

Financial Guideline 2019/2020 - 06

Community & Comprehensive and Voluntary Secondary schools

School Excellence Fund – DEIS

1. Introduction

The School Excellence Fund-DEIS (SEF-DEIS) is an innovation of the Department of Education and Skills which aims to support schools to address the gap in attainment between the most and least educationally disadvantaged children. This initiative is intended to support schools to explore innovative proposals and approaches which are context-specific and aimed at improving learner outcomes.

The School Excellence Fund-DEIS program is specifically targeted at schools within the DEIS scheme. However, consideration may be given to clusters of DEIS and non-DEIS schools where project proposals are primarily aimed at enhancing outcomes for the educationally disadvantaged learners. Applications from clusters which include early years' settings, special schools and Youthreach centers will also be welcomed.

Further information on the program can be found [here](#).

2. Phase three of SEF-DEIS

Twenty clusters of schools are currently involved in SEF-DEIS. These clusters, typically comprising three or four schools, are working cross-sectoral, with the support of DES inspectors, to introduce creative and innovative strategies and approaches to improve learner outcomes.

The Department now welcomes applications from schools for inclusion in the third phase of the SEF-DEIS. Application forms are available [here](#).

The closing date for receipt of applications from clusters of schools is 27 September 2019. Schools selected to participate in phase three of the program will commence work on the project in November 2019.

Completed application forms should be forwarded to sef@education.gov.ie

3. Financial requirements

Funding provided for a specific purpose, such as for the SEF-DEIS, must be used only for the purpose for which it is granted. Income and expenditure accounts should be retained by the cluster, and made available if, and when, required by officers of the Department of Education and Skills and/or the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The lead school in each cluster is responsible for the financial management of all funding provided under SEF-DEIS. The total grant will be paid to the lead school by Social Inclusion Unit in the Department. The other school(s) in the cluster should retain receipts for any expenditure items under SEF-DEIS. They should submit a copy of each receipt together with a request from their Board of Management for drawdown of SEF-DEIS funding to the lead school. The lead school should consider each request received and if all is in order the lead school should arrange the transfer of funding to the other school(s) in the cluster. Each school participating in the cluster is responsible for the governance of its accounts in the normal manner.

Each Cluster is required to:

1. carry out the project in accordance with the Guidance Document and in line with the details as set out their application form,
2. use resources provided under SEF-DEIS in accordance with the key objective of their project,
3. monitor and evaluate the project on an ongoing basis,
4. report progress to the Department annually,
5. comply with financial oversight requirements of the program, including procurement and maintaining financial records,
6. ensure the total cumulative spending for the cluster does not exceed the total grant, and
7. limit carryover from one financial year to the next to a minimum.

Lead schools can account for unspent funds on their balance sheet under code 2180 School Excellence Fund unspent and can account for non-capital expenditure under code 4815 School Excellence Fund- Step up Project Expense.

Please email sef@education.gov.ie with any queries relating to the SEF-DEIS project.

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