



Advance HE Collaborative Development Fund: New challenges, new solutions

Application pack

College-based HE Network: a collaborative space
for developing HE culture and practice

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1. Invitation to apply

This specification invites applications to lead and deliver a further education college-based higher education (HE) project on behalf of Advance HE entitled 'College-based HE Network: a collaborative space for developing higher education culture and practice'. The principal aim for this project is to co-create spaces for leaders of college-based tertiary or higher education across the UK to come together and share practices, devise solutions to meet their challenges and opportunities, and build stronger links with the Advance HE community. This network will provide a space to link college-based HE providers in all UK nations and deliver on areas of focus that are more prominent in college-based HE, such as the further development of a HE scholarship culture and the navigation of competing regulatory demands. The network will seek to provide solutions and guidelines to address shared challenges for the benefit of Advance HE's college members.

This network will only be open to members of Advance HE who are further education college-based HE providers and therefore applicants to lead this network must fit these criteria. We particularly welcome applicants from diverse and under-represented backgrounds to apply.

Advance HE

Advance HE was formed in March 2018, following the merger of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Advance HE is a global member-led organisation and a registered charity that is dedicated to the development and enhancement of higher education for the benefit of students, staff and society.

By further developing expertise and new thinking Advance HE can help institutions meet the challenges of the present and evolving HE sector landscape.

We bring together HE-focused expertise in governance, leadership, teaching and learning, and equality, diversity and inclusion, to help deliver world-leading teaching, research and scholarship, and student outcomes. We do this through the provision of specialist knowledge and resources, externally recognised benchmarking and recognition schemes, and a member-focused, collaborative approach.

Further information about Advance HE is [available on our website](#).

We currently have 390 members in over 27 countries, comprising universities, colleges, research institutes and other forms of higher education provider (HEP).

2. Application information

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Overview Context and Aims

Advance HE has made a strategic commitment to provide enhanced support to our college-based HE members as part of our [Advance HE Strategy 2021-24](#). By working with our college-based HE members and co-creating a network we aim to give a specific collaborative space to address the key challenges in college-based HE and improve member support. The challenge is often explained to Advance HE by our college members as one of creating a culture of developing scholarship and research across learning and teaching, leadership and governance, grounded in inclusivity.

We wish to commission a convening college-based HEP who will be responsible for working with Advance HE to lead the development of the network, co-creating the space with its members and drawing on our collective expertise, to the benefit of Advance HE's college members. As of October 2021 Advance HE has over 390 members, of which 62 are further education college-based higher education providers. These are split between the following nations:

- + England – 45
- + Scotland – 4
- + Wales – 7
- + Northern Ireland – 5
- + Isle of Man – 1

We know that college-based HE is complex and takes many different forms across a broad range of provision and whilst there is 'no one size fits all' model for college HE there are a set of uniting factors that this network can have the collaborative space to explore. Research undertaken with our college HE members indicates that the following key challenges persist:

- + balancing multiple demands on time across a varied portfolio of work
 - + ensuring the success of high proportions of widening participation students
 - + evidencing outcomes of success both internally to the Board and to regulators or funders
 - + ensuring staff and Board members understand the HE operating and regulatory landscape so that they are equipped to deliver and assure HE objectives
 - + balancing the demands and scales of further and higher education provision, including staff with dual responsibility, while creating a sustainable HE culture
-

- + supporting staff development in the context of intensive teaching requirements
- + ensuring high quality and standards for course provision alongside working with validating providers.

In addition, there is no singular governance model for college HE; colleges often have complex governance arrangements working with multiple regulators or funding bodies depending on their location and provision. These can include the Department for Education, Ofsted, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Office for Students and funding bodies such as the Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales or the Department for the Economy. As such, this creates a complex landscape for governors in college HE in terms of meeting regulatory requirements, strategic development and seeking assurances requiring complex information and a significant depth and breadth of knowledge. We consistently hear from our members about the challenge this presents. We aim to start to address this gap through sharing of practice and learning from each other in a cross-nation initiative.

We anticipate that the network lead institution will frame and co-create the network with its member college HE providers such that it covers the most useful ground. Advance HE expertise and experience across teaching and learning, equality, diversity and inclusion, and leadership and governance can be drawn upon to support the network.

Alongside the development and leadership of a network, Advance HE will be looking for how the learning from this network can be communicated back to members, for example through video briefings or publications. This could include a practical guide developed by the network addressing the specific concerns of colleges in a wider HE environment.

