



Collaborative Enhancement Project application guidance

Exclusively for QAA Members, our Collaborative Enhancement Project (CEP) funding supports bold, sector-led partnerships that take on real challenges in quality assurance and enhancement, to explore and advance quality-related themes.

Each project investigates a live issue in quality assurance or enhancement, aligning with the QAA Quality Code, generating insights that benefit the wider sector.

CEPs are designed not just to explore best practice, but to create it through meaningful collaboration, critical reflection, and transparent sector sharing.

Throughout the life of the project, participants are encouraged to document their journey in ways that share learning, spark new thinking, and engage colleagues across the sector, enabling other providers to adopt and adapt similar innovations within their own contexts.

By testing new ideas and generating insight, CEPs spark learning, drive change and create lasting impact across the sector.

These projects don't just share good practice; they help shape it.

Who is eligible to lead or partner a Collaborative Enhancement Project?

Please note, both project lead and partners must be members of QAA.

Who can lead a CEP?

Universities, colleges and specialist independent providers with the following membership:

- Full UK members
- Accredited International members
- Associate International members

Who can be a project partner for a CEP?

Universities, colleges and specialist independent providers with the following membership:

- Full UK members (from Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland)
- UK Introductory members (from Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland)
- Accredited International members
- Associate International members

If you're unsure if your provider is a QAA member, please check out the list on [our website](#).

What funding is available?

Funding of between £3,000 and £15,000 is available for each successful project.

This funding supports both the project delivery and the development of practical insights and learning experiences that can be shared across the sector.

In Wales, up to two successful project proposals will be jointly funded by the QAA and Medr (the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research), however, project partners do not have to be from a Welsh provider.

What can the funding support?

Eligible activities for funding might include:

- Support for involvement of student collaborators
- Support for engaging participants in research and consultation activities
- Professional development for project team
- Support for hosting project-related meetings, events and activities
- Support for the creation and preparation of project materials and outputs
- Specialist software and/or hardware needed for the project, which may include subscriptions
- Knowledge exchange and dissemination events and activities.

Costing

You should be as accurate as possible in your costing and overall budget request. Your institution may require you to do a full costing before applying as part of its research funding processes. Please ensure that appropriate departments and personnel are notified of your application and relevant internal procedures followed.

Value for money

When assessing value for money, we may consider whether the outcomes proposed are proportionate to the amount of funding requested. However, we fully recognise that some types of project activity naturally incur higher costs, and proposals will not be disadvantaged based on cost alone.

Application structure

The application is divided into distinct sections, most containing a set word limit:

- Project title
- Name of lead provider
- Project lead (name, job title, email address)
- Number of project partners
- Name(s) of QAA Member partner institutions and collaborators (name, job title, email address)

- Collaborative Enhancement Project (CEP) theme addressed
- Link to QAA Quality Code
- Project introduction and outline (200 words max; if appropriate, include any references in the dedicated box below)
- Project objectives (100 words max)
- Approach and methodology (100 words max)
- Success and ongoing Impact (50 words max)
- Project plan
- Impact on students (50 words max)
- Collaboration (50 words max)
- Scalability (50 words max)
- Wider stakeholders (50 words max)
- Impact on sector practice (50 words max)
- Sustainability (50 words max)
- Total funding request
- Costing
- Link to institutional Modern Slavery Statement
- Link to institutional Net Zero policy
- References (where used)

As part of your application, it is important to demonstrate a clear and meaningful commitment to Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI). You should embed EEDI principles and considerations throughout all aspects of your project, from design to methodology and dissemination. There is no allocated section for EEDI, so please incorporate EEDI considerations throughout the application.

If you are a UK institution, you need to state where your project aligns with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024](#), citing the relevant Principle(s) and Key Practices in full.

If you are an international institution, please indicate which Standard(s) of the [European Standards and Guidelines \(ESG\)](#) the project aligns with and seeks to demonstrate enhancement of.

Please note we expect projects to start between January and July 2026 and for their duration to be no longer than 18 months.

Project alignment

Your project should align with at least one of our CEP themes:

Theme 1: From compliance to catalyst: Embedding quality as a driver of transformational change

We are looking to fund projects that demonstrate quality initiatives that actively shape culture, empower staff and enable bold moves in learning and teaching.

