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[Department  
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Guidance

# FE ITE bursary funding manual, 2025 to 2026

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## Applies to England

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This guidance sets out the scope, eligibility criteria and application process for further education (FE) initial teacher education (ITE) bursaries for the academic year 2025 to 2026.

FE ITE bursaries support the training of FE teachers in high-priority subject areas.

They provide funding for trainees before they are employed as teachers. This information is for providers of FE ITE.

We award the bursaries to trainees based on their:

- relevant qualifications or professional experience
- intention to teach a designated priority subject in the FE sector

The bursary amount varies by the subject in which they train to teach.

Bursary awards are fixed for the duration of the trainee’s ITE programme. They are for qualifying courses starting in or after September 2025 and finishing no later than:

- August 2026 for full-time courses
- August 2027 for part-time courses

# Eligible ITE subjects

ITE bursaries are only available for the following subjects for the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Subject	Bursary
Computing	£31,000
Engineering or manufacturing	£31,000
Mathematics	£31,000
Science, including biology, chemistry, or physics	£31,000
Special educational needs and disabilities	£15,000

No other ITE courses will attract a bursary.

## Eligibility

For a trainee to be eligible to get a bursary, from the first day of training they must meet and continue to meet the following criteria.

A trainee must:

- be eligible to receive student support
- have a standard equivalent to GCSE grade 4 (C) or above in English and mathematics
- have at least a level 3 qualification in their subject of teacher training, or relevant professional experience
- be taking a qualifying pre-service ITE course in England

A trainee is not eligible if they:

- already have a Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills), Diploma in Education and Training (DET) or equivalent qualification at level 5 or above
- have already got a full FE ITE bursary or grant award for a previous FE ITE programme or qualification
- get a salary or other payment for any teaching work associated with the FE ITE programme for which they are getting the bursary
- are also on another ITE course, training scheme or programme, which leads to:
  - a Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills), from September 2024
  - a DET or DET-compliant qualification, for qualifications starting before September 2024
- are on an apprenticeship programme

Trainees are not eligible for a bursary if they already hold, or are eligible to get:

- early years teacher status (EYTS)

- qualified teacher status (QTS)
- qualified teacher learning and skills status (QTLS)
- advanced teacher status (ATS)

Bursary funding is not available for those training to teach in-service.

## Eligibility for student support

Trainees are only eligible for a bursary if they are eligible to receive student support, under the [student finance criteria](#).

The ITE programme must also be a designated course for the purposes of student finance. This means it must be on the [list of approved FE ITE courses](#).

The trainee must meet one or more of the definitions for being an eligible student to receive grants and loans towards tuition fees or living costs, as set out in the [Education \(Student Support\) Regulations 2011](#) (part 2 - eligible students). [Student finance eligibility](#) has more information.

### Student support for EU nationals

European Union (EU) nationals resident in the UK before 1 January 2021 who qualify for pre-settled status or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, are eligible for home fee status and student financial support on a similar basis to domestic students.

This is subject to meeting the usual residence requirements.

For further information on those requirements, contact the [Student Loans Company](#).

### Student support for trainees from the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey

Trainees from the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey may not meet one of the definitions above. If they are still eligible for support from their respective home education departments, they will still be eligible for a training bursary if they meet all other criteria.

### Student support for international students

International students can contact the [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) for advice on student support and other issues to do with studying in the UK.

# Qualifications

You must hold full records of all trainees who get bursaries. This includes any qualifications or training referenced in a trainee's application that they achieved before starting their ITE.

You must base your decision on eligibility on the content of the relevant qualifications.

Where an individual does not already hold at least a level 3 qualification in the subject of training, you must make a professional assessment to determine eligibility. This should include considering the skills, knowledge and experience that an applicant has.

## English and maths

Trainees must have a standard equivalent to:

- English GCSE grade 4 (C) or above
- mathematics GCSE grade 4 (C) or above

We do not provide a list of qualifications that can be considered equivalent to the GCSE in English and mathematics.