The aim of the project is therefore twofold:

- + to meet the needs of college HE members for sharing of practice and knowledge across the range of HE activity in pursuit of developing sustained and inclusive HE cultures in college settings that meet internal and external drivers
- + to enhance our support for our college HE members drawing on our expertise across learning and teaching, equality diversity and inclusion, and leadership and governance.

2.1.2 Intended Project Deliverables

Advance HE has college members in all UK nations and it is important that applicants consider how this applies to the network.

The project should seek to deliver:

1. A network of college HE leaders, ideally for both staff and governors, co-creating a sustained community of practice focusing on the areas which matter most to members. The network should meet regularly.
2. A range of practice-sharing 'insight' outputs drawing on the nature and range of members'¹ work undertaken to date to build a HE culture. This could include:
 - a. development of learning and teaching strategies
 - b. differing approaches towards delivering a high quality student experience
 - c. how colleges embed and evaluate equality, diversity and inclusion work in HE and an understanding of intersectionality amongst their students and staff
 - d. how colleges develop support for the development of staff as HE practitioners
 - e. how colleges organise their governance arrangements to ensure sufficient assurance of HE and support their staff and Board members to understand the HE landscape
 - f. future output recommendations to support the development college HE
 - g. the development of a practical guide of "What Works" for the college HE members and an executive summary for colleges who are not Advance HE members.
3. A curated online space on Advance HE Connect for discussions to continue outside of allotted meetings and sharing of key resources.

¹ We have members in all 4 UK nations in respect to HE context, however the vast majority are in the England. To that end there will be a bias in the project towards the experiences of members in those countries. Nonetheless, we wish to take an inclusive approach and draw upon our range of members across all UK nations.

2.2 Methodology

Advance HE invites submissions to outline a proposed methodology for delivering the project within the allotted timeframe up to a maximum value of £10,000 which will be used to assist selection. Please give consideration to how you would co-create the network's approach and areas of focus, as well as range of outputs, with network members as well as Advance HE.

The successful applicant to meet the following key deliverables by the agreed dates:

Date	Key Deliverables
February 2022	Setting up of the network
March 2022	Hosting of initial network meeting
March-December 2022	Hosting of regular meetings on either a monthly or bi-monthly basis
June 2022	Production of insights report and recommendations for future outputs
December 2022	Submission of final practical guide of 'What Works' and executive summary.

The team(s) will need to consider issues of confidentiality for each participating college in terms of the production and dissemination of the report(s). Furthermore, issues of staff confidentiality will need to be carefully considered to ensure an appropriate ethical response in relation to participant anonymity.

In relation to the possible use of any qualitative survey, the team(s) will need to adopt an inclusive and accessible methodological approach, recognising the diversity of the staff population and the importance of collecting input from across the spectrum of experiences and opinions of our members as a diverse and global community. Decisions on methods will need to be carefully considered in relation to time, location and accessibility to ensure meaningful involvement. For example, it may be possible to group interviews and focus groups by location or conduct online/telephone interviews. The team(s) will need to agree the project methods with Advance HE.

Before the project commences the project team will be required to confirm that you have received any appropriate ethical approval required for the use of data and information collected and disseminated as part of this grant.

2.3 Outputs

The team(s) will be expected to produce a range of outputs. Interim outputs will include regularly reporting to Advance HE on progress. The appointed team(s) should allow for up to six meetings with the Advance HE project manager to agree strategy and monitor progress.

The final project outputs will include a report to Advance HE providing an overview of the findings and creation of key recommendations as a practical guide. Advance HE potentially sees the outputs including:

- + to host regular network meeting on a monthly or bi-monthly basis online with an annual face-to-face meeting
- + case studies suitable for public sharing of best practice (these can be in the form of short videos, blogs, downloadable resources – creativity welcomed)
- + an interactive presentation to members as part of a project wrap-up webinar.
- + production of a final practical report and guide in line with Advance HE's 'What Works' suite of resources

For transparency, it is expected that the final report and outputs are primarily shared with member institutions. To be agreed, some aspects will be shared with the wider HE sector. The team(s) will need to present the project findings and recommendations at dissemination events as agreed by Advance HE.

All data collected by the team(s) during the course of the project shall be passed to Advance HE at the conclusion of the project and any copies of said data, or related analysis, held by the team(s), are to be destroyed at this point.

2.4 Outcome

The network will provide evidence which would identify and collate practice from as wide a range of college members as possible; analyse and identify the themes in this practice; follow up with some lessons learned case studies from a range of college members; identify the areas that should be prioritised for further work and produce a final guide for college members.

