

Access to Education

Access to Education Fund -
Guidance for Applicants

2014/2015

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Context

Scotland should be the best place to grow up and go to school. We want each child to enjoy an education that encourages them to be the most successful they can be and reach their potential. To achieve this we need to raise attainment consistently for all our children and young people; and progressively reduce inequity in educational outcomes.

Evidence tells us that there is a significant gap in educational attainment between the most and least deprived children and the majority of this variation can be found within rather than between schools.

The attainment of our most deprived young people is improving, though not at a fast enough rate. The Scottish Government, Education Scotland and all our partners have a strong shared commitment to raising attainment for all, addressing the barriers, and to closing the attainment gap. We know the reasons for this gap are complex and require partnership working over a range of related policy areas in order to make progress in this vital area for the country's economic and social well-being.

The Access to Education Fund aims to reduce the barriers to learning experienced by pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is important that learning is about the ability to learn, not the ability to pay, and pupils should not have to miss out on educational experiences for financial reasons.

In providing the Access to Education Fund, Scottish schools are being given an opportunity to apply for funding to provide support to these pupils, and their families, and to provide educational experiences which will enhance learning, address existing barriers and help each child reach their full potential.

The Overall Aim of the Fund

The fund aims to reduce the barriers to learning experienced by pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. It will achieve this by addressing one, or more, of the following areas:

- Helping schools to address barriers to learning caused by difficulties in accessing appropriate school resources, IT, or clothing;
- Enhancing a school's capacity to provide trips, outdoor learning or other activities which will boost learning and are an integral part of the school curriculum;
- Enhancing a school's capacity to provide coaching and mentoring programmes for disadvantaged students to support them to become fully engaged in school and community life;
- Enhancing a school's capacity to deliver parental engagement programmes to support parents to support their children; and
- Enhancing a school's capacity to develop or deliver innovative learning experiences which will raise educational attainment, promote attendance and encourage positive engagement.

Criteria

What are we specifically looking for?

We are particularly interested in proposals which:

- Could not be achieved without additional funds;
- provide innovative solutions to reducing the barriers to learning for disadvantaged children;
- will raise the attainment of children who, because of their disadvantaged background, are under-achieving and not engaging positively;
- are sustainable and will build capacity that will last beyond the funding period;
- will provide measurable outcomes; and
- include plans to share the initiative with other schools.

Important points to note for applicants

- You must not apply for funding for materials or activities that should be provided through existing core funds.
- You could be proposing something new, or your proposal may have a specific focus, building on what has already been achieved to date within your school, cluster or group of schools.
- The fund will initially be available for 2014/15. Decisions on future years will be made before summer 2015. Therefore, you are encouraged to submit proposals that are not a short-term fix, but part of a longer term drive for continuous and sustainable improvement where it is needed most. For example, if you are applying for funds to facilitate school trips or outdoor learning experiences, you should demonstrate the related work that will be undertaken to maximise and continue the learning. If you are proposing to provide coaching and/or mentoring programmes, it would be beneficial to demonstrate the ways in which you plan to build capacity beyond the funding period, for example, using trained staff to train others.
- Applications are welcome from individual schools, however you are encouraged to consider applying as a cluster/groups of schools, particularly if this would enable more substantial proposals that will build capacity lasting beyond the funding period.
- Applications will also be considered from schools/clusters/groups of schools who plan to work in partnership with the support of Local Authority staff to develop an approach/intervention that can also be used to build capacity and develop the approach within other schools across the authority.
- Applications for small-scale building projects, such as the creation of a garden designed to reduce the barriers to learning, will be considered.
- You should give consideration to how you plan to measure/evaluate the outcomes.

Guidelines and Criteria

Deadline for Application	10 October no later than 5pm
Timescale for our decision	End November 2014
Level of Grants	Funding awards will be around £5,000 per school, however larger awards will be made in exceptional circumstances. When applying as a cluster or group of schools, the total amount applied for should not exceed around £5,000 per school involved.
Eligibility	Applications are invited from schools/clusters/groups of schools across Scotland. Only 1 bid per school/cluster/group of schools will be permitted

How we Assess Applications

Once the closing date has passed we will start to assess all applications submitted.

It is unlikely that we will have enough funds to support all of the applications we would like to. If this happens we need to make some difficult decisions.

We have a scoring system that helps us to do this. Please see the tables below for further information.

