



Briefing on the revised process to approve and develop new consortia-led apprenticeships, 30 September 2026 – Responses to questions

Responses to questions raised by attendees at the online briefing are set out below. Please note that further questions should be made through the online form when the Call for Proposals is published. Questions will be accepted up until 5pm on Tuesday 13 October 2026.

Question(s):

Re Eligibility to Apply slide - must the application come from the Education Provider rather than the Industry lead on the Consortium?

Can you clarify that the proposal has to come from an educational body? I thought it was to be employer lead?

Who submits the application, it is the industry body or the educational

Response:

The submission will come from the Industry Consortia Member.

Question:

Re the Consortium size - if the current consortium is larger than 12 organisations must it be reduced?

Response:

No, the consortium does not need to be reduced if the consortia is larger than twelve organisations.

Question:

Why are Overheads capped at 25%? Is there a rationale for this figure?



Response:

Overheads of 25% are in line to those applied to other funding initiatives. This is the maximum application which will be considered. As Overhead Costs will be analysed, there should be detailed on the breakdown of the amount included in the application.

Question:

Will templates for proposals and costing be made available to proposers?

Response:

There is no standard template for costings, each proposer should detail all operational and consortia management costs required. All eligible costs are outlined in section 3.6 of the Call for Proposals Document.

Question:

Will there be opportunities for employers that are not currently involved in a consortium to participate in, join, or help form future consortia under the new process?

Response:

Yes, employers can help to form future consortia under the new process.

Question:

Are applications by employer bodies representing an industry acceptable as proof of industry support, after all these organisations are the authoritative voice of their industry they represent, and they often provide their own training programmes

For the minimum of 15 employers, does a letter from a central government body representing several public bodies (e.g. OGCI or LGMA) count as one employer or as each body it represents?

Response:

There must be clear support provided from a minimum of 15 employers.

Question:

Could you confirm whether proposed progression routes, rather than guaranteed progression routes, would be sufficient at the proposal stage, as under the previous process



we were required to obtain letters of commitment from HEIs, which proved challenging given that the programme had not yet been developed and validated? Thanks

Response:

Yes – given this is a proposal, proposed progression routes are acceptable but these progression routes will require to be confirmed at development stage in order for the consortia-led apprenticeship to progress.

Question:

Will the online form allow us to build our application over the time period and save work as we progress with our application?

Response:

Yes – The online application form will allow proposers to build the application over time. The form consists of five sections and information entered into these sections can be saved at any time by clicking “Save Draft” at the top or bottom of the page. Once the proposal has been submitted, no further changes to the proposal can be made.

Question:

On the funding slide 4.1 and 4.2 how do these fit with 4.3. I presume 4.3 is the fee per apprentice per annum is this correct. There is no mention of the third level admin fee can you clarify where that fits in and how much this needs to be. 4.4 should these staff be included in the funding sought or 4.3. Can you please provide more detail around these headings.

Response:

4.3 is based on the total operational funding sought per apprentice. Proposed apprentice fees are separate to operational funding. Consortia Management costs should also be separately identified. All staff who will be involved in the delivery of the proposed CLA should be included in the operational funding sought.

Question:

We are up to stage 5 on the old process for apprenticeship approval. How does it work now with the new 5 step process?

Again pre-existing approved proposals, what are the implications for these?

Response:



Programmes already approved for development through the ten-step process will continue through that process.

Question:

Will applicants have sight of the evaluation rubric. Such access would ensure high-quality applications

Response:

Detail on scores for each section are set out in Section 5 in the Call for Proposals Document.

Question:

Will union representative still be required on all consortia?

Response:

Should a proposal be approved for development, confirmation will be required of the establishment of a fully operational consortium in line with QQI quality assurance guidelines for apprenticeship.

Question:

Can a professional body (a CLG representing the occupation) act as lead proposer, with an employer chairing the consortium steering group? Is an employer chair still required under the new process?

Response:

As apprenticeship in Ireland is industry-led, the lead proposer of a new apprenticeship is generally a representative of a particular industry or subset of an industry. The lead proposer will receive all formal communication on the apprenticeship proposal.

Question:

Are webinar attendees on a list for future communications about the call, or do we need to monitor a specific webpage for updates? What is it?

Response:

All information and updates will be on www.apprenticeship.ie



Question:

Is there a mechanism for an appeal of a negative decision by the evaluation panel, if the CSG feels that the decision is incorrect / unjustified?

Response:

There is no appeals process in place, however, unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback on their proposal.

Question:

Will proven consultation with Regional Skills strengthen a proposal?

Response:

It is not part of the evaluation process, but consultation would certainly be encouraged.

Question:

I am interested in learning more about the impact on the framework for cross-border apprenticeships. Can you explain how an apprentice based in Ireland can undertake an apprenticeship with an employer in another jurisdiction, under this new system and what supports, requirements, and qualifications apply?

