

Funding Bid and Generic Income Approval Policy



<u>Policy Title</u>	Funding Bid and Generic Income Approval Policy
<u>Policy Category</u>	Compliant
<u>Owner</u>	Deputy Director Development
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>	Executive Director Development
<u>Date Written</u>	June 2023
<u>Considered By</u>	Executive Board
<u>Approved By</u>	Executive Board
<u>Date Approved</u>	June 2023
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics and an assessment was carried out in May 2023. This policy is available in alternative formats, if required.
<u>Freedom of Information</u>	This document will be publicly available through the Groups Publication Scheme.
<u>Review Date</u>	June 2024
<u>Policy Summary</u>	This policy confirms the arrangements and context for gaining the necessary approvals, NCG's wider approach to external investment, the basic principles for the management of such bids and proposals and the ways in which policy adherence supports NCG to mitigate financial and reputational risk and exposure of such investment.

<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
Newcastle	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form	Yes	Yes
Carlisle	Yes	Yes
Kidderminster	Yes	Yes
Lewisham	Yes	Yes
Southwark	Yes	Yes
West Lancashire	Yes	Yes
Professional Services	Yes	Yes

<u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u>	
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>
N/A	New Policy

<u>Linked Documents</u>	
<u>Document Title</u>	<u>Relevance</u>
Financial Regulations	The Financial Regulations translate the Group's broad policies relating to financial control into practical guidance and are the basis of the sign off protocols within this policy. They are subordinate to the Corporation's Instrument and Articles of Government and to any restrictions contained within the Group's Financial Memorandum with the ESFA and the Funding Agencies' Audit Code of Practice. Link: NCG (ncgrp.co.uk)
Funding Bid Submission Process	Process to ensure NCG has a standardised approach to bid submissions which enables greater efficiency and accuracy.
Capital Investment Panel / Process	This Process relates to all capital investment, in the context of this policy it ensures that all projects identified for external funding have been endorsed by Exec and approved by the CIP. It ensures capital investment systems are adhered to and the approach is standardised across NCG.

Equality Impact Assessment

	Judgement	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy / procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in 2.0?	Yes	
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy / procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	No	
Age	No	
Disability / Difficulty	No	
Gender Reassignment	No	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
Race	No	
Religion or Belief	No	
Sex	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy / processes contain any language / terms / references / phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	No	
EIA4 - Does the policy / process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	No	
EIA 5 - Does this policy / process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	No	
EIA 5 - Does this policy / process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	No	The process detailed in the policy is the same for all colleagues and linked to finance regs.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	The policy has been widely consulted on through colleges and professional services.	

1. Introduction

Aligned to the Financial Regulations, this Policy formally establishes NCG's approach to income generation and fundraising and the ways in which risk and exposure (both financial and reputational) are managed and mitigated via agreed ways of working, including adherence to the Bid Submission Process.

2. Policy Statement

NCG is committed to developing investment priorities and generating income from external sources to contribute to our enhancement activity and our financial sustainability. This document provides clear guidance to staff seeking to secure external investment and outlines accountability structures and impacted policies.

3. Scope and Purpose

Approved by Corporation Board in March 2022, the Funding Bid Submission Process is an end-to-end process detailing the stages of approval required for the submission of external funding bids, tenders and applications and is detailed in section 7.

The purpose of this Policy is to confirm the arrangements and context for gaining the necessary approvals, NCG's wider approach to external investment, the basic principles for the management of such bids and proposals and the ways in which policy adherence supports NCG to mitigate financial and reputational risk and exposure of such investment.

The Policy extends to all external funding bids, tenders, frameworks and applications including those that NCG are a delivery partner, rather than a lead applicant. This includes any pre-bid / application work required to join frameworks, Dynamic Purchasing Systems, etc. that have no monetary value.

The Policy applies to all NCG employees and anyone working on behalf of NCG in the capacity as a contractor, consultant, agency worker and any other workers not paid through NCG's payroll, including all personnel affiliated with

third parties. It is the responsibility of staff carrying out the induction of new employees to ensure that the requirements of this Policy are communicated in an appropriate manner.

