CareerTech Challenge Fund
Frequently Asked Questions

If you have questions about the CareerTech Challenge Fund which are not answered in the FAQs or elsewhere on this website, please contact us by emailing careertech@nesta.org.uk

Please ensure you have read our Terms and Conditions

FAQ List:

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1. What is the CareerTech Challenge?

1.1. What is the CareerTech Challenge?

The future of work is changing, providing opportunities for new careers and novel ways of working. We want to help prepare the workforce and provide the right tools and technologies to enable people to envision their futures.

To help achieve this, *Nesta* and the *Department for Education (DfE)* have launched the £5.75 million *CareerTech Challenge*, which encourages bold solutions to improve people's working lives and unlock employment opportunities for the future.

The *CareerTech Challenge* aligns with the work of the *DfE's National Retraining Scheme (NRS)*. The *NRS* is a programme to help adults retrain into better jobs and be ready for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation.

The *CareerTech Challenge* includes a Prize and a Fund:

- ● **CareerTech Challenge Prize (the Prize)** - will reward digital solutions that improve access to accurate, data-driven career information, advice and guidance.
- ● **CareerTech Challenge Fund (the Fund)** - will provide grant funding for innovative tech solutions which motivate people and support them to learn new skills and retrain.

Both the Prize and Fund are calling for innovations to 'future-proof' adults in the roles most likely to change.

1.2. What is the difference between the CareerTech Challenge Prize and Fund?

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	Prize	Fund
Aims	To reward digital solutions that improve access to accurate, data-driven career information, advice and guidance.	To provide grant funding for innovative tech solutions which motivate people and support them to learn new skills and retrain.
Methodologies	Challenge Prize	Grant Funding
Funding	20 Finalists - £50,000 each 1 Runner up - £80,000 1 Winner - £120,000	15 - 18 grants of £100,000 - £250,000
Timelines	Entries Open 16 October 2019 Entries Close 29 January 2020 Finalists announced April 2020 Winners announced March 2021	Applications Open 16 October 2019 Applications Close 9 December 2019 Successful applicants announced March 2020

1.3. What are the similarities between the Prize and Fund?

	Similarities
Help and Support	Contact the Fund team and Prize team via email careertech@nesta.org.uk
Target beneficiaries	National Retraining Scheme (NRS) Cohort
Support	In-kind support offered to Prize finalists and Fund grantees
Co-funder	*Department for Education*
Programme online Submissions	Entrants must enter the Prize and applicants must apply to the Fund online (via Submittable).
Communication activity	*CareerTech Challenge* communications activity is supported by *Forster Communications*.

1.4. Can I apply for both the Prize and Fund?

Yes.

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2. About the Fund

2.1. What does the fund aim to achieve?

We want to fund innovative tech solutions that can build career adaptability skills and /or learner motivation within the context of an existing online course / qualification that involves 15-50 hours of learning.

Innovation tech solutions to build career adaptability skills and / or learner motivation could involve:
- Personalisation of content and delivery to meet and respond to an individual learner's preferences and / or experiences
- Increasing attainability and opportunity to achieve, even if the learner or their peer group has not previously engaged in further education, or had a negative experience of learning
- Making learning fun and / or rewarding
- Increasing the choice and agency of participants as they learn
- Enabling opportunities for self-reflection and identification of how learning will relate to a learner's own career pathway
- Providing opportunities for well-matched support and / or direction so that learning has a social component.

2.2. What funding is available?

Grants of between £100,000 - £250,000 are available for 15 - 18 grantees.

2.3. When will the programme commence / When will funding be allocated?

Funding will commence in March 2020 and will be available from March 2020 to March 2021.

2.4. How long does the programme last?

The programme will last one year for development and delivery (March 2020 to March 2021), with up to two additional months for completion of a final evaluation and review.

3.   Who can apply for the Fund?

3.1.   What are the eligibility criteria?

Applicants need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible to apply:
- Must be a UK registered company / charity. If you are not, then you need to apply with a lead partner who is a UK registered company / charity.
- Need to allocate budget for a programme evaluation and will be completed within the timescales of the fund
- Must have in place the ability to deliver the innovative tech solution within an online learning offer that involves 15-50 hours of learning
- Learning must be delivered wholly or predominantly online.
- Solutions must be suitable for beneficiaries in England

We are unable to support:
- Applications from individuals
- Solutions that are not likely to be of public benefit. We cannot support ideas that are solely or predominantly for the personal or private financial benefit of an individual or organisation.
- Solutions that are likely to increase inequality or exclusion, or otherwise have a harmful or detrimental effect on individuals (such as through the unethical use of private data).

