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Guidance

School Direct (salaried) funding manual: 2023 to 2024 academic year

Updated 19 December 2022

Applies to England

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School Direct (salaried)

Grant funding is available as a contribution to the training and salary costs for qualifying trainees on School Direct (salaried) courses. Payments are made in 11 instalments, based on the trainee data that you submit.

Funding varies by subject and not all subjects are eligible for funding. More details are in the [Grant funding rates](#) section.

Where grant funding is provided as a contribution to the training and salary costs, you cannot charge trainees for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS).

As School Direct (salaried) trainees are employed while training, they are not eligible for a training bursary or student finance. You will need to inform your trainees if they need to pay any fees.

Teaching duties

You should decide before the start of your trainee's course the teaching duties they are required to

perform. The [initial teacher training \(ITT\) criteria](#) specify that trainees on employment-based courses should not perform more than 90% of a full-time teacher's duties. This limit applies to all School Direct (salaried) courses.

Who can offer School Direct (salaried) places

Lead school

The lead school is the agreed point of contact for training providers, placement schools and partner schools. They hold permission to recruit to ITT courses on behalf of the School Direct partnership.

The lead school is responsible for the funding arrangements for the partnership and is accountable for grant funding received, its distribution and assurance.

A lead school must be one of the following:

- an academy
- a free school
- a city technology college
- a local authority-maintained school
- a multi-academy trust (only one school within a MAT may act as a proxy lead school)
- a pupil referral unit (PRU)
- a sixth-form college
- a maintained special school

An independent school cannot act as a lead school in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

Partner schools

A partner school is any school working with a lead school to plan or deliver ITT.

A partner school involved in ITT may employ the trainee, if it is state-funded, and may receive funding from the lead school. State-funded partner schools may be the principal training school for any School Direct trainee.

Independent schools may contribute to the training, but are ineligible to receive funding from the lead school.

Further information on School Direct partners is available in [Annex A: types of organisation involved in School Direct](#).

Ofsted inspections

A school must be rated grade 1 (outstanding) or grade 2 (good) by Ofsted to bid for places as a lead school.

If a lead school falls below this grade in a new Ofsted inspection during the year, but is not placed into special measures, then we will permit them to continue as a lead school until it is practical to switch the lead school status to another in the partnership.

If Ofsted places the lead school into special measures during the year, the ITT places must immediately be transferred to another lead school and all funding will be suspended until this action is completed.

Schools in special measures cannot recruit School Direct (salaried) trainees. If this happens after recruitment, but before training starts, the trainee will need to be transferred to another school in the partnership.

Employing schools can retain trainees if they're placed in special measures after the trainee has started employment and training, if the lead school and ITT provider agree that the continued employment at the school will not negatively affect the trainee or the quality of their training.

The lead school and ITT provider must also be willing to offer any necessary support to the trainee and placement school during both the training period and any subsequent employment as an early career teacher (ECT) in the school (should it remain in special measures). If the lead school or ITT provider cannot offer such assurance and support, then an alternative school within the partnership must employ the trainee.

Schools and providers should email becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk to arrange the transfer.

Trainee eligibility criteria

The lead school must ensure that each funded trainee:

- meets the [ITT criteria](#) for all ITT programmes
- is eligible to work in England as an unqualified teacher
- does not hold, or is eligible to receive, QTS

Eligibility for QTS

QTS is a legal requirement to teach in certain English schools and is considered desirable for teachers in the majority of schools in England.

There are [different routes to QTS](#) depending on where the applicant qualified and whether they already have teaching experience. We will introduce a new approach to recognition from early 2023 that will enable suitably qualified teachers from all countries to apply for QTS if their qualifications, skills and experience meet the set criteria. More details on key criteria are set out in our [policy paper](#) published on 10 June 2022.

Teachers who do not meet the new criteria will need to complete an Initial Teacher Training course or apply for assessment-only QTS to demonstrate they meet the standards for QTS.

You must advise applicants to apply to us where potential equivalency is identified during the recruitment process – for example, during the application or interview stage.

Teachers who are successful in their application and receive QTS will not be eligible for a bursary. You can continue the bursary assessment of those trainees that are unsuccessful in their application to us. If they hold QTS and are still looking to undertake training – for example, to gain supported experience in an English school environment, they can be directed towards non-QTS ITT courses, such as a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) without QTS.

