



Application Guidelines

Please read these Guidelines before completing an application for a grant



Caithness Business Fund's mission is to promote the economic growth of Caithness and North Sutherland by supporting new or existing businesses and developing the skill base to meet new opportunities.

Grants from £2k - £5k are currently available to support business start-ups, those with growth plans, training needs and some apprenticeships.

The *FutureSkills* apprenticeship scheme currently supports businesses up to £24,500 over 3 years.

The Graduate placement scheme currently supports placements for 2 years up to 70% of salary costs (excluding Employer NI and Pension contributions).

Multiple applications are normally limited to one per year from eligible businesses.

Eligibility criteria

- Applicant must be a small to medium SME i.e. sole trader, partnership or limited company.

For avoidance of doubt the Fund will not support very small lifestyle/hobby businesses with no scalability and suggest these applications be directed to Business Gateway.

- Based in the Caithness and North Sutherland area (defined as the Dounreay Travel to Work Area).
- Looking to:
 - Start a new business (and which in the Fund's view does not significantly displace another business).
 - Developing an existing business i.e. through training, growth plans or employing an apprentice or graduate.
- Applicant must demonstrate financial viability including owner investment as per criteria on page 4 of these guidelines.
- Applications will not be considered for capital equipment such as computer/printers unless they demonstrate growth or additionality.

Excluded sectors/business activities:

- Alcohol**
- Activities having a detrimental impact on the environment
- Financial Services
- Gambling
- Morally or Ethically controversial activities
- Primary Agriculture (including forestry) **
- Property Development
- Weapons

**speak to the Fund team to find out more details as some funds are ringfenced with specific excluded sectors, however there are limited funds available which do not carry these restrictions.

Conditions of grant award

Applicants must:

- Supply such progress reports as may be reasonably required by the Fund.
- Agree to participate in any publicity with regards to the grant award.
- Not submit an application for retrospective funding.

Please note that the Fund may place additional conditions on any grant awarded.

The Fund may reject any application which does not meet the criteria without further comment.

Application Form

Key information is required in order to assess suitable applications. However, we encourage applicants to contact us if there are any aspects of the application form or process that they require assistance with or further information on i.e. production of business plan or financials. **T: 01847 500104 E: enquiries@caithnessbusinessfund.co.uk**

APPRENTICESHIP GRANTS

Please use the ***apprenticeship*** application form.

Applicants must provide:

- A copy of latest accounts
- Insurance certificates
- Relevant Health & Safety documentation
- Apprenticeship budget
- Any other supporting documentation to strengthen your application

GRADUATE PLACEMENT GRANTS

Please use the ***graduate placement*** application form.

The graduate placements should be 24 months in duration and in a graduate level role (minimum bachelor level). Graduates should have qualified within the last 5 years.

Preference would be shown to businesses working within, or seeking to develop into, growth sectors within the area (i.e. energy, food and drink, space and tourism). Preference will also be shown to a graduate placement in skills shortage areas. Businesses will need to provide evidence in their application. The scheme will support up to 70% of salary costs for businesses for a two-year period (excluding Employer NI and pension contributions).

Salary range supported will be between £25,000 - £32,000. There will be further support up to £1,250 per annum on CPD (e.g. 2 x 20 credit CPD module at UHI North, West and Hebrides), with a preference for local training providers.

Applicants must provide:

- A copy of latest accounts
- Insurance certificates
- Relevant Health & Safety documentation
- Any other supporting documentation to strengthen your application

*Please note support is limited and on a first come first served basis, please check with us before applying.

BUSINESS START-UPS / GROWTH GRANTS / TRAINING APPLICATIONS

A Business Plan and financial information is required otherwise your application will be rejected.

This should include:

- Brief description and history of the business where applicable.
- Description of products/services, applications, significant product advantages, features of current technology, proposed future developments.
- Description of markets (type, size, share), major customers, competitors, marketing (strategy to retain customers and attract new ones – including aspects of product/service, delivery and promotion).
- Description of resources: background and skills of key personnel, details of employees, operations and equipment/machinery, premises.
- Description of project for which funding is sought and reasons for the project (may include a SWOT analysis – see your advisor).

Financial information required:

1 Start Up Businesses

- Two years projected Cashflow Forecasts, Profit & Loss Forecasts and Balance Sheet Forecasts. If the business has a short trading record then Management Accounts should be made for this period.

2 Existing Business

- Two years historic accounts to the latest year end.
- Management Accounts from the latest year end to date of application (if available).
- Two years Cashflow Forecast demonstrating the effect of the project in question.

ⁱ Dounreay Travel to Work Area: The whole of Caithness, and Northwest to Melness / Tongue and South to Brora in Sutherland.