

Studio Schools in 2013

How to apply

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1. Things to know before you start

Vision

1.1 We want to improve our education system so that children thrive and prosper, whatever their background. By introducing increased competition, innovation and parental choice, we aim to raise standards across the school system.

1.2 We are inviting applications to establish Studio Schools that will provide high quality, aspirational education for 14-19 years olds using project-based learning to deliver mainstream qualifications, develop students' employability skills and prepare them for work, or further or higher education. Studio Schools should encourage innovation and be driven by the vision and passion of those proposing the school.

1.3 This guidance is for people who would like to establish a Studio School. If your proposal does not meet the model of a Studio School, you may be interested in applying to set up a mainstream or 16-19 Free School, a special Free School or an alternative provision Free School. You should refer to the relevant guidance available [here](#). You can also find out about how to apply to establish a University Technical College [here](#).

What is a Studio School?

1.4 Studio Schools are all-ability and mixed gender state funded schools, independent of local authorities. They are an innovative new model of educational provision, delivering mainstream qualifications through practical project-based learning. They typically have around 300 pupils, usually aged between 14 and 19 years old. Students spend a significant portion of their week working with local employers (with over 16s paid a real wage). All students have a 'personal coach' to help tailor the curriculum to their individual needs. Students follow a broad and balanced curriculum designed to give them the employability skills they need in work, or to take up further or higher education.

1.5 The admissions policy of any Studio School must be fair, open and transparent and be in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Studio Schools must be open to pupils of all abilities and faith (or non-faith) from the area and cannot be academically selective. Studio Schools are funded on a comparable basis to other state funded schools.

1.6 Further information about the characteristics of a Studio School can be obtained from the Studio Schools Trust (SST) [here](#).

Studio Schools: Law and policy

1.7 Studio Schools are new Academies and as such are independent schools to which the relevant Independent School Standards apply. The Independent School Standards (England) Regulations (2010) are available [here](#).

1.8 Each Studio School will enter into a contract with the Secretary of State. This contract, termed the 'funding agreement'¹, sets out the arrangements and standards by which the Studio School must be run. The model Studio School funding agreement will be available on the Department for Education's website in due course.

1.9 You should be aware of the following key requirements of Studio Schools:

1.10 Studio Schools are new institutions that must:

- adopt fair practices and arrangements that are in accordance with the School Admissions Code, the School Admission Appeals Code and admissions law as it applies to maintained schools²;
- collect performance data, publish results³ and be subject to Ofsted inspection under the same framework that applies to all publicly funded schools;
- have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice;
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum including the core subjects of maths, English and science, develop students' employability skills through project-based learning, and make provision for the teaching of religious education; and
- employ personal coaches to personalise students' learning.

¹ For simplicity we use 'funding agreement' throughout the application documents to refer to the formal legal agreement between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State. In addition to the funding agreement the law allows the Secretary of State to fund Academies (including Studio Schools) by payment of grant.

² We are revising both the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code at the moment. The new codes are expected to come into force in February 2012 and will affect the allocation of places for children starting school in September 2013. Please use the draft codes available [here](#) when developing your application.

³ This reporting currently (as at 2011) includes the proportion of Key Stage 4 pupils attaining 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent) including English and maths and English Baccalaureate results.

1.11 Studio Schools do not have to:

- follow the National Curriculum;
- employ teachers with Qualified Teacher Status⁴; or
- comply with the provisions in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

⁴With the exception of a Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the school's designated lead for Looked After Children, although please note that certain head teachers may hold these roles without having QTS.

2. Getting started

Before you start

2.1 Applications are invited from groups that have identified evidence of demand from parents, young people and employers and local need that would be met by the key features of the Studio School model. Applicants could include teachers, charities, community groups, employers and other existing educational providers – such as an Academy Trust, Further Education College or training provider.

2.2 Setting up a Studio School requires a lot of time, commitment and determination. Before you start your application, you should think about:

- the law and policy as they apply to Studio Schools;
- the potential demand in your area for the Studio School you want to set up;
- potential sites for the Studio School;
- the level of involvement from the group and local employers in setting up the school;
- the relevant skills and experience you have to set up and run a school; and
- whether you need to access any additional expertise and how you might secure this.

2.3 The Studio Schools Trust (SST), an independent charity, established the Studio School model. SST is the promoter of Studio Schools and will be working with the Department for Education throughout the application process. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their application with SST, who will be able to offer advice and support.

Organising your group

2.4 Applicants will need to look at what needs to be done, both on a short term basis (submitting the full application and, if approved, preparing for the Studio School to open) and long term basis (strategic running of the Studio School as well as day-to-day management). Applicants will then want to organise themselves based on the skills, experience and time commitment of individual members so that the group is deployed and governed in the most effective way.

2.5 Each Studio School must be underpinned by strong governance arrangements and established on a solid legal footing and independent of any other education establishment. Behind any Studio School is a company, referred to as an Academy Trust, constituted specifically for the purpose of establishing and running a school. This must be set up as a company limited by guarantee to protect the members of the company by limiting their personal liabilities. If you already have an Academy Trust, you may apply using your existing company number, making clear whether the Studio School you are proposing will be run by a separate Academy Trust, or be part of a Multi-

Academy Trust.

2.6 Applications are invited from proposers seeking to establish a Studio School:

- that has its own Academy Trust and separate funding agreement; or
- that will be part of a Multi-Academy Trust, with a supplemental funding agreement with the Department for Education.

2.7 Applications are not invited for:

- Studio Schools within maintained schools;
- Studio Schools within existing Academies where the Studio School will not have its own Academy Trust or the Studio School will not be part of a Multi-Academy Trust arrangement.

