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[Department
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Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19) National Testing Programme: conditions of grant from August 2021

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1. Introduction

Rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing of staff, pupils and students in secondary schools and colleges began in January 2021.

The purpose of this is to identify asymptomatic cases of COVID-19.

Further information and guidance have been developed and can be accessed in the COVID-19 National Testing Programme Secondary Schools and Colleges Document Sharing Platform. We've shared a link to the document sharing platform with schools and colleges. If you do not think you have access, contact the Department for Education (DfE) helpline on 0800 046 8687.

Schools and colleges will receive funding to support them with costs they have incurred to conduct asymptomatic testing site (ATS) on-site testing, in line with departmental testing policy.

1.1 Expiry or review date

This guidance will be kept under regular review.

1.2 Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- mainstream academies and maintained schools with secondary age pupils
- 16 to 19 academies and maintained schools
- alternative provision academies with secondary aged pupils, including hospital schools
- pupil referral units with secondary aged pupils
- special academies and special maintained schools with secondary age pupils
- further education colleges and sixth form colleges
- special post-16 institutions
- non-maintained special schools
- independent special schools

2. Scope

These grant conditions relate to the allocation that schools and colleges will receive to support the costs associated with testing from 23 August onwards, including:

- the rapid one-off on-site ATS testing on return of all students or pupils attending educational settings, with students or pupils receiving 2 lateral flow device (LFD) tests, spaced 3 to 5 days apart
- the maintenance of an on-site ATS testing offer from 18 September until further notice, in line with departmental testing policy, to enable the twice weekly testing of students or pupils for whom at-home testing is not considered suitable or who may need additional assistance

For conditions of grant for costs associated with testing activity between 4 January 2021 to 30 July 2021, read [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) National Testing Programme: conditions of grant](#).

3. Eligibility

The following institution types will be eligible for this funding:

- mainstream academies and maintained schools with secondary age pupils

- 16 to 19 academies and maintained schools
- alternative provision academies with secondary aged pupils, including hospital schools
- pupil referral units with secondary aged pupils
- special academies and special maintained schools with secondary age pupils
- further education colleges and sixth form colleges
- special post-16 institutions
- non-maintained special schools
- independent special schools

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will only provide funding to institutions that are on a list of confirmed participants in the rapid testing programme provided by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Each confirmed test site will have an agreed identifier to record test results. This will be used to identify participating institutions.

Independent institutions (with fee-paying pupils and students) are not eligible for this funding.

At eligible institutions, all pupils aged 11 to 18 are in scope, as are any aged 19 plus currently attending college during this period.

We are providing this funding to support schools and colleges with the costs of testing. We expect that this will mainly be workforce costs.

Other costs might include:

- minor incidental expenses, such as printing, paper and stationery, cleaning materials and equipment, tissues and wipes
- additional waste disposal costs incurred given the additional waste volumes likely to be generated from the testing bays and desks, such as LFD kits, disposable personal protective equipment (PPE), tissues and paper bowls

Institutions will have discretion on how they spend this funding in support of testing.

4. Allocations

We have provided a workforce planning tool on the document sharing platform which illustrates workforce requirements and associated funding. This allows institutions to calculate an estimate of funding that they may receive. We've shared a link to the document sharing platform with schools and colleges. If you do not think you have access, contact the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687.

Actual allocations will be based on the number of bays and desks calculated as

needed to deliver the number of tests completed (measured by the number of test results recorded on the school or college's individual account on the Test and Trace Log Results website).

To calculate funding, we will estimate the number of bays and desks a school or college would have required in order to complete the number of test results recorded based on an average testing volume. We will then apply an average cost per bay.

We expect most of these costs to relate to workforce costs using the roles set out on the COVID-19 National Testing Programme Secondary Schools and Colleges Document Sharing Platform, but we will also allow for waste disposal and minor incidental costs. We've shared a link to the document sharing platform with schools and colleges. If you do not think you have access, contact the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687.

For rapid one-off testing on return of pupils or students who are attending school or college, we have calculated:

- 1 role per 10 testing bays and desks for the following roles: COVID-19 co-ordinator, quality lead or team leader, registration assistant, results recorder and cleaner
- 1 processor per bay and desk
- 1 test assistant per bay and desk in special schools, special post-16 institutions, or 1 per 5 bays and desks in mainstream settings

Eligible institutions in London will be paid an additional weighting for workforce costs. This will be calculated in accordance with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' general labour market rates.

