



Department
for Education

Condition Improvement Fund 2023 to 2024

Information for applicants

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Introduction

About this guidance

This guidance is for eligible academies, sixth-form colleges and voluntary aided (VA) schools that wish to apply to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) for the 2023-24 financial year (April 2023 to March 2024).

It explains what CIF is, who is eligible to apply for CIF funding, what types of projects are eligible and how bids for funding will be assessed for the 2023-24 round.

If you wish to apply for funding, you should first familiarise yourself with this guidance. Only applications that demonstrate a high project need, supported with evidence, and which align closely with the priorities of CIF are likely to be successful.

About the Condition Improvement Fund

CIF's core priority is to support condition projects and the focus of the fund is to keep school and college buildings safe and in good working order. Most CIF funding aims to address building issues with significant consequences that revenue or [Devolved Formula Capital \(DFC\)](#) funding cannot meet. These include issues with poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency or health and safety.

We give the highest priority to condition projects that address compliance and health and safety issues. These include structural safety, fire protection systems, gas safety, electrical safety or emergency asbestos removal. We also give priority to critical replacements of coal and oil-fired boilers with low carbon heating alternatives where there is risk of school closure. We then give priority to projects that ensure weather tightness of buildings and other projects for continuous heating and water supply.

CIF also supports a small proportion of expansion projects where Ofsted has rated the school or sixth-form college either good or outstanding and where the school needs to expand their existing facilities and/or floor space to either increase admissions or address overcrowding.

All CIF projects, both condition and expansion, must aim to improve a capital asset currently used for education provision for pupils between the ages of 2 and 19 years. These will be assets held freehold by the school or college concerned, held by the school on a long lease – usually from the relevant local authority, or held by charitable site trustees for the school's purposes. You cannot use CIF funds to purchase land.

Please remember: Not everyone will be successful even if you provide a high-quality bid. On average only around a third of applications are successful each year.

The role of Responsible Bodies in CIF applications and project delivery

Accounting Officers, School Business Managers and any other designated Responsible Officials specified on the application form are solely responsible for the CIF application.

You are responsible for the accuracy and relevance of the information in your application, as well as the submission of the application on the portal. This includes ensuring that the information provided in the application form matches that in the supporting document. You cannot leave this to your consultant or technical adviser. If an error is made in the information provided in your application, then this could disqualify your application, reduce your final score or affect the amount of funding awarded to you if entered incorrectly, should you be successful.

Should your application be successful, you will be responsible for the management of the project as well as meeting the requirements of post approval guidance and the terms and conditions.

Responsible Officials, Accounting Officers and School Business Managers should note the following:

- Your CIF application will be either fully funded or unsuccessful; we will not fund part of the proposed works within an application.
- CIF funding can only be used for the project for which it was awarded. Any underspend must be declared and returned to the department. The project must address condition issues on buildings owned or leased by the responsible body.
- You must not commence work on any CIF project prior to the successful outcomes being announced by the department. The department may not fund projects which have already commenced before the announcement is made and funding may be withheld or recovered in these circumstances.
- We strongly recommend that you familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions and post-approval guidance before submitting your application for CIF funding. You can find copies of these for previous CIF funding years on the [CIF Portal](#).
- Activity that breaches the terms and conditions, such as using CIF funding for any work other than what has been specifically approved as part of the original application, may result in you having to repay some or all of the funding. The Accounting Officer is responsible for this, not your consultant or contractor.

Please note: if the school/college name within the project documents does not correspond with the school/college name on the portal form, the application will be disqualified. Please ensure all the correct documents for your application have been uploaded by 12:00pm 7 December.

New for CIF 2023-24

New priority project type – critical replacement of coal and oil boilers with low carbon heating systems

CIF's new Priority Project Type will include projects for replacing expired oil and coal boilers with low carbon alternatives to prevent school closure (see the [boiler and heating systems section](#) and the [Project Need assessment criteria](#)).

Please note: Project Need is still the most important element for assessment, and we will continue to prioritise projects which demonstrate high condition need.

Options appraisal

Where applicable, the options appraisal should include consideration of a zero/low carbon/sustainable replacement option (see the [project planning assessment criteria](#)).

Environmental sustainability/energy efficiency across the school estate

The Environmental Sustainability statement criterion has been updated this year. A statement and evidence should be submitted to demonstrate that schools have performed, or will be performing, works that lead to greater environmental sustainability within the CIF project or elsewhere across the school estate.

The DfE have published [a strategy for sustainability and climate change](#) which includes information on what the department's future plans are for the school estate.

Applicants will also be able to use their potential CIF funding as the mandatory contribution towards an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

See the [sustainability section](#) for further information.

Ventilation

You will be required to consider the adverse impact on broader ventilation in relation to your CIF project. The portal form includes a section to confirm you have considered this.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides [guidance on how to assess and improve ventilation in line with health and safety requirements under Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#). There is [further information on actions employers can take to reduce the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace](#). Detailed COVID-19

specific [guidance for workplaces and public buildings](#) is provided by the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) for those who wish to put additional measures in place.

Removal of the funding agreement bonus point from assessment

We have removed the funding agreement bonus point from the assessment criteria. Applicants will no longer need to enter the date their funding agreement was signed in the application form.

Removal of the weightings in the assessment of Project Need for expansion projects

We have removed the weightings from the Project Need assessment for expansion projects. Projects will score up to 60 points in this section.

Threshold flexibilities for condition projects

To utilise CIF funding more effectively, we may fund those projects in the highest policy priority project types achieving the score immediately below the success threshold. The highest policy priority project types are listed in [table 4](#). See the [assessment criteria section](#) for more details.

Please note: Applications will only be considered for this where the assessor has determined the project falls into this category.

Milestone dates for CIF 2023-24

Milestones	Dates
Launch of CIF 2023-24: Information for applicants published and online application window opens	13 October 2022
Deadline for new applicants to register for an account	12 noon, 1 December 2022
Deadline for applicants to request password resets for the CIF portal	12 noon, 6 December 2022
Deadline for all applicants to submit applications with all supporting documents	12 noon, 7 December 2022
Applicants notified of outcome	May 2023 (at the earliest)

Table 1: CIF 2023-24 milestone dates

For further information about CIF, Urgent Capital Support and the latest updates, please refer to the CIF web page at: [Condition Improvement Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/condition-improvement-fund).

Urgent Capital Support

Urgent Capital Support (UCS) is for academies, sixth-form colleges and eligible VA schools that do not have access to SCA and require funding assistance to address urgent building condition issues that either put the safety of pupils and staff at risk, or threaten the closure of the whole school, or a significant part of it.

UCS applications can be submitted at any time where there is a genuine and immediate need for urgent support.

Where UCS applications are received between October 2022 and April 2023 that are duplicates of any CIF 2023-24 application, then the CIF application may be withdrawn if the UCS application is successful.

Please click the following link to access more information about Urgent Capital Support: [Urgent Capital Support \(UCS\) - How to apply \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1071116/UCS-How-to-apply.pdf).

Applying for CIF and how to complete an application

Who can apply for CIF?

In any given financial year, an eligible school will either attract direct School Condition Allocations (SCA) for its responsible body, or be eligible for CIF, but not both. SCA is a formulaic allocation paid directly to responsible bodies to invest in their schools according to their own assessments of condition need. Click the link to access the [School Capital Funding Guidance](#).

To be eligible to apply for CIF funding, you must have been one of the following at the start of September 2022:

- Stand-alone academy
- School in a multi-academy trust (MAT) with fewer than 5 schools or fewer than 3,000 pupils as counted in the Spring 2022 census or 2021/22 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) (details of how pupils are counted for eligibility purposes are provided below)
- Voluntary Aided (VA) school in a VA body or VA group with fewer than 5 schools or fewer than 3,000 pupils as counted in the Spring 2022 census or 2021/22 ILR
- Sixth-form college
- School with a signed academy order as of 1 September 2022 that the department expects will convert by 1 April 2023.

MATs and VA bodies with 5 or more schools and at least 3,000 pupils and local authorities with maintained schools will receive SCA in 2023-24, and non-maintained special schools and special post-16 institutions will receive a direct allocation in respect of their state funded pupils.

For the 2023-24 financial year, MATs are no longer allowed to form MAT chains (groups of more than one trust) for the purposes of receiving SCA. Where trusts were previously within a MAT chain, each trust will now be assessed individually to determine whether they are eligible for SCA funding.

For special and alternative-provision schools (including pupil referral units), we multiply the pupil count by 4.5 for the purposes of determining either CIF or SCA eligibility. For example, we would count a MAT with 1,000 pupils in special schools as having 4,500 pupils. If pupils are registered at more than one institution, we divide the count by the number of institutions that the pupil is registered at. For example, pupils dual registered at a mainstream school and a PRU would have their count divided by two at both institutions. For nursery schools and sixth-forms, we use the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils rather than headcount.

If a school is invited to bid for CIF in the 2023-24 financial year, their responsible body will not receive any SCA funding on their behalf. The school should therefore apply for funding from CIF if they have condition investment requirements.

PFI (Private Finance Initiative) and schools which have received PSBP (Priority Schools Building Programme) funding that meet the eligibility criteria set out above can apply for CIF. However, CIF funding is only awarded to schools with priority condition issues as summarised in [section 1.1](#) above.

More information about PSBP and PFI can be found below.

If you are unable to register and/or create an account, but think that you are eligible to apply to CIF, please contact us as soon as possible via the [ESFA enquiry form](#).

If your application is successful, you will be expected to comply with our grant funding terms and conditions. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions will affect payment of the grant.

