

## Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund (RCF): assessment process

1. Full Proposals will be considered by the Council's Reconfiguration and Collaboration Committee, which will make recommendations to the full Council. The Committee's constitution, membership and terms of reference are provided at Annex C. Where appropriate, the Committee may seek advice from third parties, such as the Welsh Assembly Government, Research Councils and independent academic referees.
2. The Committee will assess each proposal to ensure that it addresses the following criteria. The proposal:
  - a. Provides a clear strategic vision of what is to be delivered, together with justification that this vision and the proposed means of achieving it are appropriate;
  - b. Provides clarity over how the proposal would deliver key elements of relevant Welsh Assembly Government priorities, as expressed in *Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales* ([http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/policy\\_strategy\\_and\\_planning/skillsthatforwales/?lang=en](http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/policy_strategy_and_planning/skillsthatforwales/?lang=en)), *Reaching Higher, One Wales*, the *Science Strategy* and other such policy statements;
  - c. Demonstrates profound and enduring landscape change in the Welsh HE sector, and potentially other substantial wider benefits, that would warrant support from the RCF (e.g. impact on the wider Transformation agenda for education and training in Wales);
  - d. Shows how the partner institutions will play into the proposed development to deliver greater benefits than the institutions acting alone;
  - e. Provides realistic financial plans that show the sustainability of the development beyond the period of any HEFCW funding;
  - f. Demonstrates support from other relevant funding bodies in the case of proposals involving cross-border or cross-sectoral collaboration;
  - g. Shows appropriate management that will ensure both successful delivery and the cohesiveness of the development on an ongoing basis;
  - h. Provides a suitable implementation plan with information on the timescale for delivery, targets and deliverables;
  - i. Shows an appreciation of the risks and how they are to be managed; and
  - j. Demonstrates that the impact on equality and diversity has been appropriately assessed.
3. In addition to the above criteria, further examples are provided below of features of a proposal that would either reinforce or undermine a case for support:

Reinforcing	Undermining
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear sense that proposal is a strategic priority for all partners, with real institutional buy-in</li> <li>• Sense that activities of partner institutions are to be permanently integrated/reconfigured under a unified management structure</li> <li>• Clear sense that the proposal would deliver significant added value</li> <li>• Strong emphasis on strategic outcomes of the proposal (e.g. wider benefits for Wales)</li> <li>• Strong/clear leadership with a capacity to allocate resources differentially between partners, according to overall strategic need</li> <li>• Plausible argument over potential sustainability post-funding (e.g. income streams and/or willingness to support any new posts)</li> <li>• Clear self-reflective analysis of strengths/weaknesses of partners, and where strengthening is needed</li> <li>• Clear sense of who the major competitor/comparator organisations are, and why this proposal will enable parity with them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bid for funding with no real sense of strategic priority to all partner institutions</li> <li>• Appearance of a loose network (e.g. research network) with limited integration/reconfiguration of partner institutions' activities</li> <li>• No real sense that proposal will deliver greater benefits than partners operating individually, as a limited partnership or as a loose network</li> <li>• Emphasis on proposal inputs (e.g. more staff) with no real sense of strategic outcomes</li> <li>• No real sense of firm leadership</li> <li>• Limited evidence to support sustainability post-funding (e.g. income projections and support for, or underwriting of, new posts)</li> <li>• Even division of any new staff posts across partners with no clear assessment of where most needed</li> <li>• No clear sense of who the major competitor/comparator organisations are, and why this proposal will enable parity with them.</li> </ul>

4. It should be noted that the RCF will not normally provide support for Masters or PhD studentships.

5. The Committee will prioritise suitable proposals for support on the basis of: the degree of contribution to HEFCW and Welsh Assembly Government strategic priorities and the urgency of timescale for implementation. The scoring method used to ensure consistency in the Committee's recommendations is available at [www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk).
6. HEFCW will need to apply to the Welsh Assembly Government for the release of funding if the cost of the proposal is over £200,000, has a substantial capital element, or if the proposal is considered novel or contentious. In this context, HEFCW must be in a position to demonstrate a case to the Welsh Assembly Government that is sound in relation to the objectives of the action proposed, specifies measurable strategic outcomes linked to those objectives, and gives details of arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work, both on an ongoing basis and on completion. While HEFCW will work with institutions to ensure it is in such a position, much of the onus in this respect will inevitably and properly lie with the bidding institution(s).