

# Sixth Form Colleges: apply to become an academy (updated January 2023)

## Application form for Sixth Form College (SFC) corporations to become 16 to 19 academies

Please complete all relevant fields with information.

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 General Data Protection Regulation 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the Data Protection Act 1998.

#### Definition of becoming an academy

The term “becoming an academy” is used throughout this application form to describe the process through which a Sixth Form College will become a 16 to 19 academy run by a multi-academy trust. This ‘conversion’ will be achieved through provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which enable a SFC corporation to dissolve and transfer its property, rights and liabilities to a new or existing multi-academy trust.

This form is the **starting point** for your application. Applications from SFCs usually take around 7 months from submitting the application to opening as a new 16 to 19 academy. Where SFCs have multiple funding streams such as adult education budget and/or apprenticeship funding, we recommend that the planned opening date of the new academy should be at the start of the academic year on 1 September, to ensure that funding streams can remain aligned.

Please read this form in conjunction with the published guidance, [*Becoming a 16 to 19 academy: advice for Sixth Form Colleges*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-academies-application-process-for-sixth-form-colleges)*,* which provides more detail about each stage of consideration of your application, and the full remit of supplementary information that you will need to provide, including the different levels of financial assessment that may be required. Becoming a 16 to 19 academy means you will move into the public sector and therefore **all** applications will require a financial review by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and will ultimately be approved by the relevant Regional Director (formerly Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)).

#### Provision of data

Where possible, pre-existing ESFA data will be used by the Department for Education (DfE) and ESFA to supplement your application.

Please email your completed application form (in Word format) to [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk), along with all accompanying documents, and copy it to your current DfE Territorial Team contact.

# Part A – Information required as part of the initial application

## Section 1 – Basic details

### Your information

Please see the [supporting notes](#_Supporting_notes_for) for further information on how to complete this part of the form.

Your contact details:

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| --- | --- |
| Full SFC name and postal address |  |
| Name of principal |  |
| Principal’s email address |  |
| Principal’s telephone number  (Other contact number) |  |
| Name of chair of governing body/corporation |  |
| Chair’s email address |  |
| Chair’s telephone number  (Other contact number) |  |
| Main contact for the process of becoming a 16 to 19 academy. If not one of the above, include role, email address and telephone number |  |

### Your application

We expect all SFCs to apply to join/form a new multi-academy trust.

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| If you are joining an existing multi-academy trust, please give the name of the trust that your SFC is joining and provide evidence that they have resolved to accept you.  Where relevant, please also provide details of your existing relationship with the multi-academy trust, e.g. sponsor, collaborative partnership, etc. | Name:  Please confirm that the multi-academy trust has consented to your SFC joining them. |
| If you are forming a new multi-academy trust, please give the name of the proposed trust (if known).  Please also give the names of the schools, academies (including free schools) and/or SFCs that you are proposing should be part of it. Please provide evidence that they have applied, or resolved to apply, to join the proposed multi-academy trust. | Proposed name of multi-academy trust :  Other institutions joining:  Evidence that they have applied or resolved to apply to join the multi-academy trust: |

### Academy sponsor application

It is possible to apply to become an academy sponsor at the same time as you apply to form or join a multi-academy trust. You must fill in a separate application form to become an academy sponsor, as this is a separate process. You can download the sponsor application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-sponsor-application-form>.

We will not ask you for the same information twice on different forms. Please complete the sponsor application form to supply information on the multi-academy trust’s proposed governance structure, and background information on the key people involved, and on the trust’s vision and plans.

Please see the information in the [supporting notes](#_Supporting_notes_for) at the end of this form, and on the academy sponsor page at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsor-an-academy>.

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| Are you applying to become an academy sponsor at the same time as you are applying to become a 16 to 19 academy? | **Yes/No** |
| If so, have you already contacted your Regional Director (formerly Regional Schools Commissioner) to start that process? | **Yes/No** |

## Section 2 – Proposed timescales

Please supply information on your plans to dissolve as a SFC and become a 16 to 19 academy.

If you have multiple funding streams – such as adult education budget and/or apprenticeship funding – we recommend that the planned opening date of the academy should be the start of the academic year on 1 September, to ensure that funding streams can remain aligned. The process to dissolve your SFC corporation must also be aligned with the 1 September date.