You will need to:

- Complete various actions before we can start to release funding to you
- Report the progress of your project throughout its lifecycle
- Inform us of changes to your planned project milestones

Schools with academy orders

If you are a school with a signed academy order that has been invited to bid into CIF and are unable to log onto the CIF portal, please contact the CIF team as soon as possible via the [ESFA enquiry form](#). Once you have obtained the agreement of your academy lead, we can give you access to the CIF portal if eligible so you can make an application.

Schools with an academy order at the start of September 2022 that are expected to convert into a CIF-eligible trust by 1 April 2023 have also been invited to apply.

If a school eligible for CIF in 2023-24 transfers to an SCA eligible responsible body, or if a planned transfer to a CIF-eligible trust is significantly delayed or cancelled, we will not normally change its eligibility for that year. This is to avoid schools wasting time on CIF bids that are not then considered. We will fund successful CIF bids, even if a school does not transfer to a CIF-eligible trust. Funding will be paid to the relevant responsible body.

Voluntary Aided schools

Voluntary Aided (VA) schools who meet the CIF eligibility requirements will be invited to apply for CIF 2023-24. The governing bodies of VA schools will continue to pay at least 10% of the costs of any successful CIF project and cannot use a CIF loan to cover this. Applications should be submitted with the full amount of funding included to show value for money. VA schools can include VAT in the project cost as (unlike academies) they cannot reclaim it.

Please note: VA schools must reference the 10% contribution towards the project cost within the application form and/or supporting documents. Failure to do so will result in the project being disqualified.

Access and specialist facilities for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Schools and local authorities should work together to decide which sources of funding may be appropriate for making adaptations. However, you may apply to CIF for works to improve the accessibility of school buildings for those with disabilities or special educational needs including those with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans (for example through the provision of lifts, accessible toilets, showers and other hygiene facilities), where the urgent condition requirements of CIF can be demonstrated.

Priority School Building Programme and Private Finance Initiative schools

PFI and PSBP schools can still apply for CIF funding where a need can be demonstrated and provided the condition issue is not already covered by warranties, insurance or contractual agreements.

If you are an applicant with a Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) project, you should contact your PSBP Project Director before you apply to make sure that you do not duplicate works covered by this project in your CIF application. If an urgent issue arises, you should also let your Project Director know as this might affect the PSBP works.

If you are an applicant with a PFI school, you must declare this in your CIF application and provide a strong rationale to explain why the work is not covered by the PFI contract.

School Rebuilding Programme

The School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) carries out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects at school and sixth-form college buildings across England, with buildings prioritised according to their condition. If you are one of the schools being considered for SRP, we would still encourage you to continue to apply for CIF, particularly if there is a significant condition issue affecting the running of the school. If your CIF application is successful, please be mindful that this could have an impact on the success of your SRP application in reducing the need for rebuild. If the SRP application is successful, we may deem it better value to address the need outlined within the CIF bid via the SRP project. It is for responsible bodies to decide whether to apply to CIF, SRP or any other application rounds run by the department. If you require support in deciding the best course of action, please contact us through the SRP mailbox - school.rebuilding@education.gov.uk.

Free Schools

If your trust includes a free school, we are asking you to confirm that your proposed CIF project was not part of the original free school project scope. You should review contracts and the relevant warranties before applying to CIF and confirm that there are no recall opportunities from the original contractor, subcontractor or on products or materials used.

If the review of contracts and warranties produces a recall opportunity from the contractor, there will be no need to apply for CIF.

If a review of contracts and warranties is not applicable, please provide the reason.

Projects

There are three categories of CIF project: condition, condition with expansion, and expansion. Projects may be re-categorised by the DfE if they do not meet the qualification criteria for the selected category.

There is more information about how applications are assessed [here](#) for condition projects and [here](#) for expansion projects. Condition with expansion projects will be scored using the same criteria as condition projects.

Condition projects

These are projects to improve the condition of buildings, with no expansion of the gross internal floor area (GIFA).

We expect the majority of projects supported through CIF to involve the replacement of high priority components such as structural elements, boilers and electrics, fire doors and alarms, roof coverings and windows, and asbestos removal.

Applicants should seek professional advice on the condition of their buildings through an independent survey. They should provide a realistic options appraisal which provides genuine options for consideration. This should set out a clear scope and demonstrate value for money.

Condition with expansion projects

These are projects to improve the condition where the GIFA of the new block is up to 10% larger than the previous block. The aim of the project must primarily be to address significant condition need.

We will accept projects in this category where the GIFA of the new block is larger than 10% of the existing GIFA that is being replaced, if you provide clear evidence that there is no other alternative to meeting area standards as defined by [Building Bulletin 103 or 104](#).

Important: If a 'condition with expansion' project does not meet these criteria, it will be disqualified. The evidence for the Project Need section of a condition with expansion project must focus on and demonstrate the condition need. Projects that add new functional areas or facilities or wish to increase their planned admittance number (PAN), must be submitted as expansion applications.

Expansion projects

Expansion projects create additional places or address overcrowding. Applicants looking to expand must demonstrate that they are high performing, as per the criteria in section 13, and the GIFA of the new block must be more than 10% larger than the previous block or add functional areas or facilities. You should submit evidence that there is no other alternative to meeting area standards across the whole site, as defined by [Building Bulletin 103 or 104](#). If an expansion project involves provision of a new building please also ensure you are meeting the requirements in [Building Bulletin 100](#) that relate to fire safety measures

Only a small proportion of CIF will be allocated to address expansion issues across high performing applicants and will be restricted to academies with fewer than 2,000 pupils. All CIF expansion projects should refer to the [Output Specification 2022](#). As for past CIF application rounds, we expect the funding for this category of application to be heavily oversubscribed.

Fully and partially selective schools that select on the basis of general academic ability will be eligible to apply to CIF for added places expansion projects and overcrowding expansion projects.

For CIF 2023-24, all successful expansion projects will initially be approved in principle. Release of CIF funding will be subject to further DfE review of proposals, where we may require applicants to submit further information, e.g. tender returns, planning evidence, updated project programmes or detailed cost plans, for scrutiny prior to final approval. This is to ensure that overall costs and delivery timelines are realistic and robust.

Added places projects

Expansion projects that lead to an increase in the number of pupils on roll will be defined as added places projects.

Overcrowding projects

Expansion projects that address existing overcrowding (in schools where the existing number of pupils on roll is greater than capacity) but do not result in an increase to the number of pupils on roll, will be defined as overcrowding projects.

We recognise that in some cases, value for money can be achieved by adding places in projects that are primarily to address overcrowding. We will define and assess these projects as overcrowding if you provide clear evidence that overcrowding is the primary focus of the expansion, and adding places offers good value for money.

For more information about expansion projects, refer to [the expansion section](#) of this guidance.

Where the type of expansion is re-categorised, and the supplementary data is not available, the application may be penalised and is unlikely to be successful.

High value projects

All successful projects with a total project value of £1m or more will be approved initially in principle, if sufficient evidence, as referred to in the paragraph below, is not provided with the application. Applicants for these projects should apply for CIF as normal and projects will be assessed using the same criteria published in this document.

Release of CIF funding will be subject to a further DfE review of proposals, where we may require applicants to submit further information, e.g. tender returns, planning evidence, updated project programmes or detailed cost plans, for scrutiny prior to final approval. This is to ensure that overall costs and delivery timelines are realistic and robust.

Project thresholds for CIF 2023-24

All CIF projects must aim to improve a capital asset held in freehold or on a long lease, used for education provision for pupils between the ages of 2 and 19 years. The applicant must be responsible for capital investment in the buildings. You cannot use CIF funds to purchase land. CIF funding can only be used in trust/VA Body owned or leased buildings.

School type	Minimum project funding threshold	Maximum project funding threshold
Primary and special schools	£20,000	£4,000,000
Secondary schools, all-through schools and sixth-form colleges	£50,000	£4,000,000

Table 2: Project thresholds for CIF 2023-24 according to school type

We expect applicants to use their revenue and [DFC](#) funding for capital works below these limits.

You can apply for a CIF loan at Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rates for all or part of the project funding for any CIF project.

The planning and preparation, as well as the construction programme, must be realistic and achievable. The majority of funds will be allocated for projects that complete by 31 March 2024. Larger projects may last up to 2 years, but all projects must complete by 31 March 2025.

Information and communication technology (ICT) software, loose furniture and equipment are ineligible. ICT hardware will not be eligible unless there is clear evidence that it is an integral part of the project. ICT infrastructure (cabling, wireless and switching) is only eligible when it is an integral part of a larger project.

Applying for two projects

You may submit up to two projects per academy, sixth-form college or VA school on the [CIF portal](#) but only one of these may be an expansion project. You may not apply for two expansion projects.

Projects will be assessed separately and independently from each other. If the two projects are linked, then please refer to this in the application form. There is no guarantee that if one project is successful, the other one will be too. You may want to consider whether a single, combined application might be more appropriate.

Preparing a good CIF application

The application should communicate clearly to someone who is not able to see the building for themselves and give a clear understanding of the issues the school is facing, and the resultant impact on teaching and learning.

The need and urgency for the work to be undertaken must be supported by strong evidence in the form of detailed technical reports and surveys.

Clear and focused evidence

- Be clear and specific about every aspect of your application
- Make it easy for the assessor to understand your bid
- We need to understand why your project is a priority for funding and cannot wait for future rounds of CIF
- Read and understand this applicant guidance and criteria in detail and make sure any consultants you use also do this
- Focus rigorously on the areas of highest need and urgency
- Do not include lower priority items unless absolutely necessary. Explain their inclusion where appropriate.
- Please include block references in the same format as set out in your CDC report. i.e. Block EFAA, EFAB etc. If your school is on multiple sites, please include the site reference i.e. EFA1, EFA2.

