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Guidance

# Higher technical education skills injection fund 3: guidance for applicants

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## Applies to England

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## Summary

This guidance is for eligible providers who apply for the higher technical education (HTE) skills injection fund 3 ('the fund').

The fund aims to grow the uptake of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). It builds on the success of the:

- HTE growth fund
- HTE skills injection fund 1
- HTE skills injection fund 2

The fund has a total budget of £10.3 million. It is open to providers who meet the [eligibility criteria](#).

We are launching this capital only fund to support providers to deliver high quality HTQs in academic year 2025 to 2026. The fund will support occupational routes in areas of high growth and investment in academic year 2025 to 2026, which are:

- agriculture, environmental and animal care
- care services
- construction and the built environment
- digital
- education and early years
- engineering and manufacturing
- health and science

## Deadline for applicants

The deadline for submitting applications under this guidance is 11.59pm on 17 June 2024.

If you have any problems submitting your application, email [team.highertechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk](mailto:team.highertechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk).

## Who the fund is for

The fund is for applicants from:

- institutes of technology (IoTs)
- further education colleges
- higher education institutions
- independent training providers
- consortia of eligible providers

The fund is open for providers intending to deliver an HTQ in the eligible occupational routes in academic year 2025 to 2026.

## Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, at the point of application, providers must:

- have received an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' or better, or be registered with the Office for Students
- have received a financial grading of 'good' or better

Only the lead partner in a consortium needs to meet these eligibility criteria.

All providers within an IoT application are exempt from these eligibility criteria.

## Eligible occupational routes

### From September 2025 and January 2026 delivery only

Providers can apply to deliver HTQs in the following eligible occupational routes only:

- agriculture, environmental and animal care
- care services
- construction and the built environment
- digital
- education and early years
- engineering and manufacturing

- health and science

With a smaller funding pot, we have focused funding on:

- high growth and high investment areas
- those which support key public sector workforces

Providers can apply against HTQs in eligible occupational routes that the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education approved as part of cycle 1 to 3. A list of [approved HTQs in cycles 1 to 3](#) is available.

Providers can also apply against qualifications going through approval as part of cycle 4 and cycle 5.1 in eligible occupational routes. We expect cycle 4 approved HTQs to be published in July 2024. We will condition funding on these qualifications:

- being successful in the approval rounds
- receiving HTQ status in time for first teach from September 2025 or January 2026

By submitting an application, providers acknowledge and accept that all evaluations and decisions about qualifications will be made based on the criteria outlined in the approved qualifications list. We advise applicants to review this list carefully before applying.

All applications are accepted at the applicant's own risk. We assume no liability for any potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations related to qualification criteria.

Where a provider does not have its own awarding powers, we expect them to have already begun the onboarding process with the relevant awarding body for that HTQ, to ensure delivery starts in the academic year 2025 to 2026.

## Important dates

These dates indicate the expected timeline. We will keep providers informed of any changes to these dates.

Date	Event
20 May to 17 June 2024	Application window
23 August 2024	DfE confirm funding allocations to providers via grant offer letters
Mid to late August 2024 (indicative)	Deadline to sign grant offer letters
September or October 2024 (indicative)	Funding distributed to providers

Financial years 2024 to 2025 and 2025 to 2026	Providers spend allocated funding. Providers complete and return evaluation reports detailing spend confirmation and impact of funding
March 2026	Final claim date
Academic year 2025 to 2026	Teaching begins for funded HTQs. Providers confirm number of learners enrolled

## What the fund is for

A total of £10.3 million will be made available to providers who meet the eligibility criteria. We have used feedback from providers to identify the areas of expenditure that will help successfully deliver Level 4 and 5 qualifications approved as HTQs.

When deciding how to use your funding, consider how it could support the government's priorities in:

- boosting economic growth, as mentioned in the levelling up agenda
- supporting our transition to net zero

Funding can only be used to support the delivery of HTQs in the eligible occupational routes which have not previously received skills injection funding.

The primary beneficiary must be doing an HTQ. Learners doing other qualifications or apprenticeships may indirectly benefit from the fund.

## What funding can be spent on

This capital funding can be spent on specialist equipment, perpetual software licence costs or refurbishing existing spaces. The construction of new buildings is not permitted.