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| Please state your preferred date on which you plan to dissolve and transfer property, rights and liabilities to a multi-academy trust.  This will be the date you open as a 16 to 19 academy. |  |
| Please summarise your transition and delivery plan including your proposed timings/key milestones (e.g. date of planned consultations/notices), who will lead on this work, and the specialist support you will use to support the conversion and any other changes. |  |

## Section 3 – Multi-academy trust overview

This section need only be completed once where more than one school/college is applying to form a new multi-academy trust. Please see the [supporting notes](#_Supporting_notes_for) for more information on how to complete this section.

If you are applying to become an **academy sponsor**, please do **not** complete this section of the form. You should include this information in the sponsor application form.

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| **Expand this section to include the following (max. of 600 words):**   * *Whether you are applying to join an existing multi-academy trust or forming a new one.* * *When you plan to open as a 16 to 19 academy within an existing multi-academy trust/your new multi-academy trust.* * *The rationale for the schools and/or SFCs forming a multi-academy trust together (e.g. building on existing links, benefits to be gained).* * *The agreed vision and aspirations of your multi-academy trust.* * *The geographical areas and communities that you will serve.* * *Your proposals to maximise the freedoms that academy status offers.* * *Your intended approach to working in partnership to improve teaching and learning within the multi-academy trust, and potentially to support other schools.* * *The benefits you will gain from being part of a multi-academy trust – financial benefits should be entered in the next section (4 – Finances).*   ***Information on the composition of the multi-academy trust, including any other sixth form-provision***   * *Whether the multi-academy trust includes any free schools – if it does, please give their names and confirm whether they are open or in development.* * *Whether the multi-academy trust includes any schools and/or academies which currently have sixth-form provision – if it does, please give their names.* * *Whether the multi-academy trust includes any other SFCs or 16-19 academies – if it does, please give their names.* * *How the 16-19 provision across the multi-academy trust will be complementary.* * *Your existing relationship with your proposed partners – e.g. back-office support, school improvement.* * *Please confirm that your proposed partners have been consulted and agree to the proposal you are making.*   ***Plans for growth***   * *Your plans over the next 5 years for however many schools or SFCs you hope will join your multi-academy trust, the geographical area you intend your multi-academy trust to eventually cover, and how this growth will be managed and sustained.*   ***School improvement strategy***   * *What are your plans for support and improvement of the academies within your multi-academy trust? Please include details of where this capacity will come from and how will you monitor it.* * *How will you ensure that your strategy is fit for purpose and drives up standards across the multi-academy trust?* * *If the trust aspires to become an approved sponsor in the future, what timescale do you have in mind?*   ***Your contribution as a former SFC to the multi-academy trust***   * *How will you improve educational standards and the range and quality of provision within and across the multi-academy trust – in the first year after becoming a 16 to 19 academy and in the longer term?* |

## Section 4 – Finances

ESFA will undertake a financial assessment of all applications from SFCs applying to become a 16 to 19 academy. This process will be proportionate to your financial position and requirements. Guidance on what is required can be found in the published guidance, [*Becoming a 16 to 19 academy: advice for Sixth Form Colleges*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-academies-application-process-for-sixth-form-colleges). However, please include, as a minimum with this application, an **initial budget forecast** for the multi-academy trust, and answers to the following questions:

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| How will the multi-academy trust help secure the financial viability of your SFC – how will your plans create a viable and sustainable structure for provision that can achieve a surplus for investment in the future? |  |
| How will your plans deliver cost savings and efficiencies on curriculum, back office, estates and finances (including fixed and semi-fixed costs, staffing changes)?  (Please note that later in the process we will ask for more detailed financial projections for the new 16 to 19 academy, agreed as necessary with any existing multi-academy trust which you are proposing to join.) |  |

### Finances of the current SFC

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| Where the revenue or capital balance is lower at the end of the current financial year (as at the time of application) than at the end of the previous financial year, please provide a summary of the reason for this. |  |
| If the SFC has a deficit, please give brief details.  Please note: it is unlikely that applications from SFCs that are not currently financially stable will be progressed. |  |
| If the SFC has any existing loan(s), bank overdraft and/ or lease(s), please provide details as follows:   1. loan provider and terms; total amount borrowed; outstanding balance anticipated at point of proposed dissolution; schedule of repayments; details of any penalty provisions; and interest rate. Please indicate if you intend to pay this debt(s) off in advance of conversion from your cash reserves (Note: applications that include the novation of loans to a multi-academy trust will only be considered in **exceptional** circumstances.) 2. lessor with details of arrangement; length of time left to run; break clauses and charges 3. bank overdraft details – including proposals for clearing prior to becoming a 16 to 19 academy |  |
| Does the SFC have liabilities which will transfer with them? Please list the liabilities and their values.  You should include full detail of the latest Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) FRS 17 (or equivalent) contributions (including deficit reduction), valuation and any expected revisions to these; ongoing pensions costs; and any pension deficit. |  |

