

Short Course Competition FAQs

1. What evidence would a provider need to produce to demonstrate job outcomes (milestone 2 completions)?

The purpose of the competition pilot is to demonstrate impact of the commissioned training on the businesses who engage. It is expected that any skills training delivered will support an employer on their decarbonisation journey. Therefore, we are looking for evidence that the skills developed are being put to good use within that employee's organisation to help develop greener/cleaner working practices. This could include:

- Improved confidence, skill & better performance in current job, leading to more sustainable ways of working
- New responsibilities or tasks now being performed by the trained employee (this could be part of a new role or an existing role)
- A promotion or new job

Evidence may be collated and demonstrated by providers via, but not limited to, any of the following mechanisms:

- Post-course employer surveys
- Post-course student feedback
- Post-course employer feedback (i.e. email communication, quotes/references...)
- Case studies

2. I am a training provider based just outside Cheshire West & Chester, can I still apply? Do I have to deliver training in the Cheshire West & Chester area?

Whilst the preference is for all training to take place within Cheshire West & Chester area (aligning with the identified industry 'hotspots'), we are happy to accept applications from training providers who are based within a reasonable distance outside of Cheshire West & Chester and who can demonstrate strong employer relationships with relevant Cheshire West & Chester businesses. Where a training provider is based & typically delivers just outside of Cheshire West & Chester, we will still consider these applications provided there is a rationale for the proposed delivery location. The rationale may include, but not be limited to, reference to specialist training facilities, supporting employer locations or cost/availability of venue hire.

3. I'm an employer interested in securing funding to develop a short training course for my employees, can I apply?

We welcome collaborative competition applications between employers and training providers for bespoke training for that employer's workforce. If you are interested in securing funding for training for your workforce but do not currently work with a training provider, please contact us at rsp@cheshireandwarrington.com for further guidance and support. Further information will also be released following the initial competition submission deadline on how employers from the energy-production or carbon-heavy industries can directly engage with the funded training opportunity.

4. When do courses have to be delivered by and why?

The funding for all the training has to be committed by 31st March 2026, with all training completed by the end of May 2026. This will be followed by a project evaluation period. This evaluation is an important part of the Regional Skills Pilot work as it will be needed to

demonstrate impact and secure potential future investment. Final claims for funding will be 10th June 2026.

5. What is the maximum contract value we can apply for?

The overall funding allocation for the short course competition is approx. £500,000. There is no minimum or maximum contract value per provider. Applications will be scored and approved based on a strong demonstration of value for money, demand, employer support and capacity to deliver. In providers' applications, we would expect to see reference to course costings including: direct staffing costs; equipment costs; on-costs (i.e. support staffing, admin costs); marketing costs and; any other delivery costs (i.e. venue costs).

6. What are the overall short course competition KPIs?

The pilot aims to:

- train at least 150 local employees in the priority skills outlined in the competition guidance
- achieve at least a 90% completion rate across all courses
- engage at least 10 Cheshire West & Chester Small or Medium Businesses in the training being delivered
- evidence positive impact on at least 80% of the businesses who engage in the training being delivered

Providers are expected to set their own internal KPIs/success measures as part of their application

7. Can an employer send the same employee to more than one short course being funded through the competition?

Yes within reason. The project is designed to support employers to transition to net zero, so if an employee(s) requires upskilling in more than one priority skill in order to support their organisation's decarbonisation journey, they can enrol on more than one course. However, the aim of the competition is to pilot supporting as many Cheshire West & Chester employers as possible, so it is important that funding isn't 'over-allocated' to a single business.