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Department
for Education

Transparency data

FE professional development grants pilot: overview

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The further education (FE) professional development grants pilot is a national pilot of competitive grant funding.

In the skills for jobs white paper, the government made a commitment to support the sector to strengthen the professional development and progression of the FE workforce. The FE professional development grants pilot will help deliver that commitment by funding collaborative sector-led initiatives to improve FE professional development and support for staff within priority areas of need.

Aims of the programme

The FE professional development grants pilot aims to:

- support education recovery within the sector
- fulfil the skills for jobs white paper commitment to strengthen the professional development of the FE workforce
- drive improvements in FE professional development provision and support in 3 priority areas of need:
  - workforce capability and confidence to use technology effectively in education
  - subject-specific professional development
  - support for new and inexperienced teachers
- stimulate improvements in workforce development and the standard of teaching in the sector by increasing opportunities for FE and providers and staff to collaborate and share effective practice
- produce resources and approaches to workforce development that can be adopted by other FE providers
- stimulate FE providers and the market to provide high-quality professional development and training for staff working in the sector

Timescales

The FE professional development grants pilot will run for the financial year 2021 to 2022.

All grant-funded activities must be completed by 31 March 2022.

Successful providers will receive an initial grant payment to the value of 60% of the total grant value on or around 18 October 2021 (subject to signing and returning the grant funding offer letter by the required date).

A second and final payment for the remaining grant value (subject to any agreed adjustment following a midpoint review) will be paid on or around 17 January 2022.

Ahead of receiving the funding, providers may choose to begin delivery of FE professional development grants pilot grant-funded activity from the date that they are notified they have been awarded a grant or have signed the appropriate grant award letter (or both).

Programme themes and activities

Priority theme 1: workforce capability and confidence to use technology effectively in education

Priority theme objective: training and support for staff to strengthen skills and confidence to use technology effectively in educational delivery.

Activity area: collaborative peer-to-peer support

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include providing ongoing support through access to trained blended learning champions (The LTE Group [College Collaboration Fund (CCG) Project](#)).

Activity area: evidence-based training or continuing professional development (CPD) to improve practice

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include:

- structured CPD offer to improve quality of online and blended teaching, learning and assessment ([Walsall College remote education case study)](#)
- development of a digital induction programme for staff along with a training schedule package to improve workforce capability and capacity with remote and blended delivery (Lincoln College [College Collaboration Fund project](#))

Activity area: development of online and blended pedagogy

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include:

- research and development to identify effective strategies in the delivery of online lessons by staff ([Plumpton College CCF project](#))
- creation of an online synchronous teaching and learning toolkit and guidance for FE teachers ([Walsall College CCF project](#))

Priority theme 2: subject specific professional development

Priority theme objective: support for staff to improve subject and pedagogic content knowledge to improve the quality of curriculum design and teaching, learning and assessment.

Activity area: evidence-based approaches to improve subject knowledge and pedagogy

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include:

- subject specific training and CPD focused on improving teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy ([T Level professional development programme](#))

- use of expert practitioners to drive effective practice through peer observations, mentoring and embedding research ([evidence base underpinning national standard for teacher's professional development and relevant Ofsted research](), see also the relevant sections within the [inspection handbook]() for FE and skills providers)

Activity area: application or adaption of generic pedagogic practices to specific subject areas

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include:

- support for staff to understand how general pedagogic issues and approaches apply to their specific learning contexts (evidence base underpinning national standard for teachers' professional development, see this [implementation guidance]() and the research highlighted in the bibliography at the end of the document)
- creation of guidance and resources to exemplify excellent teaching, learning and assessment approaches in a subject area (evidence base underpinning national standard for teacher's professional development)

Activity area: collaborative peer-to-peer support and subject networks

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include subject networks to research, identify and disseminate effective teaching, learning and assessment approaches ([T Level Professional Development networks]()).

Priority theme 3: supporting new or inexperienced teachers

Priority theme objective: tailored support and professional development for new or inexperienced teachers to aid career progression and improve teacher retention.

Activity area: structured support packages for new or inexperienced teachers

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include:

- covering costs of additional teacher time to provide intensive support such as paired teaching or work shadowing and reduced workload ([Taking Teaching Further programme]())
- [school teacher early career framework support offer]()

Activity area: induction programmes to support the development of key aspects of pedagogy and practice

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include core induction programmes covering key areas of practice essential for the

development of new or inexperienced FE teachers (schools early career framework induction packages).

Activity area: support for trainee teachers whose teacher training has been disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Examples of previous interventions or supporting evidence base include support for newly qualified teachers to broaden their experience of face-to-face teaching plus strengthen skills and confidence to undertake classroom and in-person delivery.