Independent evidence and support

- Support your proposal with independent, expert technical advice, e.g. surveys, engineer reports, site layout plans etc. cross reference the application to the surveys where applicable
- Make sure any surveys were completed within the last three years
- If you have a whole school survey that is older than three years but are applying for a specific area of the school i.e. the heating system, or part of the roof, you should obtain a more recent specialist survey for the work you are applying for
- Make sure your surveys are independent. Your proposal is not likely to be successful if a survey is not considered independent, so this is a critical success factor. Examples of surveys not considered independent are surveys from firms that also provide a quote or a tender or surveys from manufacturers. These will not be accepted, regardless of the findings. If you are unsure about this, please contact us ahead of submitting your application
- Photographic evidence of condition need helps assessors understand your bid, but they must show the full extent of the condition not just localised issues

- If you need external approvals, it helps to get them in advance, e.g., LA planning approval, RD significant change approvals, Section 77 assessment (disposal of playing fields), external sources of funding.

Well-considered options

- Consider all your options with an open mind, and don't present a preferred option as a fait accompli
- Quantify the alternatives, and show the costs and tangible differences in your options appraisal
- Always present a "do nothing" option, i.e., show us why and prove what the negative impact would be, particularly when trying to demonstrate urgent need.

Detailed costings

- Show your costings clearly and in as much detail as possible. A clear and detailed specification of work will help you get clear and detailed costings
- The more certain your costs, the lower the financial risk to the project, i.e., multiple tenders or formal quotes are more certain than estimates. Quotes should be consistent, i.e., for the same scope of works
- Be realistic, i.e., try to keep costs down, but be realistic about the funding the project needs, including contingencies. Underestimating costs puts you at greater risk of going over budget and additional funding will not be provided after project approval
- Make sure you can afford any financial contributions put forward. If you determine you cannot afford your contribution after the project is approved, additional funding will not be provided, and your project may either have to be value engineered or cancelled
- Ensure that the repayments on any CIF loans for which you intend to apply are affordable.

Rigorous planning

- Have a clear and detailed delivery plan, showing how, when, and by whom the project will be delivered
- Minimise disruption through project phasing, i.e., plan how the project will be delivered around the school terms
- Manage risk effectively, i.e., building projects have a wide range of risks associated with them, from health and safety, to scope changes, to delays, and many more. Plan in detail for any and all risks that could affect your project and make the risk register task based.

Applicant checklist

This list is not exhaustive but provides some important things to consider.

Action	Complete
Check that you have access to the CIF Portal in advance and make sure that at least one other person can access this account in case a contingency is needed	
Check that the information you have provided on the portal form matches the information in the project documents	
Check that the project documents relate to the school which you are applying for	
Ensure that your document uploads comply with the document size (1mb per document)	
Ensure that your evidence includes an appropriate, relevant and qualified third-party opinion for specific issues e.g., fire, asbestos, legionella or safeguarding issues	
Make sure any photographic evidence is clear and relevant and provides the extent and context of the condition issue	
Check that your evidence clearly identifies the project need, the extent of that need and the urgency of need	
Check that you have prioritised the worst condition element for the school and your evidence doesn't include a mix of condition priorities	
Check that all your documents are readable – especially scanned documents which can appear too dark to show detail; or documents which have been shrunk so much that they are illegible when expanded	
When you are ready to submit your application, make sure you save first and then remember to press submit - we will not accept an application that is saved but not submitted after the application window closes	

Documents to upload for your application

For each application you apply for you should upload one document for each project section to support your application. Each document can be up to a maximum of 1MB.

Condition projects

- 1 uploaded document for Project Need
- 1 uploaded document for Project Planning
- 1 uploaded document for Project Cost

Expansion projects

- 1 uploaded document for Project Need
- 1 uploaded document for Project Planning
- 1 uploaded document for Project Cost
- 1 uploaded document to show any overcrowding where this is relevant and progress on significant change approval, if applicable.

For both condition and expansion projects, you will need to include detailed photographs within the document size limit of 1MB. Files will need to be compressed. The file size of a photograph depends on its pixel dimensions. You may want to notify anyone taking photographs to reduce the dimensions of the image prior to taking the photos. This does not mean reducing the resolution.

Please ensure you do not exceed the upload limits shown above, as we will not assess any evidence above the upload limit.

VA schools

Eligible VA schools are required to upload further documents via the CIF portal.

Each document can be up to a maximum of 1MB and must not contain links to further documents.

- 1 uploaded document to show your latest financial statement and budget forecast report for review
- 1 uploaded document to provide your financial improvement plan **if** your accounts show that you meet the criteria for financial concern.

For further information, please see [section 8.3](#).

Do not include any other information in these additional uploads relating to other sections as this will not be considered as part of your application.

Evidence required within supporting documents

Supporting evidence for condition projects

We expect applicants to provide appropriate building condition survey data to show proof of project need. An up-to-date independent condition survey will assist you in identifying and prioritising the worst condition areas of your site. Most projects will need to provide additional survey data or appropriate professional evidence so there is more detailed evidence of condition need. Surveys need to be dated **no older than 1 October 2019**. Anything older than this will be discounted and not considered as part of your application.

Condition survey

A condition survey provides an assessment of the physical condition of the building. The survey should identify the building's deficiencies and maintenance issues. For all projects, the condition survey should provide a clear understanding of the current condition of the building both internally and externally. This should also include a detailed assessment of the consequence of any delay or failure to undertake the proposed work.

To increase the likelihood of success, applicants should provide supporting specialist evidence as further evidence of the specific condition issue; the evidence should include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- structural frame
- building fabric
- mechanical and electrical (M&E)
- asbestos
- utilities
- sewage & drainage
- fire safety & security
- health & safety issues
- site layout

The condition survey should be no older than 1 October 2019 and needs to be independent and impartial.

The condition survey will need to be undertaken by an independent suitably qualified person and should contain specific condition grading and prioritisation ratings; condition grade A to D (from 'good' through to 'bad' condition) and priority rating 1 to 4 (from 'immediate action required' through to 'work required in 5+ years'). The evidence must include the qualification of the surveyor. We expect surveys to have been conducted within the last three years and to

demonstrate D1 to C2 condition issues. A survey will not be considered independent if, for example, it is conducted by a firm that has also quoted or tendered for the work or is a manufacturer of any proposed solution.

Other evidence of condition

Evidence should also include:

- clear, sufficiently detailed and relevant photographs. For example, if you are applying for a roofing project, provide photographs of multiple sections of the roof(s)
- letters about compliance from appropriately qualified professionals relevant to the specific issue e.g. from a fire safety inspection, police reports or electrical engineers
Please provide an explanation if you have not been able to obtain a letter
- Ofsted or other reports on the impact of facilities on teaching and learning.

There is guidance on how the condition ratings were applied as part of the [CDC Programme](#).

If you have surveys that are not graded as described above, you should ensure the condition grading and prioritisation rating are clearly explained so the assessor can interpret the information correctly.

Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS)

We expect applicants to manage their estate effectively and strategically, to maintain it in a safe working condition. [Good Estate Management for Schools \(GEMS\)](#) provides guidance on how to do this, including information on:

- Strategic estate management – having an estate vision, strategy and asset management plan
- Information you need to know about your estate
- Planning and prioritising maintenance
- Health and safety

The GEMS self-assessment tool enables you to check if you have the things you need in place and provides an action plan with links to the relevant guidance. GEMS also contains a range of tools and checklists to help schools and responsible bodies manage their school buildings and land.

As part of your application, you will be required to confirm that you have reviewed this guidance and that your condition project is consistent with your estate strategy and asset management plan. Your score will be enhanced where you can provide relevant evidence from your self-assessment, asset management plan and estate strategy.

Sustainability

We expect applicants to consider energy efficient and environmentally sustainable options when replacing components in and around buildings in the move towards reducing carbon emissions and future proofing estates. All applications will need to demonstrate these factors have been taken into consideration through a net zero transition plan/sustainable estate strategy, including:

- Examples of current or near future green installation works on the school estate (related or unrelated to the CIF project)
- Evidence to demonstrate sustainability, energy savings or carbon reductions
- Where applicable, reference to any sustainable options considered in the options appraisal

Further details on the information required and how we will score this criterion is set out in the [Project Cost section](#).

Works to improve energy efficiency, such as lighting projects, that do not involve works to address high need condition issues, are unlikely to be successful in receiving CIF funding as they have a lower priority.

You should not apply for these energy efficiency works unless they form part of a larger proposal where the primary purpose is to address poor condition.

You should refer to the sustainability and design standards within the [Output Specification 2022](#) (OS) when preparing your project. The OS sets out the quality standards and performance requirements for school buildings and grounds.

Academies and maintained schools are also eligible for the:

- [Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund](#)
- [Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme](#) (PSDS) that has replaced the Salix Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme. PSDS provides grants for public sector bodies to fund energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation measures. More information is available [here](#).
 - Applicants should consider whether the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme could suit their project needs, such as for zero-carbon heating systems. You should not include within a CIF application any decarbonisation works that are part of a PSDS application.
 - The guidance for the next application window, Phase 3b, can be [found](#) at this link, with the application window planned to open in October 2022.

- PSDS applicants are expected to contribute the costs of like for like replacement of their existing heating system towards the PSDS project.
- Applicants can use potential CIF funding for this contribution.
- Applicants that plan to submit a PSDS application for low carbon heating should apply to CIF for the like for like replacement of their fossil fuel heating system. If approved via CIF, this funding can be used as the trust's contribution towards the PSDS project and the CIF project will effectively be upgraded to the heat pump project to be delivered as part of the PSDS project
- Contributions to PSDS must cover at least 12% of the PSDS project costs. If the CIF funding does not meet this threshold, a further contribution from the trust will be required to meet the 12% minimum.
- If both the CIF and PSDS projects are approved, the CIF funding that forms the trust's contribution to the PSDS project can be used to begin the enabling works on the building fabric if necessary

If you have applied for these schemes and for CIF, you will need to mention this in your application.

