



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **Subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) funding manual**

**For SKE programmes starting between 3  
October 2016 and 30 September 2017.**

**October 2016**

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## Introduction

1. This manual is a guide to requesting National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) funding for subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) programmes that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) candidates complete before or alongside their ITT courses.
2. Any queries about the purpose of SKE, programme eligibility or the allocation of funding to SKE providers should be sent to [ta.ske@education.gov.uk](mailto:ta.ske@education.gov.uk). Payment queries should be sent to the funding team at [ske.funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ske.funding@education.gov.uk).
3. Queries from organisations interested in becoming SKE providers should be sent to [ta.ske@education.gov.uk](mailto:ta.ske@education.gov.uk).

## SKE programmes

4. SKE programmes are designed for ITT candidates to gain the depth of knowledge needed to train to teach their chosen subject.
5. School Direct (SD) lead schools and ITT providers can deliver SKE programmes themselves or commission them to be delivered by an SKE provider.
6. SKE funding is available for the following subjects:
  - physics
  - mathematics
  - chemistry
  - biology
  - design & technology
  - languages
  - computing
  - geography
7. SKE programmes **must**:
  - support allocated places on ITT courses except for deferred places as outlined below in paragraph 11
  - be offered because, without SKE, the trainee is highly unlikely to meet the subject knowledge requirements of the [Teachers' Standards](#) by the time his or her ITT course is complete
  - end before the trainee completes his or her ITT course and before a recommendation for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is made

- be no longer than the minimum duration that is needed to address the subject knowledge gaps of trainees, rounded up to the course durations in the table below. SKE funding must be claimed based on a full time equivalent that equates to 25 hours of study per week e.g. only eight weeks of funding can be claimed for 200 hours of study, regardless of when a programme starts and finishes.

Programme length category	Number of claimable weeks for a full-time equivalent programme and the number of study hours a trainee will complete
Short	8 weeks (200 hours) 12 weeks (300 hours)
Medium	16 weeks (400 hours) 20 weeks (500 hours)
Long	24 weeks (600 hours) 28 weeks (700 hours)

8. SKE programmes **may**:

- be delivered before or alongside ITT courses
- be delivered online, through distance learning, face-to-face or a mixture of these approaches
- be undertaken by trainees on a part-time or full-time basis

9. Providers may claim SKE funding only for courses that support recruitment to the 2016 and 2017 ITT cycles (i.e. for ITT courses starting in autumn 2016 and 2017) and for deferred trainees for the 2018 ITT cycle (i.e. for ITT courses starting in autumn 2018, subject to paragraph 11 below). Funding may be claimed for the 2018 ITT cycle from the date when UCAS registration opens in autumn 2017. Further information about SKE funding for the 2018 ITT cycle will be made available in early autumn 2017.

10. An overview of the SKE programme and examples of how it can be used to support ITT recruitment is available on the [get into teaching](#) website and [gov.uk](#).

## Deferral of an ITT place to allow for completion of SKE

11. If the duration of an SKE programme means that it cannot be completed before an ITT course ends, the SD lead school/ITT provider can offer a conditional deferred place on an ITT course. For instance, if a trainee starts a 28 week part-time programme in March, then this might mean he or she would be unable to complete SKE before their ITT course ends.

12. To defer a candidate to the next ITT cycle, the SD lead school/ITT provider will need to update the UCAS system by selecting the 'confirmation amendment' decision in Weblink and change the cycle year from the current cycle to the next (see screenshot below). Please note, this does not guarantee approval to recruit in the future. Should the SD lead school/ITT provider not receive approval to recruit for the following academic year, the applicant would need to re-apply for another ITT course.

Round	1
Choice	1
Training programme code	[REDACTED]
Training location/campus	▼
Month	September ▼
Cycle year	2016
Modular	2017 2018
Part time	Full time ▼

Submit Changes

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## Eligibility of applicants to receive funding

13. SKE funding can be claimed only for the purpose of candidate or trainee teacher subject knowledge development for ITT.
14. To be eligible for SKE funding, an applicant must have accepted a conditional offer of a place on a postgraduate ITT course (which may be a deferred place as outlined in paragraph 11).
15. NCTL does not specify that all ITT course entry requirements must be met before an SKE programme starts, other than the conditional offer of an ITT place. Any separate entry requirements for an SKE programme specified by the SD lead school/ITT provider are a separate matter and must be agreed with the trainee.
16. To be eligible for an SKE training bursary, trainees must hold at least a 2:2 degree, with the exception of trainees in mathematics and physics. Trainees with a 3rd class degree in mathematics or physics require at least a grade B in A level in mathematics, further mathematics or physics to be eligible for the SKE training bursary. Trainees in other SKE subjects do not need an A level in their ITT subject to receive the SKE training bursary. Please see the [ITT bursary guidance](#) for more information.