### Financial projections

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| Please provide outline financial projections for the new 16 to 19 academy.  (Please note that you will be asked to provide detailed financial projections which have, where relevant, been agreed with any multi-academy trust which you are proposing to join later in the process.) |  |
| Please confirm whether these projections factor in any centralised costs associated with the multi-academy trust. |  |
| Please also confirm the expected per annum level of re-claim of non-business VAT once the SFC becomes an academy. |  |
| Does the SFC have liabilities which will transfer with them? Please list the liabilities and their values.  You should include full detail of the latest LGPS FRS 17 (or equivalent) contributions (including deficit reduction), valuation and any expected revisions to these; ongoing pensions costs and any pension deficit. |  |
| Did the SFC make a surplus in the last financial year, and is a surplus forecast for the next three years, achieving a surplus of at least 3% by the third year? |  |

## Section 5 – Additional information

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| Is the SFC linked to any underpinning religious authority, foundation and/or trust?  If yes, please provide details:  (Please send in any relevant letter(s) of consent with your application form to [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk). We will be unable to progress your application without this consent.) | **Yes/No** |
| Has the SFC been involved in any mergers in the last 5 years?  If yes, please state the name(s) of the organisation(s) with which you have merged.  Please give the date of the merger. | **Yes/No** |
| Do you deliver adult learning provision to students over 19 years of age?  If yes, do you have a separate legal entity to cater for these students?  If yes, please give details. | **Yes/No** |

## Section 6 – Other information

Please provide below any other information that you think may be material and/or relevant for the SFC becoming a 16 to 19 academy – this could include details of any higher education provision, provision for students with high needs (e.g. a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) unit), or apprenticeships currently delivered.

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# Part B – Information which will be required as your application progresses

You do not have to provide all of this information immediately, but it will be needed before any application can be implemented. Where you can provide it now, it will be helpful.

## Section 7 – Governance, leadership and management of the proposed multi-academy trust or the existing multi-academy trust you will join

This section need only be completed once where more than one school/college is applying to form a new multi-academy trust. Please see the [supporting notes](#_Supporting_notes_for) for more information on how to complete this section.

If you are joining an open multi-academy trust, you do not need to tell us about the current members or trustees of the trust. You should tell us if there are going to be any changes to the current members or trustees, for example, if there are going to be new trustees as a result of your school(s) joining the multi-academy trust. You should also tell us what the arrangements will be for local governing bodies in the schools that are joining any open multi-academy trust.

If you are applying to become an academy sponsor, please do **not** complete this section of the form. You should include this information in the sponsor application form.