Response:

Employers must be able to comply with the requirements i.-iv. set out below and be able to facilitate a monitoring and quality assurance visits to the company at a location within the State. Apprentices must also have a registered employment address within the State.

Pre-requisite information gathered from employer to facilitate the Employer Consent (Suitability to Train) application process, the SOLAS Authorised Officer gathers the following pre-requisite information from the employer:

- i. A valid Revenue issued Tax number, and Company Registration Office number as appropriate
 - ii. Details of the employer's registered office (a site office is not an acceptable alternative)
 - iii. Details of the employer's representative who will have overall responsibility for training the apprentice(s)
 - iv. A declaration of direct employment for the intended apprentice(s). Sub-contract employment arrangements are not acceptable for this purpose.
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Question:

Where an employer operates in Ireland and the UK, can apprentices gain work-based learning experience on projects in both jurisdictions while remaining on an Irish apprenticeship programme?

Response:

As above, the employer must be able to facilitate monitoring and quality assurance visits to the company at a location within the State. Legislation restricts SOLAS Authorised Officers from monitoring apprentices outside the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland and so the majority of the apprentice's work should be completed within the State.

Question:

How will industry demand be assessed when evaluating proposals?

Response:

Industry demand will be assessed taking into account details provided from the proposer on the relevant research sources, skills/labour needs reports, feedback from relevant industry support groups, broad-based industry consultation and level of employer support provided by them in their application.

Question:

What sectors are most likely to be prioritised under this call?

Response:

A list of ISCED codes for discipline areas which will be considered are provided in the call document.

Question:

How can employers influence future apprenticeship development?

Response:

By engaging with their regional and national education and training providers across the tertiary sector in the developing CLA proposals.



Question:

Are there opportunities for new apprenticeships that support the delivery of major infrastructure projects? For example, civil engineering technologies, construction management, digital engineering, sustainability, plant operations or utilities.

Response:

Yes, these are all areas we encourage apprenticeships applications from.

Question:

What emerging skills gaps are SOLAS and the HEA seeing across the construction and infrastructure sector?

Response:

This question does not relate to the application process

Question:

Have any proposals been identified previously that could support the infrastructure sector but have not yet progressed?

Response:

This question does not relate to the application process.

Question:

What level of employer commitment is expected from consortium members?

Response:

Consortium Steering Group Role

The Consortium Steering Group engages stakeholders in programme development, delivery, and evaluation. It ensures curriculum alignment with employer requirements and labour market dynamics, thereby fostering learner advancement. The group addresses regional and national demands by assessing funding and supply and delivers clear, accurate information to apprentices, the public, and employers. Additionally, it enhances occupational visibility and reinforces the apprenticeship brand, supports career guidance initiatives, and contributes to marketing activities.



Establishing binding agreements with stakeholders in accordance with national standards is another key responsibility, alongside coordinating recruitment and training activities with statutory regulators and employers. The group promotes equity and inclusion within programmes, providing comprehensive learning support as needed, and assesses employer training capacity, proactively addressing identified gaps. It determines and updates employer eligibility for apprentice training as appropriate, manages recruitment fluctuations, and responds effectively to redundancy concerns.

The Consortium Steering Group encourages growth and collaboration among employers and providers, conducts regular reviews of the occupation, programme, and its own operations, upholds compliance with established governance principles and regulatory mandates, and delegates specific responsibilities to the Coordinating Provider when resources permit.

The Consortium Steering Group and apprenticeship coordinator are crucial to the effective operation of consortia-led apprenticeships in Ireland. The CSG, guided by QQI statutory guidelines, includes key stakeholders such as employers, occupational regulators, and the coordinating provider. Its key role is to ensure that the apprenticeship programme is enterprise-led, meets the requirements of an occupation, and continues to evolve with the occupation over time, thereby fulfilling labour market needs. It meets regularly to review and plan programme delivery, supporting the apprenticeship coordinator in daily operations. The consortium typically comprises 7-12 members.

Question:

Can an employer join a consortium once a proposal has been submitted, or must all partners be confirmed before submission?

Response:

Yes, an employer can join a consortium once a proposal has been submitted, subject to approval from the Consortia Steering Group.

Question:

Can consortium funding support employer costs such as apprentice supervision, mentoring and on-the-job learning, and how should these costs be reflected in the funding submission?

Response:

Consortia Management Costs are associated with engagement with apprentices and employers, marketing and promotion of the programmes.



Question:

From an employer perspective, what level of written commitment will be required at proposal stage regarding apprentice numbers, employment duration, mentoring resources and capacity to deliver the required on-the-job learning?

Response:

A clear statement of active support from the employer for the proposed CLA programme.

Question:

Hi, will this session be recorded for distribution later?

Response:

Yes, it will be available on www.apprenticeship.ie
