

[Home](#) > [Education, training and skills](#) > [Teaching and leadership](#) > [Teacher training and professional development](#)
 > [Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\)](#)

Guidance

Subject knowledge enhancement: an introduction

Information about subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) support for initial teacher training (ITT) recruitment.

From: [Department for Education](#)

Published 10 November 2014

Last updated 13 October 2021 — [See all updates](#)

Contents

- [Overview](#)
- [How to know if an applicant needs SKE](#)
- [Referring a participant for SKE](#)
- [How SKE programmes are provided](#)
- [SKE funding](#)
- [Contact us](#)



This information is for initial teacher training (ITT) providers and School Direct lead schools.

If you're an applicant to an ITT course, visit our [improve your subject knowledge page on the Get into Teaching website](#).

You can use the [subject knowledge enhancement: course directory](#) to

Related content

[Subject knowledge enhancement \(SKE\): course directory](#)

[Teacher subject specialism training \(TSST\): programme details](#)

[Subject knowledge enhancement \(SKE\) course form](#)

[Qualified teacher status \(QTS\)](#)

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find a suitable provider.

Overview

The Department for Education (DfE) funds SKE programmes in:

- biology
- chemistry
- computing
- design and technology
- English
- languages
- mathematics
- primary mathematics
- physics
- religious education

As a School Direct lead school or an ITT provider you may see applicants who have the potential to become outstanding teachers but who need to increase their subject knowledge before the [teachers' standards](#) can be met. An SKE programme can help you to feel confident that they can be recruited.

How to know if an applicant needs SKE

The need for SKE is usually identified by a school or provider during the recruitment and selection process. This could be:

- when the applicant is undertaking school experience
- during discussions with an individual before they apply
- from the application form
- during the applicant's interview

Applicants may need more specific subject knowledge to begin an ITT course if they have:

- a degree that's related to the subject rather than an exact match for it
- studied the subject at A level, but not degree level
- an unrelated degree but relevant professional knowledge in the subject
- studied for a languages degree, but need a second language at an acceptable level for teaching in schools
- a degree in the subject but have not used their degree knowledge for many years

Applicants who have a degree in their chosen ITT subject awarded in the previous 5 years are not eligible for a funded SKE course.

Referring a participant for SKE

The applicant's SKE provider will ask you to complete a referral form. This is to ensure a consistent approach to collecting applicant information.

How SKE programmes are provided

SKE courses can vary in duration - from an 8-week refresher or booster programme through to a 28-week programme - and can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis.

All SKE programmes must be completed before qualified teacher status can be recommended and awarded.

There is no restriction on the type of provider that can deliver SKE, and the applicant has the final decision about their provider. However, SKE providers must have a framework agreement in place with the department to deliver SKE.

SKE courses can be:

- completed before or alongside ITT courses
- offered online, through distance learning, face-to-face or a mixture of these approaches

SKE for additional languages

If an applicant for ITT specialising in languages is already adept in a language other than English, you can use our SKE funding to refresh their skills in any additional language. This includes modern foreign languages, community languages, Latin and Ancient Greek.

Through the selection process you should:

- identify applicants who will benefit from an SKE programme
- concentrate on their level of existing and previous language knowledge
- make their offer of teacher training conditional on undertaking a language SKE

SKE programmes listed on the [subject knowledge enhancement: course directory](#) are usually for French, German and Spanish. However, you can develop and offer tailored SKE programmes in other languages

to meet the needs of your applicants.

SKE funding

For all SKE courses in the 2021 to 2022 academic year:

- programme costs are funded at a unit fee up to £200 per week per participant
- the participant bursary funding is £175 per week per participant

Contact us

Subject knowledge enhancement

Email ske.inbox@education.gov.uk

Published 10 November 2014

Last updated 13 October 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

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