



Department
for Education

Subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) funding manual

**For SKE programmes starting between 2
October 2017 and 28 September 2018**

Updated March 2018

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Introduction

1. This manual is a guide to requesting Department for Education (DfE)¹ funding for subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) programmes that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) participants complete before or alongside their ITT courses.
2. Please direct any SKE queries to the SKE team at ske.inbox@education.gov.uk.

SKE programmes

3. SKE programmes are designed for ITT participants to gain the depth of knowledge needed to train to teach their chosen subject.
4. School Direct (SD) lead schools and ITT providers can deliver SKE programmes themselves or commission them to be delivered by a SKE provider.
5. SKE funding is available for the following subjects:
 - mathematics
 - physics
 - chemistry
 - computing
 - languages
 - biology
 - English
 - geography
 - design & technology, and
 - primary maths
6. SKE programmes **must**:
 - support allocated places on ITT courses that are starting in academic years (AY) 2017/18 and 2018/19, except for deferred ITT places for AY 2019/20 as outlined below in paragraphs 15 to 17;
 - be offered to participants who, without SKE, would be highly unlikely to meet the subject knowledge requirements of the [Teachers' Standards](#) by the time their ITT course is complete;

¹ NCTL will cease to operate on 31 March 2018. Any references to NCTL within this document will be superseded by DfE.

- end before the participant completes their ITT course and before a recommendation for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is made, and;
- be no longer than the minimum duration needed to address the subject knowledge gaps of participants, rounded up to the bands in the table below. SKE funding must be claimed based on a full time equivalent week which equates to 25 hours of study per week e.g. only eight weeks of funding can be claimed for 200 hours of study, regardless of when a programme starts and finishes.

7. Course durations eligible for funding, and their funding rates, are listed in the table below.

Programme band	Number of claimable weeks for a full-time equivalent programme and the number of study hours a participant will need to complete	Maximum programme funding	Training bursary funding
Short	8 weeks (200 hrs)	£1,600	£1,600
	12 weeks (300 hrs)	£2,400	£2,400
Medium	16 weeks (400 hrs)	£3,200	£3,200
	20 weeks (500 hrs)	£4,000	£4,000
Long	24 weeks (600 hrs)	£4,800	£4,800
	28 weeks (700 hrs)	£5,600	£5,600

8. SD lead schools/ITT providers or their nominated SKE provider (if also a SD lead school/ITT provider) will receive SKE training bursary payments on behalf of the participant and must pass these on in full to them. SKE providers who are not SD lead schools or ITT providers cannot directly draw down DfE funding and should follow the arrangements set out in paragraph 35. Participants should receive their bursary award phased over the course of the SKE programme in monthly instalments in line with the [ITT bursary guidance](#).
9. SKE training bursaries can only be claimed for one SKE course (with the exception of languages, see paragraphs 52 to 54) within the academic year. Any exception to this will need to be approved by the SKE team prior to funding being agreed. If a participant withdraws from a course, it is the SKE provider's responsibility to inform DfE immediately, so bursary payments can be stopped.
10. In the event of an overpayment for the training bursary, due to a participant withdrawing from the programme, it will be recovered in full through the Audit Grant Return (AGR) or Annex G process that all SD lead schools/ITT providers are required to complete. Please see paragraphs 58 to 63 for more information.

11. SKE programmes **may**:

- be delivered before or alongside ITT courses;
- be delivered online, through distance learning, face-to-face or a mixture of these approaches, and;
- be undertaken by participants on a part-time or full-time basis.

12. SKE funding will not be paid for SKE courses relating to ITT cohorts that start before the relevant UCAS application process, with the exception of Teach First. Funding for SKE may be claimed for the 2018/19 ITT cycle from the date when UCAS registration opens on 26 October 2017. Further information about SKE funding for the 2019/20 ITT cycle will be made available in early autumn 2018.

13. It is the SKE provider's responsibility to make a judgement at the end of the SKE course on whether the participant has appropriate subject knowledge to undertake ITT. The SKE provider should make this judgement clear to the ITT provider. If, at this point, the ITT provider is not satisfied that the participant has appropriate subject knowledge to undertake ITT, they may decide to withdraw the ITT offer. It is the responsibility of the ITT provider to determine whether the conditions of the ITT offer have been met.

14. An overview of the SKE programme and examples of how it can be used to support ITT recruitment is available on the [Get into Teaching](#) website and [gov.uk](#).

Deferral of an ITT place to allow for completion of SKE

15. If the duration of a SKE programme means that it cannot be completed before an ITT course ends, the SD lead school/ITT provider can offer a conditional deferred place on an ITT course. For instance, if a participant starts a 28-week part-time programme in March, then this might mean he or she would be unable to complete SKE before their ITT course ends.