2.8 Existing maintained schools and Academies that wish to establish a Studio School as a separate unit within their existing institution may seek support from the Studio Schools Trust to do so, but should not apply to the Department for Education.

Establishing a company

2.9 A company is made up of members and directors. Neither members nor directors are paid for their work in this role. **The members** of a company are its legal owners and have a strategic role in running the school and ultimate control over the company. When setting up your company you are required to have at least three founding members but you can have more. Your group will need to decide who the members of the company will be. The members appoint the directors of the company, and when setting up your company, the members are required to appoint at least one director. This may be one of the members themselves.

2.10 **Directors** will be responsible for the day-to-day management and governance of the school. In other words your directors will be the governors of your school. Where we refer to governors and governing bodies in this guidance, we are talking about your company directors.

2.11 Company members are not always directors, but in many cases will undertake both roles. We would expect most of the directors not to be members of the company as well, however, because it is important to have clear lines of accountability between the directors and the members.

2.12 You will also need to complete the relevant paperwork to establish your company limited by guarantee. As founding members you need to sign a legal document known as the memorandum of association. You also need to complete the articles of association, which set out the purpose of the company and the rules that govern it. Studio Schools should use the Department for

Education's model memorandum and articles of association which can be found [here](#). If your company is formed using our model memorandum and articles of association it will also be a charity at the point that the articles are adopted. The company's directors will then also be its **trustees**⁵ for charity law purposes.

2.13 You then need to submit these completed documents along with an application to register a company and the relevant fee to Companies House. Further information on what you need to do to set up a company is available from Companies House [here](#). Please note we may request to see your memorandum and articles of association at a later date.

2.14 The individuals behind any Studio School application are crucial to its success. You will want to consider who forms your applicant group and ensure that you are organised in an effective and appropriate way. You should have arrangements in place to ensure that any potential conflict of interest is avoided. Conflicts of interest could include members of groups being related to each other or principals setting their own salaries (e.g. if they are also a director of the Academy Trust) but we encourage you to think widely about any possible conflicts of interest that you may face. It is possible for members of groups who have been involved in establishing a Studio School to later be employed at the school. However, if this is your intention, we would expect you to demonstrate how you will avoid a conflict of interest, including through fair and transparent recruitment processes.

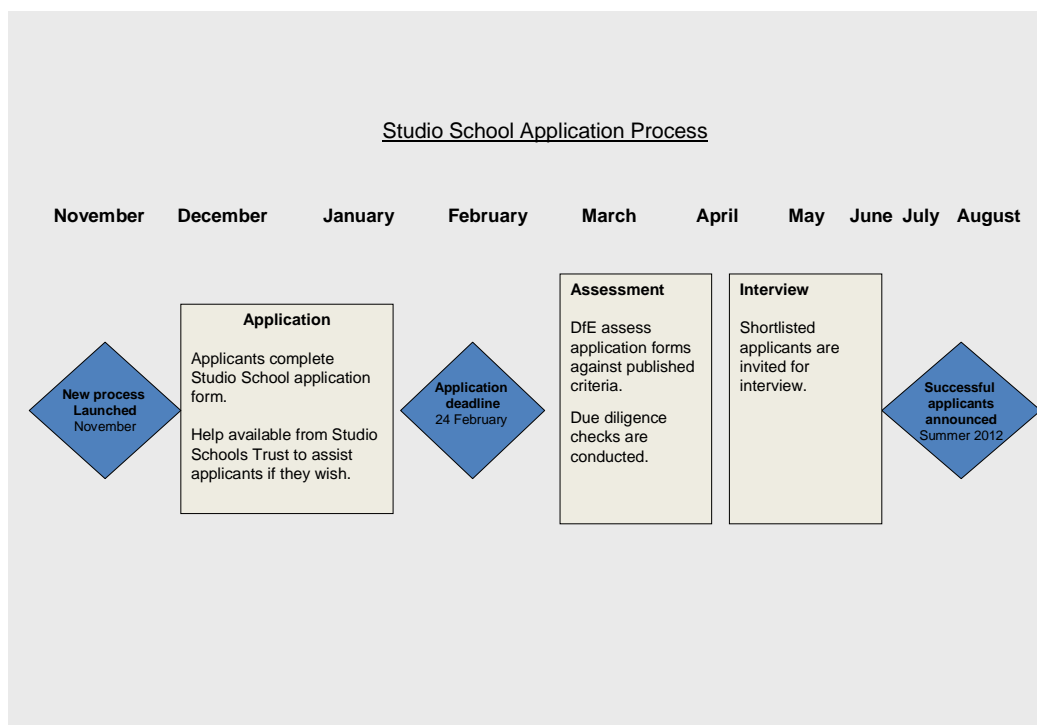
2.15 Just as every Studio School application will be different, the makeup of applicant groups will be different. There is no right or wrong model for the composition of an applicant group. Each group will want to ensure that it has the right balance of skills and experience to deliver its vision. The Studio Schools Trust will be able to advise you about the implications of the model for you and the kinds of skills and expertise required.

Suitability of applicants

2.16 The Secretary of State will seek to ensure that only suitable persons are permitted to establish publicly funded Studio Schools. He will consider each application on its merits, and take into account all matters relevant to the application. He will reject any applications put forward by organisations which advocate violence or other illegal activities, or by individuals associated with such organisations. In order to be approved, applications will need to demonstrate that they would support UK democratic values including respect for the basis on which UK laws are made and applied; respect for democracy; support for individual liberties within the law; and mutual tolerance and respect.

⁵ There is guidance issued by the Charity Commission on the role and duties of charity trustees [here](#).

3. The application process explained



What happens when

Preparing and submitting your application

3.1 This application process is primarily for those wanting to set up a school which will open in 2013. We will only consider 2014 applications on an exceptional basis where a strong case is made for the need for an extended lead time.

