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Guidance

Request a subcontracting threshold exemption

Explains how lead providers of post-16 education and training should request approval to subcontract more than 25% of their provision.

From: [Department for Education](#)

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Applies to England

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Lead providers of Department for Education (DfE) funded post-16 education and training need written permission from us to subcontract more than 25% of their provision. This exemption:

- should only be done in exceptional circumstances
- does not include local authorities or [European Social Fund](#) provision

You must submit an exemption case by 31 March each year.

In exceptional cases, lead providers can also [request approval to subcontract their whole programme of 16 to 19 provision](#) .

Subcontracting threshold

For [adult education budget](#) and [16 to 19 programmes](#), we use learner numbers in ILR data to calculate the volume of your subcontracted delivery.

For apprenticeships, we use the figures from your subcontractor declaration to calculate the volume of

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[Subcontracting post-16 education and training](#)

your subcontracted delivery.

What your request should include

Your request should include:

- the educational rationale for the arrangements, supported by those charged with governance
- how you will manage and oversee the subcontracted provision
- details of your involvement in delivery (for example, providing financial and quality assurance)
- the amount of funding you will keep to cover the costs for managing the contract
- information on gaps in provision this subcontract will fill and if your local authority or an employer supports this
- details of how much contact the learner will have with you during their course

Submit an exemption case to maintain current subcontracting

Submit requests for new arrangements at least 12 weeks before you plan to start subcontracting the provision.

To get approval to continue with existing subcontracting arrangements, submit a request by 31 March.

Email Enquiries.ESFA@education.gov.uk for a copy of the form you need to complete.

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