Examples of sustainable projects

- Solar panels on building rooftops
- Optimise the ventilation and heating of building management systems
- Install automatic movement sensors for switching off lighting
- Green rooftops (anything from basic plant cover to a working garden)
- Collecting rainwater
- Water-saving mechanisms in toilets
- Installation of an air-source/ground-source heat pump or hybrid heating system
- Insulation of pipework, walls and ceilings
- Double-glazed windows
- LED lighting

Condition Data Collection (CDC)

A CDC report presents data collected following a visual, non-intrusive data collection exercise and can be used to prompt further investigation.

The CDC report is not a condition survey and so the data presented is high-level. A CDC report can be used to support a CIF application, but on its own it will not be sufficient to make a full assessment of a CIF application. We will expect to see additional evidence, e.g. a full condition survey, when assessing applications.

Block replacement/refurbishment

We will consider a block replacement in the context of the overall area standards set out in [Building Bulletin B103 or 104](#) as appropriate. You will need to justify it against those standards and refer to the Generic Design Brief within the [Output Specification 2022](#). A project that over-specifies the space required compared to current area standards or performance will not score highly.

We would normally expect the replacement build not to be any larger than the current block. However, we will allow small increases in the replacement block if that is required to meet [Building Bulletin 103 or 104](#) space standards and/or Health and Safety, Equality Act and DDA compliance, or child safeguarding considerations. If the proposed new build is larger than the existing block and larger than the current area guidelines, then the application will be categorised as an expansion project.

If a block is being replaced, please ensure you are also meeting the standards set out in [Building Bulletin 100](#).

Block replacement is a timely opportunity to consider the environmental impact of the building. Your score will be enhanced where you can evidence how the project aligns with sustainability design standards with the [Output Specification 2022](#).

Boiler and heating systems

As set out in the [Heat and Buildings strategy](#), there is regulation planned to phase out the installation of new fossil fuel heating systems for off-gas-grid non-domestic buildings from 2024, which will mean switching to low-carbon alternatives. For on-gas-grid buildings, new natural gas boilers will then be phased out from 2035.

Therefore, it is important to consider different types of boilers and heating systems when replacing old systems, depending on the building fabric and location.

Try to consider heating systems as a whole and be mindful of the impact of any changes that improvements to component parts make; this may help avoid situations such as new boilers not working because of leaking pipework or incompatible control systems.

We will consider sustainable replacement options in addition to like for like. However, you must consider the wider implications of the project like pipework and electrics etc. Ensuring that the building is sufficiently insulated will improve the efficiency of any replacement heating system.

You should model energy usage and likely savings to support any application for such projects.

For specific requirements for replacement heat generating systems please refer to the DfE's Generic Design Brief (GDB) [Technical Annex 2F](#): clause **4.3.3. Heat Generating Systems and Main Plant**.

This sets out clearly the DfE's preferred methods of heat generating systems in order of preference.

If the operational costs are adversely impacted by the selection of low carbon heat sources, you could explore the use of hybrid systems to support an interim position, until the necessary upgrades are available, which may then support a full electric system. This should be clearly demonstrated within a net zero transition plan submitted as part of the application.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding projects often involve provision of additional security measures or remodelling of pedestrian/vehicle access points. If access improvements are required, you should work with your local authority highways department to tackle the identified issues in the most appropriate way and look to negotiate contributions for such works from other interested parties where possible.

We may accept projects that provide photo evidence that their existing circumstances do not meet the minimum for security.

If your condition project addresses safeguarding issues, you need to provide robust evidence to support urgency of need such as an incident report or police reports. We will not consider statements of unqualified opinion that there may be a risk of safeguarding issues as sufficient evidence.

Changes to the Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA)

You should clearly identify the changes in the GIFA as part of any application. This should include the GIFA being renewed or refurbished as well the GIFA being removed or demolished and any new build.

Emergency asbestos issues

DfE takes the issue of asbestos in schools and colleges seriously and expects schools, local authorities, academy trusts and other responsible bodies to fulfil their duty to manage asbestos effectively and safely. The responsible body is the main employer of staff in a school, for example the Local Authority or Academy Trust. Responsible bodies have a duty to [manage asbestos](#) in their schools and provide assurance that their schools are compliant with the asbestos management regulations ([Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012](#)). The DfE published

updated [guidance](#) in October 2020 to assist with this responsibility. Where there is any potential for asbestos to be present, it is a statutory requirement for schools to have an [asbestos register and management plan](#).

The department follows expert advice from the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#), the regulator, that as long as asbestos containing materials are undamaged, and not in locations where they are vulnerable to damage, they should be left undisturbed, and their condition monitored. We are clear, however, that when asbestos does pose a risk to safety and cannot be effectively managed in situ, it should be removed.

Where asbestos has been disturbed or damaged, unless the incident is minor and dealt with immediately, you should notify the HSE of the incident. This is a legal requirement under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Applicants with significant asbestos that is proving difficult to manage effectively (e.g. making access difficult to carry out repairs) may apply to CIF for support to remove it and should plan works around holiday periods.

Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)

RAAC is a lightweight, 'bubbly' form of concrete that was commonly used in schools and other buildings from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. RAAC is mainly found in roofs, although occasionally in floors and walls. RAAC is less strong than traditional concrete and there have been problems as a result, which could have significant consequences.

We recommend you seek advice from a chartered surveyor, structural engineer, architect, or other construction professional regarding RAAC. Not all RAAC is dangerous, however when it poses a structural risk to the building it must be addressed as an urgent issue.

Guidance for schools on identifying and dealing with RAAC can be found [here](#).

You should ensure that the following RAAC checklist is completed and include surveys and the other details identified below when applying for a project addressing RAAC:

Information Required	Included
Have you included 'RAAC' in the project title and project outline?	
Have you provided evidence of a structural report and/or survey information undertaken by a specialist structural engineer with experience of RAAC?	
Have you clearly outlined which part of the school the RAAC is affecting?	

Information Required	Included
Have you demonstrated the severity and urgency of the RAAC issue and the impact this could have on the school?	
Has a specialist structural engineer with experience of RAAC been appointed to survey, inspect and produce a report, to inform management and identify RAAC?	
Have any RAAC investigation works been undertaken, which would identify and inform the need for any remedial works?	
Has existing building information been collated and provided?	
Has an assessment of property age been provided (plans and description)?	
Has the location of RAAC been clearly identified on building plans and drawings, including span and number of panels?	
Has the loading arrangement of the panels been identified? If so, please describe?	
Have adaptations and interventions to the building that may impact on the RAAC panels been identified (i.e., re-roofing, new services etc)?	
Have areas of significant concern been identified within the structure, i.e., cut-planks, water penetration, etc?	
Has a remedial works and safety management plan been developed by a specialist structural engineer with experience of RAAC?	
Are temporary safety measures in place in areas of significant concern?	
Where remedial works are proposed - has the condition risk of the RAAC panels been developed to identify remedial works requirements?	
Where remedial works are proposed - has a risk assessment been undertaken by a specialist structural engineer with experience of RAAC to identify priorities of remedial works requirements?	

Information Required	Included
Where re-roofing or similar remedial works are proposed - has a RAAC risk assessment been undertaken to identify if there is RAAC present, either in the roof area to be removed or in the retained roof before future remedial works?	

Supporting evidence for expansion projects

Basic Need

We do not intend CIF expansion funding to replace Basic Need funding. Academies wishing to expand to meet basic need demand will not receive any additional credit under the Project Need criterion.

We do not expect to receive applications for expansion that [Basic Need capital allocations](#) should fund. Any additional places funded through this programme will be reflected in future basic need allocations to avoid double funding. It is therefore important to quantify how the CIF expansion project will make additional places available to children in the local area over and above the school's overall capacity figure.

Academies in areas of high basic need should consider working together with their local authority to maximise the impact of the available funding and demonstrating the benefits that can be accrued.

If your project is to expand admissions due to demographic growth in the population for years reception to 11 in mainstream settings, you should contact your local authority to seek Basic Need funding rather than CIF.

Overcrowding

The current capacity figure provided in your application should match the capacity figure on [Get Information about Schools \(GIAS\)](#). We will contact you for further information should this information not match.

You should outline whether you have had any interaction with your local authority to discuss Basic Need funding. We don't expect schools to admit additional pupils over and above their Pupil Admission Number (PAN) without having a long-term strategy in place to deliver the additional building capacity.

Significant change

Academy trusts may be required to submit a significant change application to their Regional Director (RD) where the proposal involves an expansion. The significant change process applies to both added place and overcrowding projects and you should refer to, and follow, the [making significant changes to an open academy guidance](#).

The approval of any CIF funding for an expansion project that does not have the necessary significant change approval at the time of the CIF outcome announcement will be conditional. Conditional funding approval of a CIF expansion application does not guarantee that the significant change application will be successful.

We do not consider any aspect of a significant change application as part of the CIF process.

If the significant change application is approved, you should make any required changes to your PAN and admissions policies in time for the completion of the capital project so that your full increase in capacity is promptly available to pupils in your area. You will also need to ensure your funding agreement is adjusted to reflect the increase in capacity.

Establishments that are not academy trusts are not required to follow the same significant change guidance, and the additional pupil threshold does not apply.

Eligible VA schools

Eligible VA schools must go through the relevant process to gain approval for the proposed increase in capacity/enlargement of premises. LAs are responsible for proposing and making decisions on proposals to expand LA maintained schools that meet the statutory threshold, subject to following the statutory process set out in the [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools guidance](#).