Applications will be scored 0-4 based on the following criteria:

0	Unacceptable	Nil or inadequate proposal. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the criteria.
1	Poor	The proposal is partially relevant but generally poor. The proposal addresses some elements of the criteria but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.
2	Acceptable	Proposal is relevant and acceptable. The proposal addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.
3	Good	Proposal is relevant and good. The proposal is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.
4	Excellent	Proposal is completely relevant and excellent overall. The proposal is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

Applications will be scored using the following headings:

Criteria	Score (0-4)	Weighting (1-5)	Max Score Available
Does the proposal clearly demonstrate that additional funds are required in order to deliver the change?		2	
Will the proposal reduce barriers to learning for disadvantaged children?		4	
How does the proposal plan to raise attainment?		4	
Is the proposal sustainable and will it build capacity beyond the funding period?		5	
Does the proposal include plans to measure outcomes/evaluate the project?		3	
Are there plans to share the initiative with other schools?		3	

Please note that the scores are weighted to reflect their relative importance.

Monitoring your grant

If we fund your project we will need you to complete an end of grant report to confirm how the grant has been spent and what you achieved.

We may also visit you to check how the grant has been spent and talk with practitioners, parents and pupils to gain their views on the impact of the project and the funding.

We may ask you to hold an in-service or best practice event at your educational establishment or invite you to present at a national event.

End of funding period summary and evaluation

We will ask you to submit a short summary at the end of the funding period – commenting on how the proposal has met the stated aims and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposal in reducing the barriers to learning for disadvantaged young people.

This summary should be submitted by end of June 2015.

If you are successful

If you are successful, we will inform you by email by the end of November 2014 so that you can proceed with project plans as soon as possible. Once we have awarded a grant we cannot give any more funding for the project.

If your application is unsuccessful

If your application is unsuccessful we will inform you of this via email. If you wish to receive feedback on your application, you can request this by sending an email to acesstoeducationfund@educationscotland.gov.uk

Important points to note

- Your application must arrive no later than the given deadline; failure to do so may render your application invalid.
- If any sections are incomplete then this may impact on the assessment of your application.
- You only need to send in the completed application form. Supporting documents are not required.
- Please ensure that you retain a copy of the application form for your own records.

We will assess your application based on the criteria detailed above.

Complying with Conditions of Grant

You must keep to the grant conditions shown in both our offer letter and any accompanying documents. In particular:

- You must not make changes to your project without notifying us first and providing an explanation of why changes need to be made;
- You must carry out your project in line with the timescales given in your application, and within the time limits shown in our offer letter. **It is very important that you let us know about any delay or difficulties in keeping to the conditions so that we can give advice and help as necessary;** and
- You will be required to acknowledge our funding in any publicity relating to this project.

Additional Important Information

Please note that Education Scotland may, by giving at least 7 days written notice, assign any of its rights and obligations under a grant award, either wholly or in part, to any other person.

Publicity

Information on grants awarded will be made public by Education Scotland. Images submitted in support of your application may be stored electronically by us. If we later seek to use these for publicity purposes, we will contact you in order to obtain permission to do so.

Openness and Accountability

Reports from information you supply within your application and from comments made on your application by external assessors and staff members will be held digitally. The information you supply will be made available to those assessing your grant application.

For the purposes of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) Education Scotland is obliged, as a Scottish public authority, to make your information (which will include your application) available to anyone making a Freedom of Information request.

By submitting your application you waive any right to raise any type of legal proceedings against Education Scotland as a consequence of, or in contemplation of, any disclosure of the contents of your application in response to an information request made under FOISA.

Information that we may release

If your application is successful we will release the following information from your funding application if we receive a FOI request:

- Your name;
- The amount of funding requested; and
- Your project description

If more detailed information is requested, we will consider this request under FOISA and apply the Act's exemptions and the public interest test appropriately.

If more detail from your funding application is to be disclosed we will contact you and advise you of this.

For further information on FOISA please see the Scottish Information Commissioners website: www.itspublicknowledge.co.uk

Data Protection

Information supplied by you in support of your application will be stored on our records system. The data we hold may be used for the following purposes:

- To report statistics;
- To assess applications;
- For accounting purposes; and
- For contacting you.

Your name, address and contact details will be held on our records system. We will use this information to correspond with you. We will not forward your details onto any other organisations.

The details of your application may become public information (see *Openness and Accountability* above). However, your personal details will be held by us and only our staff, appointed auditors and those involved in assessing or monitoring grants will have access to them.

You have a right under the Data Protection Act 1998 to see the information we hold on you. By signing your application form you are agreeing that we can use your information as shown above.

For more information on the Data Protection Act 1998 see:
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk