

POLICY / PROCEDURE TITLE		DATE OF APPROVAL
Funding Bid and Generic Income Approval Policy		October 2024
APPROVED BY	VERSION NO.	VALID UNTIL
Executive Board	2	October 2027

OWNER	Deputy Director Development		
GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD	Executive Director Development		
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>	Local Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>
PURPOSE	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.		
APPLICABLE TO	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.		
EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES ONLY]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	(If EA not applicable, please explain)		
KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY	<p>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 5 and summarised in Appendix A.</p> <p>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.</p>		
EXPECTED OUTCOME	Readers are expected to understand the organisational position on external funding and generic income, know their responsibilities in relation to the policy and comply with the terms of the policy.		

MISCELLANEOUS

LINKED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Regulations• Funding Bid Submission Process• Capital Investment Panel / Process
KEYWORDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding, Bid, Generic, Income, Approval

Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
	Yes	No	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in Section 2?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be YES
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Disability / Difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this could be yes or no as positive action is lawful. However, an explanation must be provided for clarity.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	The policy has been widely consulted on through colleges and professional services.		

1. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

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

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 Appendix A.

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 Expressions of Interest (EOI), pre-bid / application work required to join frameworks, Dynamic Purchasing Systems, etc. that have no monetary value.

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.

Bids, as defined above must be added onto the NCG Funding Bid Portal to gain the required approval at each of the stages defined in the NCG Bid Submission Process.

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. Bid Submission Process

The Bid Submission Process is now supported by the NCG Funding Bid Portal. All bids as defined in section 3, paragraph 2 of the Policy must be submitted for approval and support via the NCG Funding Bid Portal. Any prospective bids must be added in a timely manner to allow approval and review to take place within the funding timescale available and Bid Submission Process. The Funding Bid Portal will also support to ensure that Professional Service colleagues are alerted to bids as they pass through the stages of approval as outlined below.

Stage Zero: Expression of Interest

Stage Zero only applies in instances when a funder or partner has specified that an Expression of Interest should be submitted in the first instance. If the Expression of Interest (EOI) includes the return of any information such as a funding breakdown, costings, KPIs or student numbers then it should be submitted at Stage One and follow the subsequent stages for approval rather than added at Stage Zero.

Approval to proceed from the Principal OR Executive Principal OR Executive Lead must be sought before submitting an EOI.

The Business Development and Finance Teams to be notified of any approval so they can coordinate and provide support and facilitate compliance with the NCG Bid Submission Process and Financial Regulations.

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

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

These alerts 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 Business Development Team, colleagues must inform their Principal (or Executive member, if Professional Services) at the earliest opportunity if it is something they wish to pursue.

The Business Development and Finance Teams 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. If it is a capital project, it must have been approved via the NCG Capital Investment Panel process before it can proceed any further.

Approval to proceed from the Principal OR Executive Principal OR Executive Lead must be sought before proceeding to develop a bid. The Business Development Team to be notified of any approval so they can coordinate and provide support and facilitate compliance with the NCG Bid Submission Process. Once approval to proceed has been agreed, a meeting with key individuals involved in providing and completing the required information for the application must be held so actions can be agreed and completed timely. This meeting must include representation from the NCG Business Development and Finance Teams.

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 / Local Strategic Improvement Plan (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 and Finance Business Partner ideally a minimum of 10 working days before the final deadline (subject to external deadline, date to be established through initial communications). For bids over £50k a draft must also be shared with the Legal, Governance, Assurance and Risk Team and the Business Development Team,

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 value of £49,999 or less:

- Sign off by Principal AND Finance Business Partner, (in addition to any others as determined by the Finance Regulations AND following confirmation of engagement with IDES for capital projects).
- Bids of this value are not required to be shared with the Business Development Team prior to external submission although, guidance and support will be available if required.
- 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.

Bids with a total value of £50,000 or more:

- Sign off by the Principal AND Executive Principal AND Finance Business Partner (in addition to any others as determined by the Financial Regulations).
- Bids of this value to be shared with the Business Development Team prior to external submission.
- 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 application outcome is shared with NCG will vary depending on the funder. Outcome to be shared internally (including any detail on embargos) with:

- Appropriate member(s) of the Executive.
- Principal.
- Finance Business Partner and CFO.
- Business Development Team.
- Legal & Contracts Team.

- Chief Information, Data and Estates Officer.

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

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

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 and Governance Team.
- Assurance and Risk Team.
- Finance Team.
- Business 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.

Before we accept the funding award, as per Stage 4, we will undertake a thorough review of our ability to deliver the project before we sign the contract, therefore any changes after this point which require the funders permission must have the authorisation of the Group Financial Controller and the Executive Director Development and External Engagement.

- 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.

6. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

External funding activity is deemed high risk and there are central controls in place to mitigate this risk supported and 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.

Business 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 Business 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 Business Development Team will also ensure that timescales and deadlines for responses to enable completion of a bid or Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ) / Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PPQ) 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.