Post-16 expansion

Other establishments that are not academy trusts who are applying for CIF funding to expand their post-16 provision will need to demonstrate that their project is not adding to the post-16 surplus of places that is prevalent in some local areas. These applications will be reviewed to ensure there is evidence of need for additional post-16 places in the local area and the availability and a need for the type of provision proposed.

Academies wishing to expand their sixth-forms, and sixth-form colleges looking to expand, will be assessed in a similar way to ensure fairness between the two groups of institutions. In both cases, we expect there to be a revenue benefit from expanding the number of sixth-form places, so we would expect academies and sixth-form colleges to contribute towards the cost of the development. Such projects must be submitted as projects increasing the number of admissions (irrespective of whether it is the main year of entry).

You may wish to consider applying for the Post-16 Capacity Fund which was launched on 7 September. The closing date is 12pm on 11 November. Further details can be found [here](#).

Growth and demand

For all expansion projects, you need to input historic, existing and projected annual data for growth and demand for the education establishment on the CIF portal application page.

If you omit accurate growth and demand data from an expansion project application, this will make it harder to assess and may cost you valuable marks.

Growth data

You should provide growth data for the current year only. There is no need to complete for all five years set out in the application form. Please ensure it is only input within the relevant existing fields in the CIF portal.

You need to provide the following information, in order to demonstrate its anticipated benefits:

- number(s) of places specified in your funding agreement (on occasion, funding agreements will include more than one number e.g. if separate numbers of places are included for sixth-form or SEN unit places). For post-16 establishments this is the published number of places.

Both with and without the proposed project:

- gross internal floor area (GIFA) of the whole school (m²) and how this relates to the recommended area contained within Building Bulletin 103 or 104 as appropriate. Make sure you explain significant differences in the application.
- number of pupils on roll (NOR), as applicable for the age range of the education establishment.

Demand data

We only require demand data from post-16 establishments. There is no need for other establishments to provide this as it is already collected by the department. The following data on demand over a four-year period is required for post-16 establishments:

- applications in year 12
- year 12 admittances in main year of application

Net capacity

You should complete the table on existing and forecast capacity and refer in your application to the change in the net capacity because of the proposed project by confirming the number of additional places that will be created by the project over and above the number(s) in your current funding agreement. You can provide a further explanation of changes in capacity in the text box 'general remarks about demand'.

This also applies if the project is to address overcrowding and where you do not expect there to be an increase in the number on roll (NOR). The only circumstances where the net capacity is unlikely to change is if the project is to provide additional non-teaching support space such as dining facilities.

The current capacity figure provided in your application should match the capacity figure on [GIAS](#). We will contact you for further information should this information not match.

Please clearly set out within the supporting documentation the proposed changes in the GIFA as a result of the project. This should include a summary of the GIFA for the existing and proposed buildings, as well as new build, refurbished and demolished space.

If your project is solely expansion, you will be required to provide a schedule of accommodation (SoA). The SoA Tool can be found [here](#). The SoA tool is for mainstream secondary and primary schools only. Other school types will need to provide a list of accommodation.

Net Capacity Assessment (NCA) programme

The proposed Net Capacity Assessment (NCA) programme is planned to run for 2 years from 2023. Data Collection Organisations will visit all secondary and middle schools (including academies), and all special schools in England, using the NCA tool to calculate the number of pupils a school can accommodate, based on the size and use of spaces available.

Assessment of expansion projects in future CIF rounds will take account of capacity figures that have been verified through use of the NCA tool, therefore we encourage applicants to use the results of the NCA programme to provide evidence of their capacity.

More information will be available on the programme in early 2023.

Trusts interested in finding out more about the NCA programme and tool should contact: dfc.ncaprogramme@education.gov.uk.

Feasibility study

A feasibility study looks at whether a project is viable and helps identify the best option for delivery.

For all CIF projects the feasibility study should include an evaluation and analysis of the proposed project. This should be based on a detailed scope of works and in some cases an extensive investigation of the current site and property. It should confirm that all aspects of the project have been effectively considered and that the preferred option will provide the best chance of success and value for money.

The aim of the feasibility study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed project objectively and rationally. You should provide information on opportunities, issues and threats that could be present and could either support your project or create problems. You also need to confirm the resources required to deliver the project on time and on budget.

What to include in a feasibility study?

The feasibility study for the project on the proposed site should include, but not be limited to:

- project description and evaluation
- demonstration of need and scope of works proposed to address the need
- full details of surveys undertaken or planned
- what is the design solution and why will it work?
- details of energy efficiency or sustainability features
- detailed professional and robust cost management plan or a contractor's cost estimate
- an outline of planning requirements and evidence of planning permission (if appropriate)
- benefits/constraints of the project
- site issues affecting the project, site entrances, disturbance to local residence
- knowledge of location of utilities or the location and extent of asbestos and any cost savings as a result of the project
- how is this project affordable and able to demonstrate value for money?
- risk analysis and mitigation in a comprehensive risk register for the entire project and specifically deliverability of the works in a teaching and learning environment
- what will happen if an emergency occurs, fire, flood etc.
- who are the professional Project Management team and what is their track record?
- capacity and capability of the academy's Project Team
- a detailed plan of the required resources and where they will come from
- what will the procurement route be and why is this the best value for money?

Applying to CIF

CIF portal

All applications for CIF funding are made on the [CIF portal](#). We do not accept applications made through any other routes.

Applicants should refer to the user guide on the portal to help you. For tips on preparing a good CIF bid please see [here](#).

The application form is designed for you to summarise the most important features and rationale behind a project. You can attach project documentation as evidence to support the case being made. You should not include the school or college's history or the history of the condition issue; this is not required and may reduce the amount of more relevant information you can include.

The evidence you submit should be proportionate to the scale of the project. For example, we would expect more robust and detailed information for a project requesting significantly more than a project which requests an amount nearer the minimum project threshold.

CIF portal account access

If your trust or school are applying to CIF for the first time you will need to send a request via the [ESFA enquiry form](#). You will have an account created and will be sent an invitation to register to the portal.

Please check with other colleagues in your trust/school to ensure they haven't already created an account before contacting us.

You should make sure that all the contact details are kept up to date as this will be our main way to communicate with you about your application.

Please note: When you create an account, please use your trust's Companies House number as the username. If you do not have a Companies House number, please use your URN with the first two digits being 00 e.g. 00123456. Once a username is set it cannot be changed.

If you have forgotten your username or password, please send your details via the [ESFA enquiry form](#) and we will provide you with the information. You should not share the username and password details with any third-party organisation as this might constitute a breach of the General Data Protection Regulation.

We will not accept password reset requests for school/trust portal accounts from technical advisors or consultants. We will only accept password reset requests from the designated portal account holder from the school/trust.

If you are unable to register and/or create an account but think that you are eligible to apply to CIF, please contact us as soon as possible via the [ESFA enquiry form](#).

Important: It is recommended to try logging in to the CIF portal and begin submitting your application at least 3 working days before the deadline.

This will allow sufficient time for the team to assist you through the ESFA enquiries form should you experience any technical difficulties or require a password reset before the application window closes. Please do not submit multiple requests for the same issue.

Please be aware that the CIF portal may run slower in the last 24 hours before the deadline due to a high volume of use.

Use of technical advisers

You can use technical advisers or representatives to help prepare your application and to deliver the works, but they **cannot apply on your behalf**.

You need to ensure that technical advisers are of a high quality and that costs are within a reasonable limit.

It is recommended that you research the company beforehand and select a technical adviser who has experience in CIF applications. Some companies may publish information on the types of successful CIF projects they have worked with schools on.

We are required to deal with the responsible official at the institution with whom the

Secretary of State has a signed funding agreement, or in the case of a sixth-form college or VA school, a member of the senior management team.

If you use a technical adviser who may also be working with other applicants, **make sure that any evidence you submit applies to your school or sixth-form college.**

Professional fees

You may choose to appoint technical advisers to help you develop and deliver the project. The fees charged by advisers must be appropriate to the type and scale of the project and we expect you to challenge technical advisers on fees where appropriate.

The majority of CIF projects are for straightforward, single issue, lower value works. Percentage fees are not necessarily appropriate for this type of work and if used, we do not expect these to be above 10% of the total project value. For larger projects, the technical complexity of the works may justify slightly higher fees to cover additional surveys required to ensure that all the risks and ground conditions have been considered, but this must be justified in the application.

If the fees are disproportionate to the work involved, your application is likely to be unsuccessful.

CIF loans

You can take out a CIF loan for all or part of the project costs to demonstrate commitment to the proposed scheme and can choose the type of loan, the size of loan, and the timescale over which you want to repay it. Additional points are available in the assessment for taking out a loan or making a financial contribution. Applications for CIF loans are made within the CIF application form.

Further information, including interest rates and typical repayments, are in in [Annex A](#).

There is no obligation to take out a loan as part of the overall funding package. Applicants should consider carefully what is most appropriate for their academy or college. Any loan should be realistic and affordable for the trust and the information provided will be checked.

VAT

We expect academies to exclude VAT from all project costs in their CIF application. However, the trust must seek advice and if VAT is payable on their project (for example, where community use of a sports facility creates a liability), then they must include the VAT on the application form.

Sixth-form colleges and VA schools must include VAT in the project cost, regardless of project type, as they cannot usually reclaim it. However, if there is a VAT element which can be reclaimed, then that should not be included within the project costs.

How we assess your application

Introduction

Applications are assessed solely on the information provided in the application for the CIF 2023-24 round. We do not take into consideration past bids. Each application is assessed by two different assessors from two different assessor companies with around a third undergoing moderation. Each application is given a final overall score and all applications are then ranked highest to lowest. The success threshold score is identified based on the available funding. Applications scoring lower than the threshold will be unsuccessful. However, we reserve the right to fund projects in the highest policy priority project types of the score immediately below the threshold. This is to ensure that we maximise the number of projects funded within available funding. On average only a third of applications are successful each year and many quality projects are rejected due to the limited funding available, so applications are robustly prioritised against the published criteria.