Potential trainees who may already be eligible to receive QTS under the conditions described above should email qts.enquiries@education.gov.uk or read the guidance at [Qualified Teacher Status \(QTS\): qualify to teach in England](#) for more information.

Qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS)

Individuals are recognised as qualified teachers and are not eligible for funding if they:

- hold QTLS status
- are members of the Society for Education and Training (SET)

They must continue to maintain their registration with the SET for this recognition to be valid. The [SET professional status register](#) allows a provider to check a trainee's status.

Changing ITT provider, School Direct partnership or School Direct route

Ordinarily, we will not permit a lead school to change its partner ITT provider once it has registered a course. After a partnership agreement is drawn up and places are advertised to applicants, the lead school should make all reasonable efforts to deliver the course as described. We will only consider a request from a lead school to change their partner ITT provider in exceptional circumstances.

A lead school must not transfer a trainee from one partnership or ITT route to another without our prior agreement.

For further information about changing any aspect of courses that have been agreed with us, email becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk. All changes must be confirmed by us before a place is offered to any applicant.

Failure to fully comply with the criteria and requirements may result in:

- the withdrawal of funding to the lead schools
- non-compliance by the ITT provider, which may lead to the withdrawal of accreditation

Grant funding rates

Grant funding will be paid to lead schools for each trainee depending on the subject of their ITT course. There are no funding region variations, based upon the location of the employing school, in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

The training and salary grant rates that will be paid to the lead school for each trainee can be found below.

Funding will only be provided for trainees on courses in the identified subjects.

Subject	School Direct (salaried) funding
Chemistry	£27,000
Computing	£27,000
Mathematics	£27,000
Physics	£27,000
Geography	£25,000
Languages (including ancient languages)	£25,000
Biology	£20,000
Design and technology (including engineering and food technology)	£20,000
English	£15,000

Grant funding agreements (GFAs)

All lead schools with permission to recruit to funded School Direct (salaried) courses must enter into a GFA with us. Grant funding will only be paid once a GFA is in place.

We will contact all relevant lead schools before the start of the academic year to request the appropriate documentation.

If a lead school did not receive School Direct (salaried) grant funding in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, they will be sent a grant offer letter (GOL) which includes the terms and conditions of the grant. They must complete all the highlighted sections in the GOL and email this document to GFA.ITTFunding@education.gov.uk.

After the GOL has been returned, fully completed and signed by the lead school's accounting officer, we will arrange for this to be countersigned by our responsible officer and returned to the lead school. This countersigned document forms the GFA and must be retained by the lead school.

If a GFA is delayed, grant funding payments will be made in the following month.

If a lead school already has a GFA in place from a previous academic year, we will ask them to review any variations to the original agreement. The lead school must confirm that they accept any variations in order for funding to continue.

Conditions of grant

Grant funding must be used to support the specific trainee only. Funding must not be shared across funded and non-funded places.

Schools and providers must inform trainees if they need to pay additional fees – for example, an academic qualification such as a PGCE.

For the period of their training, all trainees must be employed by a school as an unqualified teacher and paid in line with their employing school's pay policy.

Maintained schools and local authorities must abide by the [school teachers' pay and conditions](#), which states that an unqualified teacher must be paid such salary within the minimum and maximum of the unqualified teacher pay range.

Pay rates must be clearly advertised to the trainee beforehand.

Trainees who are on a full-time course must be employed full-time.

Trainees are typically employed for up to 12 months, starting from September. Any variation in the precise duration of training or employment will not affect the funding contribution attached to the place.

Trainees ineligible for grant funding

If you choose to recruit trainees who are on courses in subjects that are not eligible for grant funding, they must still:

- be eligible to work in England as an unqualified teacher
- meet requirements identified in the [ITT criteria](#)

These trainees will need to be registered with either:

- the [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\)](#) by universities
- [Register trainee teachers \(Register\)](#) by SCITT providers

In subjects where recruitment is unlimited, lead schools are not restricted in the number of trainees that they can recruit. For subjects in this category that attract no grant funding, lead schools must be aware of the financial implications of recruitment.

We cannot be held responsible for any costs associated with recruiting trainees in subjects that are not eligible for grant funding.

