

Grant Funding Brief: Curriculum Development for Digital Skills Training

Overview

DigiTay, the Tay Cities Region Deal's Digital Skills Project, is inviting colleges and universities in the Tay Cities Region (Angus, Dundee, North East Fife and Perth and Kinross) to lead on the submission of proposals. Proposals should be developed in **collaboration with other organisations**, such as employers, training providers, or employability providers, to design new curriculum or enhance existing curriculum that addresses current and emerging skills needs in the region's technology sector.

We are accepting proposals that:

- Demonstrate partnership working between colleges and universities; employability providers; and technology sector.
- Engage with local employers;
- Support individuals to gain qualifications and progress into education or employment opportunities in the region.

This funding opportunity is focused on tackling regional skills gaps in the following areas:

- Cyber Security
- Data Science
- Software Development
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Grants of up to £150,000 are available per project, with delivery to take place between April 2026 and March 2030.

Successful proposals will:

- Be evidence based, drawing on regional and national labour market intelligence;
- Demonstrate collaboration across academic institutions or with partners in the employability or skills sector;
- Provide clear educational pathways for learners
- Demonstrate added value; including how the proposed activity enhances current curriculum, meets employer needs, strengthens partnerships, introduces innovation, or delivers measurable benefits that go beyond business as usual.
- Support inclusive growth across the Tay Cities Region, with a focus on targeting underrepresented groups access training, this includes but is not limited to women, people with disabilities, those who are neurodivergent, people from BME communities, from low SMID areas and from rural areas.
- Will be **SCQF Level 7** or above;
- Will focus on the development and delivery of higher level digital adoption skills integrated skills and professional digital skills* across AI, Cyber Security, Data and Software Development;

- Identify clear touch points to review and evaluate content and delivery.
- Include plans for sustainability, outlining how the curriculum and delivery will be maintained beyond the funding period.
- Demonstrate a clear strategy for combining digital competencies with essential human skills such as communication and teamwork and meta skills such as critical thinking.

*The Digital Skills Project has adopted the DESAP (Digital Economy Skills Action Plan) definition of digital skills, please see the [DESAP](#) page 36 for detailed definitions.

About DigiTay

DigiTay is the Tay Cities Region Deal, Digital Skills Project. A part of the wider £20m investment through the Regional Skills and Employability Programme, the Digital Skills Project aims to address the growing digital skills gap in the region. Launched in 2022 the skills project is being delivered over two phases. Phase 1 took place from September 2022 – October 2025, supporting over 1000 people to gain data and digital skills, not just for the technology sector but across all sectors of the economy.

Phase 2 will be delivered from October 2025 – March 2030 and will focus on addressing the skills gap for the technology sector, supporting individuals to gain integrated and professional digital skills (SQCF Level 7 or above). Drawing on the region's strengths, the project will focus on skills development in cyber security, data, software development and AI.

Through targeted curriculum development funding, DigiTay aims to support at least 750 individuals to access high quality training. The project has set ambitious outcomes, with 75% of learners expected to achieve a recognised qualification or move into a positive destination (employment, further study, or training) following completion.

Funding objectives

Funded curriculum development activities should aim to:

- Work collaboratively across academic institutions and with partners across the employability and skills sector;
- Develop new curriculum content that addresses identified gaps in current provision within the projects priority areas: Cyber Security, Data, Software Development and AI;
- Promote inclusive growth through widening access to learning opportunities, with a focus on underrepresented or disadvantaged groups including women, people with disabilities (including neurodivergent), people from BME communities, those from low SMID areas and those from rural areas;
- Add value to the existing offering for learners and technology employers in the region.

- Innovate in delivery by embedding new flexible modes of learning delivery such as agile or blended delivery formats and modular/ stackable learning approaches aligned with SCQF frameworks where possible.
- Establish partnerships with employers/recruiting employers.

We expect the funding to be utilised for:

- Staff time
- Learner places
- Marketing and events
- Evaluation
- Travel and expenses

Please note that the funding cannot be used to fund existing activity or to increase the number of learner places on an existing course. All proposals must demonstrate how the funding will be used to develop new curriculum or enhance existing provision in a way that creates additional value and directly addresses identified skills gaps in the Tay Cities Region. The funding cannot be used for capital costs e.g buildings, infrastructure and hardware.

Target Audience

Projects should aim to benefit:

- Learners working or living in the Tay Cities Region.
- Learners who face barriers accessing traditional education routes.
- Learners currently in work looking to upskill/ reskill in a specific area.
- Learners not currently in education or employment.
- The Digital Skills Project has a target to reach 50% of learners female, 10% disabled, 8% BME and 12% from rural or most disadvantaged areas.
- Outcomes for learners should include accredited qualifications, clear progression pathways and improved employability outcomes.