Assessment criteria

Assessors will evaluate each project using the information contained within the application, and make a relative judgement, to award an overall project score. They will assess expansion projects by using school performance and capacity data generated from DfE centrally held sources, not just information provided by applicants.

Assessment criteria	Total Score
Project Need	60 points
Project Planning	15 points
Project Cost	25 points
Total	100 points

Table 3: Scores against assessment criteria

Our intention is to fund applicants with the highest priority and most pressing need, but only where the proposed project is appropriately planned and presents best value for money.

The following sections set out the basis for judgements under each set of assessment criteria and set out the information you might consider providing to support applications. The information is a guide and is not exhaustive.

Project priority and specification for condition projects

We expect only applications that closely align with the CIF policy priorities will be successful. We are unlikely to fund projects that fall into the low and lowest categories. Assessors will make a final judgement under which category each project falls. Table 4 sets out the CIF project priorities.

All applicants should refer to the [Generic Design Brief](#) (GDB) which is within the [Output Specification 22](#) (OS) when preparing their CIF project.

The GDB sets out the quality standards and performance requirements for school buildings and grounds. It comprises of GDB and Technical Annexes.

Where new buildings are being provided full compliance with the GDB is required. Applicants should provide sufficient evidence to support this, including outline specifications.

Where refurbishment works are proposed in existing buildings any elements of non-compliance with the performance requirements of the GDB should be clearly identified in the application, including supporting evidence and outline specifications.

As set out in the [‘what’s new’ section](#), projects for replacing expired oil and coal boilers with low carbon alternatives to prevent school closure will now score in the highest category, alongside projects addressing legislation compliance and health and safety.

Category	Priority Level
<p>Legislation Compliance, Health & Safety and critical replacement of fossil fuel heating systems with low-carbon alternatives – where there is a risk of school closure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building safety matters, including but not limited to: dangerous structures, Laingspan and Intergrid system builds, RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) elements • emergency & managed asbestos removal to facilitate essential works • gas safety* • electrical safety • water services (hot and cold) and drainage • ventilation/air quality and thermal comfort** • fire safety • security and safeguarding*** 	<p>Highest</p>

Category	Priority Level
<p><i>*Where fossil fuel boilers and heating systems are proposed to be replaced with zero carbon options, these will score the highest mark, but the legal compliance and health and safety requirement with risk of school closure must still be demonstrated</i></p> <p><i>** Ventilation projects need to evidence how the issue may close parts of the school unless rectified. It is unlikely that a project to replace windows will be classed as ventilation</i></p> <p><i>*** Security fencing projects are unlikely to be successful unless a significant health and safety or safeguarding issue can be demonstrated and backed up by third party evidence such as police reports</i></p>	
<p>Life Expired Condition Replacement – where there is a risk of complete or partial school closure (complete will score higher marks), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building structure – e.g. structural and weather tightness • mechanical systems* • electrical systems • utility capacity and connections <p><i>*Where fossil fuel boilers and heating systems are proposed to be replaced with zero carbon options, these will score higher marks within the range, but the need for life expired condition replacement with the risk of school closure must still be demonstrated</i></p>	High
<p>Life Expired Condition Replacement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building fabric – internal or external • structural defects • mechanical systems • electrical systems <p><i>*Where fossil fuel boilers and heating systems are proposed to be replaced with zero carbon options, these will score higher marks within the range, but the need for life expired condition replacement must still be demonstrated</i></p>	Medium

Category	Priority Level
<p>Special functional areas of the school below current standards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole block • Basic teaching • Large spaces, studios, dining and social • Kitchen* • Plant • Learning resources areas • Staff and admin • Storage • Changing • Toilets* • Circulation <p><i>*Toilet and kitchen refurbishments are not likely to be successful unless a health & safety issue can be demonstrated and backed up by third party evidence such as a legionella risk assessment.</i></p>	Low
<p>Other works: Evidence must provide a clear condition and value for money case. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessibility improvements (teaching and non-teaching) • building fabric (non-teaching, e.g. external sports equipment stores etc.) * • mechanical and electrical systems (non-teaching) <p><i>*Sports hall and swimming pool projects need to demonstrate the teaching and learning implications and the impact the condition issue is having on the school. The proposal also needs to demonstrate how much availability is utilised by the school and how much through leasing arrangements.</i></p>	Lowest
<p>Other works: all other works, where there is either weak or no evidence of significant compliance, health and safety concerns or condition/value for money.</p> <p>We will not consider these cases a priority for CIF 2023-24 and will reject them on that basis. Examples include resurfacing car parks or small teaching environment refurbishments.</p>	Will not be funded by CIF 2023-24

Table 4: Policy priority ratings for condition projects

Assessment of Project Need for condition projects

Project Need is marked out of 60 for condition projects and accounts for 60 points from a total of 100.

Sub-criteria	Scoring
Project type	High/medium/low score based on priority of need (see Table 4)
Urgency of need	<p>The more urgent the need that is evidenced, the more marks will be given. You will score low marks if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of urgency is low • the urgency of the need is not apparent • you include low priority issues alongside urgent works with no justification <p>You will score highest marks if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of urgency is immediate (i.e., issue must be dealt with over the summer holidays, otherwise likely closure in September 2023 or addressing an area which is already out of use, impacting significantly on the operation of the school) • you only include works of the highest need • any non-essential items included are fully justified as part of the project <p>If the proposed works are not required to be carried out within the next two years, it is unlikely that the application will be successful.</p>
Strength of evidence for extent of need	<p>To score maximum marks there needs to be strong evidence of significant need providing justification for all works. Zero carbon heating replacement projects must justify the need to replace the existing fossil fuel boiler. Sustainability and energy efficiency must not be the sole justification for replacement.</p> <p>You will score low marks if there is insufficient or no evidence of significant need.</p> <p>You need to show clearly, through the supporting evidence, the poor condition of the building(s) or element of the building(s) which the proposed works will address.</p>
Nature and extent of impact	<p>To score maximum marks there needs to be an impact overall on the school or closure of key facilities. You will score low marks where there is solely localised impact.</p>

Sub-criteria	Scoring
Evidence of GEMS processes and strategy	<p>To score maximum marks here you need to demonstrate/evidence the GEMS approach to the trust's or school's estate management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEMS self-assessment • A developed estate strategy/asset management plan • How the project fits into the wider estate strategy • If applicable to the project, how it will improve energy efficiency or sustainability.

Table 5: Project Need scoring for condition projects

Assessment of Project Need for expansion projects

This section will no longer be weighted. Projects will score up to 60 points in this section.

Evidence should ideally include:

- Ofsted or other reports on impact of facilities on teaching and learning
- demand data, independent evidence of overcrowding
- explanation or evidence of any exceptional circumstances relating to capacity constraints that need to be considered.

We will take into account the proportion of the school's pupils who are from a disadvantaged background when we assess the need for expansion that create additional places. This is to support the creation of new places in high performing schools with a high relative proportion of disadvantaged pupils. For added places projects, we will also assess cost per place.

Evidence should also include:

- subject to the size and scale of the project; an extract of CDC survey / PDS (Property Data Survey), an independent condition survey/consultant report or detailed survey and specialist reports
- photographs
- letters about compliance e.g. from fire officers or electrical engineers.

Sub-criteria	Scoring
<p>Popularity/demand</p> <p>For overcrowding projects this includes severity of overcrowding issues</p>	<p>To score maximum marks there needs to be a very high demand and for overcrowding projects independent evidence of the impact of overcrowding.</p> <p>For academies demand is based on % 1st and 2nd preferences of PAN. For post-16 establishments and special schools – number of applications compared to available places</p> <p>You will score 0 if there is low demand (preferences less than 110% of PAN) and no evidence of overcrowding.</p>
<p>Performance</p>	<p>To score maximum marks the school or college needs to be Ofsted outstanding and have attainment or progress at or above the national average.</p> <p>Special schools will be assessed on Ofsted outcomes only.</p> <p>For post-16 establishments, Ofsted outcomes plus the relevant performance data.</p>

Sub-criteria	Scoring
	<p>You will score low marks where Ofsted results are good but where attainment and progress are below the national average, or where the school is below Ofsted good.</p>
Capacity constraints	<p>To score maximum marks there needs to be a severe shortage of capacity, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For academies this will be based on Get Information about Schools (GIAS) data, net capacity data and current number on roll (NOR). • For special schools, Get Information about Schools (GIAS) data • For post-16 establishments, Independent Learning Record (ILR) Full Time Education (FTE) data <p>You will score low marks where there is only a small shortage of capacity.</p> <p>For added places projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academies: We will take into account the anticipated funding agreement number(s) and NOR when the project is complete, and all year groups are full. • Post-16: ILR FTE plus growth figure • Special schools: GIAS data plus growth figure
Deprivation	<p>To score maximum marks you will have a high relative proportion of pupils from a disadvantaged background as defined by IDACI measures.</p> <p>You will score low marks where you have a low relative proportion of pupils from a disadvantaged background.</p>

Table 6: Project Need scoring for expansion projects

Project Planning – all projects

Project Planning is marked out of 15 for all projects and contributes 15 points from a total of 100.

Assessors must be able to see that the proposed solution appropriately addresses the nature, extent and urgency of the need evidenced, and that applicants have the ability to deliver the solution. You must be able to show that projects are planned appropriately and realistically, taking account of potential risks.

