



Department
for Education

Further education (FE) initial teacher education (ITE) grants funding manual

2020 to 2021 academic year

February 2020

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What is an ITE grant?

An ITE grant is a financial incentive to help FE providers attract high-quality individuals into the teaching profession in the FE sector in certain defined subject areas. The grant amount is £18,200 for each individual training to teach in an eligible subject while working as a salaried FE teacher ('trainee'). These grants are distinct from [School Direct \(salaried\) teacher training grants](#) or those made available through the [Taking Teaching Further programme](#).

The grants, available for the 2020 to 2021 academic year, are awarded to trainees based on their relevant qualifications or professional experience, and their employment to teach a designated priority subject in the FE sector in England.

Grant awards are fixed for the duration of the trainee's ITE programme, and are for programmes starting in or after September 2020, and finishing no later than July 2022, only. Awards will be made from a finite funding pot on a first-come-first-served basis, as detailed in the [grants allocations](#) section.

The grant must be used by the trainee's employing FE provider to cover the costs of a prescribed ITE qualification, associated remission from teaching time, and additional support (such as mentoring). It must not be used to cover salary costs.

Grants available

ITE grants are available in the below subjects for programmes starting in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. See the [grant eligibility](#) section for details of trainee requirements.

Subject	Grant
English	£18,200
Mathematics	£18,200
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	£18,200

Funding will not be provided for any subject that is not included in this list.

You must not make assumptions about the continuation, value or scope of ITE grant awards in future years based on the information provided in this document.

We will publish information regarding the availability of any future training grants (beyond the 2020 to 2021 academic year) at the appropriate time.

Accessing grants

In order to be able to access ITE grants, you must be an ESFA-funded FE provider (of any type, not just a general FE college). We cannot accept applications from any other providers.

Grant eligibility

For a trainee to be eligible to receive a grant, you must make sure that, from the first day of training and throughout the programme, the trainee meets the criteria set out below. These points should be read in conjunction with the corresponding sections below, which give further guidance.

To be eligible, a trainee must:

- be employed by you, for at least the full academic year or duration of their training programme (whichever is longer)
- hold minimum Level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics, and at least a Level 3 qualification in their subject of training (or have appropriate professional experience)
- be taking a qualifying in-service ITE qualification in England
- not already be in possession of a diploma in education and training (DET), DET-compliant qualification or equivalent
- not already hold, or be eligible to receive, early years teacher status (EYTS), qualified teacher status (QTS) or qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status
- not be simultaneously undertaking any other ITE course, training scheme or programme that leads to a DET or DET-compliant qualification
- meet other related expectations, including intending to remain in FE teaching in England after qualification

Employment

To be eligible to receive a grant, trainees must be employed to fill an existing vacancy in the available subjects. Typically, a suitable post will have been vacant for at least 3 months and/or re-publicised at least once before. Grants must not be used to provide training to existing employed teachers.

Trainees must be employed full- or part-time (including sessional) on a 0.5 or higher FTE contract for at least the whole of the 2020 to 2021 academic year or the duration of their programme (whichever is longer).

Additionally, in relation to trainees' funded remission from teaching time, we would expect that this typically includes at least 18 hours a week of shadowing for their first 8 weeks, and 5 hours a week or reduced load until March 2021.

Qualifications

To be eligible to receive a grant, a trainee must hold qualifications in English and mathematics at Level 2 as a minimum. Where a trainee is otherwise suitable but has not

successfully achieved Level 2, you may wish to give them an opportunity to show that they can meet the required standard either by taking an equivalence test or by offering other evidence of attainment, which should demonstrate a similar level and breadth. You should consider making similar arrangements for candidates who cannot provide original certificates as evidence.

You should be confident that a trainee's subject qualification has the same level of breadth and depth that would be expected of a UK Level 3 qualification. If the trainee does not hold a relevant Level 3 qualification, you can use your discretion when considering the trainee's skills, knowledge and experience – including relevant professional experience – to determine whether their subject knowledge is sufficiently robust to allow them to complete an ITE programme successfully.

An ITE grant award is dependent on the subject that a trainee trains to teach – not the subject of any other qualifications they hold.

Example

If a trainee with a degree in physics and relevant sector experience trains to teach English, they will be eligible for an £18,200 English grant. If they train to teach physics, they will not be eligible for a grant.