3.2.   Do you have to be based in the UK to enter?

If you are applying as a single organisation, you must be a UK registered charity or company.

If you are applying as a partnership, the lead partner must be a UK registered charity or company. Other partners may be based overseas.

3.3.   Can partnerships apply?

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Yes. We encourage knowledge sharing and applications from partnerships.

3.4.   Can individuals apply?

No, only UK registered companies or charities are able to apply for the fund.

3.5.   I'm an overseas registered charity / company. Can I still apply?

Yes, though you will need to partner with a UK registered company or charity who will be the lead applicant.

3.6.   I am an online training provider not based in the UK, but the content is accessible there. Can I still apply?

Yes, though you will need to partner with a UK registered company or charity who will be the lead applicant.

3.7.   My project already receives funding from another source. Can I still apply?

Yes, you are welcome to bring additional match funding to this programme. Please identify in your application what funding will be matched, and what project costs will be met by this grant.

3.8.   I'm a for-profit company. What do I need to be aware of?

Nesta can only fund applications which meet our charitable objects and provide public benefit. We may impose conditions and restrictions on any private benefit or profit that may be derived from our grant.

3.9.   I have a digital solution that can improve career adaptability and / or motivation for learning but I am not a course content provider. Can I still apply?

Yes, as long as you have identified and agreed a course that your tech solution will work with, you are welcome to apply. We will need assurance that you have the relevant agreements in place with the course provider to deliver your tech solution within the identified course/s.

3.10.   Is there a maximum number of partners that can be involved in one application?

No. There is no maximum number.

4. Fund structure and timeline

4.1. How is the Fund structured?

Career Tech Challenge Fund Timeline
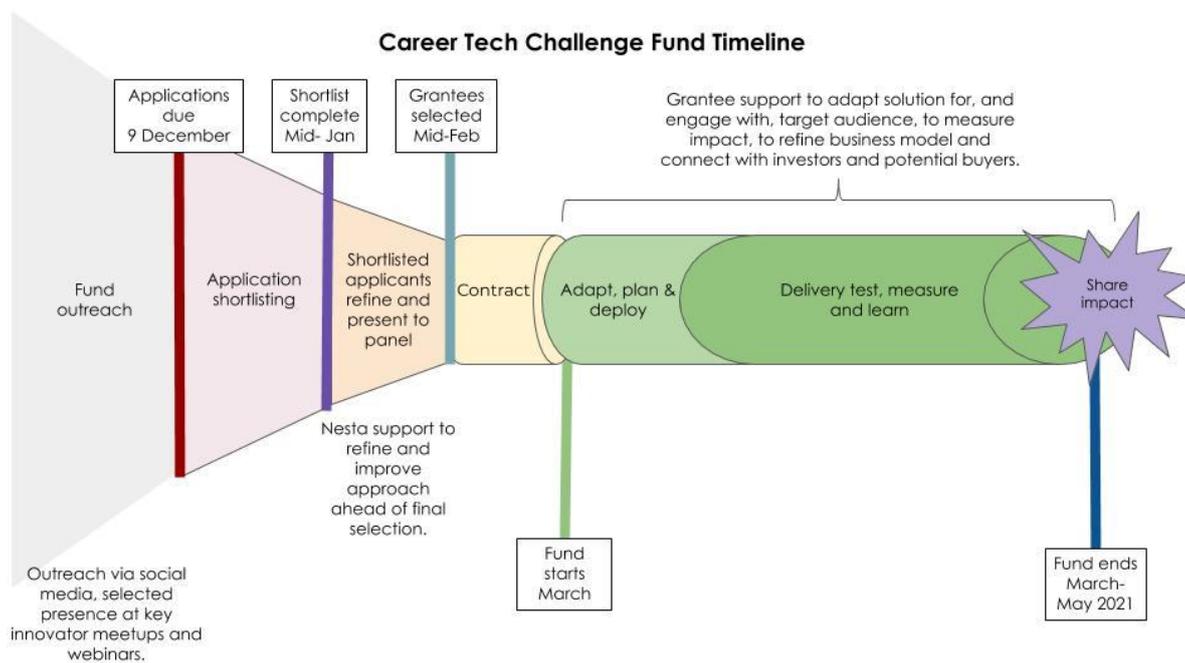
The Fund is made up of five stages:

Stage 1:   **October 2019 - December 2019**
Develop applications

Nesta has a range of resources to help innovators understand the target beneficiaries, the core aspects of career adaptability and motivation to learn (see here). Nesta will also be running two webinars about the fund and a workshop to support the application process and to answer questions.

