

DIGITAL INNOVATION FUND

UWE Bristol's Covid-19 Recovery Fund



Guidance for Assessors

About DIF

The [Digital Innovation Fund](#) (DIF) will help support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the West of England who are seeking to innovate and solve new challenges, including those created by Covid-19, and will seek to create new employment opportunities. Boosting the SME's capacity for research and development (R&D) commercialisation at this time will help businesses adapt to the new economic landscape and improve resilience. Innovation is the foundation of our recovery.

The University is offering grants of £10,000 - £40,000, to cover 35% of costs, to successful applicants. Through this grant programme we are unlocking private sector investment and enabling job creation. There is additional emphasis on innovative digital products, processes and services.

We welcome R&D digital initiatives from all sectors. We are particularly interested in projects that apply key enabling technologies such as:

- Cloud computing
- Cyber security/cryptography
- Quantum computing
- Data analytics
- Machine learning / AI
- Sensors
- Radio frequency
- Wireless / 5G
- Autonomous systems
- Digital media production
- Wired and photonic networks
- Machine vision
- AR / VR

Use of Assessments

The Assessors are asked to fill out assessor forms (provided) which are then used by Recommendation Panel to assist the decision-making process. We use 2-3 Reviewers per project. Panel members will also be able to read all the documentation provided by the applicant. The following notes are to help you to fill out the supplied form.

The Recommendation Panel will advance companies to due diligence. Companies who successfully pass due diligence will be offered a grant.

Assessor Guidance

Please score each section from 1-5 only (**please do not use zeros or half points**).

As well as the scores the wording you use is important. Please add a concise comment under each section (approx. 50 words, max 100 words – if a particular response requires more please do so if absolutely necessary). You can use the notes to caveat your score (e.g. due to lack of clarity in the application, or if you lack the specific detailed knowledge, please do so). We are interested in your opinion together with any rationale behind scores you give.

Contractually we are only able to support R&D projects, so this is the minimum hurdle that the company must overcome. We will be focussing almost entirely on Experimental Development projects defined as below in the latest General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).

'Experimental development' means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services. This may also include, for example, activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services;

Experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real life operating conditions where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set. This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes.

Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

Assessors Form

1. The Technology (Weighting: 20%)

How innovative is it?

This is an R&D scheme and routine product development is not supportable. Carefully consider the degree of innovation involved with the proposed work. Consider whether the project involves novelty in a field (by which we mean new to an industry or market) and/or technological innovation (by which we mean a technological development that will form an improved alternative, or the basis of a significant improvement, over existing products or processes).

Is it new in the field or completely novel or neither?

Is the project Digital Innovation?

Score 1 if no innovation (just product development in the field) or not digital Innovation

Score 3 If clearly some innovation

Score 5 if highly innovative: entirely new technology

2. Is this digital R&D? (Weighting: 20%)

The applicant must describe a digital scientific or technological advance that is being sought and why research or development work is required to address the uncertainty as to how this advance will be achieved. Scientific or technological uncertainty exists when knowledge of whether something is scientifically possible or technologically feasible, or how to achieve it in practice, is not readily available or deducible by a competent professional working in the field. In such cases a project involving some experimentation is required.

Score 1 if no evidence of challenges/ uncertainty with obvious developments only to be made, or not digital

Score 3 if some clear evidence of R&D in project but some standard development tasks as well

Score 5 if Strong research project with major digital challenges

3. The Business Proposition (market size/ potential) (Weighting: 10%)

These considerations include whether there is a market for the work, the size of the market, and the likelihood the company will reach market

Score 1 if little demonstration of a market for proposed product and how this market will be reached

Score 3 if reasonable confidence in the market and that it can be exploited

Score 5 if strong confidence in a significant market for company to exploit and likelihood of it being reached

4. Work Plan (Weighting: 5%)

How realistic is the work plan? Please comment on whether risks have been mitigated as far as possible and the likelihood that it will be completed within 1 year?

Score 1 if work plan is very basic and it is hard to comment on whether it is likely to be achieved in the timeframe or if it is clear but it looks unachievable

Score 3 if the work plan is adequate and there appears to be some risk mitigation

Score 5 if there is an excellent work plan giving high confidence of success

5. Applicant/ Business (Weighting: 5%)

Please comment on the company's track record/ability to deliver, and the track record/strength of the delivery team (depending on whether one or both of these aspects has been addressed by the applicant).

Score 1 if no evidence of real track record in delivering this type of project

Score 3 if some evidence amongst team of a track record in delivering similar projects

Score 5 if team has a strong track record of delivery

6. Added Value (what does the grant bring) (Weighting: 10%)

Grants will only be given if there is a good justification that they are essential for the project to go ahead or if they will significantly enhance its speed or scope

Score 1 if the project appears to be part of the company's ongoing work or no case is made for added value

Score 3 if there is a strong possibility that the grant will make the project happen (or at larger scale or more quickly)

Score 5 if project will only happen because of the grant, e.g. by leveraging private sector investment

7. Jobs created (Weighting: 15%)

The panel will consider the proposed figure for job creation, the rationale used for their calculation and **the likelihood that these are achievable**. Please give your view.

Score 1 if jobs figure is unclear or unrealistic or above £20k cost per job, or if little rationale is used

Score 3 if there is some rationale for the job figure and it is around £10k per job

Score 5 if there is a strong rationale for the jobs figure at £8.5k or less per job and the figure looks highly achievable

8. Justification of cost (Weighting: 5%)

Is the project costing clear and reasonable? Are subcontract costs justified?

Score 1 if costs section very thin or does not clearly relate to the project described

Score 3 if some detail on costs and link to the project description

Score 5 if all cost eligible, related to the project and clearly described

9. Value for Money (Weighting: 10%)

To take into account the Cost per job created and the likelihood that the project will deliver based on all criteria. Will the benefits be in the West of England (Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset or South Gloucestershire)?

Score 1 if the project is highly unlikely to deliver the programme outputs required, i.e. the match funding and the jobs in the South West

Score 3 if there is a reasonable likelihood of the project delivering the programme outputs

Score 5 if it is highly likely that the project will deliver the programme outputs

Covid-19

Companies have been asked to reflect on the impact of Covid-19 on their projects. It is not essential that a company's project is in response to the global pandemic and we will not be scoring companies based on their response in these questions. Their responses will be considered by the Recommendation Panel.