

## Changes to the Free School criteria

These criteria will be set out in more detail in the How to Apply guidance released in May.

Section	What we are looking for (headlines)
Education Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive summary</li> <li>• Rationale for establishing the school</li> <li>• Why parents will choose the school:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What will make the school distinctive/innovative</li> <li>○ Why students will have a better chance to succeed here than elsewhere, locally</li> <li>○ What success looks like</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Whether this vision underpins, and is supported by, the rest of the application</li> </ul>
Education Plan  (Route 1 applicants would only complete differences from previous applications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A viable curriculum plan that is academically rigorous and provides sufficient focus on core subjects</li> <li>• Plans for student progression and success</li> <li>• Clear differentiation between abilities and needs; how those with the greatest needs will be helped to succeed</li> <li>• How Academy freedoms will be used to drive success</li> <li>• High, but realistic, aspirations for the school's definitions and measures of success</li> <li>• How data will be collected and used to drive improvement</li> <li>• Strategies to ensure that behaviour, attendance, pastoral care and student wellbeing will improve outcomes</li> <li>• The rationale for why this curriculum is proposed and how it will meet the needs of each group in the anticipated student intake</li> <li>• Clear links between the staffing structure and 1) the curriculum and 2) the expected income</li> <li>• Additional information for particular school models (e.g. faith schools must show how all students are provided for by the education plan)</li> </ul>
Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that the school is needed – we will look for a combination of: parental demand, including demand for the specific school model proposed; basic need for places; or low existing standards in the area</li> <li>• How parents and students who have expressed an interest or applied formally for a place during pre-opening will be kept engaged</li> </ul>

Section	What we are looking for (headlines)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of engagement with potential students and strategies for continued engagement</li> </ul>
<p>Capacity and Capability</p> <p>(Route 1 applicants would only complete differences to the team from previous applications)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information relating to the educational, financial and other relevant expertise of the core applicant group, showing how this will enable groups to successfully lead the project <i>through pre-opening</i>, with time commitments from each named individual</li> <li>• Information relating to the educational, financial and other relevant expertise of the proposed Members and Directors to lead the school <i>once open</i>, with time commitments from each named individual</li> <li>• Details of any support required in pre-opening, including expertise and time commitments and how that support will be secured and held to account</li> <li>• How the proposed accountability structures will lead to effective decision making, strong accountability and financial probity</li> <li>• How further high-quality governors will be recruited (if necessary) and plans for the development of the governing body</li> <li>• Plans for recruiting and developing a high quality Principal and other staff, which cohere well with the education and financial plans</li> <li>• An outline plan for the pre-opening phase</li> <li>• <i>Where applicable</i>, additional information on: the educational track record of existing providers; the corporate capacity of groups submitting multiple applications</li> </ul>
<p>Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans that: show the school to be viable; are consistent with the rest of the application; are based on realistic assumptions</li> <li>• A prioritised list of changes demonstrating how you would make savings to your expenditure if lower than expected pupil recruitment reduced your income</li> <li>• For existing independent schools, Academies and Free Schools, information on financial track record</li> <li>• <i>Where applicable</i>, an additional financial plan for multi-</li> </ul>

Section	What we are looking for (headlines)
	<p>Academy trusts to show how any centrally-retained funding held outside the schools will be spent</p> <p><i>We are re-designing the financial template so that it is more user-friendly and serves as a more useful planning tool.</i></p>
Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the preferred site for the school</li> <li>• A list of alternative sites, should the preferred site not prove feasible</li> <li>• Information about why each site is viable and reasonable value-for-money.</li> </ul>

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<sup>i</sup> Procurement; governance; managing/leading projects; setting-up a new business/organisation; HR; ICT; property/construction; marketing; project management and relevant education philosophy (if applicable).