Projects might include:

- The redesigning of quality assurance to unlock creativity and innovation
- The embedding of enhancement-led thinking across disciplines, departments, institution
- The utilisation of quality teams as strategic partners in institutional transformation and partnerships
- A shift in the language and mindset around quality from compliance to enhancement
- An innovative approach to quality assuring diverse modular provision
- The innovative design of quality assurance methods, that enable critical use of AI in the learning experience

Theme 2: Designing for impact: Reimagining quality processes to cultivate excellent practice

We are looking to fund projects that demonstrate smart design, digital innovation, and empowerment in quality assurance and enhancement.

Projects might include:

- Innovative streamlining to maintain robust quality oversight with tighter resource
- The engagement of students and staff to co-create effective review models
- The embedding of reflection and enhancement into everyday practice
- The replacing of compliance-heavy systems with agile, improvement-led models
- The use of Gen AI or data analytics for effective quality processes

Theme 3: Innovating with integrity: Quality-led transformation in curriculum, Pedagogy and assessment

We are looking to fund projects that demonstrate innovation within a quality-enhanced environment, whilst ensuring that creativity aligns with credibility and value for learners.

Projects might include:

- The redesigning of quality frameworks that support experimentation in assessment
- The integration of student-led learning models with robust QA principles
- The utilisation of quality data to drive pedagogical innovation
- The building of rapid innovation cycles for curriculum redesign
- The inclusion of skills or employer-led design in programme creation

Theme 4: Cross-sector and international collaboration

We are looking to fund projects that demonstrate ambitious approaches to sector-wide improvement, learning across contexts, across nations and/or co-developing with colleagues from international providers or partnerships.

Projects might include:

- Building transnational QA&E partnerships for shared learning and benchmarking
- The embedding of effective cross-sector working practices with partners such as industry, community, tertiary or TNE
- The adaption or adoption of global trends in quality to inspire institutional innovation
- The creation of inclusive, globally informed QA&E strategies
- Approaches to partnership provision that drive enhancement in both partners

Expected flexible outputs: Sharing learning along the way

We are looking for evidence of identified potential outlets for communicating insights emerging from CEPs, in ways that are accessible, engaging, and useful to others in the sector. These outputs are intended to be creative and responsive, shaped by what the project uncovers, not just what it sets out to do.

As part of the funding criteria, QAA asks the **Project Plan section** of the application to include the following five emergent opportunities to share learning, provoke thought, and engage others during the life of the project.

We encourage project teams to think creatively and strategically about the most effective ways to share learning and tailoring approaches to suit their work and audiences. Teams should build in time and resources to ensure these outputs are meaningful.

Therefore, please identify potential opportunities for the following five flexible outputs within your project plan and timeline. The fifth output should mark and celebrate the end of your project.

QAA is excited to support these outputs as part of your project. Where there is strong alignment with our marketing and communications strategy, we may be able to facilitate or co-create some of them. However, please note that the primary responsibility for planning, producing, and delivering these outputs lies with project teams, as part of their funded work.

The five flexible outputs

A Quick Read

A short, accessible written piece, such as a blog, insight snapshot, or reflective resource or social media challenge, that captures a key idea, challenge, or learning moment.

An Interesting Listen

A podcast, social media sound bite, audio diary, or recorded conversation/interview, that brings voices from the project to life and explores emerging themes in a conversational format.

An Engaging Watch

A short video, animation, visual story event presentation (could be a QAA event) or webinar that communicates a key message or learning in a dynamic and shareable way.

An Interactive Activity

A tool, an activity, an interactive module, a workshop, or participatory exercise that others can use to explore similar questions or apply your learning in their own context

An In-Depth Read

We ask that this longer-form, reflective piece is the summative submission of your project, synthesising learning and experience, not as an evaluation of success, but as a contribution to sector knowledge. We will provide a standardised structure to support comparability across all projects. This is a sector-facing reflection that asks: What did we learn that others need to know? It should explore the project's context, decisions, tensions, and insights in a way that is honest, useful, and thought-provoking. It is not a judgment of project success, but a thoughtful exploration of what the project revealed about the broader landscape, while allowing space for storytelling, nuance, and critical reflection

If you have any questions on the application, please contact us at membership@qaa.ac.uk.

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