Independent training provider. Examples could include building collaboration around a technical pathway. There is no right or wrong but the partnership must be relevant to the provision and pathway. Appraisal will not be on a specific model. We are open to new ways of working

6	<i>There was a suggestion for an IoT in the ABR – will this need to be funded through Skills Capital?</i>	No. We are expecting an IoT launch in Autumn. The Government has made £170m spend for IoT's (capital spend). Skills Capital would, however, have to be aligned with any Greater Manchester IoT
7	<i>When is the Round 2 decision?</i>	August/September 2018. Full indicative timetable is contained within the Skills capital Prospectus
8	<i>If institutions are accessing the Restructuring Fund does this affect the ability to access Skills Capital?</i>	No, Restructuring is not capital so can access both
9	<i>If oversubscribed is there a scoring mechanism?</i>	Yes. Scores will be taken into account if oversubscription. Details of appraisal and weighting of scores will be published in advance.
10	<i>Will there be a cap on words?</i>	Yes, for both EoI and full application
11	<i>Can Skills Capital be applied for along with other funding streams e.g. infrastructure investment?</i>	Yes, we would expect to see where other funding streams have been utilised to support application and how they interrelate.
12	<i>When can money start being spent?</i>	Money can be spent from when an EoI stage is launched, however any spend is at applicant's own risk until an offer of funds has been confirmed.
13	<i>How will projects that finish after 2019/20 be handled?</i>	For this programme we need to spend the bulk of funds by 2020 but need to consider applications on a case by case basis and recognise that significant projects could take longer.
14	<i>What type of projects were approved in Round 1?</i>	Examples include Tameside College project linked to Local Authority creating a new town centre facility; Salford City College project for digital skills; smaller projects with Mantra Learning for reverse logistics facility and The Skills Company project to upgrade STEM facilities across GM.

15	<i>Our initial estimate of investment indicates a project spend of around £200,000. Is there likely to be any flexibility on the minimum project size, current stated as £300,000?</i>	<p>For the first round these thresholds will remain in place but we will review these in time for the launch of Round 2 in January 2018.</p> <p>Where project spend is likely to be under the £300,000 threshold, we recommend that applicants submit an 'outline' Expression of Interest during this current round so that we can gauge future demand. This need not be a full EoI but just a completion of Part 1 Project Summary. This would be for information only</p>
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		and applicants will not be scored on this nor held to the exact content if they subsequently choose to bid in Round 2
16	<i>Are Sixth Form Colleges eligible to apply for Skills Capital funding?</i>	<p>In principle, sixth form colleges are eligible to apply for the GM Skills capital Fund providing they meet all of the criteria outlined in the prospectus, including the focus on technical education in GM's priority sectors.</p> <p>Given the anticipated oversubscription to the GM Skills Capital Fund, applicants have to demonstrate all other funding sources have been explored and exhausted. FE Colleges currently have no access to the DFE capital funds which are available to Sixth Form Colleges through the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF). We would therefore expect all Sixth Form Colleges who intend to apply for Skills Capital funding to have explored this option first and inform us whether they have applied to the CIF.</p> <p>The GM Skills Capital Fund 2017-2020 supports the development of the Post-16 skills infrastructure in the region. It was originally the Skills Capital Fund administered by the SFA to support FE Colleges and independent training providers and provides their primary source of potential capital funding. The Funding guidelines have therefore been developed to focus on assisting with the development of the technical pathways leading to employment or higher level sector specific training.</p>
17	<i>When will the detailed application form and guidance be available?</i>	<p>The detailed application form and guidance for the full business case stage of the process are still being finalised. However we can share a draft version upon request, to assist with planning. If you like a draft version please email your request to GMSkillsCapital@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk</p>