Sub-criteria	Scoring
Appropriateness of solution	<p>To score maximum marks the highest need issues should be prioritised and a costed options appraisal with quantified benefits that supports the solution provided.</p> <p>Where the project is a small project there should be an appropriately scaled options appraisal to support the solution.</p> <p>For all projects: where applicable the options appraisal should include a sustainable and/or net zero-carbon solution.</p> <p>You will score low marks where low priority issues are included and if there is no options appraisal.</p>
Timescales	<p>To score maximum marks, readiness milestones (e.g. planning approval) need to be complete by May 2023 and the project delivery timescale must be appropriate to the scale of the project.</p> <p>We expect smaller projects to be delivered within the 2023-24 financial year and larger projects by the end of 2024-25 financial year.</p> <p>Projects should not begin before June 2023.</p> <p>You will score low marks if there are concerns with deliverability to the timescale, given the scale and nature of the project, or where it is clear that readiness milestones would not be complete until after January 2024.</p> <p>We expect low carbon/sustainable heating projects will take longer to deliver and applicants will not be penalised for including an appropriate timescale for these types of projects.</p>

Sub-criteria	Scoring
Delivery Plan	<p>To score maximum marks, a realistic delivery plan for the project size supported by appropriate evidence should be submitted and there needs to be good consideration and mitigation of risk.</p> <p>For urgent works, we expect contingent plans to be considered to perform the works during term time if there is a delay to the start date.</p> <p>You will score low marks where there are concerns over the ability to deliver the project and/or it lacks a sufficiently detailed delivery plan or risk register for the size of the project.</p>

Table 7: Project Planning scoring for all projects

Evidence should ideally include (subject to the size and scale of the project):

- quantification of other options/options appraisal
- milestones chart/a detailed programme plan or Gantt chart
- quantification of benefits
- a comprehensive risk assessment with mitigations
- evidence of prioritisation
- master planning for the site and a business plan
- project context for wider site
- pre-planning advice or any planning evidence
- or all of the above in a feasibility study.

We expect to see greater levels of details for large, high value projects. There is further information on conducting a feasibility study [here](#).

It is your responsibility to consult your local planning authority to check if planning permission is required before applying to CIF. The application should indicate clearly whether or not planning permission is required and whether it has been confirmed with the local planning authority.

If you are an academy with a CIF project that impacts on school land, it is likely to require a separate consent of the Secretary of State via a land transaction application. For example, the acquisition or sale of a freehold or leasehold interest in land or buildings; change of use of playing field land when expanding the school building footprint; or if you are relocating utilities that involves the grant of easements over school land and/or the grant of a new lease or variation of an existing lease will all require a separate application for Secretary of State consent.

Approval of a CIF application does not provide or imply Secretary of State approval for any land transaction required to deliver the approved project. The relevant [land transaction guidance](#) will assist you in determining whether a separate approval is required. Please access

the [application form\(s\) and associated property information notes](#) to enable your land transaction application to be made. The CIF approved project cannot proceed until the separate consent of the Secretary of State is obtained to any land transaction.

If the application relates to a proposed expansion that would increase the school's capacity, you will need to seek separate DfE approval by following the [significant change](#) process. This ensures that sufficient consultation of interested parties has taken place. Please note that the approval of any CIF funding for an expansion project that does not have the necessary significant change approval at the time of the CIF outcome announcement will be conditional.

Project Cost – all projects

We expect all projects to show they are costed appropriately and respond to the project need. The cost section contributes 25 points from a total of 100. We also expect that all project costs are within an appropriate cost range for the type of works proposed. For new build projects we will check that the cost per square metre is within an acceptable range, taking into account abnormal factors.

There is a score for how your project demonstrates an environmentally sustainable approach. When approaching refurbishment projects, it is important that applicants consider using products and technologies to future proof school estates, having a regard for climate change resilience and environmental sustainability.

We reserve the right to disqualify applications that score very low marks in the Overall Costs criterion (see below), regardless of how they perform against other criteria.

Sub-criteria	Scoring
Overall costs	<p>To score maximum marks there should be a clear scope with overall cost below expectations/industry benchmarks.</p> <p>All cost elements should appear reasonable and where there are ‘abnormals’ or high costs they are clearly justified.</p> <p>The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) defines abnormal costs as those which might be considered as project specific (i.e. they are not a ‘typical’ construction cost) and are classified as such because they tend to have a notable cost consequence. Examples include asbestos removal, demolition costs, temporary accommodation and specialist substructures works. Abnormal costs must be clearly identified and justified. This will assist in the benchmarking of the overall costs.</p> <p>If your project will contribute towards longer term sustainability goals, such as achieving net zero carbon estate emissions, we will take this into account in assessing the costs of your project. If you wish to set out how you have incurred additional costs in order to achieve or make significant steps towards net zero please evidence this in the Cost upload.</p> <p>You will score low marks where the level of costs are above expectations with no clear justification e.g. excessive professional fees, allowances and contingency.</p>

Sub-criteria	Scoring
	<p>DfE will look at the cost per place for added place expansion projects and will expect these to meet industry benchmarks unless you provide clear justification.</p> <p>Project costs should only include capital costs and not any recurrent costs, such as maintenance plans, insurance, staff costs etc.</p>
Cost certainty	<p>To score maximum marks, multiple tenders/quotes should be thorough and well evidenced, with fixed prices and in line with the expectations relative to the size of the project. Firm commitment evidenced from contractors to stick to tender price if appointed.</p> <p>You will score low marks where there is no evidence of tenders/quotes attached to the application or they are inadequate for the size of the project.</p>
Funding sources	<p>To score maximum marks there will be a significant (and affordable) contribution from other sources or via a CIF loan.</p> <p>Please note: VA schools will only score in this sub-criterion if they provide more than 10% of the project value.</p> <p>The funding sources score is calculated by first adding the value of any CIF loan requested to the value of any reserves or contributions. The combined value as a percentage against the total project cost will generate a score as set out in the bandings in table 9 below.</p> <p>Note: This score contributes to the overall score for the bid. It is the overall score that is the deciding factor as to whether a bid is successful and not the level of contribution provided.</p>
Environmental sustainability in the project	<p>To score maximum marks there will be evidence that applicants are committed to reducing carbon emissions across the school estate with installation of green technologies, and the project delivers one or more of the following as a result of replacing components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An increase in energy efficiency and reduction in energy use and carbon emissions - Supports environmental sustainability and climate change resilience - Applicants can evidence this through one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data supplied to evidence increase in energy efficiency or reduction in energy use, or environmental sustainability is clear and strongly supports the project. - Explain how the project proposal fully demonstrates alignment to the sustainability design standards within the Output Specification 2022. <p>Where it is not possible or applicable to the project type to demonstrate an environmentally sustainable/energy efficient approach, other examples of green</p>

Sub-criteria	Scoring
	<p>technology installations unrelated to the current CIF application can be provided. These can be existing facilities or works due to be done in the near future. This should be accompanied with data where possible highlighting reduced carbon emissions across the school estate.</p> <p>The statement does not have to be exhaustive, and we expect it to be no more than 1-2 pages in length. When setting out the approach or plan to reducing carbon emissions across the school estate, responses that describe physical changes to buildings/components and landscape around buildings that will result in carbon emission reductions or support environmental sustainability and climate change resilience will be required to achieve full marks. These options can be recently installed or due to be installed in the near future.</p> <p>Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar Panel installation • Rainwater recycling facilities • Smart lighting / heating systems • Heat pump installation <p>If your project cannot evidence a positive environmental impact, you must provide a narrative as to why this is not achievable. Where an option identified in the options appraisal for a green project was not used a clear justification as to why this was not possible must be provided.</p>

Table 8: Cost scoring for all projects

Points	All Projects – Level of Contribution
0	Under 5%
1	5% to 10%
2	10% to 15%
3	15% to 20%
4	20% to 25%
5	25% to 30%
6	Over 30%

Table 9: funding sources

In addition to the information requested in table 8, your evidence should also include (subject to the size and scale of the project):

- cost plan (breakdown of costs) appropriate to the size and scale of the project
- hard copies of quotes/estimates/a summary of any tender exercise attached as part of evidence
- cash flow forecast (where appropriate)
- details of procurement route
- market testing to demonstrate additional/abnormal costs, where appropriate
- details or evidence of any savings being made, including any environmental savings the project will provide
- letters of funding commitment from other sources (if applicable).

Cost of works will vary significantly from site to site due to local economic variances, site features (e.g. presence of asbestos), planning constraints and project specification/scope. Assessors will refer to industry standards and experience to consider whether the levels of costs are appropriate.

Any cost overruns will be at the expense of the applicant, although an appropriate level of contingency funding is permitted. Where local conditions may lead to costs outside of industry benchmarks, you must clearly explain why this is the application and provide supporting evidence.

Cost plans should take account of the proposed risk of price increases and local economic conditions. Cost plans should also be realistic about the level of professional fees, allowances and contingency. The amount of contingency should be clearly identified in the application. You should provide an explanation for the level of contingency included. This should demonstrate that it is appropriate to the scale and type of the project, and the level of work already undertaken to establish price certainty and reduce residual risks.

When entering figures onto the application form, please round up to the nearest GBP (£). Do not enter pence.

Financial viability, governance & school estate management

We want to ensure that CIF funding goes to applicants who can evidence robust financial and governance health. This is because we want CIF funding to be used effectively and for projects to be value for money.

It is important that trusts submit their accounts on time, as set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#). Timely financial returns will be considered during CIF assessment. We use these returns as an indication of good financial management. Therefore, those applicants with poor financial viability and governance will find it harder to be successful unless they can demonstrate the highest priority and most urgent need.

Assessing good financial management – academy trusts

We will use the following information to identify trusts with finance and governance concerns.