Information, Data, Estates Service (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 Learner Data Service 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:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Finance Officer
- Corporation Board
- Principal / Executive Principal
- Finance Business Partner / Director or Financial Controller

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 Business Development Team.

7. MEASUREMENT AND REVIEW

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

8. STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval, this policy will be uploaded to the policy portal and communicated to staff via The Business Round-Up and will be published on the NCG intranet and internet.

9. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details of our aims and objectives are outlined in our [Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy](#).

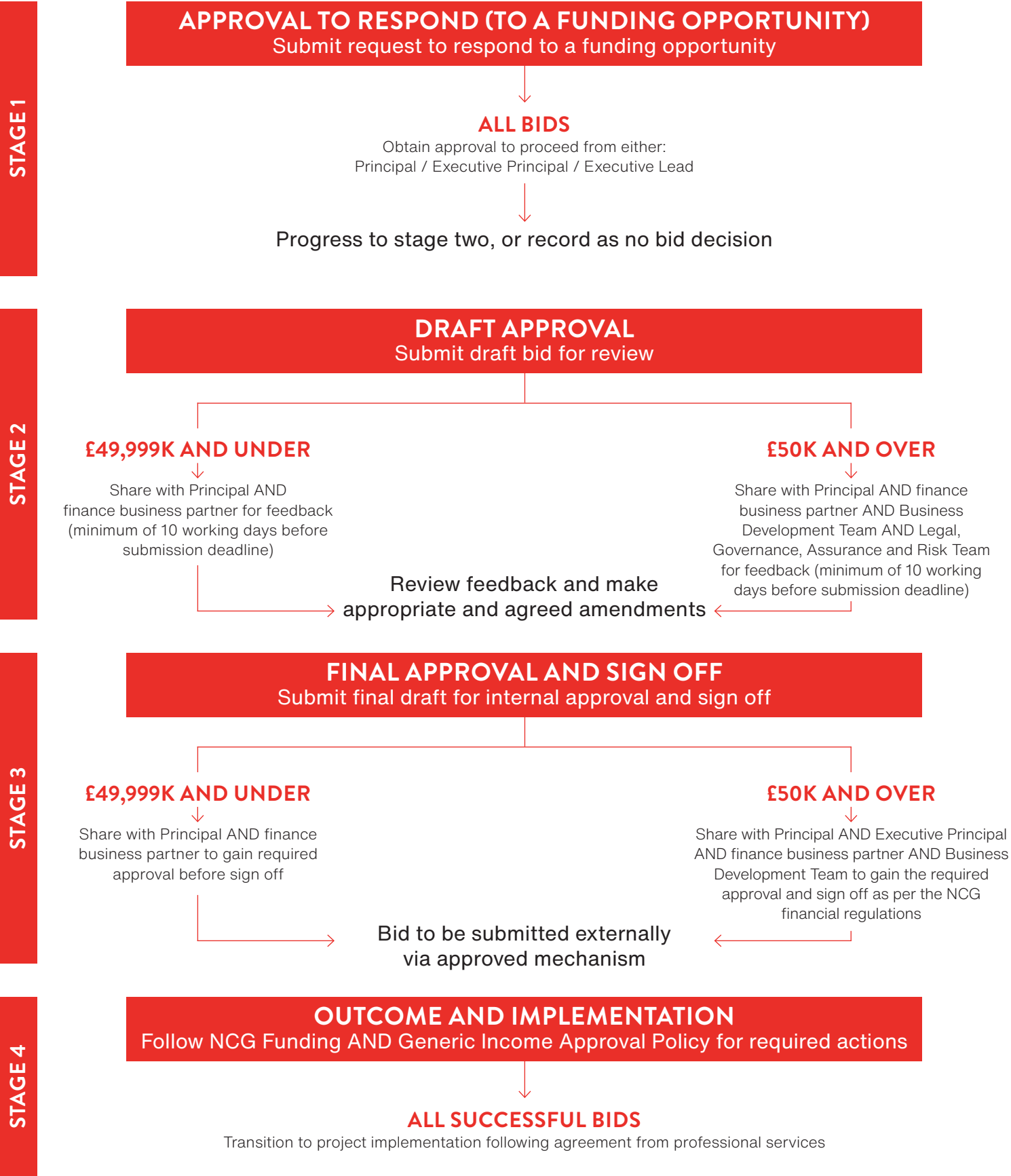
This policy has been assessed to identify any potential for adverse or positive impact on specific groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate either directly or indirectly. In applying this policy, we have considered eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people from diverse groups.

10. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with colleagues from the NCG colleges and professional services.

VERSION CONTROL				
Version No.	Documentation Section/Page No.	Description of Change and Rationale	Author/Reviewer	Date Revised
1	New Policy	N/A	Deputy Director Development	June 2023
2	Scheduled Review	Changes: Inclusion of stage zero to process and reference to NCG Bid Portal. Minor amendments to role changes	Deputy Director Development	June 2024

NCG BID SUBMISSION PROCESS



Please note: Stage Zero will also apply in instances when a funder or partner has specified that an expression of interest should be submitted in the first instance – please refer to the full Policy for the process.