

SKILLS INNOVATION GRANT

CORE GRANT TERMS

AREA	KEY TERMS	COMMENT
Number of grant schemes to be launched by the Foundation this academic year.	One grant scheme in the year 2026. (Grants to fund expenditure incurred between 1st June 2027 – 31st August 2028).	We may launch a similar grant programme in Autumn 2027 depending on the success of this funding round.
Geographical scope	Delivery will be in England, Wales and/or Scotland.	There is potential scope to expand to international delivery in future funding rounds. Northern Ireland is excluded as OCN NI already provide grants to their NI centres.
Potential applicant eligibility criteria	Applicants must be an NOCN Group Customer And: Have been invoiced by NOCN Group over the 12 month period to the end of November 2026 <u>at least twice</u> the equivalent to the total grant being applied for. Total invoiced value should exclude any annual fee billing.	Includes AO, EPA & non-AO centres (e.g. endorsed, short courses, CPCS centres). Centres can include employer centres as well. Where multiple centres are owned by one customer, then just one application is allowed. Any annual centre fees billed must have been paid to be eligible to apply. Please note registrations or assessments booked/registered on NOCN systems up to close of play on 30th November 2026 will count towards this.
Minimum age of learners to be supported through the grant	16+	

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Grant start date	1st June 2027.	To allow for upfront costs and align broadly with the academic year.
Maximum length of term	Up to 14 months.	To allow alignment with the academic year where needed. There is potential to consider multi-year grants in exceptional cases.
Minimum individual grant	£500	
Maximum individual grant	There are 2 tiers of applications: Small – up to £5k Large – £5k-£15k	There is scope for higher awards for large-value applications with exceptional potential, depending on overall funding availability. Note: large-value bids will be subject to closer due diligence/assessment and ongoing monitoring and have a lower chance of being funded.
What we will not fund	General capital expenditure. No core staffing/BAU costs. Aside from new roles focused on just the additionality being funded. Qualification/Short course registration/EPA fees (NOCN or other AOs) are not eligible for funding. Spend without supporting evidence. Expenditure not contained in the application.	Normally, capital expenditure is excluded from funding unless it is very specific, core to the application and is not something that the organisation would normally fund. Has to be funding additionality – something they would not be doing otherwise. You will need to keep evidence in case of an audit.

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Match funding expectation	Match funding (including in-kind costs) will not be mandatory but will be encouraged (especially for larger grant proposals), and the level of match funding proposed will be part of the scoring criteria.	
Funding payments	We anticipate paying in three installments over the term of the grant.	We reserve the right to stop funding in the event of the project not commencing/stopping; or project reports not being received on time; and/or anticipated outputs no longer expected to be materially achieved. Payments made will be paid in arrears, apart from the first payment, which would be a mobilisation payment at beginning of the grant period. The other two payments are likely to be made halfway through the project and at the end of the project, subject to satisfactory progress against the projected outputs.
Claw-back	We reserve the right to claw back unspent funds.	Should the funding not be returned, centres may be put at risk of recovery action.
Auditing	Sample audit based on risk assessment and scale of funds given.	To be carried out by NOCN Group staff visits.
Evidence requirements	We require submission of invoices for spend for large grants. For smaller grants, evidence review through sample NOCN Group audits.	

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Evaluation approach	Output/impact measures to be noted in the application, and then submission of actual output/impact reports at the mid- and end-of-grant period.	Where it is an award of <£5k then NOCN Group may just request one impact report at the end of the grant period (at NOCN Group's discretion).
On-going requirements to keep in contact with NOCN on progress	Centres that are awarded a grant are expected to keep NOCN Group informed on a timely basis of any significant changes to the project.	We reserve the right to withhold/clawback funding if the changes materially alter the project.
Due diligence prior to award.	Before agreeing to any grant award, we will carry out the following checks: • Financial due diligence checks. • Quality assurance record. • Previous invoice payment records.	Basic due diligence will be carried out as each centre is already known to us. Bank account names will also be checked to ensure that it is consistent with the name of the centre applying. Larger grant proposals will be subject to closer due diligence.
Scoring of applications	An initial long-listing sift will be completed by NOCN Group staff to eliminate obvious ineligible applications prior to the issue of the longlist to panel members. Each NOCN Group Foundation panel member will score longlist applications NOCN Group will collate scores and rank. The panel will meet to review and moderate scores and agree on a cut-off in the event of being over-subscribed.	We reserve the right to request further clarification from shortlisted applicants where necessary prior to the award decision.

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Conflicts of interest	Centres submitting an application cannot also be on the Foundation Committee Panel.	All panel members will be required to declare any conflicts of interest prior to receiving applications and sign a confidentiality agreement.
Publicity & Logo	NOCN Group will reserve the right to externally publish grant application information, case studies of the project and impacts achieved should they be awarded the grant. The NOCN Group Foundation Logo is to be included in any promotional activity.	We will issue awards in March/April and will aim to publish case studies and learnings over the course or at the end of the project.
IPR	All IPR developed/used in the project will be owned by the applicant. However, NOCN Group reserve the right to utilise the learnings/outputs from the project in its development of its qualifications/short courses on a licence-free basis and to inform its policy work.	