This should not change your selection or recruitment process, including making judgements about the suitability of qualifications or professional experience to the subject of training.

Further information on making and recording qualification decisions is available from [annex B: assessing UK academic qualifications](#). You may also wish to consult with your ITE provider or qualification Awarding Organisation, for any support or advice they can offer.

Qualifying ITE programmes

To be eligible to receive a grant, the trainee must be recruited to and undertake a qualifying in-service ITE programme in England, beginning in or after September 2020 and finishing no later than July 2022.

A qualifying programme must lead, upon successful completion, to the award of a Level 5 DET or DET-compliant qualification at Level 5 or above, with a specialisation in one of the subjects identified in [annex A: list of subjects eligible for a grant](#).

Programmes that enable a trainee to be recommended for the award of EYTS or QTS, or a non-DET-compliant qualification, are not eligible for ITE grant funding.

Combination programmes

The programme content (including teaching) must be at least 50% in the grant subject awarded.

Example

A programme with content of 50% or more in English and the remainder in drama would receive the English grant.

A programme with content of more than 50% drama would not be eligible for a grant as there is no grant award for this subject.

Trainees must not be required to spend a majority of their time teaching a subject other than that for which you are receiving grant funding.

Possession of a DET, DET-compliant qualification, or equivalent

Individuals who hold a DET or DET-compliant qualification on the first day of their ITE programme are not eligible for a training grant. Separate continuing professional development (CPD) may be appropriate for those who already hold these qualifications.

Information on qualifications which may be considered 'DET-compliant' is available from the [Student Finance England eligibility guidance](#).

Possession of, or eligibility for EYTS, QTS or QTLS status

Individuals who hold, or are eligible to receive, EYTS, QTS or QTLS status are not eligible for an ITE grant. Each jurisdiction tested their pupils in 2 of these subjects. In England, these were chemistry and physics.

Undertaking other ITE courses, training schemes or programmes that lead to a DET or DET-compliant qualification

To be eligible for an ITE grant, trainees must not simultaneously undertake any other:

- teacher training course, including teaching apprenticeships
- programme leading to a DET or DET-compliant qualification

Trainee expectations

We expect that trainees who accept an offer of employment and ITE with you and are eligible to receive a grant will:

- inform you of any changes in their bank account details and address
- promptly inform you if they intend to withdraw from the programme
- confirm they intend to remain in FE teaching in England on successful completion of their programme

You should also make it clear to the trainee how you intend to use the grant to support their training. The [grants payments](#) section contains more details on payment patterns.

Grant allocations

General process

Grants are funded from a pre-defined pot of money, and the number that can be awarded will therefore be limited. It is possible that not every candidate who meets the eligibility criteria will be able to receive a grant; this will depend on the total number of eligible applications received.

For the academic year 2020 to 2021, we will make available funding for at least 150 in-service grants. These will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis, regardless of the trainee's choice of eligible subject specialism.

Alongside ITE grants, in academic year 2020 to 2021 we are also funding training bursaries to support pre-service training of teachers in priority areas ([further information available](#)). We will make available funding for at least 300 such bursaries.

Once 150 training grants or 300 pre-service bursaries have been awarded, any remaining funding will be allocated – on a first-come-first-served basis, and regardless of subject – to those on the relevant waiting list. If 150 grants are awarded and any remaining funding made available for further grants awards, we will ensure distinct funding remains available for up to 300 bursaries until the end of 2020, at which point we will consider whether to release this for further grants – and vice versa.

Once the available funding has been exhausted, we will retain details of anyone remaining on a waiting list in case any trainee withdraws before their programme starts, and their grant can be reallocated.

If a trainee who has been deemed eligible for a grant withdraws from the ITE programme before the start, or otherwise fails to take up your offer of employment, you must notify us immediately, so we can consider reassigning the funding to another trainee. You must not assume that such funding can be retained or will be allocated to another trainee in your institution, unless and until you have received explicit confirmation from us.

Confirming grant awards

You must determine whether a trainee is eligible for a grant and contact us to seek confirmation of whether a grant can be awarded, before informing them in writing.

You can seek confirmation of grant availability for trainees at any time, either on a case-by-case basis or in batches, ahead of their starting employment and training, by emailing FE.workforceincentives@education.gov.uk. You will need to provide details of:

- trainee name(s)
- when individual trainees applied

- intended ITE programme
- level 2 qualifications held
- level 3 qualification held, or equivalence

You should make sure that trainees are informed of whether they are eligible for a grant in good time before the start of their programme. We cannot provide written confirmation to trainees.