2.5 Application requirements

Teams should deliver a concise application, focusing on the proposed work and budget. The application should include the following information:

- + team and/or organisation details including name, legal status, full contact details and lead contact
- + details and/or CVs of staff who will undertake the work and a clear breakdown of how much time each person will contribute to the project
- + details of professional experience and expertise relevant to the project, including any experience gained in the HE and/or Research sector and/or in the governance of HE and/or Research
- + samples of other pieces of work which are similar in focus, scope and tone to the project
- + reasons for interest in undertaking the work
- + any other details considered relevant
- + proposed approach and methodology to deliver the project, including:
 - suggested timetable for the work, including key milestones and clear timescales for completing the project
 - details of how you will work closely with Advance HE, the institutions involved in the project and relevant sector stakeholders
 - details of any potential or actual sensitivities involved in undertaking the work and how they will be managed
 - details of how you will attract relevant participants to be involved in the project
 - risk assessment of the proposed approach and how the risks will be mitigated
 - outline of quality assurance processes
- + schedule of all costs including a detailed breakdown of how costs will be allocated in terms of staff hours, expenses, VAT (if applicable) etc, including any preferred variation to the payment terms (set out in **Section 2.9** below)
- + outline of the team or organisation's approach to equality and diversity
- + details of any claims of unlawful discrimination upheld against the team by any court or employment tribunal in the last three years
- + details of any outstanding claims of litigation against the team(s)
- + details of the team's insurer, the policy numbers, extent of cover, and expiry dates in respect of public liability and professional indemnity insurance, together with copies of the policies.

If the application contains a sub-contracting relationship, please state:

- + the main contractor and sub-contractors
- + the nature of the relationship.

2.6 Reasonable adjustments

Advance HE will consider reasonable adjustments as requested.

2.7 Conflicts of interest

Details of the team's policy on handling conflicts of interest which may exist or arise regarding this engagement must be provided. In the event that a director, partner, employee or employee's representative of the team has an interest or connection in Advance HE, please provide that person's full name, position and the nature of the connection or interest in Advance HE.

2.8 References

The name and contact details of two referees for whom the Team Lead has recently worked (within the past five years only) are to be available on request.

2.9 Fees

The total amount available for this work, including all fees and expenses is up to £10,000 including VAT. This includes all attendance fees, conference fees and expenses related to the project, including giving presentations at any sector dissemination events.

The printing costs of any final publication, and the costs of any dissemination events or conferences, will be borne by Advance HE.

Our preference is to pay for the work in three stages: a payment of 40% on signing the contract, a second payment of 40% on presentation of the draft report, and a final payment of 20% on receipt of the final report. Payments will be made on submission of an invoice.

Advance HE wishes to agree a fixed price for the work.

In calculating the fee, account should be taken of the fact that Advance HE is a registered educational charity and non-profit making body.

Advance HE is not bound to accept the lowest priced application and shall not be bound to accept the contractor as a sole supplier.

2.10 Application submission

Please complete the [online application form](#) in English.

The questions within the application form is provided in Appendix A to allow for drafting of proposals.

Applications will close at 12 noon (GMT) on Tuesday 21 December 2021.

Advance HE shall have the right to disqualify any teams who submit incomplete or late applications.

2.11 Selection criteria

In awarding the contract, Advance HE will consider the balance between the quality of the application and value for money, taking account of the factors listed in these guidelines and in particular the proposed methodology.

Each application shall be assessed on the following:

- + relevant experience and research credibility in the fields of higher education with a particular focus on college HE
- + understanding of the context, challenges and development of college HE across multiple UK nations
- + effectiveness of means for engaging the diversity and breath of Advance HE's 62 college HE members
- + appropriateness of the proposed methodology in terms of securing credible and robust project outcomes including considerations for delivering in a possible Covid-19 effected environment
- + feasibility of completing the proposed programme of work to a high quality within the specific timetable
- + understanding of the need to work closely with Advance HE throughout the project
- + risk mitigation
- + overall value for money.

As a charity with limited resources, we are unable to provide any feedback on unsuccessful applications.

A full assessment matrix can be found in Appendix B.

2.12 Timing

The project will be undertaken between January 2022 and December 2022. The team should note the following key dates:

- + deadline for receipt of applications: 12 noon (GMT) Tuesday 21 December 2021
- + opportunity to Advance HE to ask for clarifications if required: w/c 10 January 2022
- + award of application to successful team: w/c 17 January 2022
- + draft insights report and recommendations for future outputs report submitted by 27 May 2022
- + final draft of insights report and recommendations for future outputs report submitted by 12 noon on 30 June 2022
- + Submission of final practical guide of 'What Works' and executive summary by 1 December 2022.

The dates set out in this paragraph are provisional only and may be altered by Advance HE at its discretion.

