
24 March 1998

CIRCULAR

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

UNIVERSITY FOR INDUSTRY

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

To
Principals of colleges

Circular type
Information and request for
applications for funding

Summary
An invitation to colleges to apply
for project funding for University
for Industry (UfI) pilot work and to
confirm acceptance of an
allocation of capital funding to
support their preparation for the
UfI.
Responses by 1 May 1998

Reference number: 98/09

Enquiries:
Susan Bickerton
Regional director, Northern Region
0191 211 2200

98/09

UNIVERSITY FOR INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

1 This circular sets out arrangements for the allocation of capital funding to assist colleges with their preparation for the University for Industry (UfI) and invites applications from colleges for funding to support UfI pilot projects.

BACKGROUND

2 The establishment of the UfI is a key aspect of the government's strategy to improve employment-related skills and encourage lifelong learning (see annex A). The government's consultation paper *The Learning Age* suggests that the UfI will 'connect those who want to learn with ways of doing so'. It envisages the UfI as being 'the hub of a brand new learning network, using modern communication technologies to link businesses and individuals to cost-effective, accessible and flexible education and training'. The UfI will work with a range of learning centres, assuring the quality of the services accessed. The consultation paper defines learning centres as 'places equipped with technology where people can go and access UfI courses and materials'. A prospectus providing further details on the UfI will be issued by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in the spring.

3 The minister of state at the DfEE, Baroness Blackstone, announced on 12 February that additional funding would be made available in 1998-99 for colleges to develop their information technology (IT) infrastructure to underpin their contribution to the UfI and to meet IT skills shortages. As the Council had already identified £500,000 to support UfI pilot projects, following the minister's announcement a total of £6 million is now available to colleges.

- 4 The funding will be allocated in two parts:
- a. 'capital funding' – £5 million to help colleges develop their IT infrastructure to underpin their contribution to the UfI;
 - b. 'project funding' – £1 million to support college involvement in UfI pilot projects.

5 The arrangements for both capital and project funding are set out at paragraphs 6 to 13 below.

CAPITAL FUNDING

6 The Council wishes to offer colleges the opportunity to spend the capital funding as soon as possible after the beginning of the 1998-99 financial year in April. To assist colleges to plan their expenditure, a provisional allocation is set out in the letter enclosed with this circular. The allocations comprise a basic sum of £3,000 and a variable sum related to the number of units funded by the Council at the college in 1997-98. The basis of the allocations and two examples are set out at annex B.

7 Where a college wishes to accept its allocation, it is asked to explain how it intends to use the funds to assist its preparation for contributing to the UfI. Proposals linked to project funding are particularly welcomed. A form for colleges to provide this information and to confirm that they wish to accept the allocation is attached at annex C. This should be returned to Louise Hazel at the Council's Coventry office by 1 May 1998. Colleges that do not wish to accept their allocation are asked to complete the form appropriately and return it as soon as possible to the Council so that the funds may be reallocated.

8 The success of the UfI depends upon ease of access for learners and effective IT networking. Colleges should therefore target funds at items of information and learning technology hardware and/or software and networking products.

9 Colleges will be asked to provide a report summarising how the funds have been used and outlining college involvement with UfI-related activities. The Council will issue details of the necessary information during the summer.

PROJECT FUNDING

10 Project funding is intended to support a small number of UfI projects, and would be in the region of £100,000. The purpose of the project funding is to encourage colleges to work within partnerships when contributing to the UfI.

11 Colleges which consider they meet the criteria set out in annex D are invited to apply for project funding.

12 In determining the criteria for allocating project funding, the Council sought the advice of the sector's joint advisory committee set up as a result of the work of the Higginson committee on

information and learning technologies. The committee advised that projects might usefully be based around the following themes:

- development of innovative modes of delivery, using information and learning technology (ILT) (especially for work with small and medium-sized enterprises)
- transferring and sharing expertise and materials with other providers
- development of generic (not specific) learning materials, primarily aimed at entry levels and improving basic skills in the workplace
- development of generic assessment materials for UfI enquiries to colleges
- development of electronic access for students to obtain information about programmes to meet their needs.