## Funding arrangements for SKE

17. Funding for SKE is requested from NCTL using the SKE claim form on the [SKE introduction web page](#).
18. An SD lead school/ITT provider can claim funding directly from NCTL if it runs its own SKE programmes. Alternatively, if it commissions an SKE provider to deliver an SKE programme, it can instruct the SKE provider to request and receive SKE funding on its behalf. However, this option is only available where the SKE provider is also an SD lead school/ITT provider.
19. For SKE funding to be released by NCTL, SD lead schools/ITT providers must have a signed grant offer letter in place. All highlighted sections in the [grant offer letter](#) must be completed and annex A must be signed by the Accounting Officer. The form only needs completing once and should be returned to the SKE funding team at [ske.funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ske.funding@education.gov.uk). By completing this document, the SD lead school/ITT provider agrees to the [grant terms and conditions](#) for the SKE funding.
20. If the SKE provider is not an SD lead school/ITT provider, it will need to invoice the SD lead school/ITT provider for the actual cost of delivering the SKE programme. The SD lead school/ITT provider will then need to claim back the funding for the SKE programme and the training bursary from NCTL. The SD lead school/ITT provider must retain the invoice from the SKE provider for audit purposes (see paragraphs 46 to 49 for further information).

## Rates for funding for SKE programmes

21. SKE funding is made up of programme funding for providers to deliver SKE and training bursary funding for trainees to assist with additional costs that trainees incur while undertaking the programme.
22. For all courses that have a start date after 3 October 2016:
  - The maximum rate of funding for programme costs is £200 per week per trainee. The SKE programme funding that is claimed should reflect the actual cost of running these programmes. There is no additional funding to cover administration of SKE programmes or training bursaries.
  - The trainee bursary funding is £115 per week per trainee but this may be uplifted for a limited number of trainees to up to £200 per week in accordance with paragraphs 31 to 35.
23. The maximum rates of funding that can be claimed for trainees undertaking full-time SKE programmes are shown in the table below.

Programme band	Programme duration and the hours of study	Maximum programme funding *	Training bursary funding**
Short	8 weeks (200 hrs)	£1,600	£920
	12 weeks (300 hrs)	£2,400	£1,380
Medium	16 weeks (400 hrs)	£3,200	£1,840
	20 weeks (500 hrs)	£4,000	£2,300
Long	24 weeks (600 hrs)	£4,800	£2,760
	28 weeks (700 hrs)	£5,600	£3,220

\*Claim should be made only for programmes that are 8, 12, 16, 20, 24 or 28 weeks long.

\*\*A limited number of trainees may be eligible for a bursary uplift to a maximum of £200 per week to enable them to complete an SKE programme (see paragraphs 31 to 35).

24. Funding claims must reflect the full-time equivalent duration of SKE programmes, rather than the number of weeks between programmes starting and ending. For example, if an applicant undertakes an 8 week SKE programme for 200 hours of study that is delivered part-time over a longer period, only 8 weeks of SKE funding can be claimed.
25. If an applicant fails to engage in or withdraws from their SKE programme, the SD lead school/ITT provider/SKE provider must inform the SKE funding team at [ske.funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ske.funding@education.gov.uk) as soon as possible so that future bursary payment for this trainee can be stopped. NCTL reserves the right to investigate withdrawals from SKE programmes and recover any unused funding.
26. It is a condition of SKE programme funding that trainees should not be charged for undertaking the programme. This is to prevent issues that may adversely affect ITT recruitment.

## SKE training bursary

27. To be eligible for an SKE training bursary, trainees must satisfy the training bursary eligibility criteria as detailed in paragraphs 14 to 16 and the [ITT bursary guidance](#).
28. If an SKE programme runs in parallel with a full-time ITT course and the trainee is eligible to receive an ITT bursary, the trainee will receive either the SKE bursary or the ITT bursary; depending on which has the higher value. If an SKE programme runs in parallel with an SD salaried course, the SKE bursary will cease from when the SD salary begins. The SD salary should be sufficient to support the SKE trainee throughout the remainder of their SKE course. The value of SKE funding requested, and detailed on the claim form, must be reduced to reflect the duration of any parallel delivery.