Grant payments

You are responsible for the management and administration of grant payments, including:

- assessment of eligibility
- ensuring the use of the grant to fund the trainee's [qualifying ITE qualification](#), associated remission from teaching time, and additional support (such as mentoring)
- ensuring that the grant is not used in any way to pay the trainee's salary costs
- notifying us in a timely manner if a trainee withdraws from their programme or ceases employment with you

To be able to receive grant funding for your trainees, you must complete and return a grant funding agreement (GFA). When you first request confirmation of grant availability for specific trainees we will issue a GFA for your signature, which you must return as soon as possible. If you are not already registered with us as a grant recipient, it is particularly important to return the signed GFA quickly as there is a lead-in time to process these. Failure to do this promptly may mean we are unable to release funding until after trainees have started their programmes. You will be issued with a single GFA, regardless of the number of grant applications made; no funding can be released for any applicant until we have received and accepted the signed GFA.

Details of other requirements, including around maintaining necessary evidence and audit trails, are set out in the [monitoring, assurance and data requirements](#) section.

If a trainee is found to be ineligible for the grant, we will recover any grants payments made to you for them.

We will make grant payments to you throughout the academic year as detailed in [annex D: value and timing for ITE grant payments](#).

Payment eligibility

You will be entitled to receive the first grant payment for a trainee from the month when they are first employed and actively engaged on the ITE programme (subject to having an accepted GFA).

Example

For a trainee commencing their programme in September 2020, you will be entitled to your first payment if they are employed and actively undertaking the programme from 1 September. You'll be entitled to the second payment if they are employed and on the programme on 1 October, and so on.

Where a trainee successfully completes their programme before the end of the academic year, we will continue to make payments to you on the existing monthly cycle.

Training grant funding should not be used to cover costs arising from:

- maternity or paternity pay arrangements
- a period of unauthorised absence

In the event that a trainee is absent through sickness you will receive only one further payment following the first day of absence. After this, if the absence will continue into the next payment period, you must report the absence, which will be treated as a period of deferral from the programme, and typically be deemed a withdrawal from the grant scheme, so payments will stop with immediate effect. See the [withdrawals and deferrals](#) section for more information

These principles also apply for trainees who start their programmes later in the academic year – subject to their still completing no later than July 2022. For example, if a trainee commences their employment and training in January 2021, they will be entitled to their first payment (subject to grants still being available) if they are actively completing the programme on 1 February.

Payments will not start before the trainee commences the programme.

You must maintain an audit trail of all payments made with the trainee's grant funding.

We maintain the right to request this information at any time for assurance purposes.

Withdrawals and deferrals

Where an eligible trainee withdraws from their ITE programme or otherwise withdraws from their employment with you while undertaking the ITE programme, you will be entitled to payment for each month up to, and including, the month in which they formally withdraw or left. Trainees are not typically able to defer their study where this would mean they complete the programme after the 2021 to 2022 academic year and continue to be eligible for an ITE grant on return, so must be treated as withdrawals for the purposes of grant management. Please contact us immediately if exceptional circumstances may apply.

Example

If a trainee starts their programme in September 2020 and withdraws (directly or by deferring) in January 2021, you'll be entitled to 5 payments in total as they were active on the programme on:

- 1 September 2020
- 1 October 2020
- 1 November 2020
- 1 December 2020
- 1 January 2021

In the event of withdrawal, you must make sure that their records are updated, detailing the formal withdrawal date, by notifying us immediately at FE.workforceincentives@education.gov.uk

We'll recover any overpayments made to you after the trainee has withdrawn and will not reimburse you for any longer-term payments/commitments made in relation to the trainee.

Suspended trainees

You may continue to receive grant payments for trainees who are suspended from their programme or employment pending investigation; please contact us at FE.workforceincentives@education.gov.uk to discuss this further if necessary. If a decision is reached to terminate the trainee's programme you must notify us immediately so payments can be stopped straightaway. We will also recoup any funding unspent due to the suspension (eg for remission from teaching time).

Monitoring, assurance and data requirements

Monitoring and assurance

We have a responsibility to make sure that public funds and assets generated from applicable ITE places are properly managed in line with your grant funding agreement.