Your purchase must meet your capitalisation policy criteria. If your software licence cost is for one year only, this would:

- be classed as 'resource'
- not be permitted as eligible expenditure

We will ask you to let us know how you plan to use your capital funding, and what outcomes you expect from this expenditure, in the application form. We will monitor these outcomes.

To show what you can spend funding on, recipients of skills injection fund 2 funding bought equipment such as:

- Meta Quest equipment
- perpetual software licences for generative AI and content hub for virtual asynchronous education
- USB robots
- SOMAT data acquisition equipment
- network switches to build capacity for additional learner-facing ICT equipment for their digital and engineering HTQs

## What the fund does not cover

You cannot use HTE skills injection fund 3 to:

- fund non-capital activities – for example, pay teacher salaries
- pay the costs associated with getting courses validated by another organisation
- construct new buildings
- support an apprenticeship if the learner will not achieve an HTQ at the end of their study

## Local skills improvement fund

The [Local skills improvement fund \(LSIF\)](#) aims to develop a local response to local skill priorities as set out in the local skills improvement plan. Lead providers submitted applications for LSIF for areas as a whole. If you are in a collaboration that has been [awarded LSIF funding](#), you can also apply for the HTE skills injection fund 3. However, DfE will not fund the same activities or provision twice.

## How funding is allocated

To allocate the funding, we will:

- calculate a percentage share for each provider
- allocate the total funding amount (£10.3m) according to this share

The share is based on:

- the number of learners you have predicted in your application form
- the type of provider you are, as IoTs will receive a funding [uplift](#)
- whether your local authority is ranked in the bottom third category of the LSAs ranking, as they will receive a funding uplift

The share will be calculated by estimating the proportion of predicted learners each provider has relative to the total number of predicted learners of all providers that have applied. IoTs and providers in LSAs will receive an additional uplift. Funding per learner is capped at a maximum of:

- £8,000 for IoTs
- £7,333 for providers in bottom third LSAs
- £6,667 for all other applicants

Below is the formula for calculating the share:

- step A: number of predicted learners (plus uplift if eligible) divided by total number of predicted learners of all providers that have applied equals share of total funding
- step B: if share of total funding is greater than the cap for the provider, the final allocation will be based on the cap amount
- step C: if share of total funding is below the cap for the provider, the final allocation will be based on the share of total funding (calculated in step A)

The maximum amount does not indicate the final amount you're likely to receive and depends on the number of successful applications. The greater the number of applicants, the lower the chance of reaching capped amounts.

We will determine the funding available for each provider when we get all applications. We will agree the final allocation when we know the full number of predicted eligible learners across all applications.

## Uplifts

We will apply additional uplifts in funding to applications from IoTs or providers that are in the bottom third category of local authorities, as ranked by proportion of 16 to 64-year-olds with qualifications at level 3 or above.

Local skills areas (LSAs) are the levelling up areas where the government is focusing skills-based interventions. In the [skills levels of 16 to 64-year-olds by local authority analysis](#), they are identified according to skills levels at a local authority level.

We have applied funding uplifts to:

- IoTs
- providers in bottom-third LSAs regions

As flagship providers for science, technology, engineering and maths level 4 and 5 provision, IoTs will receive a 20% uplift.

Any provider located in a local area in the bottom-third local authority areas category (which is highlighted in the analysis of skills levels) will receive a 10% uplift.

Consortium bids with one or more providers whose local authority is in the bottom third LSA

category will receive the uplift for that provider. We will calculate the correct level of uplift, and the consortium lead partner is responsible for ensuring the LSA partners receive the additional funding.

## How we assess applications

We review applications against the eligibility criteria and your responses to the questions in the application form.

Information provided on the application form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily:

- the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- the Data Protection Act 2018
- the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)

We will use predicted learner numbers from all successful applications in our funding formula to allocate the appropriate amount to each provider. We will do this after we receive and review all eligible applications to the HTE skills injection fund 3.

## How to apply

### Completing the application form

To apply for the funding, you must:

1. meet the [eligibility criteria](#)
2. provide data on predicted learner numbers, explain how you have arrived at those numbers, and clearly justify any growth in your numbers
3. outline how you plan to support learners to build up their learning more easily to qualifications at levels 4, 5 and 6 throughout their lives, showing the availability of progression routes into higher-level learning or employment
4. provide supporting evidence on how the funding will build capacity and improve the quality of provision
5. include information on:
  - why you are projecting those learner numbers
  - how you intend to spend the funding
  - how the funding will help build capacity and improve the quality of provision
  - which specific groups or individuals will benefit from the funding



Once you have read this guidance and are ready to complete your application, the form is available to download.