3.2 Completed applications, **must** be submitted to the Department for Education **by 6pm on 24 February 2012**. Please note that any applications received after this time will not be considered.

3.3 It is important that you read this guidance carefully before starting your application to make sure you understand what you need to do and the information that you must provide.

Assessment of your application

3.4 We will assess your application against the requirements and criteria set out in this guidance. You must ensure that you provide all the information that we have asked for.

3.5 All applications will:

- be judged against the criteria set out in this guidance, other Studio School applications and a range of contextual factors. **Chapter 4** provides further information about the assessment process; and
- be subject to due diligence checks.

Interviews

3.6 If your application is assessed as one of the strongest applications, we will invite your group to an interview. We will provide further information on interview dates in due course.

Final approval and decisions

3.7 We hope to let everyone know the outcome of their application, successful or otherwise, by the summer 2012.

3.8 If the Secretary of State decides your application should progress you will be provided with a dedicated project lead from the Department for Education, along with support to help secure a site and open your school.

3.9 There will be a significant amount of work to complete between approving your Studio School application and your Studio School actually opening. You should therefore be clear that members of your group are able to commit themselves fully to the time necessary to do this. During this period you may have support to hire a principal designate and other senior staff, as well as project management support. The key requirement for you is to oversee any staff working full-time.

3.10 Assuming you make good progress after your application is approved, the Secretary of State will then decide whether to enter into a funding agreement with you.

Appeals

3.11 Decisions by the Secretary of State are final and there will be no formal appeals process.

4. How we assess applications

4.1 Your application will be assessed in the following ways:

- against the criteria set out in this guidance;
- against other Studio School applications; and
- against a range of contextual factors, including value for money.

4.2. Applications will also be subject to due diligence and other checks.

4.3 In assessing all applications, we will take into account a wide set of contextual factors, including, but not limited to:

- overall cost;
- value for money;
- the Secretary of State's duty to consider equality issues⁶ related to the proposed Studio School;
- the standards of schools in the local area;
- the level of deprivation in the community that it will serve;
- the need for more school places in the area; and
- the recent track record, including on education and finance, of applicants who run existing provision.

⁶ [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)

5. Preparing your application

5.1 A Studio School application is made up of eight sections as follows:

- **Section A:** Applicant details and declaration
- **Section B:** Outline of the Studio School
- **Section C:** Education vision
- **Section D:** Education plan
- **Section E:** Evidence of demand and marketing
- **Section F:** Capacity and capability
- **Section G:** Initial costs and financial viability
- **Section H:** Premises

5.2 Please read through all these sections before you begin, to avoid repetition from section to section.

5.3 In **sections A-H**, we are asking you to tell us about you and the Studio School you want to establish. We have provided a form available [here](#) for you to complete for **sections A** and **B**.

5.4 **Section G** also requires you to submit two financial plans as Appendix 4 – see below. Both financial plans must be filled out using the same template, available [here](#), but using different assumptions. The first financial plan should be developed on the basis that all the pupil places in your school will be filled. The second financial plan must show how you would manage your budget and remain financially viable if you are unable to achieve the levels of income you assumed in the first scenario (e.g. if you are unable to recruit the number of pupils you expect).

5.5 We also require appendices, as set out in the appropriate sections of this guidance. The full application should consist of:

- The Application – sections A-H
- Appendix 1 – Letters of support
- Appendix 2 – Catchment area and travel plan
- Appendix 3 – CVs of key people
- Appendix 4 – Financial spreadsheets
- Appendix 5 – Premises plan

5.6 You need to submit all of this information in order for your application to be assessed. **Chapter 6** provides further information on what we are looking for in each section, how you should provide it and the criteria we will use to assess your application. **Chapter 7** provides further detail about how, when and where to submit your Studio School application.

6. Assessment criteria

6.1 All sections of your application must be completed in order for it to be considered. We will use the criteria outlined in this chapter to assess your application. Under each criterion we have included a description of what you should include in your application. **Sections A** and **B** need to be completed for information purposes and therefore have no assessment criteria.

Section A: Applicant details and declaration

6.2 This section seeks basic information about applicants, including the main contact details of the lead applicant and the company limited by guarantee that has been formed and registered with Companies House (also referred to as an Academy Trust). It also seeks information on any related organisations that have links with the applicant group as well as information from applicants who are existing education providers.

6.3 As companies limited by guarantee, certain details will be publicly available on the Companies House website. However, the personal information you provide in **section A** will be treated by the Department in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data protection

The personal data you provide us with will be used to consider your application to set up a Studio School and will not be used for other purposes. For the purposes of the Data Protection Act, the Department for Education is the data controller for this personal information and for ensuring that it is processed in accordance with the terms of the Act. The Department will hold all personal information you supply securely and will only make it available to those who need to see it as part of the Studio School application process. All personal information supplied in these forms will only be retained for as long as it is needed for this process.

6.4 There are no assessment criteria for this section.

Section B: Outline of the school

6.5 This section seeks key details on the Studio School that is being proposed, including its name, planned yearly intakes and the number of pupils when the school is at full capacity.

6.6 There are no assessment criteria for this section.

Section C: Education vision

6.7 The education vision should describe why you are setting up a Studio School in this area, and its core features and ethos. This is your opportunity to tell us in your own words about the overarching vision for your Studio School, what makes it unique and distinctive and how this informs your education plan.

6.8 We will be using two criteria to assess this section of your application.

C1: Provide a clearly focused, coherent vision that underpins the application with a compelling rationale for establishing the Studio School.