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

- selecting and recruiting the highest-quality candidates
- securing the delivery of a high-quality programme of ITE
- assuring the quality of trainee placements undertaken and mentoring received
- demonstrating propriety and adequate controls in your financial management and compliance with relevant financial reporting or governance requirements
- complying with our data requirements and requests as stipulated in all our guidance
- use 100% of the training grant funding issued to you under your grant funding agreement solely for the purposes of providing the trainee's ITE qualification, associated remission from teaching time, and additional support (such as mentoring)

You must hold full records of all trainees for whom you are in receipt of grants, including evidence of trainees' academic qualifications achieved (or other evidence of attainment or relevant experience) prior to starting their ITE.

Trainees must hold the highest eligible qualification on which their assessment was based, prior to starting the programme. We reserve the right to request this evidence at any point during the academic year from you, for the purpose of quality monitoring and funding assurance. This may include copies of original documentation provided by trainees, including qualification certificates.

We may also request evidence of:

- payments you've made using the grant funding
- evidence of trainee attendance

It is advisable that you keep records for three years after the trainee has finished.

We require rigorous assurance of all grant payments, including your accounting officer verifying the data sets. A sample "Annex G" will be included in your GFA which demonstrates the breadth of this requirement, with more detailed guidance regarding the Annex G process to be provided at the end of the academic year 2020 to 2021 (annual certification of expenditure arrangements).

We will also review the allocated ITE grant funding that you receive and reconcile this amount with the trainee records submitted. Funding will be adjusted to meet the actual amount required. Where funding that you have received is more than the amount that you were entitled to, we will recover the excess by invoicing you or offsetting this amount against any future payments.

Remember to make sure that all trainee records submitted to us are complete. This includes amending the records of trainees who:

- withdraw (directly or by deferring) from their ITE programme or their employment with you
- start later in academic year 2020 to 2021

We'll carry out a reconciliation exercise between the grants allocated and the actual trainee records as confirmed by our data collection exercises during and after the period of training. In the event of any variances, we reserve the right to ask you for explanations of the variances and to seek further information. We will not reimburse you for any grant money spent for ineligible trainees.

You'll be asked to complete an Annex G, in accordance with published guidance, containing: income, expenditure and trainee data. This has to be independently audited and countersigned by the accounting officer (see [annex F: assurance and audit process](#)).

We'll use this information to reconcile the funding that you have received with your declared expenditure, taking into account the effect of withdrawn trainees. Prior to the Annex G, we'll request an interim return to provide an indicative training grant expenditure figure so that we know what is likely to be spent on the programme.

We'll write to you regarding the interim indicative return and we will issue more detailed guidance regarding the Annex G at the end of academic year 2020 to 2021 so that you're able to comply with the grant funding agreement requirements.

Data requirements and reporting

You must submit relevant trainee-level data to us, at specific times before, during and after the programme, including:

- individual and programme data
- applications
- recruitment and employment outcomes

[Annex E: ITE provider grant funding cycle](#) sets out the key timeline, and we will provide further details of requirements if you receive confirmation of grant availability for your trainees.

Failure to comply with requests for data may be taken into account when we consider further requests for any future funding.

Any queries regarding the submission of trainee-level data should be directed to us at: FE.workforceincentives@education.gov.uk.

Annex A: list of subjects eligible for a grant

We'll provide grants for the following ITE programmes:

- English
- mathematics
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Funding will not be provided for any subject that is not included in this list.

Annex B: assessing UK academic qualifications

You must make sure that those responsible for making decisions on grant eligibility are familiar with, or have access to, advice on the range of qualifications generally regarded as equivalent to Levels 2 and 3 in the UK. This may include:

- overseas qualifications
- professional or vocational qualifications
- qualifications no longer available but held by mature applicants

You should be aware of the range of qualifications awarded by UK institutions. In all cases, you are responsible for deciding whether an individual's highest relevant qualification meets the grant eligibility criteria. This includes determining whether a particular qualification demonstrates the breadth and type of academic engagement that would be expected.

Where the trainee does not hold a formal qualification in the subject to be taught, you will need to assess whether the skills, knowledge and experience that they possess in the relevant subject/specialism is sufficient for them to meet the requirements of the training programme.