Stage 2:   **9th December 2019**
Submit your application

Applications to the fund need to be received by 14:00 GMT on 9 December 2019.

Stage 3:   **December 2019 - February 2020**
Shortlisting stage

During December Nesta will assess eligible applications against the assessment criteria to create a shortlist. We expect to shortlist a maximum of 35 applications.

In January 2020 shortlisted applicants will be invited to discuss and develop their proposal further with Nesta. The purpose is to support them ahead of the final assessment to:
1. Consider how their proposed approach will work for the NRS cohort, and share relevant NRS cohort insights with them
2. Explore how shortlisted applicants will consider their measurement of impact and what an effective evaluation might look like
3. Better understand the capacity of their team and their ability to develop, learn and test their solution within the timeframe of the fund
4. Understand the budget and applicant support needs of applicants in greater detail

In February, shortlisted applicants will be invited to demonstrate and present their solutions which will also involve a deeper interview with 2-3 panel members / partners.

Stage 4:   **March/April 2020**
Announcement of grantees

The selection process will be in February. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to demonstrate and present their solutions which will also involve a deeper interview with 2-3 panel members / partners.

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Stage 5: Delivery	March 2020 - March 2021
Grantees will commence they delivery in March 2020 until March 2021.	

4.2.   What are the key dates of this Fund?

Applications open	16th October 2019
Webinars (pre-application) *An opportunity to ask questions about the fund*	7th November & 28th November 2019
Workshop (pre-application) *An opportunity to find out more about the fund, network with potential application partners, and refine your idea*	19th November 2019
Applications close	2pm GMT, 9th December 2019
Development day for shortlisted applications	30th January 2020
Selection day	February 2020

5.   What is the Fund looking for?

5.1.   Who should the solution be aimed at?

The target user group for solutions to improve career adaptability and / or motivation via online learning is the *National Retraining Scheme* cohort, who are:
- Working in roles most susceptible to change due to automation

- Employed, self-employed or working part-time in England
- Aged 24-65 years old
- Without a qualification at degree level
- Earning below £35,000 per annum

Examples of roles in sectors most likely to experience shrinkage include (but are not limited to):

➔ Retail roles, including sales assistants, vehicle trades and elementary sales, records, administrative and finance roles
➔ Logistics roles, including vehicle trades and elementary administrative, records and finance roles
➔ Manufacturing roles, including process, assembly, plant and machine operatives and Metal forming, welding and related trade roles.

For additional information on target beneficiaries see here

5.2. What is the *National Retraining Scheme*

The *National Retraining Scheme (NRS)* is a Government programme to help adults retrain into better jobs and be ready for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation.

The *NRS* will respond to the changing nature of jobs and the types of tasks people do at work. There is the need for a multi-skilled workforce to take on new and emerging jobs as businesses adapt to new opportunities that the future economy will bring. For more information on the Government website here.

5.3. Why are we targeting the *NRS* Cohort?

While consensus seems to be forming around technological change driving a net increase in the quality and quantity of jobs, some job roles across a number of sectors in England are projected to be more susceptible to shrinkage than others.

We are following the Government's lead in targeting this group as they have comparatively less access to existing government support and are most in need of adapting their skills so they can take advantage of new opportunities.

5.4. What do you mean by accessibility?

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The solution's ease of use for the target group/ audience. This can include making the solution easy for people with disabilities to use, but also for people who do not have the latest generation technology (e.g. newest smartphone) and / or slow network connections. Accessibility also includes how a solution will work within people's daily lives.

5.5.   What do you mean by online learning?

By online we refer to solutions that are available through an internet connection. The CareerTech Challenge Fund is interested in solutions that are delivered solely or predominantly online. This could include, but is not restricted to self-directed entirely online, or tutor supported remote learning.

Teaching, instruction and assessment should be delivered / accessed via a digital device. Any in-person delivery needs to be minimal and we will not fund blended learning. Minimal amounts of person-to-person learning delivered off-line will be considered only where the context of instruction is material to achieving an impact in building motivation and / or career adaptability skills.