You must:

- set out clearly why you are seeking to establish your Studio School and the rationale for this curriculum offer, location and approach to teaching and learning;
- set out how your Studio School will meet the needs of local young people to help them achieve and give them employability skills;
- identify what will make the Studio School distinctive in its vision and ethos and how this has informed the education plan, demonstrating your understanding of the distinctive characteristics of Studio Schools, including the role of local employers and the curriculum framework and other standards recommended by the Studio Schools Trust; and
- set out your aspirations for the achievements of individual pupils, and the school as a whole, and why these are appropriate.

C2: Outline a clear identity for the Studio School, which utilises the expertise of, but is separate from, your existing provision (where applicable).

You must:

- identify the role that you and key partners expect to play in establishing the Studio School in the medium to long term. Please provide letters of support from your employers, partners and other relevant organisations wherever possible, indicating the practical support being offered to the Studio School, as Appendix 1 to your application; and
- explain how you will make the Studio School a separate institution from that of your existing provision (where applicable).

Section D: Education plan

6.9 This is the heart of your application. Your education plan must explain how your school will achieve its education vision. The education plan should describe the structure of your Studio School and the experience that pupils will have there. You should set out your aspirations for the curriculum, including successful engagement of local employers and provision of work experience, placements and projects; what pupils will achieve and how they will achieve it; your teaching and learning strategies; and, your admissions arrangements.

6.10 Please provide further information in Appendix 2 – Catchment area and travel plan.

6.11 We will be using eight criteria to assess this part of your application.

D1: Set out a viable curriculum plan with appropriate focus on project-based learning.

You must:

- describe the curriculum in detail, setting out how it will be broad and balanced⁷ and meet the different needs and interests of all pupils including the range of qualifications which might be offered. This should reflect the unique characteristics of Studio Schools, including the CREATE skills framework;
- describe the project-based learning and development of employability skills (and, where appropriate, the specialisms of the Studio School) and how these will be integrated with the curriculum to be delivered (a) to 14-16 year old pupils and (b) to post-16 pupils; and
- set out a curriculum model that shows what proportion of learning is given over to each subject or area of learning for each year group, and the time spent with employers and on community projects.

⁷ In order to be considered broadly based and balanced the curriculum must (a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and (b) prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

D2: Provide a coherent and feasible school timetable and calendar.

You must:

- set out expectations around the length of the Studio School day, term and year. This should include an example of the number and length of lessons each day and your plans for extended hours, and should make a clear distinction between compulsory and optional activities; and
- explain how pupils will be organised, for example through year groups, tutor groups, or other class structures, including the role of personal coaches, and how this links with and supports the Studio School's vision.

D3: Set out a clear strategy for ensuring that the needs of pupils with differing abilities are met.

You must:

- demonstrate an awareness of the varying needs of individual pupils and have an effective strategy for meeting them, including supporting those who need it and stretching the most able (gifted and talented pupils), and the role of personal coaches;
- show how you will use ICT, other agencies and partners' resources to support the learning and achievement of pupils of varying abilities and needs;
- describe the strategies you will use to overcome barriers to learning and achievement, such as children with English as their second or additional language;
- set out your approach to supporting disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, who may or may not have a statement of special educational needs; and
- set out how you will have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

D4: Tell us how your definitions and measures of success will deliver your vision for pupil achievement.

You must:

- explain the aspirations for the Studio School pupils, including academic achievement and employability skills;
- outline the targets that are proposed, why these are suitable to measure the delivery of your vision, and what your strategy will be to achieve these;
- describe the proposed success measures for individual learners and for the whole school and how these will be monitored, reviewed and reported; and
- set out plans to develop pupil assessment and tracking systems.

D5: Describe your admissions policy, confirming commitment to fair and transparent admissions practices.

You must:

- set out your admissions policy, including the criteria to be used to prioritise places if your school is oversubscribed. Your admissions policy must be in accordance with the School Admissions Code, the School Admissions Appeals Code and admissions law as it applies to maintained schools. It must be clearly linked to the delivery of your education vision;
- define the catchment area of the Studio School (attach as Appendix 2); and
- explain any associated travel issues and how these will be managed – attach information as Appendix 2 to your application.

D6: Describe how your approach to behaviour management, pupil wellbeing and attendance will improve pupil outcomes.

You must:

- set out detailed strategies for promoting good behaviour and attendance;
- describe how you will promote pupil wellbeing, including through pastoral care and strategies for tackling bullying; and
- describe how these strategies are informed by your vision and linked to raising standards and educational outcomes.

D7: Demonstrate your understanding of the local community and its needs, and your plans for sharing facilities with other schools and the wider community.

You must:

- demonstrate a good understanding of the community your pupil intake will come from and show how the education plan reflects that while retaining high expectations for pupil achievement;
- describe any plans you have for working with other schools, educational establishments or the wider community; and
- set out how you will promote good community relations.

D8: Engagement of employers with the education plan.

You must:

- describe the employers who are engaged with the Studio School proposal, including how the work experience/placements/projects they will offer will tie in with the curriculum offer for the students (letters of support should be attached as Appendix 1); and
- demonstrate the strength and sustainability of employer engagement with the Studio School, including the specific support they will offer, such as project-based learning opportunities, numbers and types of work placements and experience, their involvement with curriculum development.

Section E: Evidence of demand and marketing

6.12 In this section we are looking for evidence that parents would send their children to your Studio School, that local young people want to attend the Studio School, and that employers will work with your school to deliver its vision. You should also demonstrate how you have engaged with the wider community, including other education providers, and considered the impact of your Studio School on those providers. You should also include, where possible, evidence of support for the Studio School from local authorities.

6.13 The funding your school will receive will depend on the number of pupils you have. The more evidence you can provide to show you have demand for the number of pupil places you need to fill in the first two years of the school being open, the better. You must show that the demand is for your specific school and must have engaged directly with the community you will be serving.