Please note that all outputs of your project will need to be produced in Advance HE branding and ensure as broad a range of accessibility as possible. This will be supported by the Advance HE Marketing and Communications Team who will provide brand and style guides, assisting with briefings to marketing agencies, graphic designers and providing feedback. As such, all successful grant winners will be asked to meet with Advance HE's Marketing and Communications Team as part of project initiation to discuss specific branding and proofing requirements in order to agree timescales and budget for these activities prior to publication.

2.13 Contracting

This application is being issued by Advance HE. Any queries relating to the contract should be outlined in a cover letter to your submission.

2.14 Reporting responsibilities

The successful team will report to Hannah Cook, Memberships Executive.

2.15 Further information

For further details, please contact the [Membership Services Team](#), Advance HE.

Any queries should clearly reference the appropriate paragraph in the documentation and, to the extent possible, should be aggregated rather than sent individually. The deadline for submitting queries is **12 noon (GMT) on 7 December 2021**.

Advance HE will respond to all reasonable requests for clarification of any aspect of this application pack and supporting documents as soon as is reasonably possible.

For open applications: Please note that the response to your query may be posted on Advance HE's website without identifying you, therefore your query should not contain any details which are confidential. Please consult [Advance HE's website](#) for any updates.

Please note that no pre-application negotiations are permitted.

Appendix A

Advance HE Collaborative Development Fund: New challenges, new solutions Application Form

Section 1

1. Please identify which project you are applying for:
 - + Utilising the Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning for Strategic Change
 - + College-based HE Network: a collaborative space for developing HE culture and practice
 - + Exploring an integrated framework for equality charters
 - + The Future Student Experience Project
 - + Inclusive institutions: enabling and supporting culture change.

Section 2: Team Details

2. Please detail the Organisations represented in the application and the Lead Organisation for the project.
3. Please provide details of the Lead Contact (name, organisation employed at, role and full contact details)
4. Please provide details of the other team member including name, organisation employed at, role and full contact details.
5. Please upload a current CV for each member of the team. Please upload as an integrated single document with the organisation and project area that you are applying for in the title.

Section 3: Experience and Interests

6. Please provide details of the team's professional experience and expertise relevant to the project, including a clear breakdown of how much time each person will contribute to the project.
7. Please detail the team's reasons for wishing to undertake the work and any links to samples of other pieces of work which are similar in focus, scope and tone to the project.

Section 4: Approach and Methodology

8. Please detail your proposed approach and methodology to deliver the project, including:

- + suggested timetable for the work
- + key milestones and clear timescales for completing the project
- + details of how you will work closely with Advance HE
- + the institutions involved in the project and relevant sector stakeholders
- + details of any potential or actual sensitivities involved in undertaking the work and how they will be managed
- + details of how you will attract relevant participants to be involved in the project
- + risk assessment of the proposed approach and how the risks will be mitigated
- + outline of quality assurance processes.

Supporting documentation can be uploaded in the next questions if required.

9. If required, this is an area to upload files which support this methodology can be uploaded. Please upload as a single document with the organisation and project area (College HE Network) applying for.
10. Please confirm that ethical approval has been granted by the lead institution to carry out this project, or that this will be granted prior to contracting with Advance HE.

Section 5: Costing and Budget

11. Please detail the schedule of all costs including a detailed breakdown of how costs will be allocated in terms of staff hours, expenses, costs associated with the branding and accessibility requirements, VAT (if applicable) etc, including any preferred variation to the payment terms. A table or spreadsheet of schedule of costs can be uploaded in the next question if required.
12. If required, this is an area to upload a schedule of costs. Please upload as a single document with the organisation and project area applying for in the document title.

Section 6: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

13. Please outline the team's approach to equality and diversity and include an Equality Impact Assessment. If you wish to upload a document, you can do so at the next question. [Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment can be found here.](#)
14. If required, this is an area to upload files which support the Equality Impact Assessment. Please upload as a single document with the organisation and project area applying for in the title of the document.

Section 7: Legal

15. Please provide details of any claims of unlawful discrimination upheld against any member of the team by any court or employment tribunal in the last three years.
16. Please provide details of any outstanding claims of litigation against the any member of the team.
17. Please provide details of the lead organisation's (if a consortium) insurer, the policy numbers, extent of cover, and expiry dates in respect of public liability and professional indemnity insurance. Copies of the policy may be required for successful teams.

