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Guidance

Submitting an FE transaction approval request

How colleges can request approval for non-delegated transactions from the Department for Education (DfE).

From:

[Department for Education](#)

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Applies to England

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This guidance applies to colleges. It does not apply to academy trusts.

Colleges include:

- further education corporations (FE colleges)
- sixth-form college corporations
- designated institutions, established or designated under section 28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

Which transactions are beyond a college's delegated authority

The transactions that are beyond a college's delegated authority are explained in part 5 of the [college financial handbook](#).

Those transactions include:

- indemnities
- guarantees
- letters of comfort
- write-offs or losses
- novel, contentious or repercussive transactions
- special payments, including:
 - severance
 - compensation
 - ex-gratia
 - extra-contractual
 - extra-statutory
 - extra-regulatory

Refer to sections 5.27 to 5.35 of the handbook for guidance on the [disposal of fixed assets that require approval](#).

Why a college must seek approval for these transactions

Colleges are required to maintain high standards when they manage public money, particularly with regard to:

- regularity
- propriety
- value for money

They must seek approval to comply with:

- their accountability agreement
- the [college financial handbook](#)
- HM Treasury (HMT) rules on [managing public money](#)

Who can request approval

The person completing the form must have authorisation from the college's accounting officer to do so.

How to request approval

To request approval, a college must submit an [FE transaction approval request form](#).

Refer to [FE transaction approval requests: required information](#) for guidance on providing supplementary evidence.

If HMT or the Charity Commission for England and Wales also need to approve a transaction, DfE will liaise between the parties. A separate application is not

needed.

When to request approval

Colleges must request and obtain approval before going ahead with any transaction that is beyond their delegated authority. If a college fails to do so, this is a breach and likely to result in the irregular use of public money.

Colleges must also submit any retrospective request for approval through the FE transaction approval request form. DfE does not give approval automatically. A late submission will generate more scrutiny because we will consider the request both on its merits and the reason it was sought retrospectively.

What to do after requesting approval

A college can go ahead with a transaction once DfE has sent proof of its approval. DfE will notify the college if a transaction is not approved, and the college must not proceed with the transaction.


The approvals process can take several weeks. It can take longer if more information or HMT approval is needed.

Colleges should contact their place-based team case manager if they have any queries.

FE senior pay approval

Follow the [guidance on applying for FE senior pay approval](#) if you are requesting approval for:

- remuneration of senior roles above £174,000, or the pro-rata equivalent for part-time staff
- performance-related pay arrangements that exceed £25,000

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