6.14 Those applicants that are called to interview will be asked to update the panel on the latest evidence and information on E1 and E2 so please keep consulting locally and collating data to demonstrate demand for your Studio School.

6.15 We will be using three criteria to assess this part of your application.

E1: Provide evidence of demand from employers.

You must:

- provide information that shows clearly demand for your Studio School from employers on the basis of skills shortages. Tell us about any consultation that has taken place. You may consider providing wider demographic data and evidence about local need.

E2: Provide evidence of demand from pupils and parents.

You must:

- provide information that clearly shows demand for your Studio School from parents and students. Tell us about any consultation activity that has taken place. You may consider providing wider demographic data and evidence about local need in the area to add context to the data from your survey findings.

E3: Demonstrate how you intend to reach out to the wider community.

You must:

- demonstrate how you have made, or plan to make, the Studio School known and attractive to pupils of different backgrounds and abilities including from deprived or disadvantaged families;
- tell us if you are planning to use the school as a resource for the wider community (e.g. hiring out premises) and, if so, how will this be managed;
- include details of any discussions you have had with the local authorities about pupil admissions or any details you have gathered about the need for a different pedagogy (offered by the Studio School model) in the area; and
- set out a robust marketing strategy built on your education vision and plan, taking into account your proposed intake and the demand that you have already identified.

Section F: Capacity and capability

6.16 You must demonstrate to us that your group has the capacity and capability to set up **and** run a school, and has access to educational, financial and other expertise either within your group or by procuring additional support. Please provide further information in Appendix 3 – CVs of key people.

6.17 If your application is approved, we will be able to support you, if required, to secure additional expertise that you may need in the implementation phase, such as project management, human resources, ICT and sites and property/construction.

6.18 Before submitting an application for a Studio School, you **must** have established a company limited by guarantee with members and directors appropriately skilled to discharge their duties and willing to do so without payment. This is explained in more detail on **pages 7 and 8** of this guidance.

6.19 We will be using five criteria to assess this section of your application. In providing responses to criteria **F1**, **F2** and **F3** set out below, it is important to note that:

- expertise could come from within your group or through forming a voluntary partnership with an organisation or individual(s) with a successful educational track record or by entering a commercial contract with such an organisation or individual(s);
- there is no guarantee that your application will be successful. Therefore you **must not** enter into any contracts on the expectation of government funding. In your application you should tell us what contractual arrangements, if any, you would like to have in place should your application be approved; and
- public procurement regulations apply to expenditure of public money and require that commercial contracts must be let competitively. Therefore, there can be **no guarantee** that organisations or individuals offering support in the preparation of applications will be offered contracts to continue providing such support should the application be approved.

F1: Show how you will access appropriate and sufficient educational expertise to deliver your vision.

You must:

- show that you have identified the resources, people and skills that you will need to set up and operate the Studio School;
- confirm time commitments to the project from relevant individuals; and
- set out clear and detailed plans for identifying and securing any necessary educational expertise currently missing from your group.

F2: Show how you will access appropriate and sufficient financial expertise to manage your school budget.

You must:

- show that you have identified the resources, people and skills that you will need to set up arrangements for, and undertake the financial management of, a school;
- confirm time commitments to the project from relevant individuals; and
- set out your clear and detailed plans for identifying and securing any necessary financial expertise, including an understanding of school budgets, currently missing from your group.

F3: Show how you will access other relevant expertise to manage the opening and operation of your school.

You must:

- provide details of your group, including the members and directors of the company and their particular areas of experience and expertise;
- show that your group has identified other relevant expertise, such as individuals or organisations with successful experience of setting up a new organisation or business, human resources, ICT, property/construction, marketing, school governance and project management;
- set out clear time commitments to the project from the relevant individuals;
- where your group is seeking to establish more than one new school, explain how work on this school will be balanced against the development of others; and
- set out your clear and detailed plans for identifying and securing any necessary expertise currently missing from your group.

F4: Show how your staffing structure will deliver the planned curriculum.

You must:

- set out plans showing an appropriate and phased build up of staff (where the school is increasing in size over time) in line with planned pupil numbers and financial resources;
- describe the final staffing structure, including your schools' personal coaches and input from employers as per the Studio School approach, and show how it is sufficient, affordable and appropriate to deliver the education vision and plan;
- set out the structure of the senior leadership team, heads of department and other staff, as well as a clear description of their roles and responsibilities;
- reflect both the arrangements for the first year and for the longer term as the school builds to full capacity, with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities; and
- set out any staff that will be shared with the proposer/sponsor (where applicable) and how this enables you to benefit from economies of scale.

In preparing your application, it is important to note that:

- you will be asked to demonstrate the financial viability of this staffing plan later in the application form in **Section G: Initial costs and financial viability**. Please ensure that the information you provide is consistent in both sections.

F5: Provide realistic plans for recruiting a high quality principal designate for your Studio School, other staff and governors in accordance with your proposed staffing structure and education plans.

You must:

- set out plans for recruiting your Studio School's principal designate (head teacher) and the role you envisage him/her playing in the pre-opening phase;
- provide the CV of your preferred principal designate, if you have already identified one, along with evidence of their ability to deliver your education vision and plan and lead your proposed school;
- set out your plans for recruiting high quality members of staff, including personal coaches;

- tell us about any individuals you have already identified as prospective governors and their relevant skills and expertise; and
- describe how you will identify and appoint committed governors with the breadth of skills needed to successfully oversee both the implementation of a school and its operation once open,

In preparing your application, it is important to note that:

- where you have already identified a preferred principal designate, we may require that person to be assessed to help inform the decision to appoint; and
- if your application is approved, you will – subject to our agreement – be able to appoint a principal designate up to two terms in advance of the school's opening date.