There are well-established means of supporting newly qualified teachers which we will expect applications to build on but we will be testing approaches in a new context of responding to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

To help monitor outputs from funded projects, we have provided a set of common KPIs. Common KPIs are divided into 4 categories:

- common mandatory KPIs that must be included in all applications
- required KPIs which should be included where relevant to the priority workforce development theme the proposal is addressing
- recommended survey KPIs include KPIs bespoke to the programme of work you have detailed in your proposal

We will centrally collect mandatory and required KPIs, whereas lead providers will collect survey KPIs and report them to us. All KPIs will form part of the conditions of funding and grant funding agreement for successful proposals and will be regularly monitored.

You will be required to complete and submit a monthly proforma detailing progress of activities against the mandatory, required and bespoke KPIs. These KPIs will form part of your grant award letter. Lead providers will collect and report recommended survey KPIs to us at the beginning of the programme and on completion of programme activities to provide baseline data and indicative measures of impact.

Where a KPI is measured at provider level, you must reference the lead provider and all partner providers for the KPI, including the current status (for example, a baseline) and targets (where appropriate). The KPI collection process requires you to submit provider-level KPI data for all participant partners.

Providing evidence of the current status for each KPI will help you to attribute improvements to the activity included in your proposal. Collecting and reporting on this same data throughout and at the end of the project will allow you to measure your progress.

Mandatory KPIs (KPI type 1)

These are the:

- estimated cost per participant of accessing training, support or professional development
- number of parties actively engaging in the project a) providers, b) third party organisations
- increased hours of training, support or professional development provided by the funding a) delivered, b) accessed
- increased number of staff: a) accessing training, b) completing training, support or professional development directly provided by the funding
- number of learners or students reached through project

You should be aware that:

- hours of training, support or professional development delivered are measured at an event level – for example, a 1 hour training course delivered to 20 participants = 1 hour of training delivered
- hours of training, support or professional development accessed are measured at an individual level – for example, a 1 hour training course delivered to 20 participants = 20 hours of training accessed

Required KPIs, based on the activities that your bid will deliver (KPI type 2)

These are the:

- number of employers involved in the development of training, support or professional development
- number of resources (training courses or guidance) created
- increased hours of training, support or professional development provided by staff for other staff
- increased number of staff providing training, support, or professional development for other staff
- increased number of staff who: a) have identified training needs b) have a development plan in place c) receive training as a result of a) and or b)
- number of hours of reduced timetabling accessed
- number of staff accessing training or resources created through the project
- number of teachers accessing remission and reduced timetabling
- number of part time staff accessing out of contract hours payments to participate in CPD activities (equivalent to remission funding for full time staff)
- number or range of subject areas in which training is sought as a result of training needs analysis

Other recommended survey KPIs (KPI type 3)

These are the:

- indicators of collaboration, such as dissemination of outputs (possibly through the sharing of resources or learnings), or development of professional communities of practice
- indicators of positive changes to teacher confidence as a result of the project (in, for example, teaching practice, pedagogy, subject-specific skills, digital or technological)
- indicators of positive changes to teacher job satisfaction levels
- indicators of positive changes to teacher knowledge as a result of the project (in, for example, teaching practice;, pedagogy, subject-specific knowledge, digital or technological)

Lead providers will centrally collect survey KPIs and report them to us. They will form part of your grant award letter. DfE and ESFA will monitor them.

Your proposal should include sufficient KPIs to provide a full understanding of impact at the close of the project. Where these are not met by KPIs in 1, 2 or 3, you will be required to detail these 4 additional bespoke KPIs.

You should consider both short-term or interim, or both, measures and long-term measures to help you to track and report on progress. Interim measures allow for the collection of proxy data over a short time period where longer-term measures may not be available. Long-term measures should be KPIs or measures that you expect the FE professional development grants pilot project to affect over a longer period, for example, changes that the FE professional development grants pilot may expect to influence over one academic year.

Additional bespoke KPIs (KPI type 4)

Any additional KPIs you included in your application will also form part of your grant award letter. DfE and ESFA will monitor them.

Responsibilities

The lead partner is responsible for:

- managing the funding allocated
- accounting for progress on the project, including reporting against agreed KPIs
- submitting monitoring and self-evaluation reports
- ensuring all partners are engaged with and are active members of the group

- contributing to dissemination activities to share outputs and promote learning within the FE sector
- sharing resources created through your project in agreed designated public domains such as GOV.UK – projects that may not have the creation of digital tools as their primary focus will be required to share high-level project summaries along with information about outputs and impact

The lead partner and all partners of the providers must work together to:

- understand the challenges you are seeking to address through your application
- deliver the project
- develop a costed project
- plan how you'll use your combined experience and knowledge
- deliver the project
- sustain new ways of working or learning beyond the lifetime of the project
- ensure optimal reach of the project
- contribute to DfE material to support the promotion of learning
- participate in any evaluation requirements

Funding

Lead providers could apply for up to £500,000. The total fund is £9.5 million. We reserve the right to renegotiate proposed projects, including funding values.