For institutions receiving Medacs support for administered swabbing requirements, the cost of this Medacs support will be deducted from that institution's allocation or payment by recalculating the allocation with the Medacs funded post removed.

We have accounted for different staffing levels needed for rapid one-off on-site ATS testing on return of pupils or students in special schools, special post-16 institutions, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units. We have assumed that:

- these settings will need a higher number of test assistants to support pupils who cannot self-administer tests
- test assistants will be paid at a higher hourly rate to reflect the likelihood of additional qualifications or experience

While these assumptions will be used to determine funding allocations, decisions on specific requirements for staffing are for individual institutions to make.

5. Exceptional funding for additional premises costs

In exceptional circumstances we will consider claims for additional funding over a minimum level of £250 to cover other additional costs incurred by schools and colleges.

The window to claim for exceptional costs will be open by the end of the autumn term 2021. This will include schools and colleges that had to hire additional premises or make significant alterations to their existing premises to conduct testing from 23 August to 17 September 2021.

Claims will:

- only be available in exceptional circumstances where the funding allocation is not sufficient and after every other alternative option has been exhausted
- need to be supported by an invoice or other documentary evidence of the costs incurred

The link to claim exceptional costs will be available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) mass testing funding for schools and colleges: exceptional costs guidance](#) along with further guidance in due course.

We anticipate making payment for valid claims in January 2022.

6. Payments

A series of payments will be made to schools and colleges, with payments being made retrospectively and based on information reported through Test and Trace.

See [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) mass testing funding for schools and colleges](#) for more information about how much each institution has been allocated for the periods of testing that have already been paid for.

For testing conducted between 23 August and 17 September, we will make payments to colleges, non-maintained special schools, local authorities and academies at the end of November 2021.

For testing conducted from 18 September onwards, we will make payments to colleges, non-maintained special schools, local authorities and academies in April 2022.

Testing period	Estimated payment date
23 August to 17 September 2021	November 2021

Payments will be made directly to colleges, academies, local authorities and non-maintained special schools. Local authorities must pass payments on to maintained schools. The ESFA will make these payments automatically. There will be no requirement to make a claim to receive the funding for Test and Trace reported testing.

We have asked institutions to make the necessary payments to carry out testing from their existing budgets and record these in line with local finance policies. Schools that are academies on 1 September 2021 will receive payment directly from ESFA. Local authorities should pass on funding to schools due to convert to academies after this date.

Independent special schools (ISSs) included in these allocations will be paid later. To receive payment for this grant, ISSs will need to ensure they have registered their bank details with the department. This can be done by completing the online form, [provide information about your banking and payments to DfE](#), following the route as a 'provider' organisation type.

7. Variation

These conditions of grant may be altered at any time. Participating institutions will be notified of this through existing channels.

8. Recovery of funding

This funding is being provided under section 14 to 16 of the Education Act 2002 and we reserve the right to audit the expenditure.

We will seek to recover funding that has been paid in error. This includes overpayment where an institution is also receiving Medacs support.

Recoveries will be made by invoice or by offsetting the amount against subsequent payments due from DfE.

The recipient must notify DfE immediately through the [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\) enquiry form](#) if it becomes aware of any instance of error, suspected fraud or financial irregularity in the use of the funds.

9. Monitoring, assurance and data

requirements

We have a responsibility to make sure that public funds are properly managed in line with these grant conditions.

We reserve the right to check each institution's Test and Trace data. We may adjust an institution's allocation if the recorded number of tests exceeds the department's guidance on testing activity to be carried out this half term.

We reserve the right to request assurance of this grant funding and will provide further details as necessary.

10. Further information

Books, other documents and records relating to the recipient's accounts shall be open to inspection by the Secretary of State and by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Comptroller and Auditor General may, under section 6 of the National Audit Act 1983, carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the recipient has used its resources in discharging its grant-aided activities.

Schools, colleges and local authorities shall provide information as may be required by the Secretary of State to determine whether it has complied with these conditions.

11. Short-term support with costs

We recognise that a very small number of academies and colleges may be unable to make up-front payments to cover the additional costs due to COVID-19 because of cash flow issues. In these circumstances, academies and colleges should follow the normal process for seeking short-term advances to support their cash flow by contacting ESFA.

Any maintained schools in similar circumstances should contact their local authority for support.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support](#)

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