Qualifications in key and functional skills at level 2 are not equivalent to GCSEs in terms of content.

If applicants are suitable but have not successfully achieved at least a GCSE grade 4, they can:

- take an equivalence test
- offer other evidence of attainment

## Subject qualifications

You should be confident that the 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 their skills, knowledge and relevant professional experience to decide whether their subject knowledge will allow them to complete an ITE programme successfully.

An ITE bursary award is dependent on the subject that a trainee trains to teach, not the subject of their academic qualifications.

For example, if a trainee with a degree in English and relevant sector experience trains to teach physics, they will be eligible for a £31,000 physics bursary. If they train to teach English, they will be eligible for a £10,000 English bursary.

## Assessing UK qualifications

Make sure that those responsible for deciding bursary eligibility have access to advice on the range of qualifications regarded as equivalent to GCSE grade 4 (C) or above and level 3 in the UK.

This may include:

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

You must decide if an individual's highest relevant qualification meets the bursary eligibility criteria.

If the trainee does not hold a formal qualification in the subject they intend to teach, assess whether the skills, knowledge and experience they have in the relevant subject or specialism are enough to meet the requirements of the training programme.

You must keep an audit trail of how you assess this. You can:

- use internal colleagues, such as those in the relevant subject department
- consult external organisations, such as the awarding body of the equivalent qualification or a professional body related to the subject
- conduct a review of the course content or transcripts of a qualification

We may request this information for assurance purposes, and to ensure your processes are robust.

Where providers do not have the experience to assess the validity of academic qualifications, use the [frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-](#)

[awarding bodies](#).

# Assessing overseas qualifications

When you select trainees with overseas qualifications, make sure they meet the ITE bursary requirements.

Trainees can get a statement of comparability from [UK Enic](#), part of the European Network of Information Centres. This confirms if their qualification is comparable to a UK qualification.

## Eligible ITE courses

To be eligible to receive a bursary, the trainee must be on a qualifying pre-service ITE course in England.

The course must begin on or after 1 September 2025 and finish no later than:

- 31 August 2026, for full-time courses
- 31 August 2027, for part-time courses

A qualifying course must be included in the list of [FE ITE courses that are eligible for student support funding](#). Trainees must specialise in one of the subjects eligible for a bursary.

A small number of providers may call a part-time FE ITE course an in-service course. A trainee on one of these courses may still be eligible for a bursary if they are not employed or receiving a salary for the teaching work they do as part of the ITE programme.

The Ofqual-regulated Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills) is not eligible for student support in the 2024 to 2025 academic year. Students taking this qualification are not eligible to apply for bursary funding.

Courses are not eligible if trainees can be recommended for the award of EYTS or QTS.

## **Combination courses**

The course content must be 50% or more of the bursary subject awarded.

You must be able to provide clear evidence that the course meets this minimum threshold. The Department for Education (DfE) may need this for assurance purposes.

Courses with equal content of 2 subjects will get the bursary for the subject with the higher bursary rate.

## **English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)**

There is not a bursary specifically for ESOL. The English bursary is to support those intending to teach English from basic skills to GCSE and up to level 3.

A bursary is available if a trainee is registered to undertake a combined specialist ITE programme with ESOL with an English speciality content of 50% or more. The provider should be able to give clear evidence that the course content meets the eligibility threshold.

## **Ofsted outcome and eligible providers**

Ofsted is currently consulting on proposed changes to the ITE framework and grading outcomes. No new inspections will take place before January 2026.

We will continue to assess providers for bursary eligibility based on the Ofsted grade they hold now.

You cannot apply for the bursary if your Ofsted judgement for overall effectiveness for FE ITE is either inadequate or requires improvement.

Eligibility is based on your most recent Ofsted ITE inspection at the date you apply, up to the date Ofsted paused inspections.

If you have not yet been inspected for your FE ITE provision, you are still eligible to



apply for the bursary.

If you offer more than one phase of ITE, for the purpose of assessing eligibility for the bursary, we will only take the FE judgement into account.

