



International Collaborative Enhancement Project application guidance

Exclusively for QAA Accredited International Members and Associate International Members, our International Collaborative Enhancement Project (ICEP) funding supports partnerships that take on real challenges in quality assurance and enhancement, to explore and advance quality-related themes.

ICEPs investigate a live issue in quality assurance or enhancement. Projects should generate meaningful outcomes and shared learning that benefits the institution, as well as the wider Higher Education sector. Projects should demonstrate the potential to make a positive contribution at national level, within a regional or international context, or within a defined market sector.

ICEPs 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, ICEPs spark learning, drive change and create lasting impact across the sector.

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

What does 'collaboration' mean for you?

There are two ways in which an ICEP can be collaborative:

1. Funding is provided for a project that seeks to enhance quality across multiple areas within your institution. The project should not be focused just within one academic department, school or faculty; there needs to be benefit across the institution. For example, bringing in professional services such as quality teams alongside academics and leaders from a broad range of disciplines.
2. Funding is provided for a project where the lead institution partners with one or more academic institutions. Work will be carried out in collaboration between the lead institution and the partner institutions. Working with a partner can strengthen the scope, impact and dissemination of the project. Partners can be from within your country's higher education sector, or be international. Outcomes should benefit all institutions involved in the project.

Who is eligible to lead or partner an International Collaborative Enhancement Project?

Who can lead an ICEP?

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

- Accredited International members
- Associate International members

Who can be a project partner for an ICEP?

If you choose to collaborate with a partner, the partner needs to be an academic institution, and it does not need to be another QAA member.

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

What funding is available?

- Accredited International Members can apply for up to £15,000.
- Associate International Members can apply for up to £10,000.

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

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.

Project alignment

Your project should align with **one** of our five Membership themes below. We have suggested areas of focus, but we welcome applications across the range of issues and activity within these themes:

1: Curriculum redesign

- Programme architecture
- Inclusive, flexible and modular design
- Industry and future skills

2: Strengthening partnerships oversight

- Governance and accountability
- Relationship and capability
- Managing risk

3: Responding to emerging policy and regulatory change

- Meeting evolving regulatory requirements

4: Future-proofing assessment

- Authentic assessment for future skills
- Balancing integrity and innovation
- Critical AI design

5: Transforming quality processes

- Protecting academic standards
- Driving efficiency and innovation
- Data informed decision making

Expected flexible outputs: Sharing learning along the way

We are looking for evidence of identified potential outlets for communicating insights emerging from ICEPs, 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.

Application structure

The application is divided into distinct sections, most containing a set word limit. Please note that the application form will not automatically save progress, so we suggest planning out your application text separately and then adding it to the application form text boxes:

- **Project title**
 - Please keep this to between 5 and 10 words
- **Name of lead provider**
- **Project lead** (name, job title, email address)
- **Number of project partners** (not including the lead provider)
 - Please note that all project partners must be QAA Members for the duration of the project.
- **Name(s) of QAA Member partner institutions and collaborators (name, job title, email address)**
 - By adding institutions' details, you are confirming that they have agreed to be part of the project. Please note that you can include additional institutions as the project proceeds, but you need at least one partner to begin.
- **Collaborative Enhancement Project (CEP) theme addressed**
 - Select one theme only.
- **Project introduction and outline** (500 words max)

Provide a detailed description of the proposed project. As part of this, you should:

 - Set the context and outline the overall aim(s) of the project. What problem or issue is it trying to address? What is it fundamentally going to achieve?
 - Detail the specific objectives, which may include the outputs, outcomes, and learning from the project.
 - Outline how the project will be conducted.
- **Collaboration** (200 words max)
 - What are your chosen HE/FE partners bringing to the project?
 - How will you work with your these to achieve the project objectives?
 - How will you work with students to achieve the project objectives?
- **Impact** (200 words max)
 - Explain how you will measure the impact and success of the project, and the ongoing benefits of the project following its completion.
 - How can the practices and outcomes be scaled to institutional level, to benefit across departments and faculties?
 - How will the project advance practice more broadly in your area of activity, and potentially for the HE sector as whole?

- **Project Timeline** (300 words max)
Provide a structured project timeline, representing key stages/phases, milestones/deliverables and indicative timing. This may include:
 - Ethics approval (if required)
 - Employment of project staff (if required)
 - Schedule for project oversight and engagement with partners
 - Partner and wider sector meetings and consultation
 - Publication of outputs
 - Other dissemination activities
- **Five Flexible Outputs** (200 words max; see guidance above)
- **Total funding request** (£)
- **Costing**
 - Please include a breakdown of the budget, to include allocation (£) against activity/resource.
- **Link to institutional Modern Slavery Statement**

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

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