5.6.   Are there any constraints around the type of online learning?

Your solution needs to be offered within a course that offers 15-20 hours of learning and be delivered predominantly online. Learning needs to be available to the target cohort, and take into consideration the accessibility requirements of these learners.

Learning does not have to be regulated provision (e.g. Level 2 on the qualifications framework) and we encourage applicants to think beyond formal qualifications. T

5.7.   What do you mean by 'career adaptability?

'Career adaptability', and 'career adaptability skills' are terms we use to describe a set of capabilities people need, to be able to adapt to changes to their work and the job market.

Feeling motivated, being able to reflect and identify suitable next steps, ask for and have access to support, and confidence to take up and complete learning are all increasingly important characteristics for our career.

There are five elements to career adaptability:
- **career concern** - a person thinks critically about what their future will be like and prepares for it.
- **career control** - a person feels a sense of agency and responsibility to make decisions that impact on their career.
- **career curiosity** - a person explores a variety of options for future roles and skills development before making a choice that builds on/are appropriate to their skills and aspirations
- **career confidence** - a person's perception that they have the ability to solve problems and overcome obstacles in order to pursue their career goals/aspirations.
- **career commitment** - a person displays resilience and overcomes challenges to achieve their goals.

For additional information on career adaptability see here

5.8. What do you mean by 'motivation to learn'?

While reasons people choose to learn often appear to be individual and complex, and in many ways they are, research has shown that there are some common factors which contribute to motivation. Motivation is particularly important in the context of a learner's journey because it often feels harder to keep going after the first 'rush' of commencing something new evaporates.

For the purposes of the CareerTech Challenge we are interested in motivation of learners to complete their course or qualification given high drop out rates for online learning.

For additional information on motivation to learn see here

5.9. Does my solution have to address career adaptability _and_ learner motivation?

No. Although the two skills are linked, your solution can address just one or both skills.

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5.10. Can the solution direct people to learning rather than providing learning content itself?

Yes, the solution can direct people to learning rather than providing learning content itself. Applicants will need to demonstrate how and why the solution will improve career adaptability and learner motivation.

5.11. Are the criteria for the target cohort all necessary? Can the solution also be used by others?

Yes. The solution needs to be targeted at people who meet all the criteria for the target cohort. The user base for the solution can also be wider than the target cohort, but does need to include them for the purposes of the fund.

6. Completing your application form

6.1. How do I apply for the fund?
Applications should be made through online platform, Submittable. Here is the link for the application form:

https://apply.challengeprizecentre.org/submit/710002b9-13b9-4a45-b008-11863c2f975c/careertech-challenge-fund-application-form

6.2. When is the deadline for applications?

Applications close at 2pm GMT, on Monday 9th December 2019.

6.3. Can I apply more with more than one idea / proposal?

Yes, but you will need to do so on separate application forms.

6.4. How many beneficiaries / learners need to be engaged in the course of the fund?

There is no set number we have prescribed for this fund, but we would encourage applicants to consider what number of learners is impactful, feasible and represents good value for money given the amount of grant funding requested.

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6.5. **What is the expectation regarding evaluation and evidence?**

Part of the programme will involve capturing the evidence of impact of your solution on career adaptability and / or motivation for the learners involved. You will need to include information about what form your evaluation will take as part of the application process.

6.6. **I have commercially sensitive information. How will this be treated as part of the application process?**

Information included in your application will be reviewed by key personnel at *Nesta*, *Department for Education*, advisory panel members and professional support providers. The Terms and Conditions set out who the information provided in your application will be shared with.

7. Why apply - what the Fund offers?

7.1. **What are the benefits of being involved in the programme?**
- Grant funding of £100,000 to £250,000 without surrendering any equity
- Non-financial support such as business development support, user design, communications and evaluation support
- Access to a network of leading innovators
- Exposure to investors, customers and partners
- Input from leading industry experts
- Connections with government

7.2. **What can the funds be used for?**
- Direct project costs
- Evaluation planning and delivery (applicants must commit some time and resource for impact report and evaluation)
- Adaptations and / or kit for target beneficiaries to engage in learning (e.g. amending platform for smartphone versus laptop, provision of any specialist equipment to use)
- Fees / costs related to content delivery (e.g. subsidising use for learning if paid)
- Activities that lead to target cohort group enrolment
- Note that VAT is not payable on grants

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7.3. What are the conditions that apply for receipt of funding?