If you have received a separate judgement for your ITE provision and further education and skills provision, we will only consider the ITE judgement.

We will update the manual to clarify the guidance around any new grading structure when this has been published.

## Franchising and validation arrangements

Franchise arrangements are inspected as single entities by Ofsted. The grade will apply to all providers in the partnership when we assess eligibility for FE ITE bursaries.

Ofsted will inspect each individual provider in validation arrangements. Each provider will get a separate grade. Providers' eligibility to apply is based on their grade, not their validating partner's grade.

The terms 'validation' and 'franchising' are applied as set out in:

- the [QAA UK's quality code](#)
- the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator's good practice framework](#)
- the [Office for Students regulatory framework](#)
- [Ofsted's ITE inspection framework](#)

## Trainee requirements

Trainees who accept a place with you and are eligible to get a bursary should:

- sign a declaration of understanding with you that they expect to seek a teaching post in the FE sector in England on successful completion of their course
- tell you of any changes to their bank account details and address
- promptly tell you if they intend to withdraw from the course

# How to apply

All applications must come from an FE ITE provider.

To apply:

- 1 Check your trainee has not applied for a bursary from another FE ITE provider – only one bursary is available for each trainee.
- 2 Complete the [application form](#) and email [ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk).
- 3 We will confirm if a bursary has been awarded.
- 4 When we have confirmed the bursary, advise the trainee in writing.

If ITE is delivered as part of a franchise arrangement, the ITE provider that leads the franchise must submit all applications.

If a higher education provider with degree awarding powers validates an ITE course, the validated partner must submit all applications.

You can apply for trainees individually or in batches, ahead of a course start date.

You must establish if a trainee and their specific course are eligible for a bursary before applying.

## Limits on bursary allocations

We award bursaries based on applicants meeting the eligibility criteria and the availability of funding. Not every candidate who meets the eligibility criteria might be able to receive a bursary. It will depend on the total number of eligible applications we get.

For the 2025 to 2026 academic year, there will be a maximum of 100 bursaries for

trainees to teach English.

When we have used the available funding we will keep a waiting list. We will then reallocate their bursary.

If a trainee withdraws, let us know immediately, so we can consider reassigning the funding to another trainee.

## Management and administration of bursary payments

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

- assessing the eligibility of the trainee and their specific course
- awarding the bursary to the trainee
- letting us know if a trainee withdraws or defers from their course
- meeting your [monitoring and assurance responsibilities](#)
- [keeping records](#)

To be able to receive bursary funding for your trainees, you must complete and return a grant funding agreement signed by your accounting officer.

If you do not do this promptly, we may be unable to release funding.

We will issue you with a single grant funding agreement, regardless of the number of bursary applications made.

## Banking information

If you are a new ITE provider and DfE has not given you grant funding before, you will need to [give us information about your banking and payments](#).

# **Bursary funding cycle**

In your first year of delivery, we will contact you to ask for your grant funding agreements.

If we need other documents, such as letters of variation, we will contact individual providers separately.

We must approve your grant funding agreement, and your payment details must be on our system before August 2025 to make payments from September.

We will make payments on or around the third working day of each month.

## **September 2025 to November 2025**

We will make the first 3 payments if you have a grant funding agreement in place. These will be based on your trainee data.

## **November 2025**

We will ask you to confirm trainee records using the form we provide. We will ask you to reply by a given deadline.

## **December 2025 to January 2026**

We will pay you if you have a grant funding agreement in place. This will be based on your trainee data.

## **January 2026**

We will send you a copy of your payment profile to confirm the funding you are receiving. This will be based on your trainee data.

## **February to March 2026**

In March, we will ask you to confirm trainee records using the form we provide. We will ask you to reply by a given deadline.

If you have a grant funding agreement in place, we will make the remaining payments each month. They will be based on your trainee data.

## **April to July 2026**

In July, we will ask you to confirm trainee records using the form we provide. We will ask you to reply by a given deadline.