You must adhere to the word limits stated on the application form and provide answers for each question. We will not count or read any words over the word limit as part of the review of your application. You should provide focused responses, supported by robust and quantifiable information where possible.

We may check your responses against information we already hold and contact you if further information is required.

If you have questions on this guide or application form, email [team.hightechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk](mailto:team.hightechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk). Allow up to 3 working days for a response. We may update the published guidance in response, depending on the nature of your query.

## Submitting your application

Email your completed application form to [team.hightechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk](mailto:team.hightechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk) with email subject line: 'Skills Injection Fund 3: (Lead or Provider Name)', no later than 11.59pm on Monday 17 June 2024.

When submitting your application, you will get an automated reply. This will be proof of receipt. Only if you do not receive this automatic response within 24 hours, resend your application to [team.hightechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk](mailto:team.hightechnicaleducation@education.gov.uk) and cc [oniqa.siddiq@education.gov.uk](mailto:oniqa.siddiq@education.gov.uk) and [anesu.chekera@education.gov.uk](mailto:anesu.chekera@education.gov.uk).

## If your application is successful

You will receive a grant offer letter on 23 August 2024, confirming if your application has been successful or not. If you have been successful, the letter will set out the terms and conditions of the grant. These are based on an amended version of DfE's standard terms and conditions to reflect specific clauses for the grant.

The agreement confirms the funding allocation and outlines what the grant is to be used for. It also includes other conditions, including restrictions. You must review and accept the terms by signing and returning a copy of the grant offer letter within 2 weeks of receipt.

We reserve the right to delay our decision on the outcome of applications. If our decision on your application is going to be significantly delayed, we will tell you this.

We reserve the right to recover spent and unspent funds from you if there is evidence you have not used them for the agreed purposes, within the agreed timelines. We reserve the right to pause future payments until we receive timely monitoring returns.

You must demonstrate that funding spend will occur within the period we agreed with you and any spending activity outside of this window will not count as eligible expenditure.

If you decide not to deliver an HTQ, we reserve the right to recover any grant funding we have paid according to the details given in the [clawback of funds](#) section.

We only confirm funding when we receive a signed copy of your grant offer. You must not issue communications regarding the success of your application until you get confirmation from us that you can do this.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Successful applicants will receive a grant offer letter setting out:

- what the money can be spent on
- the circumstances in which the grant would be repayable
- the monitoring and evaluation requirements

We will ask providers to submit quarterly returns so we can monitor:

- what providers have spent the funding on
- the impact it has had on building capacity
- the impact it has had on increasing quality of provision

### Monitoring requirements

Providers are required to maintain comprehensive documentation of their expenditures to facilitate our validation process and the National Audit Office audit. This is indicated in the [grant funding agreement](#).

Providers must:

- ensure the return of accurate monitoring data by the set deadlines agreed in the grant offer letters
- help to evaluate the fund, in terms of spend and value generated

We reserve the right to pause future funding payments until we receive timely and accurate monitoring data.

We will ask providers to return independent assurance of all spend. We will provide further details on this through the grant offer letter.

## Clawback of funds

We will monitor spend throughout the grant period. We will ask providers to confirm the number of learners enrolled onto HTQs in September 2025 and January 2026 for delivery in that academic year.

We will recover unspent and spent funds if:

- funds have been misspent and not used in accordance with grant agreement
- funds remain unspent at the end of the grant period
- a provider does not deliver an HTQ qualification as agreed
- a provider fails to reach 80% of their predicted learner numbers during the delivery window (we will claw back the difference between their actual number and 80% – for example, if they had 70% of predicted learner numbers, we would claw back 10% of spent funds)

Learner number targets will be assessed on a route-by-route basis. For example, a provider's total digital enrolment numbers are assessed against their total predicted digital learner numbers.

Providers should ensure that predicted learner numbers are based on evidence of demand. The Department for Education may challenge learner numbers provided at application where they appear to be unachievable.

For consortium and IoT applications, it will be the lead provider's responsibility to manage the clawback process of behalf of the partnership.

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