- Be successfully accepted on to the programme
- Comply with the terms and conditions, grant contract and milestone requirements
- Participate in and contribute to learning and reporting progress
- Devote sufficient time and resource to measurement of impact and evaluation
- Share learning and insights about your project and participation in the programme
- Acknowledge Nesta and DfE contributions
- Acknowledge Intellectual Property and profit-making conditions
- Inform Nesta of any changes to your delivery plan or team

7.4. Will Nesta or the Department for Education take any equity as a result of being funded?

No

7.5. Who will own Intellectual Property of any solution developed during the fund?

You will own all IP you develop using the grant. However, you will be asked to grant us and the *Department for Education (DfE)* a licence over that IP for evaluation and research purposes for public benefit. This is required so that we and DfE can ensure that the grant achieves a public benefit and isn't just benefiting your organisation alone.

8. Assessment of applications

8.1. How are the successful applications chosen?

Applicants will need to apply for funding through Submittable, the online application platform.
Eligible applications will then be assessed against the criteria below. The most promising applications will be shortlisted and invited to a development day. During a separate

selection day, applicants will present and discuss their solution with an advisory panel who will help inform the final decision on who to fund. Final funding decisions will be made by Nesta and the Department for Education.

Criteria	Weighting
Innovation - This fund seeks to support innovative tech solutions to improve career adaptability and / or learner motivation for people in work who are most vulnerable to workforce changes, such as automation. For the purposes of this fund, we will consider innovation in relation to: ● The uniqueness of your solution to address this particular issue (i.e. improving career adaptability and learner motivation through digital) ● The uniqueness of your solution in this market (i.e. adult online education and training) ● The uniqueness of your solution for its useability for target beneficiaries (i.e people in work most vulnerable to workforce changes) ● The uniqueness of your solution in relation to the technology or service or process it will use. Applicants will need to identify how your solution is unique and different in addressing this issue through **digital innovation**.	35%
Impact - We want to understand the potential of the proposed tech solution to improve career adaptability skills and / or increase learner motivation via an existing online learning course or qualification of 15-50 hours. For the purpose of this fund, we will consider impact in relation to: ● How your proposed solution will improve a learner's career adaptability skills and / or increase learner motivation (i.e what evidence is there to support your approach?) ● How the impact of your proposed solution could be measured during the fund period (i.e how will you know if your proposed solution works?) ● What the learner will gain as a result of participating in the course/qualification that the solution is embedded within. Applicants will also need to demonstrate a commitment to understanding and improving the impact of their solution.	20%
Capacity - We want to understand the applicant's ability to deliver the proposed solution, including the feasibility of the budget to achieve the desired outcome. For the purpose of this fund, we will consider capacity in relation to: ● Your expertise to adapt and deploy an innovative tech solution within an	20%

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existing online course/ qualification to the target beneficiaries. ● Your budget and delivery plan. You will need to demonstrate you have the resources and ability to deliver within the timescale of the fund, including any existing and / or matched funding that will complement the grant fund requested ● Your openness as a team to share and learn, as this will be an important component of the programme.	

Beneficiaries - We want to understand the specificity and accessibility of your proposed solution for the target beneficiaries and how many learners you will engage.
 	
For the purpose of this fund, we will consider 'beneficiaries' in relation to:
● Understanding your target audience/users
   ○ Who is your target audience/users and what do you know about them? (eg location, sector, barriers to learning)
   ○ How do you plan to reach and engage them to enrol in the learning and what are your assumptions about engagement?
● Accessibility - how you plan to deliver the solution/course to overcome barriers to learning including the feasibility to deliver within their daily lives?
● Reach - how many learners do you plan to support during the funding period?
	12.5%

Sustainability - We want to understand how your proposed solution will sustain and grow after the funding period. For the purpose of this fund, we will consider 'sustainability' in relation to: ● Business plan - do you have an existing business model that can be adapted, or have clear and feasible plans to generate revenue so that you do not create ongoing demand for grant funding? ● Your proposal addresses an identifiable need for a target market of sufficient size Applicants will also need to consider who and how payment for training might occur given the barriers that exist for the target cohort group.	12.5%

8.2. When will I know if I have been successful?

Shortlisted applicants will be informed by mid-January.

9. Help and support

9.1. Who can I contact if I have a question that is not answered here?

For any further queries, email careertech@nesta.org.uk