If you have a grant funding agreement in place, we will make the remaining payments each month. They will be based on your trainee data.

## **September to December 2026**

We will send final Annex G documents to you at the end of the academic year.

We will pre-populate these with the amount of funding you have received and the trainees the funding relates to.

We will send you guidance on this process at the same time.

You will need to complete a document and auditor report, where applicable. Return these by 31 December 2026.

This will help you to provide us with the necessary assurance for both the amount received and the purpose for which it was used.

## **November 2025 to March 2027**

We apply a sampling process to gain assurance of the bursary expenditure.

This involves assurance checks, where we collect evidence on sampled trainees.

We will recover and reimburse funds through the payment profile or invoice.

We do this in addition to the Annex G process.

## **Payments to trainees**

You should make bursary payments to trainees throughout the academic year.

Trainees will be entitled to get the first bursary payment if they are actively engaged on the ITE programme on the first day of the month following their start date.

For example, a trainee starting their course in September 2025 will be entitled to their first payment if they are actively undertaking the programme on 1 October. They will be entitled to the second payment if they are on the programme on 1 November. This is regardless of the provider's individual payment date.

Do not pay training bursary funding:

- as part of maternity or paternity pay arrangements
- during a period of unauthorised absence

If we find a trainee is ineligible for the bursary, we will recover any bursary payments. The recovery of any bursary overpayment will then be an internal matter between you and the trainee.

You should make clear how you intend to pay the bursary to the trainee.

## **Payments for full-time courses**

You should pay bursary awards in a minimum of 10 equal monthly instalments over the duration of the course.

If you are paying trainees for 10 months, you will pay:

<b>Bursary award</b>	<b>Value of monthly instalments</b>
£10,000	£1,000
£15,000	£1,500
£31,000	£3,100

Any payments you make before we confirm the bursary award are at your risk.

## Payments for part-time courses

For part-time trainees, you will receive:

- 50% of the funding in the first year of their course (2025 to 2026 academic year)
- 50% of the funding in the second year of the course (2026 to 2027 academic year)

Bursary payments must broadly reflect the proportion of the course that the trainee has completed at any point.

This will typically be in 20 equal monthly instalments over the duration of the course, so you will pay:

<b>Bursary award</b>	<b>Value of monthly instalments</b>
£10,000	£500
£15,000	£750
£31,000	£1,550

## Trainees who complete the course early

If a trainee successfully completes their course before the end of the academic year, you may pay them the full balance of the bursary early at your discretion. We will continue to pay you on the existing monthly cycle.

## Withdrawals and deferrals

Tell us immediately if any trainee accepted for a bursary:

- withdraws from their ITE course
- decides they no longer need the bursary
- defers their study for any period

You must:

- suspend all bursary payments to the trainee immediately
- email [ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk) with the formal withdrawal date

Trainees cannot defer if they are due to complete the course after the 2026 to 2027 academic year. They will be treated as withdrawals for bursary management purposes. Contact us immediately if exceptional circumstances may apply.

You must not allocate the funding to another trainee without written confirmation from us.

Eligible trainees who withdraw from a course will be entitled to payment for each month up to and including the month in which they formally withdraw.

For example, if a trainee starts their programme in September 2025 and withdraws or defers in January 2026, they will be entitled to 4 payments in total. This is because they were engaged on the course on:

- 1 October 2025
- 1 November 2025
- 1 December 2025
- 1 January 2026

Withdrawal information should reflect the dates given to Student Finance England for student support purposes, where it applies.



In the event of a deferral or withdrawal, you must:

- suspend all bursary payments to the trainee immediately
- email [ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk) detailing the formal withdrawal date

We will recover any overpayments made to you. We will not reimburse you for any payments made to trainees in error.

The recovery of any bursary overpayments will then be an internal matter between you and the trainee.

## **Trainees who become ineligible for bursary payments**

If an eligible trainee is awarded an FE ITE bursary and later becomes ineligible after their course has started, treat their bursary payments in the same way as withdrawals.