Payment of School Direct (salaried) funding

Who we pay

The grant will be paid directly to the lead school if you are:

- an academy
- a MAT
- a free school

If a lead school is a local-authority-maintained school, the grant will be paid to the relevant local authority. Lead schools in this category will need to make sure that suitable agreements are in place with their local authority so that funding is transferred appropriately.

Lead schools should identify funding arrangements and mechanisms to recover unused funds in written agreements with their partner schools and ITT providers.

Flexible School Direct (salaried)

Lead schools delivering part-time or accelerated courses will receive the same School Direct (salaried) grant funding for each trainee as an equivalent full-time trainee. This will be paid over the course of the same monthly instalment schedule as any other School Direct (salaried) trainee.

It is the responsibility of the lead school to decide:

- the payment profile for the trainee's salary
- how the grant will be managed as a contribution towards this

Any funding that is owed to us will be calculated in accordance with the criteria set out in the [Assurance and audit](#) section.

Payments

Payments will be made in 11 monthly instalments from September to July as set out in [Annex C: funding cycle](#).

Payments will be made on the third working day of each month and are subject to:

- us receiving your grant funding documentation
- trainee numbers being established from available data

The first payment of the 2023 to 2024 academic year will be made in September 2023. If you receive your first payment after September 2023, it will be adjusted to include payments backdated to September. The final payment will be made in July 2024.

How much the payment will be

The payments from September to November 2023 will be calculated using trainee recruitment data available at that time. This funding may be at a preliminary rate.

Following receipt of verified trainee data from the ITT provider in the October ITT census, we will adjust the monthly payment amounts from December 2023 onwards. We will issue any arrears that may be due or recover funding as appropriate within this adjustment.

It is important that ITT providers have all the relevant information for trainees to complete the October ITT census. We strongly encourage all lead schools to engage with their partner ITT provider to avoid any delay or suspension of payment.

We will not provide any additional funding for the administration of School Direct (salaried) courses.

Data requirements and reporting

Schools and ITT providers are required to share all data on School Direct (salaried) with us.

This includes data on:

- applications
- recruitment
- employment outcomes

School Direct (salaried) grant funding is primarily calculated on the basis of data submitted by ITT providers through [HESA](#) and [Register](#).

It is important that the data is:

- accurate
- complete
- submitted on time

Failure to meet these conditions is likely to result in the suspension of funding.

Data requirements from schools

Once a candidate has been recruited, lead schools are required to provide their ITT partner with accurate placement and employing school data. Lead schools must inform providers promptly of any changes such as:

- withdrawals
- deferrals

Lead schools are also required to provide trainee data to us as part of their Annex G assurance return. Further details about the assurance process can be found in the [Assurance and audit](#) section.

Data requirements from ITT providers

Failure to comply with requests for data in an accurate or timely manner may lead to the withdrawal of accreditation for the ITT provider. Full details of the process are included in the Register

guidance page for higher education institutions (HEIs) and non-HEIs.

Guidance will be updated throughout the academic year.

Withdrawals and deferrals

Withdrawals

If a trainee withdraws, ITT providers must update the trainee's record in [Register](#) in the same month they have withdrawn. HEIs should update their trainee records via [HESA](#) during the HESA data collection period.

Reconciliation will be determined on a pro rata basis. We will consider the trainee's actual withdrawal date in relation to the intended completion date.

Lead schools can keep 1/11th of the School Direct (salaried) funding for each month or part-month the trainee remained in training.

Example

If a trainee commences a School Direct (salaried) course from September 2023 and leaves in March 2024, you can retain 7/11th of the School Direct (salaried) grant funding.

Your School Direct (salaried) funding will then either be:

- adjusted in-year, if the ITT provider has updated the trainee data in Register
- recovered as part of the Annex G reconciliation exercise following the end of the academic year

We will not reimburse lead schools for any expenditure incurred after the trainee has withdrawn.

If a trainee leaves without completing their ITT, the last date of training is the final date for which the ITT provider has evidence that they were still in training or attendance for any learning that is part of their ITT.

Supporting evidence may be requested to corroborate the withdrawal date, and all appropriate records should be retained by the ITT provider or lead school.