13 Colleges which wish to apply for project funding should outline briefly how the activity in which they are involved meets each of the criteria outlined in annex D. Applications should be returned by 1 May 1998 to:

Louise Hazel
The Further Education Funding Council
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT.



TIMETABLE

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Documentation</i>
1998		
1 May	Closing date for accepting provisional capital allocations Closing date for applications for project funding	Annex C
15 May	Colleges notified of final capital allocation	
5 June	Colleges notified of outcome of applications for project funding	
1999		
31 March	Colleges provide Council with report on use of capital funding and evaluation report on use of project funding	

UFI: PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES

1 A prospectus describing how the UFI is to be established will be published by the DfEE in the spring. It is anticipated that the UFI will have the following features:

It will:

- be a broker, not a provider, of learning provision
- ensure individuals and organisations have access to quality learning via the UFI franchised learning centres
- revolutionise the supply of learning by seeking to increase the supply and use of leading-edge, multimedia learning products
- commission materials and services where gaps or weaknesses in provision emerge.

2 To contribute successfully to the UFI, it is likely that colleges will need to work in partnerships and be able to provide access to:

- open learning and learning involving technologies, for example on-line learning
- a wide group of people who may or may not have access to computers at home or at work
- learning on demand.

BASIS OF THE ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL FUNDING FOR UFI

Allocations will be calculated on the basis of a basic sum plus a variable element determined by the number of units for which a college is funded in 1997-98.

The basic sum has been set by the Council at £3,000. This accounts for approximately £1.33 million of the £5 million to be allocated for capital funding.

The variable element has been calculated by taking the remainder of the available funds, £3.67 million, divided by the 164.7 million units funded in colleges in 1997-98. This gives a variable element of £22.20 per 1000 units.

Example A – large college

	£
Basic sum	3,000
Variable element	
900,000 units x 2.22 pence	<u>19,980</u>
Total allocation	22,980

Example B – small college

	£
Basic sum	3,000
Variable element	
100,000 units x 2.22 pence	<u>2,220</u>
Total allocation	5,220

ACCEPTANCE OF CAPITAL FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR UFI

(Reference Circular 98/09)

Please photocopy, complete and return this form to Louise Hazel at
the Council's Coventry office no later than 1 May 1998.

College name *(please print)*

Contact *(please print)*

Telephone no.

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100

Please use this space to describe how the funds will be used to contribute to the college's preparation
for the UFI.

DECLARATION

I confirm that this college does/does not* wish to accept the provisional allocation for UfI capital funding set out in the letter enclosed with Circular 98/09 and that these funds will assist the college in preparing for its contribution to the UfI when launched.

** delete as appropriate*

Signature (*principal*)

Name (*please print*)

Date

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR UFI PROJECT FUNDING

To be eligible for Ufi project funding, colleges should be able to demonstrate that:

- they are involved in activity which will assist the Council in evaluating the implications for the sector arising from college involvement with the Ufi; and

either

- the college is currently involved in a Ufi pilot which will result in the college allocating additional resources to support the pilot

or

- the college is involved in activity which, whilst not necessarily referred to as a Ufi pilot, nevertheless has certain features consistent with those emerging from work to date on Ufi. The project activity should therefore have the following features:
 - college involvement in a strategic partnership
 - the associated provision should be marketed by the partnership
 - information and learning technology should be a central part of its delivery
 - the partnership should have available to it a call centre operation which can be used as a first point of contact by learners
 - the outcomes should have wide application across the sector and be available for dissemination; and
- the project activity is consistent with the college's strategic plan.

In addition, the college should be prepared to:

- provide the Council, via appropriate flagging of its ISR data, with information relating to the volume and type of Ufi-related provision.

In the light of applications received, the Council will endeavour to ensure that it supports at least one Ufi project in each of its regions.

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