- Those trusts who have submitted late financial returns to the ESFA on one or more occasion during the 2021/22 academic year will have 1 point deducted from their overall score:

Land and buildings collection tool	9 November 2021
2021 to 2022 Financial statements	31 December 2021
Accounts return	25 January 2022

- Those trusts missing the 31 December 2022 deadline to file 2021/22 audited financial statements by more than 14 days will have an additional 2 points deducted from their overall score.
- Those trusts with a qualified audit, adverse audit opinion or auditor's disclaimer of opinion in their 2020/21 audited accounts will have 1 point deducted from their overall score.

Assessing good financial management – sixth-form colleges

Sixth-form colleges (SFCs) are required to comply with the obligations set out in the College Accounts Direction. Failure to comply with those obligations will be considered during CIF assessment as indicated below.

SFCs will have points deducted as follows:

- Those SFCs missing the 31 December 2022 deadline to file audited accounts by more than 30 days, or missing any other deadline agreed with the ESFA to file audited accounts by more than 30 days, will have 2 points deducted from their overall score.
- Those SFCs with a qualified audit, adverse audit opinion or auditor's disclaimer of opinion in relation to their accounts will have 1 point deducted from their overall score.

Assessing good financial management – VA schools

Eligible VA schools will need to submit their latest financial statement for review as part of their CIF application form. Where your statement shows that you meet the criteria for financial concern below, you will need to submit a financial improvement plan as part of the CIF application.

If an effective improvement plan has not been provided, 4 points will be deducted from the overall score.

An additional 4 points will also be automatically deducted from the overall score if the latest financial statement is not submitted with the CIF application.

The criteria for VA schools with financial viability concerns are:

- The latest financial statements reporting a cumulative deficit.
- There is evidence of financial issues from budget forecasting reports, without sufficient evidence of improvement or action to address them.

School Resource Management Advisers (SRMA)

Any successful CIF applicants who have not previously had an SRMA visit in the last two academic years, or those trusts that are either already in a deficit position or that are predicting to be in a future deficit position, will be required to agree to an SRMA visit as a condition of funding.

Procurement

The [DfE construction framework](#) offers a compliant procurement vehicle which may be suitable for your project needs. There is no fee to use our framework. The DfE Construction Framework Team provide free training to framework users, as well as grant access to framework documents.

The DfE construction framework contains pre-selected contractors across 22 regional lots. It is aimed at individual school projects, both new build and refurbishment, and has the capacity to deliver elemental works. This framework may also be appropriate for a number of different types of projects, particularly projects with a cost in excess of £500k.

The key characteristics and benefits of using the DfE construction framework are that it is **efficient, flexible** and **consistent**:

Efficient – We have established contractors on our framework and we can ensure quick framework access for our users. We have price certainty in terms of capped rates for overhead and profit, project fees and risk. We ensure full disclosure of project information (including cost plan) to our contractors at expression of interest stage.

Flexible – Works can be procured either via direct award or via mini-competition. There is also the option to procure a Construct Only project. Framework user-specific requirements can be incorporated into framework documents to reflect your priorities.

Consistent – We have an agreed form of contract which eliminates the risk of protracted negotiations. Our contractors work in accordance with DfE rules, regulations and expectations. There are also consistent approaches to dealing with contractual changes e.g. Covid-19. We have a dedicated Framework Management Team to support framework users, but framework users have ultimate control.

While there is no requirement for you to use the framework, we recommend that all applicants explore this procurement route as part of their project development. For high value and expansion projects, we may ask you to use our framework as a condition of funding.

Projects that have tenders in place if successful will score higher in the Project Cost criterion. We generally expect larger, more complex projects to have undertaken a tender process.

If you are interested in discussing the possibilities for your project or if you would like to know more information, then feel free to email the DfE Construction Framework Team on dfeconstructionframework.2021@education.gov.uk

We also encourage the use of other construction frameworks and ask applicants to consider this procurement route. The benefits to this approach often include the pre-vetting of contractors across various criteria, including health and safety, delivery track record, and financial viability.

Contractor selection can be a key factor in ensuring project success and may also mitigate some of the inherent risks of contracting. [The Construction Playbook](#), published by HM Government in September 2022, offers practical advice on both contractor selection and the appropriate mitigating steps to take in the event of contractor insolvency.

Annex A: CIF loans

Applications for CIF are made within the CIF application form on the CIF portal.

Academies, sixth-form colleges and VA schools who choose to apply for a loan will be eligible for additional points under the Project Cost criterion than if they had applied for their project to be funded through grant alone. However, the overriding element of any application is Project Need.

Assessment under this section will be based on the ratio of loan to grant. For example, a project funded at least 30% by a loan will see a greater increase in score than a project funded 5% to loan and 95% grant.

In keeping with our principles of equality for academies with the maintained sector, we provide CIF loans at Public Works Loan Board rates of interest. These rates are the same that local authorities can access to invest in their schools. The interest rates that will be used for the programme are set out below and a [loan calculator](#) is available.

Duration of loan (years)	Interest rate (%)	Total repayable on a loan of £100k	Annual repayments over period of loan
2	5.00%	£107,560.98	£53,780.49
3	5.14%	£110,451.68	£36,817.23
4	5.23%	£113,408.03	£28,352.01
5	5.30%	£116,446.79	£23,289.36
6	5.34%	£119,498.91	£19,916.48
7	5.36%	£122,556.91	£17,508.13
8	5.37%	£125,635.33	£15,704.42
9	5.37%	£128,715.65	£14,301.74
10	5.37%	£131,841.76	£13,184.18

Table 10: Public Works Loan Board rates example

Affordability tests

Before deciding whether to apply for a loan, you must consider the affordability of repayments. We will apply a number of tests to assess the affordability of proposals and your Funding Sources score will be adjusted accordingly where the affordability tests are not met.

Applicants failing to pass these tests will not be eligible to receive a loan but may still be considered for grant funding if scored highly in other assessment criteria.

We do not expect you to submit additional documents, such as financial statements, to support affordability testing. We will obtain the information from the relevant sources.

Please do not apply for a loan if you do not meet the loan tests.

Affordability tests for academies

1. The total of the annual loan repayment for the academy, all existing loans (including any previous Salix loans) plus future loans (including loan being applied for), must be less than 3% of the revenue grant ('GAG') that the academy was allocated in 2022-23.
2. The academy trust must not be under a Notice to Improve or where the DfE/ESFA have serious financial management or governance concerns.
3. The academy trust's external auditor must not have modified their report on regularity of the financial statements.
4. The trust's last audited financial statements must show that the trust was in cumulative revenue surplus.
5. The trust's latest budget forecast return must show a forecast revenue surplus, at August 2022, equivalent to 3% or more of the GAG allocation.
6. The trust's last audited financial statements must show that the trust has a current ratio of at least 1:1 (the 'current ratio' is the ratio of an organisation's current assets to its current liabilities).

Affordability tests for sixth-form colleges

1. The annual repayment must be less than 4% of the revenue grant that the sixth-form college received from DfE in academic year 2022-23.
2. The sixth-form college has a financial health assessment of satisfactory, good or outstanding.

Affordability tests for Voluntary Aided schools

1. The total of the annual loan repayment for the requested loan, plus the annual loan repayment for any existing CIF loans approved in previous funding rounds, must be less than 4% of the revenue funding the school was allocated in 2022-23.
2. The school must confirm it is under no financial notice from the relevant local authority.
3. The school's own budget forecast must show a forecast cumulative revenue surplus to the end of the forecast period.

Repayments

Repayments are made through a reduction in the general annual grants (GAG) payments made by the DfE. Repayments taken from GAG payments as the savings generated from carrying out the work are revenue savings rather than capital, resulting in lower running costs.

You can repay your loan early without early repayment charges. You can use the [loan calculator](#) to show the impact of early repayment.

Annex B: Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA)

The DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) is a voluntary arrangement for schools. It is an alternative to insurance through which the cost of risks that materialise will be covered by Government funds.

RPA automatically provides cover for damage to any existing structure owned by an RPA member or for which the member is responsible, up to the full reinstatement value of the existing structure.

The RPA does not need to be notified when works are being undertaken and the school's existing structures will continue to be covered for the duration of the works. The RPA also provides automatic cover for damage to contract works; cover is limited to £250,000 for any one claim.

Where the cover provided by the RPA is not sufficient

RPA members cannot agree to insure either the existing structure or contract works in 'joint names' with the contractor, nor can it agree to obtain a waiver of subrogation from its insurer. RPA is not insurance and is unable to provide 'joint names' cover or waive subrogation rights against any party including the contractor.

The considerations set out above need to be addressed prior to a school putting a project out to tender. Failure to do so may result in uninsured losses, the school being in breach of contract and very high additional insurance costs later on in the project.

The options available to the RPA Member are as follows:

1. Existing structures

RPA Member to cover the existing structures under the RPA, the contractor to retain any responsibility for any damage that it causes to the existing structure. The contractor can cover this risk by way of a third-party public liability insurance policy.

2. Contract works – either the:

- a) RPA Member may rely on the cover provided by the RPA (limited to £250,000 any one claim) and the contractor to retain any responsibility for any damage that it causes to the works. The contractor can cover this risk by way of a third-party public liability insurance policy; or
- b) RPA Member may take out separate insurance for the works in the joint names with the contractor to cover the full value of the works for the duration of the works; or the

- c) RPA Member may require that the contractor take out insurance for the works in joint names with the RPA Member to cover the full value of the works and for the duration of the works.

Members should think about and build these costs into their overall project costings to ensure the overall costs remain transparent and are fully budgeted for.

Further information can be accessed via the [RPA welcome pack](#). To discuss the cover provided by RPA, you can contact the RPA advice line on 0117 9769 361 or email RPAAdvice@willistowerswatsonsecure.com.

It should be noted that the issues highlighted above are by no means a comprehensive list of insurance matters to consider during a CIF project. Your legal advisors should be consulted on a general basis at an early stage to ensure you have appropriate insurance for your CIF project.



Department
for Education

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