You must keep an audit trail of how you assess equivalency. In determining equivalency, you may:

- use internal colleagues, such as those in the relevant subject department
- consult external organisations, such as any provider you may be using to deliver the trainee's ITE, the awarding body of the equivalent qualification or the professional body representing a particular professional domain
- conduct a review of the course content or transcripts of the other qualification

We reserve the right to request this information for assurance purposes and to ensure the robustness of your processes.

Where providers lack the institutional experience to assess the validity of academic qualifications they should refer to the [Framework for Higher Education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

Annex C: assessing overseas qualifications

Overseas qualification equivalency

When selecting trainees with overseas qualification you should make sure that they comply with the ITE grant requirements. A Statement of Comparability can be obtained from the [National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom](#) (UK NARIC) which confirms whether or not the trainee's qualification is comparable to a UK qualification.

You must hold full records of all trainees in receipt of grants, including any qualifications or training they referenced in their application which was achieved before starting their ITE.

Decisions on eligibility must be based solely on the content of the qualification itself and must not include any unrelated additional qualifications. Where an individual does not hold at least a Level 3 qualification in the subject of training, you must make a professional assessment to determine eligibility. This should include taking into account the skills, knowledge and experience that an applicant has and the extent to which these will stand the applicant in good stead in order to meet the requirements of the ITE programme.

We reserve the right to request these details from you at any point during the academic year for the purpose of monitoring the robustness of your processes.

This may include: You must submit relevant trainee-level data to us, at specific times before, during and after the programme, including:

- copies of original documentation provided by trainees, including qualification certificates
- correspondence related to the decision making process, for example, advice from internal colleagues or external organisations such as awarding bodies

Annex D: value and timing of grant payments

Payments for full-time programmes

Grant awards will typically be paid in 11 equal monthly instalments over the duration of the 2020 to 2021 financial year. Where a grant is awarded after the academic year has started, the grant will be distributed equally across the remaining months' payments.

Payments for part-time programmes

You will receive the same payments for part-time trainees, in academic year 2020 to 2021, as for full-time trainees. You must make sure that, as much as possible, grant-related payments/commitments broadly reflect the proportion of the programme that the trainee has completed at any point.

Annex E: FE provider grant funding cycle

Key dates in the grant funding cycle

From March 2020

You will need to submit trainee and programme data when seeking confirmation of grant availability, ahead of receiving any confirmation. After this you will receive your grant funding agreement (GFA), which you should sign and return to us as soon as possible after receipt, to allow for prompt processing. GFAs must be received before July 2020 to ensure payments can be made from September.

You must notify us immediately if any trainee subsequently withdraws from their programme or ceases their employment with you. We will incorporate this into our grant model and confirm the process for recovering unallocated funding.

August 2020

We'll write to you about funding amounts for September to November 2020 based on your trainee data.

September 2020

The first payment will be made if you have a GFA in place, based on your trainee data.

October 2020

The second payment will be made if you have a GFA in place, based on your trainee data.

You will need to provide any updated trainee records, by exception, using the form which will be provided, before 16 October, so we can incorporate this into our grants model.

November 2020

The third payment will be made if you have a GFA in place, based on your trainee data.

We'll write to you about funding amounts from December 2020 based on your trainee data.

December 2020

The fourth payment will be made if you have a GFA in place, based on your trainee data.

You will need to provide any updated trainee records, by exception, using the form which will be provided, before 11 December, so we can incorporate this into our grant model.

January to July 2021

The remaining payments will be made each month if you have a GFA in place, based on your trainee data.

You will need to provide any updated trainee records, by exception, using the form which will be provided, before 19 March and 9 July, so we can incorporate this into our grant model.

December 2021

You will need to provide retention-related data on former trainees alongside your Annex G return.

Part-time trainees

The above timescale for the academic year 2020 to 2021 applies equally to part-time trainees, but you will also need to provide updated trainee records to the same schedule for the academic year 2021 to 2022, and in December 2022.

Annex F: assurance and audit process

Key events in the grant funding cycle

June to July 2021

We'll send indicative Annex G documents to you in June 2021.

These should be returned by 31 July 2021.

September to December 2021

We'll send final Annex G documents to you at the end of the academic year. We'll pre-populate this with the amount of funding you have received. The completed document will help you to provide us with the necessary assurance for both the amount received and the purpose for which it was used. Further guidance on this process will be sent to you at the same time.

These should be returned by 31 December 2021.

January to March 2022

Recoveries and reimbursements will be completed through appropriate methods, such as invoices.



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