

# Application Form for finance specialist National Leaders of Further Education Programme

**Please complete all relevant fields.** Where word limits are specified, please observe them. Any text in excess of the stated limits will be disregarded.

Please note that information provided on this application form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Financial specialist National Leaders for Further Education (NLFEs) must be serving college finance directors who have a strong track record of delivering financial improvement - both at their own colleges and in working with others. They will provide support to colleges which need to improve. [Further information](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-leaders-of-further-education-guidance-for-potential-applicants) can be found on GOV.UK.  
  
Part A

# 1. Applicant/college details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Email address |  |
| Telephone number |  |
|  |  |
| College name |  |
| UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) |  |
| Name of college CEO principal |  |

2. Applicant/college information   
To be eligible to apply to become an NLFE finance specialist, you must:

* be a serving finance director at a general or specialist further education or sixth form college in England with a rating of good or outstanding for both quality and financial health
* have been a tier two finance director for approximately 3 years or more at point of application (i.e. reporting directly to the CEO/Principal)

Your college must not be in intervention.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Finance and professional qualifications:** please provide details of all the financial and professional qualifications that you hold. |  |
| **Current/former posts:**  Please provide details of your current post and any previous posts held over at least the last 3 years, confirming dates of appointment, college names and line manager |  |
| **Ofsted Report:** Please provide the date of your college’s report and the grade for overall effectiveness. |  |
| **Financial health:** Please confirm the latest financial health grade for your college - from your July 2022 College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) |  |

# Part B

# 3. Track Record - Driving improvement in your college

This section asks you to provide evidence in response to two questions:

|  |
| --- |
| **(a).** Please provide an overview of the financial improvement work that you have led in your own college, covering detail such as diagnosis of issues, planning, decision making, staff development, and systems reform. You should refer to difficulties you encountered and strategies you used for overcoming them. (Maximum 800 words). |
|  |
| Please specify number of words used: |
| **(b).** Please outline the impact of your work on the institution’s financial health and sustainability. (Maximum 300 words) |
|  |
| Please specify number of words used: |

In judging your responses, the assessors will look for:

* evidence of thorough review and diagnosis of financial improvement need, and of a clear strategy to bring about the necessary improvement.
* evidence of successful leadership within your college e.g., in bringing governors and senior staff on board with the financial improvement programme, and management of change.
* evidence of strong communication skills e.g., in engaging relevant staff in the improvement process.
* evidence of ability to identify and/or delegate appropriate sources of expertise and support for different aspects of improvement work.
* evidence of impact of improvement activities on financial health and sustainability.
* evidence of the ability to take tough decisions when necessary.
* evidence of ability to evaluate impact of improvement activities.

# 4. Track Record – Supporting improvement at other colleges

This section requires you to provide evidence in response to two questions:

|  |
| --- |
| **(c)** Please provide an overview of your previous engagement with other colleges in the FE sector to promote financial improvement, including details such as how you and your staff built relationships, diagnosed the issues and planned improvement activity, who was involved in providing support, and the type of work they undertook. (Maximum 500 words). |
|  |
| Please specify number of words used: |
| **(d)** Please outline the impact your support has had on financial health and sustainability in the college(s) supported and the impact on your own college. (Maximum 200 words) |
|  |
| Please specify number of words used: |

In judging your responses, the assessors will look for:

* evidence of engaging with, or providing formal or informal support to, other colleges, in order to drive financial improvement. Include examples of different forms of support, and both sustained and short-term engagement.
* evidence (as appropriate/relevant) that senior leaders and/or key stakeholders such as governors were aware of and involved in college-to-college support.
* evidence that this support has been well led and managed in a form appropriate to the particular college’s context and needs
* evidence that the support has had a positive impact in the supported college (including the extent to which this has contributed to improved financial health).
* evidence that the support has had a positive impact in own college, and that the college values the reciprocal nature of college-to-college support and provides support based on effective evidence-based strategies.

5. Plans for supporting improvement as a finance specialist NLFE  
  
This section requires you to provide evidence in response to one question:

|  |
| --- |
| **(e)** Please outline how you will use the experience and capacity from within your college to meet the financial improvement needs that you have identified within the sector and maximise the potential of your role as a finance specialist NLFE. (Maximum 500 words) |
|  |
| Please specify number of words used: |

In judging your response assessors will look for:

* evidence that you have a good understanding of how your experience of financial improvement can be translated into support for other colleges.
* evidence that you have a good understanding of the financial improvement needs of weaker colleges.
* evidence that you have a good understanding of your areas of improvement expertise and experience, of how you will be able to use that to support other colleges.
* evidence of a considered approach to identifying key individuals with management responsibilities for diagnosing the needs of client colleges, contributing to an improvement plan, and undertaking training and mentoring of staff at the client college.
* evidence of an understanding of wider opportunities for how your role as a finance specialist NLFE can contribute to improvement in the sector.

6. Optional: Commentary on college financial management data  
  
In assessing your application, we will refer to relevant published performance data for the last three years, including evidence related to financial management.

In the section below you may provide a narrative on your college’s performance with regard to financial management, including details of your own impact on these areas. If there are any dips or anomalies, it is an opportunity to explain why these have happened or what action has been taken to rectify them. Please ensure that you provide a link to any data sets or reports which you reference in your comments. (Maximum 300 words)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area of financial performance | Comments |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Please specify number of words used: |

Part C  
7. References

Provide references from two senior education professionals who can endorse your track record. References should be provided as separate attachments and should be on the headed paper of the referee’s organisation. Referees may wish to refer to the questions and assessment criteria in their references, where that is applicable.

8. Due diligence

If there is anything relevant to your suitability if selected – for example any criminal convictions, bankruptcy or anything which could impact on public confidence on your suitability, please provide brief details below.

Please note that due diligence checks will be carried out and may include searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs, or any other publicly available information. Details about how this information will be processed are available in the [Department’s Personal Information Charter](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter).

# 9. Declarations of applicant, CEO principal and chair of governors

By signing this application, you confirm:

* all the information included is true and accurate to the best of your knowledge
* your college (including its governing body or equivalent) supports this application and is committed to the finance specialist NLFE role.
* you accept that you will provide any additional information that we request in order to assess your application.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Signature | Date |
| Applicant |  |  |  |
| CEO principal |  |  |  |
| Chair of governors |  |  |  |