For trainees undertaking part-time or accelerated School Direct (salaried) courses, we will take into consideration the withdrawal date and course length. Funding will be recovered on a pro-rata basis.

Deferrals

Schools, in agreement with the ITT provider, are responsible for making the decision to allow a trainee to defer.

Lead schools must communicate this decision to their ITT provider, who are responsible for reporting this to us through [Register](#).

Trainees can only defer once they have started their ITT course. The grant will only be paid up to the maximum grant rate relevant to the academic year in which the trainee starts, regardless of the year in which they return.

If a trainee defers, ITT providers must update the trainee's record in Register in the same month they have deferred. HEIs should update their trainee records in HESA during the HESA data collection period.

Typically, a trainee will only defer to the following academic year. In this scenario, lead schools must retain the remaining funds for use on the trainee's return. If the trainee does not return to the course in the following academic year, funds relating to the remaining months on which the trainee was not training will be recovered in full. In this event, the deferral date or date of last attendance would become the date of withdrawal.

Where a deferral is expected to be beyond one academic year, you must notify us as soon as possible, in order for us to recover the remaining funding. If a trainee subsequently returns from a period of deferral longer than one academic year, email ITT.FUNDING@education.gov.uk to discuss the arrangements for receiving the remaining funding.

If the trainee returns to the course and subsequently withdraws, funding will be recovered on the basis of the total time that the trainee was on the course.

For trainees undertaking part-time or accelerated School Direct (salaried) courses, we will take into consideration the deferral date and course length when calculating any funding adjustments or recoveries.

Assurance and audit

Grant funding identified as recoverable as result of this exercise will be recouped.

In most cases, where recovery is required, it will be carried out by offsetting funding that will be paid to the lead schools in subsequent years. If this is not possible, we will invoice the lead school for the outstanding amount.

Grant funding may be recovered as a result of:

- trainees not starting
- trainees leaving before obtaining QTS, including trainees who accept a place and subsequently withdraw
- errors identified in trainee data submitted by schools and ITT providers, upon which the grant funding is calculated resulting in an overpayment
- any miscalculation of grant funding which results in an overpayment to the lead school
- any grant payment made to an incorrect recipient
- any grant payment made in error

Grant funding may also be recovered as a result of non-compliance with the GFA, including, but not limited to, failure to submit an Annex G in accordance with the requirements of the grant funding letter or any subsequent communication from us.

Where a recovery of grant funding is required, we may do this in the same or subsequent academic years.

Lead schools and associated ITT providers must hold full records of all trainees in receipt of grant funding, including evidence of the trainees' academic qualifications achieved prior to starting their training.

Trainees must be in receipt of the degree on which their assessment was based, prior to starting the course. We reserve the right to request this evidence at any point during the academic year from lead schools and ITT providers, for the purpose of monitoring quality and funding assurance.

ITT providers should make sure that all trainee records in Register are complete. This includes amending the records of trainees who:

- withdraw or defer from their ITT programme
- start later in the academic year
- return from earlier academic years

We reserve the right to:

- delay or withhold payments to the lead school if data is inaccurate or incomplete
- request this evidence from ITT providers and lead schools for the purpose of monitoring quality and funding assurance

Lead schools are required to submit an appropriate assurance return to us by 31 December 2024.

Lead schools in receipt of grant funding of:

- £40,000 or more will be sent an Annex G(i) which requires an independent external auditor and accounting officer approval
- less than £40,000 will be sent an Annex G(ii) and will need to be self-certified by the accounting officer of the lead school and the chair of governors, the chair of the local governing body or the chair of the board of trustees

As part of the grant assurance process, lead schools are required to submit an audited breakdown of grant expenditure and corresponding trainee details. Where these trainee details differ from those submitted through Register by the provider, we reserve the right to request further information or evidence from the lead school to confirm these details before making any additional recovery or reimbursement payments.

Further guidance on this will be sent out to you following the end of the academic year.

Failure to submit accurately completed and signed off assurance and audit documentation on time is likely to result in:

- future ITT grants being withheld
- the recovery of funding paid

Further assurance will be sought in the following academic year for trainees who:

- deferred their training into the following academic year
- extended their training into the following academic year

Lead schools need to retain all appropriate records for the next audit, such as when the trainee resumed their training and the status of the trainee.