### Governance structure

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| ***This section is to ensure that there will be a clear governance structure for the academy trust and that the individuals within it will have the knowledge, skills and experience, as well as the capacity and commitment, to deliver effective governance. Information regarding this requirement is defined in the Governance Handbook and Competency Framework for Governance, which can both be downloaded at*** [***https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook***](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook)***.***  ***Effective governance is based on 6 key features:***   * ***Strategic leadership*** *that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy* * ***Accountability*** *that drives up educational standards and financial performance* * ***People*** *with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity* * ***Structures*** *that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities* * ***Compliance*** *with statutory and contractual requirements* * ***Evaluation*** *to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance*   ***Key points to consider:***  Individuals who will act as members and trustees of the proposed multi-academy trust, as well as the individuals associated with it, will be required to uphold the [seven principles of public life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life) (selflessness, objectivity, integrity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.)  ***Members***   * *Multi-Academy Trusts: Good Practice Guidance and Expectations for Growth* [*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust) *states that multi-academy trusts must have at least 3 members, although the department’s strong preference is for at least 5 members. This provides for a diverse range of perspectives and robust decision-making, and reduces the risks of concentrating power. It also ensures that members can take decisions via special resolution without requiring unanimity.* * *Employees of the proposed or existing multi-academy trust cannot be members of the trust (Governance Handbook Section 5, paragraph 30).* * *The Governance Handbook states that the majority of members are to be independent of the board of trustees (Governance Handbook Section 5, paragraphs 34-35). Ensuring a significant degree of distinction between the individuals who are members and those who are trustees provides for more robust oversight of the board.* * *Ensure local authority-associated persons (Governance Handbook Section 5, paragraph 24) make up no more than 19.9% of the members.* * *The total number of members shall comprise of a majority of UK based individuals who shall have relevant UK educational expertise including experience of school improvement.*   ***Trustees***   * *The board of trustees manages the business of the multi-academy trust and is responsible for the multi-academy trust’s accountability to Parliament and to the Secretary of State as the Principal Regulator of academy trusts as exempt charities. The board should have the necessary expertise and capacity to undertake its 3 core functions of ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.* * *Trustees should have a range of expertise, such as business, commercial, finance, legal, education, governance and Human Resources (HR). Where there is a gap in required skills, the board should ensure that this is addressed through recruitment, induction or training and how it will be sourced e.g. through Academy Ambassadors and/or Inspiring Governance.* * *The academy trust articles of association prevent more than one third of the total number of trustees being employees. The Governance Handbook sets an expectation that the CEO/Principal is the only trust employee who is a trustee (Governance Handbook Section 5, paragraph 20).* * *Ensure local authority-associated persons (Governance Handbook Section 5, paragraph 18) make up no more than 19.9% of the trustees.* * *The board of trustees is responsible for the proper stewardship of public funds, including regularity and propriety, and for ensuring economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in their use – 3 key elements of value for money.* * *The board of trustees of the multi-academy trust must appoint, in writing, a named individual who is both the senior executive leader and Accounting Officer. This should be the chief executive or equivalent.* |
| **Please attach an A4 diagram showing the proposed structure of your multi-academy trust. This diagram must clearly show the lines of accountability between the trust and the academies that would join the trust, in order to show how the trust will hold each academy to account. Use accompanying text where necessary to explain the detail.**  **If you are joining an open multi-academy trust, use this section to explain what local governing body arrangements will be for the schools that are joining, and how they will fit into the existing lines of accountability within the multi-academy trust.**  Guidance on multi-academy trust structures is set out in the Governance Handbook, which can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>.  You can find examples of governance structures in Multi-Academy Trusts: Good Practice Guidance and Expectations for Growth, at<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust>. |

### Key people

Using the table below, please provide a brief biography for each of the persons fulfilling the specific roles outlined below, to demonstrate relevant experience in the key areas of leadership, education improvement, finance, business, HR and data handling. The Academy Trust Handbook places requirements on all of these roles.

You should consult the Academy Trust Handbook to find out more about these requirements, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook>.

If any of these people have previously been a head teacher, please give the name of their most recent school, the dates of their headship and their school performance data.

If any of these people have an interest in any other academies, for example as trustee, please give details of the trust and their role.

* The senior executive leader/CEO of the trust, including their qualifications and experience for that role
* The chief financial officer/finance director, including their qualifications and experience for that role and how much time they expect to be able to give initially
* The members of the trust who are signatories to the articles of association and who have a similar role to shareholders in a company limited by shares
* The trustees who manage the business of the academy trust
* Other key partner organisations and individuals with whom the trust would work

Please add more rows to the table as required.

#### Governance Structure Overview

Please give brief details of:

* Number of members
* Number of trustees
* Executive leadership team
* Local Governing Bodies (LGBs), other committees

**Key Person Profile:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **D.O.B.** | **Address** | **Position within the Trust (tick all that apply)** | **Has the individual consented to take up this position?** | **Current responsibilities**  Employment/ self-employment/other non-exec. roles | **Current employer (company number)** | **Primary area of expertise**  e.g. finance, marketing, education, HR | **Associated companies/ previous employers** | **Biography**  Demonstrate relevant experience and expertise (max. 250 words; annex if necessary) |
|  |  |  | Member  Trustee  CEO/executive headteacher  Chair of trust  Chief financial officer  Other: | Yes  No |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Member  Trustee  CEO/executive headteacher  Chair of trust  Chief financial officer  Other: | Yes  No |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Member  Trustee  CEO/executive headteacher  Chair of trust  Chief financial officer  Other: | Yes  No |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Member  Trustee  CEO/executive headteacher  Chair of trust  Chief financial officer  Other: | Yes  No |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Member  Trustee  CEO/executive headteacher  Chair of trust  Chief financial officer  Other: | Yes  No |  |  |  |  |  |