29. SD lead schools/ITT providers or their nominated SKE provider (if the SKE provider is an SD lead school/ITT provider) will receive SKE training bursary payments on behalf of the trainee and must pass these on in full to them. Trainees should receive their bursary award phased over the course of the SKE programme in monthly instalments in line with [ITT bursary guidance](#).
30. In the event an overpayment for the training bursary should arise due to a trainee withdrawing from the programme, it will be recovered in full through the audit grant return process that all SD lead schools/ITT providers are required to complete. Please see paragraphs 47 to 49 for more information.

## Discretionary training bursary

31. Limited discretionary funding will be available so that the SKE training bursary can be increased from £115 to up to £200 for a limited number of trainees. The amount of funding that will be made available to individual providers for this purpose will be linked to the funding claim limit that will be allocated to them by NCTL (see paragraph 36 to 41 for information on the allocation of funding claim limits).
32. This discretionary bursary funding is for trainees that need additional financial support who would otherwise be unable to undertake the programme. The discretionary bursary is intended to cover additional costs that some trainees incur while undertaking the programme such as significant travel, childcare or other care arrangements and other supplementary household living expenses.
33. SKE providers will be responsible for managing their own discretionary bursary fund which includes communicating the criteria and targeting it appropriately to trainees that are experiencing the greatest financial difficulties. It is for SKE providers to determine which trainees receive this additional funding and that the amount of funding that individuals receive is sufficient to enable them to undertake SKE.
34. To ensure that there is discretionary bursary funding available throughout the ITT cycle, SKE providers may wish to hold a back funding for trainees that emerge late in the cycle in accordance with their planned programme recruitment.
35. SKE providers must indicate the amount of any discretionary funding that has been awarded to individual trainees when submitting their funding claim. They will be expected to keep records of the reasons for uplifting the training bursary. NCTL reserves the right to review these records under [terms and conditions](#) of the Department for Education grant funding agreement (sections 9, 13 and 31).

## Allocation of SKE funding claim limits

36. In October 2016, funding limits will be allocated to individual providers for claims for SKE programme costs from October 2016 to March 2017 and separately, from April 2017 to September 2017. These allocated funding limits will be monitored, reviewed and may be adjusted at agreed points throughout the year.
37. NCTL's process for allocating funding limits to individual providers is as follows:
- i. In early October, a partial allocation will be made to providers based on a proportion of their SKE claims for the previous year. This will enable claims to be submitted while a full funding allocation is being agreed.
  - ii. To determine how much SKE funding will be required, individual providers will need to calculate how many weekly funding units they expect to claim for each month and allocation period, based on the number of trainees they expect to recruit and the duration of programmes that they plan to deliver.
  - iii. Providers will be required to request their funding allocation by submitting a funding allocation request form to [ta.ske@education.gov.uk](mailto:ta.ske@education.gov.uk). This form is available on the [SKE introduction web page](#). It will break down the funding request by the expected number of trainees and weekly units by ITT subject and month.
  - iv. If the funding requests for all providers exceed the amount available for distribution, NCTL will determine the amount of funding that will be allocated to individual providers after considering the following criteria:
    - a) The number of trainees that will be recruited compared to the number of units requested i.e. this will prioritise funding to requests that deliver a higher proportion of trainees on short programmes than long programmes.
    - b) The difficulty in ITT recruitment to the subjects in which the funding is requested i.e. this will prioritise funding to requests that deliver a higher proportion of trainees that are in ITT subjects that are considered by NCTL to be the most difficult to fill.
    - c) The number of school-led ITT places that the request is likely to support. This will be based on an assessment of the number of ITT candidates the provider has recently supported for school-led ITT courses and any additional information about the proportion of school-led trainees that the provider expects to support will also be taken into account.
    - d) The amount of SKE funding that was claimed by the provider in the previous year and/or the accuracy of any previously agreed funding

allocation requests. This will prioritise funding to requests that are supported by past recruitment trends and/or previous funding allocation requests that accurately reflected the claims that were later submitted.