Failure to fully comply with the data reporting and assurance requirements set out in this manual may result in:

- the withdrawal of funding to lead schools
- non-compliance by the ITT provider, which may lead to withdrawal of accreditation

Annex A: types of organisation involved in School Direct

Lead school

The lead school:

- is the agreed point of contact for the School Direct partnership
- holds the partnership's School Direct training places
- is responsible for the partnership activity
- can employ trainees, and receive grant funding for them
- must agree the location of trainee with the ITT provider
- is responsible for the grant funding and its distribution
- is responsible for placing trainees across the partnership

They will be responsible for communications:

- across the partnership to and from us
- between each partner school

The lead school must be one of the following:

- a maintained school – primary or secondary
- a special school
- a sixth-form college
- a PRU
- a city technology college
- an academy
- a MAT
- a free school

An independent school cannot act as a lead school in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

Partner school

The partner school is any school within the partnership of schools involved in ITT.

Employing school

The employing school is defined as the school that employs the trainee during their ITT year.

Independent schools may contribute to the training but may not receive funding from the lead school.

Accredited ITT provider

The ITT provider is accredited by us.

An ITT provider can be:

- an HEI
- a SCITT provider

The ITT provider is a full member of the School Direct partnership.

As an accredited provider of ITT, it:

- has the experience of delivering teacher training
- is accountable, alongside the lead school partnership, for the marketing, selection, assessment and standards monitoring for trainees

The ITT provider will recommend trainees for the award of QTS.

Annex B: further information and contacts

Additional supporting information

[School Direct: guidance for schools](#)

[School Direct: types of funding for ITT](#)

[Apply for teacher training](#)

[Postgraduate teacher apprenticeship: funding manual](#)

[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): bursary manual](#)

[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice](#)

Contacts

Email ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk for queries from schools and ITT providers about:

- funding and payments
- grant funding letters and agreements

For queries about permission to recruit, Register, October census queries, or any other data matters, email becomingateacher@digital.education.gov.uk.

For ITT criteria, email ITT.Accreditation@education.gov.uk.

For all other enquiries, contact the [Department for Education](#).

The future teaching scholars programme is not covered by this guidance or funded through School Direct (salaried). For further information, email schools@futureteachingscholars.com.

Annex C: funding cycle

June to July 2023

Lead schools that did not receive grant funding in the 2022 to 2023 academic year will be contacted in order to submit grant funding agreements (GFAs) to us. If other documents, such as letters of variation are required, we will contact individual lead schools separately.

August 2023

Apply acceptance data is incorporated into the funding model. This allows us to make interim payments to you from September to November 2023, if you have a GFA place. Payment profiles are available in [Register](#) during this period.

November 2023

Your ITT provider's [Register](#) data is incorporated into the funding model to confirm payments from December 2023. This is based on the trainee registration returns submitted through either [HESA](#) or [Register](#) on or before the census closure date.

December 2023 to January 2024

These payments will be made, if you have a GFA in place, based on your data in Register.

[Register](#) is available for you to see School Direct (salaried) grant summaries and payment profiles.

February to April 2024

Your data in Register will be updated in the funding model in February 2024 to include any changes that ITT providers have submitted through either [HESA](#) or [Register](#) since the census was published,

These payments will be made, if you have a GFA in place, based on your Register data.

[Register](#) is available for you to see School Direct (salaried) grant summaries and payment profiles.

May to July 2024

Your data in Register will be updated in the funding model in May 2024 to include any changes that

ITT providers have submitted through either [HESA](#) or [Register](#). These payments will be made, if you have a GFA in place, based on your Register data. Any subsequent changes to your Register data will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

[Register](#) is available for you to see School Direct (salaried) grant summaries and payment profiles.

Annex D: assurance and audit process

These are the key events in the funding cycle.

September to December 2024

We will send final assurance documents to you at the end of the academic year. We will pre-populate this with the amount of funding you have received, and the trainees that funding includes.

The completed document, and auditor report (if applicable), 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 2024.

January to March 2025

In addition to the final assurance document and auditor report (if applicable), we also apply a sampling process to gain assurance of the grant expenditure. This involves assurance checks through the collection of evidence on sampled trainees, including withdrawals, course information and payment information.

Recoveries and reimbursements will be completed through the payment profile, invoice or credit memo.

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