## Section 8 – Assets, land, and buildings

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| Does the SFC have assets which will transfer with you to the multi-academy trust?  Please list the assets and their values, stating if these are physical or financial assets. Where a building or buildings that have been zero-rated for VAT purposes on construction are transferring to the multi-academy trust and there is an arising VAT liability on change of ownership, you must confirm the advice sought from HMRC on this and provide details. No grants or funding will be made available to cover any arising liabilities. | **Yes/No** |
| Are there any assets which the SFC currently uses but does not own?  Please list the assets and their values, stating if these are physical or financial assets. | **Yes/No** |
| Will these assets continue to be used after becoming a 16 to 19 academy?  If so, please explain how they will be used and what arrangements will be in place to allow the multi-academy trust to make use of them. | **Yes/No** |
| Who currently owns/holds the SFC building and associated land? Is this public or private ownership? |  |
| Please provide details of the estate, including number and location of sites. |  |
| Are any of your SFC’s facilities used by, or shared with, organisations other than the SFC, formally or informally? This could include hire of rooms or playing fields by community groups.  If yes, please provide details of the shared use. | **Yes/No** |
| Are there any significant building works ongoing or planned or required in the next 4 years, e.g. due to poor quality estates or significant expansion plans.  If so, is funding secured for these?  If yes, please provide details of what is required or being done, the scheduled completion date, and whether the arrangements for the funding will be affected by becoming a 16 to 19 academy. | **Yes/No** |
| Does the SFC currently lease / rent any buildings or land from anyone else?  If so, please state from whom.  Please state the length of the lease and the amount of rent. | **Yes/No** |
| Is this likely to continue after becoming a 16 to 19 academy? | **Yes/No** |
| Does the SFC currently lease / rent any buildings or land to anyone else?  If so, please state to whom.  Please state the length of the lease and the amount of rent. | **Yes/No** |
| Is this likely to continue after becoming a 16 to 19 academy? | **Yes/No** |
| Has your SFC received grant funding from Sport England, the Football Foundation or National Lottery funding? | **Yes/No** |
| Is your SFC part of a private finance initiative (PFI) scheme?  If yes, please provide more information.  details. length of  If | **Yes/No** |
| Are there any loans or mortgages secured on land or buildings?  If yes, please provide more information. | **Yes/No** |

## Section 9 – Dissolving the SFC corporation

You must consult on your plans to dissolve as an SFC corporation (as required under section 33N and 33P of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992), and you must also consider whether you need to carry out an equality impact assessment.

The process to dissolve your SFC corporation must be aligned with process to become a 16 to 19 academy, so that they both come into effect on the **same date**. If you have multiple funding streams – such as adult education budget and/or apprenticeship funding – we recommend that the planned dissolution date for the SFC and simultaneous opening date of the new academy should be at the start of the academic year on 1 September, to ensure that funding streams can remain aligned.

Your delivery officer will contact you to discuss your plans.

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| Has the governing body confirmed its intent to apply to become a 16 to 19 academy, and agreed dissolution of the SFC corporation and the transfer of property, rights and liabilities to the multi-academy trust? | **Yes/No** |
| Have you started this consultation?  If not, when do you plan to start the consultation? | **Yes/No** |

## Section 10 – Declaration

By submitting this application we, the governing body of the SFC named in this application, confirm that:

* we have the authority to resolve that our SFC corporation should dissolve and transfer property, rights and liabilities to a 16 to 19 academy
* the person signing this application has authority to bind the governing body to the application
* this application is made in the context of post-16 educational needs of the area and has been discussed with the local authority and/or mayoral combined authority
* all the information included is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge
* if there is a diocese, foundation, trust, or other body that appoints governors in our SFC, then that body and the trustees of the SFC have separately agreed that we may dissolve and transfer property, rights and liabilities to an academy (A letter stating this will be sent from that body to the department. Your delivery officer will need to receive this consent letter before the application can be processed)
* a resolution to dissolve and transfer property, rights and liabilities to a multi-academy trust has been passed and a record of this decision is available should departmental officials wish to see it
* there are no financial or safeguarding investigations ongoing at our SFC
* individuals who will act as members and trustees of the proposed multi-academy trust, as well as the individuals associated with it, must ensure that principles are promoted which support fundamental British values, including: respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England; respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes; support for equality of opportunity for all; support and respect for the liberties of all within the law; and respect for and tolerance of different faiths and religious and other beliefs
* we accept that DfE or ESFA may ask for any additional information as they see fit to assess our application and that, as a condition of us becoming a 16 to 19 academy, we shall provide it
* should any information presented in this application be revealed to be false or misleading, our application may be rejected
* the corporation agrees not to negotiate any new liabilities with a commercial lender prior to transfer unless this can be cleared in full prior to any proposed date when the SFC will become a 16 to 19 academy