F6: Demonstrate a clear understanding and describe the respective roles of the company members, governing body and principal designate in running your school.

You must:

- clearly describe in both writing **and** in a diagram the structure, lines of accountability and methods of escalation between the company members, the school's governing body (the company directors) and the principal designate;
- clearly define and set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the company members, the governing body and the principal designate; and
- have arrangements that seek to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are avoided and that deliver **independent** challenge to those with executive functions.

Section G: Initial costs and financial viability

6.20 In this section we are looking for evidence that the cost of setting up your school and delivering your proposed education plan is affordable and that your group is able to plan and manage the financial side of running a publicly funded school. Studio Schools must offer value for money.

6.21 We have included in **Annex A** an explanation of how school funding works and the information you need to know before starting this section of your application. You should read this annex carefully.

Step 1 - You must complete two different financial plans for your school.

6.22 We want you to create two different financial plans for your Studio School. You must do this by filling out the same template spreadsheet twice, with information based on two different scenarios. The template spreadsheet is available [here](#) and must be used for all Studio School applications and included as Appendix 4 - Financial spreadsheets. Instructions for completing the spreadsheet are contained within it.

6.23 The first financial plan needs to show us the income you expect to receive and what you intend to spend when your school is full. You must provide financial information up to and including the academic year **after** the school is full, and for a minimum of five years.

6.24 You should complete the second financial plan to show us how you would reduce spending if your income is lower than expected – for example, if you recruit fewer pupils than planned (please see criterion **G3**).

6.25 In both financial plans, your income must always exceed your expenditure, taking start-up funding and reserves you have built up in prior years into account.

6.26 In preparing your financial plans, you should think carefully about how you can make the best use of the money available to you to deliver your school's education plan. We know that it will not be possible for you to state actual costs at this stage but we need you to demonstrate that your particular education vision and plan are affordable. The cost estimates you make need to be realistic and based on evidence. If you show income that is not from the Department for Education, you need to explain where it is coming from, how certain you are that you will get it and provide evidence to support this assumption.

6.27 In preparing your financial plans it is important for you to ensure that they:

- are based on clearly stated and evidenced assumptions;
- flow directly from the education vision and plan for your Studio School;
- show how you have kept costs to the minimum needed to deliver your education plan;
- reference established school benchmarks where appropriate;
- use best estimates where there are uncertainties;
- do not show a deficit in any year;
- are not predicated on your school being able to borrow money;
- do not carry over excessive balances of money from one year to the next; and
- show clearly any income you are expecting to receive from sources other than the Department for Education and provide robust evidence to show why this is realistic and achievable.

6.28 Both completed financial plans must be submitted alongside your main application **as electronic Excel files and in hard copy**.

Step 2 - In addition, you must include an explanation in your application describing how you developed your financial plans and the thinking behind them.

6.29 We expect you to explain how you have kept costs as low as possible and how your financial plans support your education vision and plan. You should also tell us about the assumptions you have based your plan on, and the evidence you have gathered to show these are realistic.

Review of school funding

6.30 School funding for 2012/13 and beyond is not yet decided because of wider work going on to reform the school funding system. Therefore, you will need to use the funding figures and approach for 2011/12 when completing your financial plans. This means that the approach to, and levels of, funding suggested by the template spreadsheet are indicative only, and do not represent the actual funding the school would receive if approved.

6.31 We will be using five criteria to assess applications for initial costs and financial viability for Studio Schools.

G1: Show how the school will be financially viable and offer value for money up to the point where there are pupils in each year.

You must:

- show in **both financial plans** that income, including start-up funding, would exceed expenditure for each year up to and including the first year where you have pupils in each year (the 'start-up' period); and
- demonstrate you have minimised the need for any start-up funding, particularly staffing diseconomy funding. For example, where the school is building up year group by year group we would normally expect principals to do some teaching, and for support staff to fulfil multiple roles.

G2: Show how the school will be financially sustainable once there are pupils in each year.

You must:

- demonstrate in your **first financial plan** that income will exceed expenditure once the school is no longer eligible for start-up funding. The last year in which schools are currently eligible for start-up funding is the first year in which they have a cohort of pupils in each year; and
- set out clearly and explain in your application the supporting assumptions for your first financial plan.

In preparing your application, it is important to note that:

- a strong financial plan should also include contingencies and flexibility that would allow the school to cope with unexpected financial pressures. You should not do this by building up a large surplus over time.

G3: Show how the school will be financially resilient to reductions in income.

You must:

- show in your **second financial plan** how you would reduce your expenditure to spend less than your income if you were not able to achieve the levels of income you assumed in your first financial plan. You must show how you would do this whilst still being able to deliver high quality education in line with your stated education vision and plan;
- show in your second financial plan how you would manage if only 90% of pupil places were filled in each year;

- also take into account any other areas that could impact on your school's income. In particular, where relevant, you should show in the second financial plan how you would manage if:
 - your proportion of Free School Meals pupils is lower than expected, where you are assuming a higher rate than the local authority average; and/or
 - you did not reach the assumed level income from sources other than DfE grants e.g. third party contributions; and
- set out clearly and explain in your application the supporting assumptions for this second financial plan.

G4: Provide realistic financial plans that are consistent with other aspects of your application.

You must:

- be consistent about the information you provide in **both financial plans** and other relevant parts of your application. This means that the numbers and assumptions in your **first financial plan** must match the numbers and assumptions stated elsewhere in the application form and that the numbers and assumptions in your **second financial plan** are clearly explained and evidenced in your application.