- v. If a provider is allocated less funding than it originally requested, it may submit an updated funding request form to profile how it will use this funding by ITT subject and calendar month.
38. If, at any time, after the funding allocation limit is agreed, a provider becomes aware that it will not need to claim the number of units it was allocated, it should relinquish these units by resubmitting a revised funding allocation request form as soon as possible.
39. NCTL will monitor individual providers' claims throughout the year against the monthly breakdown of funding as detailed in their agreed funding allocation request. If providers do not fully claim against this monthly breakdown, the unclaimed units of funding will be automatically relinquished for redistribution.
40. Providers may over recruit against the monthly breakdown that they provided in their agreed funding request form as long as this does not result in the funding allocation for the recruitment period being exceeded (see paragraph 36).
41. Providers may request additional funding at pre-determined points in the year by resubmitting their funding request. However, the approval of additional funding will depend on the amount of funding that is available to be reallocated and an evaluation of the request itself by NCTL based on the criteria that is outlined in paragraph 37. If a provider is new and does not have a track record in delivering SKE, it will be required to provide information about how the requested number of trainees will be recruited. This evidence will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## How to claim SKE funding

42. The following is an overview of the process for SD lead schools/ITT providers to follow when claiming SKE programme and bursary funding:
43. The process for completing the claim form is explained below.
- i. The SKE claim form is available on the [SKE introduction web page](#). Requests for multiple trainees can be included on one request form.
  - ii. The SKE claim form must be completed in full, including the names of all parties involved with the SKE request. SD lead school/ITT providers must ensure that, from the first day of the training, the trainee meets, and continues to meet, the eligibility criteria to receive SKE funding. Providers must complete each section on the request form before submitting it.

- iii. The cost of each SKE programme and SKE training bursary included in the claim form should be known before submitting the request.
44. The process for submitting claims is explained below.
- i. From 3 October 2016, NCTL will not provide funding for any SKE claims that are submitted more than two weeks after the programme start date.
  - ii. Completed SKE claim forms should be password-protected and sent, via secure mail, to [ske.funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ske.funding@education.gov.uk). The password for the file will need to be sent to [fa.team@education.gov.uk](mailto:fa.team@education.gov.uk). Incomplete claim forms will not be processed and SD lead schools/ITT providers will be asked to resubmit them.
  - iii. SD lead schools/ITT providers must have signed the GOL and returned it to NCTL before any funding can be released.
  - iv. The SKE funding team will contact providers if their claim has been unsuccessful.
  - v. Where the SKE funding team is unable to approve claims because doing so would cause the funding limit for the allocation period to be exceeded, it will refer any queries directly to the SKE team. Applicants must be registered on one SKE programme only. NCTL reserve the right to monitor SKE programme take up and spend. Any SKE programme funds deemed to have been used inappropriately will be recovered in full. Should it emerge that a trainee is registered on more than one SKE programme, the ITT/SKE provider must immediately contact NCTL at [ske.funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ske.funding@education.gov.uk) for further guidance before submitting a claim.
45. The payment process is explained below.
- i. Payments will be made electronically directly from NCTL by BACS at the start of each calendar month.
  - ii. NCTL aims to pay SKE programme funding in full at the start of the SKE programme, within the next NCTL monthly payment run and following receipt and acceptance of the completed SKE claim form.
  - iii. NCTL aims to pay SKE training bursary funding from the next NCTL monthly payment run following the start date of the SKE programme, which must be recorded on the SKE request form. Failure to record the start date of the programme in the request form will result in the form being rejected. The SKE training bursary will be paid over the duration of the SKE programme in monthly instalments.

- iv. SKE payments are processed approximately one week before the final working day of the month. To help ensure that payments are made in the correct month, SKE claim forms must be received and accepted by the SKE funding team before the third Friday of the month preceding the SKE programme start date. For example providers wishing to receive payment for trainees starting in December 2016 must submit and have their claims approved by mid-January 2017.

## **Monitoring, analysis and audit of SKE**

- 46. The data submitted in the SKE claim form will form part of a regular analysis and review by NCTL and additional information may be requested as appropriate to monitor and evaluate take up, quality and impact of the SKE scheme.
- 47. Recipients of SKE funding may be subject to audit during the year and must, therefore, retain all invoices corresponding to the SKE request form. Recipients of SKE funding may also be asked to submit relevant documentation to NCTL at the end of the year.
- 48. An Audit Grant Report (AGR) will be sent out by NCTL to all recipients of ITT-related funding at the end of the 2015 to 2016 academic year, to reconcile funding from NCTL and actual spend. SKE funding will be incorporated within this return. Funding will be recovered in full for any trainee that did not start the SKE programme. Providers in receipt of any SKE funding will be required to report directly to NCTL in relation to unspent funding when requested.
- 49. The recipient must complete the relevant section(s) of the AGR, arrange for the AGR and Annex G of the GOL to be signed by a registered independent external auditor and submit to NCTL by 31 December 2016, to [financial.monitoring@education.gov.uk](mailto:financial.monitoring@education.gov.uk).



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Reference: NCTL-00265-2013



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