This applies, for example, if a trainee has taken up paid teaching work that contributes to their training during their course.

Trainees will be entitled to payment for each month up to and including the month in which they become ineligible.

## **Suspended trainees**

Trainees who are suspended from their course pending investigation may continue to receive their bursary payments during their suspension.

Tell us immediately if you decide to terminate the trainee's programme, so we can stop payments.

## **Absence for sickness**

If a trainee is absent through sickness, you may only make one further payment

following the first day of absence. After this, if the absence continues into the next payment period, treat the absence as a withdrawal from the course.

This means a withdrawal from the bursary scheme, and payments must stop with immediate effect.

These principles also apply for trainees who start their courses later in the academic year, if they complete their course no later than August 2026 (for full-time courses) or August 2027 (for part-time courses).

You must not make payments before the trainee starts the course.

## **Trainees who are not engaging with the course**

Trainees are entitled to receive bursary payments if they are actively engaged on the FE ITE programme.

If you have valid concerns that a trainee is not engaging appropriately with the course, you have the discretion to withhold bursary payments until you are confident the trainee will complete the course.

Email [ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk) immediately if you decide to withhold bursary payments.

## **Monitoring and assurance responsibilities**

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

You must show that you have administered all bursary funding in accordance with your grant funding agreements. This includes:

- selecting and recruiting the highest-quality candidates to programmes of ITE
- designing and delivering high-quality programmes of ITE
- assuring the quality of trainee placements undertaken and mentoring received

- showing propriety and adequate controls in your financial management, and complying with relevant financial reporting or governance requirements
- following our data requirements
- responding to requests for information in a timely manner
- passing on 100% of the bursary funding issued to you under your grant funding agreement to the trainee

## Records you must keep

You must hold full records of all trainees who get bursaries. This includes evidence of the academic qualifications trainees achieved, or other evidence of attainment, before they start their ITE.

You should keep records for 3 years after the cohort has finished.

We will ask all providers to confirm all trainee records in November, March and July.

We may also ask for evidence of:

- your trainees' prior qualifications
- your trainees' course and subject eligibility
- payments you have made to trainees
- trainee attendance

Make sure all trainee records you send to us are complete. This includes amending the records of trainees who:

- withdraw (directly or by deferring) from their ITE course
- start later in the 2025 to 2026 academic year

We may delay or withhold payments if data is inaccurate or incomplete.

We will ask you to complete an Annex G with income, expenditure and trainee data. We will provide detailed guidance.

Your Annex G may have to be independently audited and countersigned by your accounting officer. We will confirm the requirements when the Annex G return is

sent.

We will use this information to reconcile the funding that you have received with your declared expenditure. We will take the effect of withdrawn trainees into account.

## **Funding checks**

We will review the ITE bursary funding you receive and reconcile this amount with your trainee records. We will do this after you confirm the records (in November, March and July annually) and the submission of your Annex G. We will adjust your funding to meet the actual amount you need.

We may ask for further information to explain any variances.

Where your funding 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.

We will not reimburse you for any bursaries paid to ineligible trainees.

## **Evidence requirements**

We may ask you to supply evidence of trainee and course eligibility to meet our grant assurance requirements at any point in the funding cycle.

This includes confirmation of your or your delivery partner's current Ofsted rating. You could send a link to your most recent inspection outcome.

If you are not able to supply the evidence listed, email [ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk) to check if your proposed alternative evidence is acceptable.

## **Audit trail of payments**

You must keep an audit trail of all payments made to trainees and decisions around payment structures.

DfE may ask for evidence of payments being made to eligible trainees as part of the assurance process.

## **Evidence of trainees' identity**

We may ask you to provide a statement that confirms:

- you have checked, and have copies of, photographic evidence that the trainee meets nationality or residency eligibility requirements
- the evidence you checked relates to the named individual

## **Evidence of trainees' status**

We may ask you to confirm if your trainees are currently doing their ITE course or have withdrawn, deferred or completed their training.