4. Objectives

The Policy aims to develop and embed ways of working that will ensure all staff understand, and work towards a set of key objectives including:

- Development of bids that align to NCG and local college strategic priorities.
- Compliance with NCG Financial Regulations, the Managing Public Money Framework and the Public Contract Regulations.
- Mitigation of financial and reputational risk and exposure.
- Increasing the chances of success by creating strong, winning bids / proposals through partnership working, supported by Professional Services.
- Creation of an efficient and lean approach with time and resources focused only on viable opportunities with approval required before a bid can be developed.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

External funding activity is deemed high risk and there are central controls in place to mitigate this risk managed centrally by Professional Service Teams:

- **Assurance and Risk** – Once approval to respond to a funding opportunity has been agreed, Assurance and Risk must be informed so they can contribute and assess any risks at draft bid stage.
- **Development** – Provide an overall coordination and management service of all Bids. NCG (as the legal entity) is the organisation which must have a single registration on all portals. Responsibility for managing and accessing these portals sits centrally and is managed by

the Development Team. Accounts should not be held individually by colleges and in instances where legacy accounts exist these should be deactivated once any live contracts have ceased. The Development Team will also ensure that timescales for and deadlines for responses to enable completion of a bid or SSQ within the funding application window are clearly communicated and adhered to.

- **Finance** – Review and approval of financial viability of the bid and any associated funding rules. All income, expenditure and working capital requirements must be identified and developed in conjunction with finance and their approval is required before a bid can be submitted.
- **IDES** – Capital projects included in bids will be subject to approval via the Capital Investment Panel. Capital bid submissions must be developed in conjunction with the Directors of IT and Estates. Any bids that require the return of Learner Data must also be flagged with the Director of LDS once stage one approval to respond has been agreed so they can contribute accordingly.
- **Legal and Contracts** – Responsible for reviewing all proposed contracts. Any available documentation e.g., contract, terms and conditions must be shared with the Legal and Contracts team at the earliest opportunity pre-bid submission so any contractual risks / queries can be raised within the specified bid timescale.
- **People** – From time-to-time bids may require information or data related to our People. This includes, but is not limited to policies, procedures and status of any kite marks or standards. Information of this nature must be requested from the People Team and shared only with their authorisation.
- **Procurement** - Colleges are responsible for acquiring all goods, services and works with support from the Procurement team, who facilitate the process to ensure compliance with the NCG Financial Regulations and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Procurement team will provide advice on procurement timescales to

inform the content of bids and facilitate the process should the bid be successful. If it is intended for any suppliers or subcontractors to be named in a bid, they must be appropriately procured before the bid is submitted.

Roles and responsibilities related to approval and sign off as per NCG Financial Regulations apply to:

- CEO
- CFO
- Corporation Board
- Principal / Executive Principal

Only authorised personnel can sign or declare information on behalf of NCG as per NCG Financial Regulations and once recommended to do so by the Contracts & Legal Team and Executive Director of Development.

Further information and support on the above can be sought from the Development Team.

6. Measurement and Review

The policy will be updated annually and published via NCG's publication scheme.

7. NCG Bid Submission Process

Stage One: Approval to respond (to a funding opportunity)

Relevant opportunities known to the Development Team will be shared with Principals and their named bid leads for consideration (copied to the appropriate Executive member).

These opportunities must be responded to, and go / no-go determined promptly. The required response time will be highlighted on circulation and will not exceed five working days of release (subject to the timeframe available). Reasons as to why an opportunity has not been progressed will be recorded and reviewed.

In instances when opportunities are not shared by the Development Team, colleagues must inform their Principal (or equivalent, if Professional Services) at the earliest opportunity if it is something they wish to pursue. If it is a capital project, it must have been approved via the NCG Capital Investment Panel process before it can proceed any further.