In preparing your application, it is important to note that:

- examples of areas that will be scrutinised include pupil numbers, staffing structure, and whether there are elements of the education vision and plan (such as after extended provision) that would require financing and how these are reflected in your financial plan.

G5: Provide sound financial plans that are based on realistic and evidenced assumptions about income and expenditure.

You must:

- complete the template spreadsheets accurately;
- ensure that all required fields of the template spreadsheets are filled in;
- clearly state and evidence in your application all the assumptions you have made in putting together your financial plans; and
- use, where appropriate, benchmarking data (e.g. school or local authority data) to ensure that the figures you have included are realistic.

Section H: Premises

6.32 Finding a suitable site is an essential part of opening a Studio School. As part of preparing your application you should investigate potential sites for your school. In your application we would like you to tell us about the sites you have identified. Please provide further information as Appendix 5 – Site plan.

6.33 There are no assessment criteria for this section. **Your overall application will not be affected by the information you provide on premises.** However we would like to know where you would prefer your Studio School to be. Your preferred sites will be visited by Partnerships for Schools. Partnerships for Schools is the organisation appointed by the Department for Education to assist in finding and securing Studio School sites⁸. Partnerships for Schools will assess the sites they visit for their suitability, availability, and the likely cost and duration of work required.

6.34 We will also make an overall cost and value for money assessment of your proposed site options. You should therefore aim for the lowest possible capital cost. Successful applicants will be provided with help to secure a suitable site for their Studio School. Advice and guidance on how to find potential sites, as part of developing your application, is available from Partnerships for Schools by contacting them by email.

6.35 You should make enquiries as to whether your proposed sites are available for acquisition or leasehold but you **must not** enter into any negotiations at this or any other stage on the expectation of government funding. If your application is approved, Partnerships for Schools will undertake negotiations on our behalf to acquire a site for your school

6.36 Where premises proposed involve the granting of a lease, it is expected that the length of the lease will offer stability to the school, its staff and students, and represent value for money. Your application should be clear what the cost of the lease will be, and what this cost is intended to cover.

6.37 It is also expected that any lease charges for non-commercial premises should be for a peppercorn rent with no premium payable. Where this is not so or where private sector premises are proposed, it should be clearly identified in the application with a short accompanying explanation.

6.38 Any capital requirements should be clearly identified as upfront costs in applications (this covers all building work and ICT equipment not covered by the start-up grant). Capital requirements must be declared fully in your application.

6.39 **Please note** that if it proves impossible to identify feasible premises, we may not be able to approve your application for opening in 2013, simply because of the time available to prepare premises for the opening. If this is the case, Partnerships for Schools will help you with your search for premises and

⁸ From April 2012, Partnerships for Schools will become part of the new Education Funding Agency

we may consider working with you towards opening in 2014 or beyond.

6.40 Although this section of your application will not be assessed against any specific criteria, you should aim to provide us with the following information:

Possible site options

6.41 Please provide brief details of the steps you have taken to identify suitable premises.

Details of your preferred premises

6.42 Please set out for your preferred premises, if possible:

- your reasons for choosing it;
- the address and postcode of the proposed site;
- the current use of the proposed site;
- the current freeholder of the proposed site;
- a brief description of the site including size (in square metres) along with the pupil numbers you are proposing;
- the availability of the site and the nature of the tenure; and
- why you think the premises is suitable for your school and how it will support delivery of your education vision.

Capital investment

6.43 Please detail any sources of funding available to you to support site acquisition.

Studio Schools in public and government buildings

6.44 When looking for potential premises we would encourage you to consider surplus or under-utilised government and other public buildings. These have the potential to offer cost-effective solutions. A wide range of public buildings could provide suitable accommodation for a Studio School, including:

- offices
- courts and police stations
- clinics, health centres, day centres and hospitals
- care facilities
- training centres
- Territorial Army facilities and barracks
- depots
- former churches
- ambulance stations
- fire control centres

6.45 We have carried out detailed assessments including surveys and, where appropriate, pre-planning enquiries of six sites. We welcome applications to establish Studio Schools on these sites. Information about the sites can be found via our [website](#) including location, size and the type of school for which each site might be suitable. They currently include two Department for Education buildings, Mowden Hall in Darlington and Castle View House in Runcorn, where there is potential to share the sites with us.

6.46 We will provide details of further properties as they become available. If you are interested in any of these properties please [email](#) Partnerships for Schools.

6.47 Partnerships for Schools will provide you with further detail about these sites and will be able to advise you on how they might match your education vision. Furthermore, to assist you with searching for other available government and publicly owned sites, Partnerships for Schools has developed an online map browser [here](#) that will allow you to explore potential government and other publicly owned buildings by entering your postcode.

7. Submitting your application

How, where and when to submit

7.1 Please submit all the written information and two financial plans before **6pm** on **24 February 2012**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. You need to submit **one copy by email** to StudioSchools.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk and **two hard copies** by 'Recorded Signed For' post to:

Studio Schools Applications Team
Department for Education
3rd Floor
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

7.2 It is essential that the hard copies you provide are identical to the electronic version you email. Your application should be formatted for printing on A4 paper and completed in Arial font with a minimum font size of 12. Sections C-H of your application should not exceed 20 pages (not including appendices) and your email must be smaller than 20MB in total. You may wish, therefore, to carefully consider how important photographs, images and logos are to your application.

7.3 Please remember that we must receive all of the documents that make up your application **no later than 6pm on 24 February 2012** in order for them to be considered⁹. You may find it helpful to use the checklist in **Annex B** of this document to ensure that you have provided all the information we need to assess your application.

7.4 The full application should consist of:

- The Application
- Appendix 1 – Letters of support
- Appendix 2 – Catchment area and travel plan
- Appendix 3 – CVs of key people
- Appendix 4 – Financial spreadsheets
- Appendix 5 – Site plan

⁹ Applicants should not submit additional supporting material after this date, although the Department for Education reserves the right to request additional information if deemed necessary.

