



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **Subject Knowledge Enhancement**

**An Introduction**

**November 2013**

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## Introduction

In academic year 2013/14, any School Direct lead school, HEI or SCITT which receives an initial teacher training (ITT) allocation for academic year 2014/15 in mathematics, physics, computing, chemistry, languages or design and technology (D&T), can request Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) funding to support their ITT recruitment. We have opened up the market so that provision of SKE will **not** be restricted to the accredited ITT providers who delivered SKE previously. As there is a limited budget for SKE, the funding will operate on demand, subject to regular review by NCTL.

## What is SKE?

Some people who apply for ITT with the potential to become outstanding teachers may not have enough specific subject knowledge to begin an ITT course. SKE programmes are pre-ITT programmes designed to help these applicants gain the depth of subject knowledge needed to train to teach their chosen subject of mathematics, physics, computing, chemistry, languages or D&T.

While SKE programmes, and their content, are designed to reflect the individual needs of the applicant, they all serve the same purpose – to bring an applicant’s subject knowledge to the appropriate level needed to start an ITT course.

Applicants may not have enough specific subject knowledge to begin an ITT course for different reasons, including:

- They have studied the subject to a highly advanced level, but over time have lost some of the ‘basics’ needed to teach at secondary level.
- They have studied a degree which is related to the subject, rather than an exact match.
- They have recently graduated and studied a degree not related to the subject but have a related A level.
- They have changed career and may have an unrelated degree with a lot of related knowledge including an A level.
- They have a languages degree, but need a second language at an acceptable level for the schools market.

Annex 1 provides examples of how SKE programmes have supported recruitment to ITT in the past.

## How do I know if someone needs SKE?

The need for SKE can be identified by a school or provider during the recruitment and selection process. This could be at any of the following stages:

- When the applicant is undertaking school experience
- During discussions with an individual before they apply
- From the application form
- During the applicant's interview

If you are a School Direct lead school, you may want to discuss SKE with your partner ITT provider.

If you identify the need for SKE, you can make completion of an agreed SKE programme a condition of the ITT offer to the applicant. Once the conditional offer has been accepted, you can request funding and then commission the SKE.

## How will SKE be delivered?

SKE can vary in terms of duration, from an eight week 'refresher' or 'booster' programme right through to a 36 week programme.

SKE programmes can be delivered by a wide range of suppliers and you can consider different options depending on your needs. Suppliers may include:

- A university education department
- A university subject department
- Another school
- Another ITT provider
- A third party supplier such as a Science Learning Centre
- You may also consider delivering the SKE in-house

SKE is flexible enough to be delivered in a variety of ways including:

- Full-time classroom-based study
- Part-time classroom and evening/weekend study
- Part-time distance learning

- Any combination of the above

## Parallel delivery

It might be the case that an SKE programme cannot be completed **before** an ITT course is due to start. Therefore the option of parallel delivery for SKE is available.

It is no longer a requirement that all SKE must be completed before an ITT course can be started. This means that an applicant can start their SKE programme and finish it alongside their ITT programme as long as the two are kept separate in their timetable.

Ofsted has amended its ITE inspection handbook to take account of the fact that an applicant might not have completed SKE before starting ITT. However, it is still the case that all training, including any SKE, must be completed to the requisite standard before QTS can be recommended and awarded.

## Long SKE

If parallel delivery of SKE is not a feasible option, you should not be put off from considering people even if their SKE need means they cannot start their training in September 2014. Funding for long SKE (programmes with duration of more than 24 weeks) is available. No preference will be given in the 2015/16 ITT allocations to providers or schools with individuals coming off long SKE courses.

## How is SKE funded?

SKE programmes are funded by the NCTL. All ITT providers and School Direct lead schools with an ITT allocation in mathematics, physics, chemistry, computing, languages or D&T will be able to request funding for SKE. Details of this process will follow in the SKE Operations Manual which will be available by the end of November.

Funding will operate on demand and can only be requested when an offer of an ITT place has been made to an applicant. NCTL will carry out periodic checks to ensure that all funding is being used appropriately.

SKE funding for 2013/14 is set out in table one below. The maximum amount that NCTL will fund is based on the amount of full time study that the SKE programme equates to (where 25 hours is approximately equivalent to one week's full-time study). Each request for SKE funding will need to set out the duration of the SKE programme and cost. NCTL will fund the actual cost of the SKE programme unless it exceeds the rate maximum for the duration, in which case the maximum funding rate for the duration will be paid. Details of bursaries for SKE will be available in the SKE Operations Manual

For example, if a School Direct lead school identifies that an applicant needs to complete an eight week SKE programme before they start their ITT course, the school can request a maximum of £1,910 to fund the programme.

**Table one: Maximum SKE funding rates 2013/14 – mathematics, physics, computing, chemistry and languages**

| <b>Weeks of full time (or equivalent) study</b> | <b>Maximum Rate</b> |
|---|---------------------|
| 8-11  | £1,910              |
| 12-15   | £2,810              |
| 16-19   | £3,705              |
| 20-23   | £4,605              |
| 24-27   | £5,500              |
| 28-31   | £6,115              |
| 32-35   | £6,725              |
| 36  | £7,340              |

## Annex 1: Examples

Below are some examples of how SKE has supported recruitment to ITT in the past.

Please note – there is complete flexibility with SKE and this list is illustrative not exhaustive. Any number of combinations and programmes are possible.

### Short SKE

Applicant A recently graduated with a 2:1 in Theoretical Physics and applied to a physics ITT course with an HEI provider.

They completed an eight week SKE programme to refresh the ‘basics’ that would be required to teach physics at GCSE level, as this had not been covered since she was at school herself.

The SKE was commissioned from another HEI provider.

### Short SKE

Applicant B recently graduated with a First in physics and applied to a physics ITT course through School Direct.

They completed an SKE programme equivalent to eight weeks to refresh the basics of physics that he had not used since his own GCSE.

The School Direct lead school decided to break up the SKE programme to run alongside the ITT course, and commissioned its own head of physics to build training sessions outside the timetable spread over the first term between September and Christmas. The SKE funding was used to bring in supply cover for the head of physics.

### Medium SKE

Applicant C held an environmental science degree and applied to a chemistry ITT course through School Direct.

They completed a 16 week chemistry SKE programme that was completed entirely by distance learning commissioned from a third-party provider and which ran from March to June. She began her ITT course in September.

## **Medium SKE**

Applicant D held a Spanish degree and applied to a languages ITT course through School Direct.

The School Direct lead school used its SKE funding to commission the equivalent of a 16 week SKE programme from its own languages department that would be timetabled to run flexibly between Easter and September, paying overtime and supply cover where appropriate with the SKE funding. The programme would work towards developing the applicant's French language skills, prior to her starting her ITT course in September.

## **Medium-long SKE**

Applicant E applied in November. She held a degree in medical genetics and applied to a physics ITT course through School Direct. Her degree included modules that covered chemistry and biology, but not physics or mathematics.

They began a 24 week physics SKE in the following January, which was commissioned from the School Direct partner HEI provider. The programme was completed in the summer, prior to her starting her physics ITT course.

## **Long SKE**

Applicant F held an engineering degree but had spent a number of years in related work experience, including as a part-time instructor in a school. She had applied to a maths ITT course through School Direct.

They agreed to take a 36 week maths SKE programme which the school commissioned from its partner ITT provider and which would start in January. She began the SKE programme and the final eight weeks were completed in parallel with the first term of her ITT course.





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