The NCG Development Team will provide feedback on opportunity suitability to confirm capacity, profitability and alignment to agreed priorities for funding and investment. Engagement with relevant impacted Professional Service must take place at this stage. For capital projects this includes IDES and Finance, along with confirmation of the outcome of the Capital Investment Panel.

Approval to proceed from the Principal OR Executive Principal OR Executive Lead must be sought before proceeding to develop a bid. The Development Team to be notified of any approval so they can coordinate and provide support and facilitate compliance with the NCG Bid Submission Process.

Stage Two: Draft Approval

Reviewing and assessing the quality of submissions in a timeframe that allows changes and updates to be made will increase the chances of success.

At draft stage, any requirements critical to the submission of the bid must be in place, including but not restricted to:

- Partnerships established and confirmed (if, subcontracting or there are named bid partners that we are required to distribute funding to, the Procurement Team must be consulted).

- Employers engaged / LSIP or Regional and National Policy compliant.
- Necessary evidence-base available or in development
- Project profile and Finance Business Case covering all income and costs and working capital requirements agreed and developed with finance and, where applicable (always for capital) relevant Professionals Service teams e.g. IT, Estates.
- Agreement of impacted college leaders (e.g., head of department / curriculum)

A draft must be shared with the Principal, relevant Finance Lead, the Legal, Governance, Assurance and Risk Team and Development Team, ideally a minimum of 10 working days before the final deadline (subject to funding body deadlines, date will be established through initial communications)

Stage Three: Final approval and sign off

All bids must gain the necessary level of sign off before they are submitted.

Full documentation and supporting documents to be shared (via location on Teams Channel) and approval as per NCG Financial Regulations to be adhered to (summarised as below).

Bids with a total contract value of <£49k:

- Sign off by Principal AND finance lead, (following confirmation of engagement with IDES for capital. Do not require sign off from any others (unless determined by Finance Regulations).
- Bids are not required to be reviewed by the Development Team. Although, guidance and support from the Development Team will be available to bids of this contract value if required.

Bids £50k - £499k and £500k+ total contract value:

- Sign off by the Principal AND Executive Principal AND finance lead (in addition to any others as determined by finance regs).
- Bids will be subject to review by the Legal, Governance, Assurance and Risk Team and the Development Team at draft and final stages.
- Additional requirements apply to capital bids and sign off will not be recommended to the above without evidence of engagement with relevant and impacted Professional Service teams. Capital projects must have been through all the relevant stages of the NCG capital investment panel process.

Stage Four: Outcome and Implementation

- Notification of how the outcome is shared with NCG will vary depending on the funder. Outcome to be shared (including any detail on embargos) with:
 - Appropriate member(s) of the Executive.
 - Principal.
 - Finance Lead and CFO.
 - Development Team.
 - Legal & Contracts team.
 - Chief Information, Data and Estates Officer.

Before any funding award is accepted all bids, must be re-reviewed and ability to proceed confirmed by:

- Finance – Including review of costs and profile.
- IDES – Including review and schedule of any proposed capital works.
- Legal & Contracts – including confirmation that contract terms and conditions are agreeable.
- Principals and Executive Principals.

If successful and we intend to proceed - notification must also be shared with:

- Procurement.
- Marketing.
- Any other relevant heads of service.

Transition to Project Implementation:

Project Implementation Meeting (PIM) to be organised by bid lead.

Attendance at the first project implementation meeting must include:

- Relevant Heads of Service e.g., Director of Estates.
- Legal, Governance, Assurance & Risk Team.
- Relevant Finance Team Member.
- Development Team.
- Procurement Team.