8. Support for applicants

Useful contacts

8.1 Please find below contact details of organisations that are able to offer support:

- The Studio Schools Trust (SST) established the Studio School model. Further information can be obtained on their website at <http://www.studioschoolstrust.org>. SST is the promoter of Studio Schools and is working with the Department for Education throughout this application process. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their application with SST, who will be able to offer advice and support.
- If you want to explore the best possible location for your Studio School then support is available from the School Kit online tool developed by Partnership for Schools at: <http://fsk.partnershipsforschools.org.uk/default.htm>
- If you have any technical problems with this guidance, our website or any of the forms, please contact us by calling 0370 000 2288 or visiting our website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus>

Further information and key documents

8.2 There are a range of websites and documents that you may find useful when writing your application, including:

Studio Schools ‘How to Apply’ guidance and financial templates:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/technical/a0077820/how-to-apply-to-establish-a-studio-school>

Studio Schools Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/technical>

Model Studio School Funding Agreement (this will be uploaded on the Department for Education’s website in the coming weeks):

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/technical/a0077820/how-to-apply-to-establish-a-studio-school>

Model memorandum and articles of association for use by Studio Schools:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/guidance/a0074737/free-schools-model-funding-agreement>

Academies Financial Handbook: http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/ypla-academies_financial_handbook-gn-nov06.pdf

Behaviour and exclusions policy and guidance:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/behaviourpolicies>

Charity Commission guidance:

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.aspx>

Companies House: <http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/>

Department for Education Procurement Guidance for Free Schools:

www.education.gov.uk/freeschools/b0073235/procurement-guidance-for-free-schools/

Equality Act 2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Governance Guidance: www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance

Partnerships for Schools: <http://www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk>

School Admissions Code: We are revising both the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code at the moment. The new codes are due to come into force in February 2012 and will affect the allocation of places for children starting school in September 2013. Please use the draft codes when developing your application

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmissions/a00199845/departmental-response-to-the-consultation-on-changes-to-the-admissions-framework>

Schools benchmarking website (for examples of maintained school finances):

<https://sfb.teachernet.gov.uk/Login.aspx>

Special Education Needs Code of Practice:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DfES%200581%202001#downloadableparts>

Annex A: School Funding Overview

Review of school funding

The approach to and levels of school funding are currently being reviewed. The funding that schools will receive from 2012/13 onwards therefore has not yet been agreed. The information set out below and in the financial template is based funding figures and approach used in 2011/12. This is likely to change, and therefore the information set out below and in the template should be considered illustrative only. No guarantee can be given at this point about the approach that will be used and the levels of funding that will be received from 2012/13 onwards. In particular, it is likely that levels of start-up funding will be lowered.

School funding explained

Funding is currently allocated to schools on a per pupil basis. The more pupils you have, the more funding you get. This is why having evidence of demand for your school is so important. If your school does not have enough pupils it will be very difficult for you to pay for staff and the upkeep of the building.

Start-up funding

Start-up funding is intended to bridge the gap between a school opening and there being pupils in each year. This funding should enable a new school to cover essential costs when a school first opens, such as employing a headteacher and buying books and equipment, where these costs could not otherwise be met by the per pupil funding.

There are currently two main types of start-up funding:

- formulaic funding; and
- staffing diseconomy funding.

Formulaic funding is based on a standard formula and will be the same for all schools depending on the number of pupils. This currently includes funding for books, materials and equipment, recruitment costs after you have opened and some initial senior staff training. These formulaic elements will automatically complete in the financial template once you have entered pupil and teacher numbers.

Staffing diseconomy funding is worked out on a school by school basis and is designed to help meet the costs of employing senior staff when the school opens. The amount of funding currently depends on the way year groups build up and which senior staff are essential for schools to operate.

The staffing diseconomy lines of the spreadsheet are blank for you to complete. You will need to estimate how much diseconomy funding your school may need

while building up year groups. As a guide, a school which has 300 pupils and is starting with 60 pupils will have 20% of its pupils in the first year, so might expect diseconomy funding to cover up to 80% of the principal designate's salary in the first year.

Diseconomy funding should be used to fund only the minimum **essential** posts.

Lead-in funding

If your application is approved it is likely that you will be eligible for funding to help you get your school ready to open. This funding is known as lead-in funding. It can currently be used to help develop detailed plans for the school including the curriculum, recruiting a principal designate, running a consultation on their proposed school, and attracting pupils.

This funding is **not** covered by the financial template, and you do not need to include this as part of your application. We will discuss this with you if you are successful. As with all types of school funding, proposer groups will need to justify any need for funding, keep costs to a minimum and demonstrate how they have secured value for money.

Annex B: Application Checklist

Checklist: Sections A-H of your application		
	Yes	No
1. You have established a company limited by guarantee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You have provided information to cover all of the following areas:		
Section A: Applicant details – including signed declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section B: Outline of the Studio School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section C: Education vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section D: Education plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section E: Evidence of demand and marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section F: Capacity and capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section G: Initial costs and financial viability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section H: Premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. This information is provided in A4 format using Arial font, minimum 12 font size, and sections C-H of your application do not exceed 20 pages (excluding appendices)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You have completed and attached appendices 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. You have completed two financial plans using the financial template spreadsheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. All relevant information relating to Sections A-H of your application has been emailed to StudioSchools.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk by 6pm on 24 February 2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Two hard copies of the application have been sent by 'Recorded Signed For' post to: Studio Schools Applications Team, Department for Education, 3rd Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT, by 6pm on 24 February 2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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