In addition, where you have financial surplus and intend to pay off debts prior to transfer to academy status, you should confirm in writing, **letter attached**, that prior to the transfer to academy status the corporation agrees to make a cash payment to settle all outstanding debts in full and make a payment to cover any break clause cost.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name and position of the person that completed this form |  |
| Date form was completed (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |

### Next steps

Please email the signed completed application form (in Word format), together with your letter(s) of consent, initial budget forecast, and any other accompanying documents as required, to [Enquiries.ESFA@educaction.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@educaction.gov.uk). Please copy in your current DfE Territorial Team contact and use “SFC Academy Conversion” as the email subject.

Once your application has been submitted, your Territorial Team contact will liaise with a delivery officer in DfE Regions Group, who will discuss your application with you.

Your Regional Director (formerly Regional Schools Commissioner), advised by their Advisory Board, will then consider your application, and make a decision based on the criteria in the published guidance [*Becoming a 16 to 19 academy: advice for Sixth Form Colleges*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-academies-application-process-for-sixth-form-colleges).

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# Supporting notes for completing an application

We will automatically use information and data that we already hold about your SFC’s performance and financial position where that information is up to date and sufficient for use. However, it is the responsibility of the SFC to check and confirm that relevant data that has previously been submitted is correct.

Your delivery officer will be in touch to discuss your predictions for your SFC’s educational performance, and any further information required.

# Part A – Information required as part of the initial application

## Section 1 – Basic details

### Your information

Must be completed for all SFCs applying to convert to academy status.

### Your application

You can apply to **form a multi-academy trust** with other SFCs and/or schools, or **join** an existing multi-academy trust.

You should include the names of any open academies, maintained schools, free schools, or SFCs that want to form a new trust with you on this form, but they must complete their own application form(s).

You should include the names of any special schools or Pupil Referral Units that want to form a new multi-academy trust with your SFC in this form, but they must complete their own application forms, which take account of their own distinct characteristics.

The application form for special schools can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-conversion-application-forms>.

The application form for Pupil Referral Units can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-academy-application-process>.

If you are **joining an existing multi-academy trust** you must confirm that the established trust consents to your SFC joining them. Please send in their letter(s) of consent with your application either by post or via the email address [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk). We will be unable to progress your application without their consent.

**Forming a new multi-academy trust** **–** please give the proposed name of the multi-academy trust and the other SFCs and/or schools that intend to join.

### Applying to become an academy sponsor

If you are interested in becoming an academy sponsor, you should first contact your [Regional Director's office](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regional-schools-commissioners/about) to discuss this.

If your Regional Director agrees that you should apply, DfE will nominate a delivery officer to work with you. Your named delivery officer will ask what sort of academy you wish to sponsor so they can advise on the sponsor opportunities in your region. They will also ask if you are already working with a particular school that may need a sponsor.

It is possible to apply to form a multi-academy trust at the same time that you apply to become an academy sponsor. You must fill in the separate application form to become an academy sponsor, which you can access at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-sponsor-application-form>. However, we will not ask you for the same, or similar, information twice. Please use the sponsor application form to supply information on the multi-academy trust’s proposed governance structure, the key people involved, and the vision and plans for the multi-academy trust.

You can also find further guidance and help on applying to become an academy sponsor at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsor-an-academy>.

## Section 2 – Proposed timescales

The length of time taken to complete both the dissolution of the SFC and process of becoming a 16 to 19 academy will vary depending on each SFC’s individual circumstances. We expect the 2 processes to run alongside each other. Your delivery officer and Territorial Team contact will discuss this with you in more detail whilst processing your application. However, if you have a particular date you wish to work towards, please state this within your application.