You should provide either:

- a screenshot of your trainee records system
- a signed statement

This is to confirm the trainee's course status for a particular period.

If the trainee withdrew or deferred, include the date and value of bursary amounts paid to the trainee to date. This allows us to calculate how much funding to recover.

## **Evidence of ITE route and subject eligibility**

We may ask you to provide:

- a signed enrolment form
- a signed interview form
- a signed learning and assessment plan
- a screenshot of internal student records system

These should include the name of the trainee and clearly specify the bursary subject as the teaching specialism. This is to check that the ITE course leads to the award of an eligible qualification in the stated bursary subject.

If you do not have this evidence of teaching specialism in the course title, you should be able to provide evidence that:

- a minimum of 50% of any training placement was in the relevant bursary subject
- the trainee had a subject-specific mentor

This could be in the form of a signed statement from the provider.

If, during assurance checks, we find the ITE course is ineligible for a bursary, we will:

- recover any funding
- ask for evidence for all bursary recipient trainees

## **Evidence of qualifications**

We may ask for evidence that trainees meet our requirements in:

- English and maths
- level 3 qualifications

If the trainee has UK qualifications, we may ask you to send copies of qualification certificates.

If the trainee has an overseas qualification, we may ask you to send:

- a National Academic Recognition Information Centre certificate, if it was issued before February 2021
- a declaration from the European Network of Information Centres, for all certificate applications from March 2021

If you have run an equivalence test to show the trainee meets the required standard in English or maths, we may ask you to send a copy of the test outcome.

If the trainee does not have the relevant English and maths qualifications, we may

ask you to send a signed statement confirming that you:

- have reviewed their attainment, knowledge and expertise
- are satisfied they will be able to complete their ITE course and teach to the required standard

If the trainee does not have the relevant level 3 qualifications, we may ask you to send a signed statement confirming you:

- have reviewed their skills, knowledge and experience
- are satisfied that their subject knowledge is sufficient to complete their ITE course and teach to the required standard

This evidence is to confirm that the trainee:

- has a minimum of a GCSE grade 4 (C) in English and GCSE grade 4 (C) in mathematics or equivalent
- has a suitable level of subject knowledge
- will be able to complete their course of study
- will be able to teach to the required standard

## **Evidence of payments to trainees**

We may check that 100% of the bursary funding is being paid directly to the trainee and that the payments reflect the percentage of the course undertaken.

You are not permitted to make any deduction from the bursary payments we make to you before you pass this on to the trainee, including any deduction for course fees.

We may ask you to send a monthly breakdown for bursary payments to the trainee. You can send this in a spreadsheet or a table.

If payments are not proportionate to the percentage of a course undertaken to date, we may ask for a statement explaining why.

### **Remittance or BACS reports**

We may ask you to send remittance or BACS reports that clearly show payments made to the trainee.

Redact any information that does not relate to the trainee when you send this.

If you cannot send remittance or BACS reports, send us:

- screenshots of internal systems showing payments to the trainee
- bank statements or account statement reports showing the total payment made for the selected sample period

Screenshots of internal systems must be linked to bank statements or account statement reports.

## **Evidence of attendance**

We may ask you to send:

- an attendance log – for example, a screenshot of trainee records system showing attendance, or a spreadsheet
- a statement from the course tutor or lecturer referencing the attendance and engagement of the trainee for any selected sample period

This is to check the trainee was actively engaged on their course.

If the trainee was not on the course for the selected sample period, send your evidence for the closest month.

## **Data requirements**

You must send relevant trainee-level data to us at specific times before, during and after the course. This includes:

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

We will provide further details of the data you need to send us when we confirm if your trainees are eligible for bursaries.



When you send information to us, you must follow UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) requirements.

As bursaries are grant funding, you are the data controller for any personal data you process. More information about [how DfE shares personal data](#) is available.

If you have any questions about the submission of trainee-level data, email [ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk](mailto:ITT.Funding@education.gov.uk).

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