Conditions of funding

You must ensure:

- all partners meet the eligibility criteria
- the proposed project and activities addresses only one priority theme.
- demonstrate how you have used evidence to identify the specific priority theme as appropriate to meeting the needs of your providers
- all workforce participants accessing the FE professional development grants pilot-funded projects are actively engaged or employed in FE education activities
- all activities in the project funded by the FE professional development grants pilot are for the primary benefit of FE staff delivering ESFA-funded provision for FE learners in at least one of the eligible funding streams
- demonstrate how you have used evidence to identify the specific priority theme as appropriate to meeting the needs of your providers
- identify the products, learning and best practice that will be derived from your

project and how this will be shared with the wider FE sector

- agree to comply with DfE-led dissemination of project summary information, shared resources and effective practice

What's excluded from FE professional development grants pilot funding

You cannot use FE professional development grants pilot funding for capital expenditures on assets valued at over £2,500 which are expected to be used for a period of at least 12 months such as:

- purchasing assets
- buildings
- furniture
- fittings
- information technology
- software

Items valued below £2,500 are not counted as capital assets, even where they have a productive life of more than one year.

Also excluded are any:

- staff restructuring
- independent business reviews
- marketing or public relations activities
- activities that are predominantly focused on types of non-FE provision (such as higher education provision)
- activities or services you'd normally get free of charge
- payments you'll make for subsidised activities of services at a higher 'market' rate

We also don't expect eligible HE providers to be delivering formal types of professional development or training classed as higher education (at level 4 or above) for their staff through the pilot.

VAT

Total eligible costs may include irrecoverable VAT, but you will not be able to claim for additional funding above the amount you have been awarded to cover any additional VAT liability.

Further information about our position in relation to VAT can be found in the

standard [grant terms and conditions](#).

Monitoring, assurance and data requirements

We have a responsibility to make sure that public funds and assets generated from the FE professional development grants pilot programme are properly managed in line with your grant funding agreement.

You'll be required to demonstrate that you have administered all funding in accordance with your grant funding agreements, including:

- providing the DfE with monitoring returns on your use of grant funds
- providing any management information or data returns required for evaluation
- identifying risks that could have an impact on your project
- accounting for progress against the agreed project including KPIs and measures of success
- producing and maintaining a spending profile – there needs to be clarity within your internal accounting systems to provide assurance on the use of funds

We require rigorous assurance of all expenditure, including your accounting officer verifying evidence provided to us. We will include a sample annex G in your grant funding agreement which demonstrates the breadth of this requirement. We will provide more detailed guidance regarding the annex G process at the end of the financial year 2021 to 2022 (annual certification of expenditure arrangements).

There will be a midpoint reconciliation to review the allocated funding that you received and programme expenditure. In that return, you will also be requested to provide indicative expenditure for the remainder of the programme so that we know what is likely to be spent. We will adjust funding to meet the actual amount required. Where funding that you have received is more than the amount that you will, or are forecasting, to spend by 31 March 2022, we may recover the excess either by offsetting this amount against the remaining payment of FE professional development grants pilot funding, invoicing you or through a future reduction in ESFA funding.

We reserve the right to delay or withhold payments if data is inaccurate or incomplete. In the event of any variances, we reserve the right to ask you for explanations of the variances and to seek further information. We won't reimburse you for any ineligible expenditure.

When your project is completed, we will ask you to complete an annex G in accordance with published guidance, containing income and expenditure. This must be independently audited and countersigned by the accounting officer.

Data requirements and reporting

You must submit relevant data and management information to us at specific times during and after the programme, including:

- monthly proforma detailing progress of activities against KPIs and spending profile
- a monitoring return on your use of grant funds at the mid-point and endpoint of your project

We may take into account failure to comply with requests for data when we consider further requests for any future funding.

Evaluation

You are required to participate in any possible additional evaluation which will be confirmed in due course if relevant. We may generate data based on this evaluation which may be published in an anonymised way so that individuals and colleges cannot be identified.

Payment and repayment of funding

The lead partner will receive payment from ESFA under a funding schedule.

ESFA will enter into a contract with the lead partner. Any arrangements between the lead partner and all other partners in the providers are to be determined by your group.

FE professional development grants pilot funding will be repayable if:

- the funding is not spent by 31 March 2022
- the funding is not spent on the eligible activities you have detailed in your project (unless any change has been agreed with ESFA and DfE)
- reports on expenditures and outcomes are not submitted

Contact

Email fepdg.pilot@education.gov.uk if you have any questions about the pilot.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

Services and information

Benefits

Births, deaths, marriages and care

Business and self-employed

Childcare and parenting

Citizenship and living in the UK

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