Funding Available

- Grants of up to £150,000, delivered over multiple years.
- Activity must be completed by March 2030.
- Match funding or in-kind contributions are welcome but not required.

Application Requirements

- The lead applicant must be an academic institution.
- Applications demonstrate partnership or collaboration working across academic institutions or with an employability/ skills organisation. i.e there must be 2 or more organisations as part of the application. Applications submitted that do not

demonstrate partnership working with another academic institution or employability provider will not be considered for the funding.

- Activities must align with the Digital Skills Project's strategic objective to address the skills gap for the technology industry focusing on priority areas cyber security, data, software development and AI.
- Learners must be working or living in the Tay Cities Region.
- Activities must be delivered by March 2030. Activities must be new or enhanced, not a continuation of business as usual activity.
- Applicants should outline how delivery will be evaluated and how learner outcomes will be tracked. (The digital skills project requires all projects to provide a 6 month follow up evaluation.)

Application Process

Expression of Interest	September 2025
Applications Open	November 2025
Applications Close	January 2026
Evaluation Panel	February 2026
Award	March 2026
Delivery starts	April 2026

Application Form Outline

1. **Project Summary** – aims, target groups, and partners involved (Weighting 10%)
2. **Needs Analysis** – summary of employer engagement and digital skills demand (Weighting 20%)
3. **Curriculum Outline** – structure, format, and expected learning outcomes (15%)
4. **Delivery Plan** – timelines, responsibilities, and learner engagement strategies (15%)
5. **Partnership Overview** – roles and contributions of each partner (20%)
6. **Budget Breakdown** – proposed use of grant funding (10%)
7. **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan** – approach to tracking and reporting impact (15%)

Applications will be scored on a scale of 1 – 4 with the maximum number of points 28 for an application. Applications scoring 14 or less will not be considered for delivery.

Scoring guidance:

0	Very Poor – nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.
1	Poor – response is partially relevant and poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.
2	Acceptable – response is relevant and acceptable. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.
3	Good – response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.
4	Excellent – response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

FAQ's

1. How many projects will be funded?

The number of funded projects will depend on the quality of proposals submitted and the total funding requested. The project anticipates 6 – 8 projects will be funded; proposals demonstrating strong alignment with objectives, clear added value, and collaborative delivery models will be prioritised.

2. What qualifies as ‘enhancing existing curriculum’?

Enhancing existing curriculum refers to meaningful developments to current provision such as embedding new content aligned to emerging digital skills, integrating employer co-delivery, updating delivery models (e.g. modular or hybrid formats), or extending access to new learner groups. Increasing the number of places on a current course does not qualify.

3. Can learners from outside the Tay Cities Region participate?

Funding for student places from the Digital Skills Project can only benefit learners who live or work in the Tay Cities Region (Angus, Dundee, North East Fife, and Perth & Kinross). However, other funding can be utilised to reach learners outside the Tay Cities Region.

4. Are there standard requirements for evaluation?

Yes. All funded projects must provide information on learners, track progress and outcomes, and submit a 6-month follow-up evaluation. A standard reporting template will be provided, and additional guidance will be available upon award.

5. Will DigiTay support engagement with employers or underrepresented groups?

Yes. While applicants are expected to lead on engagement, DigiTay will support with by sharing information on social media, our newsletter and engaging with local stakeholders.

6. What does 'added value' mean in the context of this funding?

Added value refers to the additional impact, benefits, or innovation your proposal delivers beyond standard curriculum delivery. Proposals must demonstrate how the activity:

- Fills a clear gap in current provision.
- Introduces new or improved approaches to teaching and learning (e.g. modular or stackable formats, employer co-delivery).
- Enhances collaboration across institutions or with industry/employability partners.
- Improves learner outcomes or reaches new audiences.
- Embeds digital skills in ways that are future focused and aligned to labour market demand.

Added value should be clearly evidenced in your curriculum design, delivery plan, and learner engagement strategy. Projects replicating or expanding existing provision without demonstrable enhancements will not be considered eligible.

7. Can funding be used for digital platforms, software, or tools?

Digital tools or platforms directly related to delivery may be eligible if not classified as capital expenditure. Please clarify in your budget.

Capital costs (e.g. hardware, infrastructure, building maintenance, etc) are not eligible.

8. What is required to evidence partnership working?

Applications must include a clear outline of partner roles and contributions, and a letter of support or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from each named delivery partner would be advantageous. Proposals without at least one additional partner will not be considered.

9. Can a partner organisation be a school?

Yes, however, all curriculum development must be SCQF Level 7 or above. The fund cannot fund after school clubs or activities aimed at school aged learners below this level.