Section 8: Any Other Information

18. Please add any other details, links or information you would like considered with your application.

Appendix B

Scores can be awarded as a 0.5 (eg 0.5, 1.5, 2.5)	0	1	2	3
Relevant experience and research credibility in the fields of HE with a particular focus on college HE	The application demonstrates little or no relevant experience or research credibility	The application demonstrates some-what developed relevant experience or research credibility	The application demonstrates developed relevant experience or research credibility	The application demonstrates well developed relevant experience or research credibility
Understanding of the context, challenges and development of college HE across multiple UK nations	The application demonstrates little or no understanding of the context, challenges and development of college HE	The application demonstrates some-what developed understanding of the context, challenges and development of college HE	The application demonstrates developed understanding of the context, challenges and development of college HE	The application demonstrates well developed understanding of the context, challenges and development of college HE
Effectiveness of means for engaging the diversity and breath of Advance HE's 62 college HE members	The application demonstrates little or no means for engaging the diversity and breath of Advance HE's 62 college HE members	The application demonstrates some-what developed means for engaging the diversity and breath of Advance HE's 62 college HE members	The application demonstrates developed means for engaging the diversity and breath of Advance HE's 62 college HE members	The application demonstrates well developed means for engaging the diversity and breath of Advance HE's 62 college HE members

Appropriateness of the proposed methodology in terms of securing credible and robust project Outcomes including considerations for delivering in a possible Covid-19 effected environment	The application demonstrates little or no credible and robust project methodology	The application demonstrates some-what developed credible and robust project methodology	The application demonstrates developed credible and robust project methodology	The application demonstrates well developed credible and robust project methodology
Feasibility of completing the proposed programme of work to a high quality within the specific timetable	The application demonstrates little or no ability to complete the programme of work to a high quality within the specific timetable	The application demonstrates some ability to complete the programme of work to a high quality within the specific timetable	The application demonstrates developed plans to complete the programme of work to a high quality within the specific timetable	The application demonstrates well developed plans to complete the programme of work to a high quality within the specific timetable
Understanding of the need to work closely with Advance HE throughout the project	The application demonstrates little or no understanding of the need to work closely with Advance HE throughout the project	The application demonstrates some-what developed understanding of the need to work closely with Advance HE throughout the project	The application demonstrates developed understanding of the need to work closely with Advance HE throughout the project	The application demonstrates well developed understanding of the need to work closely with Advance HE throughout the project

Risk mitigation	The application demonstrates little or no risk mitigation	The application demonstrates some-what developed risk mitigation	The application demonstrates developed risk mitigation	The application demonstrates well developed risk mitigation
Overall value for money	The application demonstrates little or no overall value for money	The application demonstrates some-what developed overall value for money	The application demonstrates developed overall value for money	The application demonstrates well developed overall value for money

Comment on the ability of the methodology to meet the research areas:

1. A network of college HE leaders, ideally for both staff and governors, co-creating a sustained community of practice focusing on the areas which matter most to members. The network should meet regularly.
2. A range of practice-sharing ‘insight’ outputs drawing on the nature and range of members’² work undertaken to date to build a HE culture. This could include:
 - a. development of learning and teaching strategies
 - b. differing approaches towards delivering a high quality student experience
 - c. how colleges embed and evaluate equality, diversity and inclusion work in HE and an understanding of intersectionality amongst their students and staff
 - d. how colleges develop support for the development of staff as HE practitioners
 - e. the production of an insights report and future output recommendations to support the development college HE
 - f. the development of a practical guide of ‘What Works’ for the college HE members and an executive summary for colleges who are not Advance HE members.
3. A curated online space on Advance HE Connect for discussions to continue outside of allotted meetings and sharing of key resources.

² We have members in all four of the UK nations in respect to HE context, however the vast majority are in the England, to that end there will be a bias in the project towards the experiences of members in those countries. Nonetheless, we wish to take an inclusive approach and draw upon our range of members across all UK nations.

Contact us

General enquiries

+44 (0) 3300 416201
enquiries@advance-he.ac.uk
www.advance-he.ac.uk

Media enquiries

+44 (0) 1904 717500
communications@advance-he.ac.uk
www.advance-he.ac.uk/contact-us

   @AdvanceHE

Advance HE helps HE and research be the best they can be.

We are a member-led, sector-owned charity that works with institutions and higher education across the world to improve higher education for staff, students and society. We are experts in higher education with a particular focus on enhancing teaching and learning, effective governance, leadership development and tackling inequalities through our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work.

Our strategic goals to enhance confidence and trust in HE, address systemic inequalities and advance education to meet the evolving needs of students and society, support the work of our members and the HE sector. We deliver our support through professional development programmes and events, Fellowships, awards, student surveys and research, providing strategic change and consultancy services and through membership (including accreditation of teaching and learning, equality charters, knowledge and resources).

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+44 (0) 3300 416201 or publications@advance-he.ac.uk