HOW TO WIN THE INNOVATION AWARD 2018

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teachfirst.org.uk/innovation
APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES

In the UK it is mainly family income which determines a child's performance at school and their life opportunities. Teach First is on the hunt for big ideas that will help ensure that, one day, no child’s educational success is limited by their socio-economic background.

For this year’s Innovation Award, we’re seeking applications from individuals who have game-changing ideas in the **two innovation areas** set out below. We believe that supporting and developing innovations to address these areas will make the biggest difference in closing the gap for young people from low-income communities.

**INNOVATION AREA 1:**
**Raising the attainment of the lowest-performing pupils.**
We’re looking for ideas that tackle the root causes of poor attainment, targeting pupils who are most in need of support. Interventions can include high-quality tutoring and assessment or programmes to improve study skills and meta-cognition. Ideas can focus on children of any age - from early years to secondary - utilising bespoke methods to engage low-attaining pupils.

**INNOVATION AREA 2:**
**Supporting pupil progression into employability in a variety of sectors.**
We’re also on the lookout for ideas that offer pupils carefully curated experiences that empower them to make confident decisions about their future, whether this includes university, further training, an apprenticeship or other post-school destinations. Interventions should give pupils expert mentoring that informs them about their post-school options and then provides tailored experiences of work and academic environments that match their aspirations.

We’ve created this short guide to help you craft your answers to give you the best shot at winning an Innovation Award.
ENTERING THE AWARD

Your online application for the Innovation Award will be judged across six areas:

1. The problem 4. Sustainability
2. Your solution 5. Leadership
3. Impact 6. Value added

We recommend that you read through all of the guidance notes before you begin your application. All questions require an answer, however there are three questions which may not be applicable to all applicants. These questions have ‘(if applicable)’ at the end of the question. If an ‘(if applicable)’ question does not apply to you, please write N/A in the answer box. We have different word limits for the questions and recommend that you use the maximum number of words to give us a concise but full answer.

1. PROBLEM

Q Explain the problem that your idea addresses, including the following information (250 words):

• A description of the young people it affects
• The number of young people it affects
• How it affects an individual young person

Your answer should begin by clearly defining the problem that you want to solve. You should then explain how this problem relates to one of the Innovation Areas and our ultimate goal of ending educational inequality in the UK.

You should be precise when defining the scope of the problem, identifying the type of young person affected by the problem (for example young people of a certain age or ethnicity) and the number of young people affected by the problem. To satisfy our judging criteria the problem must affect a significant number of young people across England and Wales, even if you will pilot with a group of those individuals.

We also want you to explain how the problem affects an individual young person. We understand that a problem will affect different people in different ways so please answer with reference to a ‘typical’ young person.

We anticipate that many applicants will want to address problems that they have experienced first-hand. Your answer may include anecdotal evidence of the problem based on your own experiences but this will not be sufficient to demonstrate that you have identified an important problem. You should also quote relevant facts and figures from credible third-party sources, such as national datasets and academic research, as evidence of the problem.
2. YOUR SOLUTION

Q a) Explain your proposed solution to the problem, including the following information (200 words):

- Who you (will) deliver the solution to
- What you (will) do and how you (will) do it
- When, where, how often and by whom it is (or will be) delivered

Your answer should begin by explaining your proposed solution to the problem in one or two sentences. You can provide greater detail about your proposed solution in the rest of your answer.

You should explain to whom you will deliver the solution. In many cases this will be the young people affected by the problem. In other cases you may plan to deliver your solution to other relevant stakeholders such as teachers or parents.

You should provide as much detail about the delivery of your solution as possible. In particular we want to know what form your solution will take, when, where, how often and by whom it will be delivered. We understand that your plans are likely to change as you work on implementing your idea. However, we want to see that you have really thought through your solution and how to implement it.

Q b) Describe what is currently being done to address the problem and explain how your idea is different or better than existing solutions (150 words):

You should start your answer by providing an overview of how other organisations and institutions are already working to address the same problem that you have identified. For example, what are schools already doing to address this problem? How does government policy attempt to address the problem? Are there independent organisations working to solve the problem? It is very unlikely that no one else is working on the problem that you have identified, so ensure your research is thorough.