If you have multiple funding streams – such as adult education budget and/or apprenticeship funding – we recommend that the planned opening date of the new 16 to 19 academy should be the start of the academic year on 1 September, to ensure that funding streams can remain aligned. The process to dissolve your SFC corporation must also be aligned with the 1 September date.

## Section 3 – Multi-academy trust overview

**Name of multi-academy trust –** needed for all established trusts. The multi-academy trust must consent to your SFC joining them as a 16 to 19 academy. Please send in their letter(s) of consent with your application either by post or via the email address [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk). We will be unable to progress your application without their consent.

**Forming a new multi-academy trust** – please give the name of the multi-academy trust and the other institutions intending to join.

**Structure of multi-academy trust** – if the multi-academy trust is already established, please give as much information as possible on how it is structured, for example in a diagram. If you are forming the multi-academy trust with other institutions, we recognise you may not have come to a firm decision on its structure yet, but it will be very helpful to see the early stages of your planning.

## Section 4 – Finances

The value of some assets and liabilities may vary depending on the date of dissolution and, at this stage the values may be hard to specify with certainty. Where this is the case, you should discuss the likely range with your existing Territorial Team contact.

For any queries regarding VAT, please consult the published guidance for SFCs on becoming 16 to 19 academies, [*Becoming a 16 to 19 academy: advice for Sixth Form Colleges*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-academies-application-process-for-sixth-form-colleges), which explains how to access HMRC advice.

## Section 5 – Additional information

**Consent of religious authority, foundation, trust or other body** – your delivery officer will need to see evidence of this consent in order to progress your application. You may send in a copy of their letter(s) of consent electronically via [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk), copied to your current Territorial Team contact.

**Any other information** – please add any further information you think would be significant for your SFC’s application. Your delivery officer will be in touch to discuss this with you.

You may also send in any further information via [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk), copied to your current Territorial Team contact.

## Section 6 – Other information

You may add any further information you think may be helpful or relevant here.

You should also use this section to provide information on whether you provide any European-funded programmes; admit international students, provide apprenticeships or other post-19 training for adults including HE provision. Please also indicate if you are currently on the Office for Students Register.

## Section 7 – Governance, leadership and management of the multi-academy trust you will join or form

As part of the transfer process, we will expect your governing body to consider appropriate governance structure and arrangements for the future because, as an academy trust, we would expect its board to be lean and tightly run. The information requested therefore relates to the multi-academy trust you will join or form.

We recognise that your governing body may not have reached firm decisions on this yet and we are interested in their thinking as it develops – your governing body is not required to commit themselves to plans at this stage.

Your governing body may find it helpful to consult further information on the roles and responsibilities of members and trustees which can be found on:

* The Charity Commission website:
  + Setting up and running a charity – <https://www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity>
  + Trustee role and board – <https://www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity/trustee-role-board>
* The Academy Trust Handbook – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook>
* the Governance Handbook – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

**Number of founding members of the multi-academy trust** – these will be the individuals who will sign the memorandum of association that sets up the multi-academy trust. The members agree the articles of association for the multi-academy trust and hold the board of trustees to account for the management of the multi-academy trust. The articles define the charitable purpose of the multi-academy trust and how it will be run. The minimum number of members is 3, but we would encourage your governing body to consider having 5 members in order to ensure that the members have the necessary skills and expertise to hold the trustees to account for school leadership and improvement, financial accounting and running a charitable company.

Please give the number of members of the multi-academy trust, whether any members will also be trustees, and the number of trustees.

## Section 8 – Assets, land, and buildings

**Building works, shared use including nurseries, Sport England funding and PFI** - we do not need full information at this early stage, as if the Regional Director approves your application, we will ask you to complete a detailed Land Questionnaire. It is helpful to know whether your SFC has any of these arrangements as they typically require additional time to deal with. This could affect your scheduled dissolution and conversion date.

## Section 9 – Dissolving the SFC corporation and consultation on becoming a 16 to 19 academy

The process of becoming a 16 to 19 academy will be achieved through provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which enables an SFC corporation to dissolve and transfer its property, rights and liabilities to a new 16 to 19 academy. Please include confirmation that the governing body has considered what plans it has to undertake, or whether it has undertaken, the statutory consultation and any equality impact assessment.

Your delivery officer or current Territorial Team contact can discuss this with you.

Please email your completed application form (in Word format) to [Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk), along with all accompanying documents. Please copy in your current DfE Territorial Team contact and use “SFC Academy Conversion” as the email subject.

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