Minimum actions to be agreed at PIM (example):

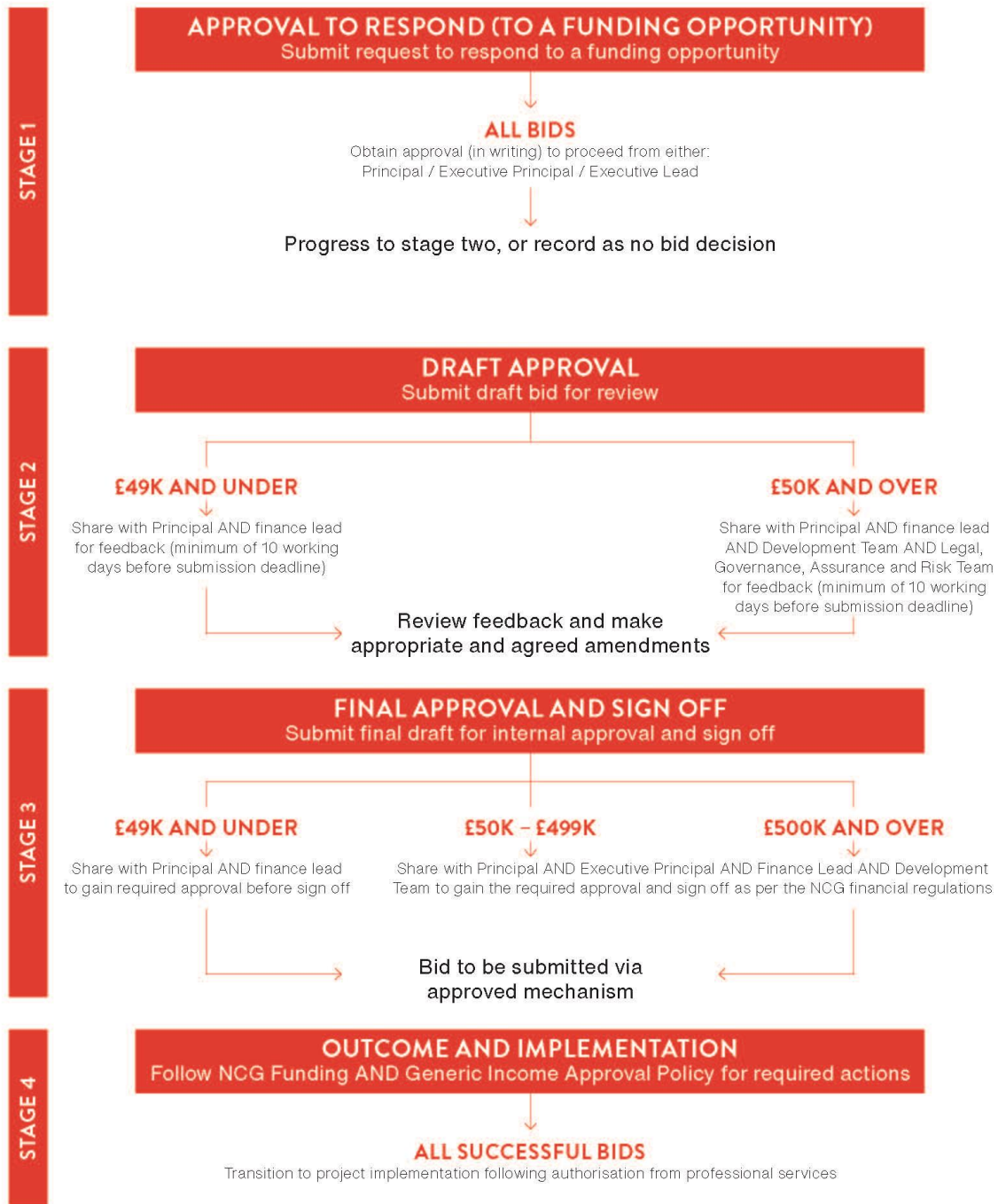
- Confirmation of Project Manager (this might be interim). They will assume immediate responsibility for project monitoring and managing change control.
- Confirm and agree project budget as outlined in the project agreement. This is the process by which change control will be managed and oversight for this sits with finance. Any future changes (and only with

agreement of funder) must start with the submission of a revised change control case.

- Confirm process and timeline for contract return – Legal and Contracts Team to attend and detail of any risks, clawback etc.
- Document any risks / complete risk register.

Appendix A – Bid Flow Chart

NCG BID SUBMISSION PROCESS



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