Next, you should explain how your idea is different or better than existing solutions. For example, will your solution be more effective? You must clearly demonstrate that your idea is not just replicating existing ideas.
3. IMPACT

Q Describe the typical changes that you expect to see in a young person who benefits from your idea (150 words):

We understand that just as a problem will affect different young people in different ways, your solution will have a different impact on each young person that you work with. However, in order for us to understand the potential impact of your idea, please describe the changes you would expect to see, or have already seen in a pilot, in a ‘typical’ young person. These changes include, but are not limited to, improvements in knowledge, skills, attitude or behaviour.

As well as identifying the changes you would expect to see in a typical young person, you should also explain why these changes are important to future opportunities for this young person. For example, as a result of the solution, a typical young person may improve his or her behaviour. However, this has a wider reaching impact and you should explain what this will be, based on research. This will allow us to understand the ways you could measure the impact of your idea and how this contributes to solving the problem.

4. SUSTAINABILITY

Q Explain how you will fund the delivery of your idea (150 words):

You should start your answer by providing an overview of who you believe will pay for the delivery of your solution. For example, will you be charging schools? Will you try to find third-parties such as charitable foundations or corporate sponsors that are willing to fund you?

Next, you should explain why those people will be willing to pay for the delivery of your idea. For example, if you plan to charge schools can you identify the budget they would use to pay for your solution? If you plan to get funding through third parties, can you name some specific organisations that you believe would be willing to pay for the delivery of your solution?

You must demonstrate that you have thought carefully about how you will fund your idea and ensure its long-term sustainability. In order to have a sound understanding of projected income streams, we recommend that you speak with budget holders of potential funders (schools, grant making organisations or corporates).
5. LEADERSHIP

Q a) Explain how your skills will enable you to deliver the solution effectively (150 words)

Before you answer this question think about the skills that will be needed to develop and implement your solution in the medium-term (two years). You do not need to possess all of these skills but you should be able to take the leading role. Your answer should explain why you are the right person for the job and how your experience (with specific examples) has equipped you with these skills.

Q b) Provide information about anyone else who is working on the idea with you (if applicable) (150 words):

If you are working with anyone else on this idea then you should tell us more about them here. Your answer should describe their skills and experience and why they are relevant to the delivery of your idea.

Please note that in your answer to this question you only provide information about your ‘co-founders’ who will also be leading the development of the idea. We do not need information about advisors, mentors or other individuals who will not be directly involved in developing the idea.

Q c) Describe any necessary skills that you or your team do not currently have and how you will address these ‘gaps’ (150 words):

It takes a wide range of skills to develop and implement an idea and we do not expect that you and your team will already have all of them. However it is important that you recognise any ‘gaps’ that exist and explain how you will address them. You may plan to develop these skills yourself or you might plan to use a third-party. Tell us how you plan to fill the ‘gaps’ - if you plan to develop these skills yourself, how will you do this? Or if you use a third-party, how will you get them on board?
6. VALUE-ADDED

Q a) Describe the work that you have done on your idea to date (if applicable) (150 words):

If you have been working on your idea for sometime then your answer should explain what you have achieved to date. Please provide information about the key milestones you have achieved, including details of any pilots you have conducted.

Remember that you do not need to have done any work on your idea to be eligible for the Innovation Award and we encourage applications from individuals who are still at the ‘idea stage’.

Q b) Describe the support you are receiving from any other organisations (if applicable) (150 words):

If you have already received support from other organisations then please provide details about them and the nature of the support they have given you. You should also provide information about any applications for support you have made to other organisations but do not yet know the outcome of.

Please note that we only need information about formal support relationships such as the provision of funding or training. We do not require information about advisors or mentors.

Q c) Explain why the Teach First Innovation Award is a good fit for you and your idea (150 words):

Your answer should explain how you and your idea will be able to benefit from Teach First’s resources and reputation as well as the prizes for Innovation Award Winners. We encourage you to read our website and learn about what we do and the impact that winning the award has had on previous winners. Tell us what practical elements of the Teach First Innovation Award will be most useful to you in growing your idea.

You will also have the opportunity to receive personalised support on your application at the Innovation Award application workshop on 23 November in London.

You’ll have the chance to get guidance about your application answers and speak with previous winners of the Innovation Award.

If you would like to register for the event or have any additional questions, please contact innovation@teachfirst.org.uk
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