16. To defer a participant to the next ITT cycle, the SD lead school/ITT provider will need to update the UCAS system, by changing the cycle year from the current ITT cycle to the next cycle, e.g. from AY 2018/19 to AY 2019/20. Participants should not assume that funding for future academic years would continue at current levels when making the decision to defer their ITT.

17. DfE reserve the right to request evidence of deferred conditional offers or written confirmation from Teach First before approving SKE funding claims for courses that relate to AY 2019/20. Please contact the SKE team at ske.inbox@education.gov.uk for more guidance.

SKE Programme Cost Funding

Eligibility

18. SKE programme funding can only be claimed for one SKE course (with the exception of languages, see paragraphs 52 to 54) within the academic year. Any exception to this will need to be approved by the SKE team prior to funding being agreed.
19. To be eligible for SKE programme funding, a participant must have accepted a conditional offer of a place on any eligible ITT course via UCAS, (which may be a deferred ITT place as outlined in paragraphs 15 to 17) or, had the need for SKE identified as part of their application to Teach First. The completion of a SKE course must be a specific condition of the conditional ITT offer. It is the responsibility of the SKE provider to verify from the evidence produced that the participant is eligible, and also to deem what is acceptable proof. The SKE provider should retain evidence as DfE reserves the right to request evidence of eligibility for monitoring and assurance purposes.
20. DfE do not specify that all ITT course entry requirements must be met before a SKE programme starts, other than the participant must hold a conditional offer of an ITT place or have been identified as needing a SKE course by Teach First. DfE do not impose any further entry requirements for SKE courses.

Undergraduate ITT courses

21. SKE funding can only be claimed for participants who have accepted a conditional offer of a place on an eligible DfE funded undergraduate ITT route with QTS.

Postgraduate ITT courses

22. SKE funding can only be claimed for participants who have accepted a conditional place on a postgraduate ITT course. Participants who have not yet graduated will need to provide evidence of their predicted degree class. Please see section 3 (a) of the [ITT bursary guidance](#) for more information on eligibility.
23. Participants with a third class degree on standard ITT, School Direct (tuition fee) and Teach First courses are not eligible for a SKE bursary; however, the programme costs can be claimed by the SKE grant recipient for these participants. SKE providers should contact the participant's ITT provider for details of their existing academic qualifications before making assessments on bursary eligibility. SKE providers must also retain evidence of candidate eligibility. Please see paragraphs 58 to 63 for further guidance on retaining evidence.

Overseas Participants

24. SKE programme costs may not be claimed for overseas participants, with the exception of overseas participants who have been recruited to a DfE funded SD salaried course only. Programme cost funding for EEA citizens is in line with the [ITT funding guidance](#).

Teach First

25. Teach First participants are eligible for SKE funding, providing they meet the criteria set by Teach First. Please contact Teach First directly for more guidance on assessing eligibility, at ske@teachfirst.org.uk.

SKE Training Bursary Funding

Eligibility

26. To be eligible for a SKE training bursary, participants must satisfy the SKE programme costs eligibility criteria as described above, and the training bursary criteria set out in section 3 of the [ITT bursary guidance](#). The exception to this rule is PE with EBacc candidates who will undertake subject training in an additional subject, as outlined in the [ITT Allocations Methodology for AY 2018/19](#)
27. Participants with a third class or ordinary degree on standard ITT, School Direct (tuition fee) and Teach First courses are not eligible for a SKE bursary; however, the programme costs can be claimed by the SKE provider for these participants. SD salaried participants with third class/ordinary degrees can receive a SKE bursary where the provider has been given special dispensation by the DfE to offer them an ITT place. In these cases programme costs can also be claimed.
28. Bursary funding is available for eligible participants on designated undergraduate courses in secondary maths and physics that lead to QTS and/or participants on opt-in secondary undergraduate physics, computing, maths or modern foreign language courses that lead to QTS. Participants on four-year undergraduate courses that lead to the award of QTS, and lead to the award of a Master's degree, will also be eligible.

Teach First

29. Providers may claim SKE bursary funding for eligible Teach First participants between 2 October 2017 and 31 August 2018, for the ITT cohort starting in September 2018. SKE will need to be completed before participants engage in the salaried element of the Teach First course to claim SKE bursary funding (see paragraph 31).

Overseas Participants

30. Overseas participants are not eligible to receive the SKE training bursary. Bursary funding for EEA citizens is in line with the ITT funding guidance.

SKE during ITT

31. If a SKE programme runs in parallel with a full-time ITT course and the participant is eligible to receive an ITT bursary, we will only pay the ITT bursary². If a SKE programme runs in parallel with a SD salaried course, the SKE training bursary will cease from when the SD salary begins. This also applies for Teach First courses, when the participant starts to receive a salary. The value of SKE funding requested and detailed on the [SKE claim form](#), must be reduced to reflect the duration of any parallel delivery.

Funding arrangements for SKE

32. Funding for SKE is requested from DfE using the [SKE claim form](#).
33. For SKE funding to be released, SD lead schools/ITT providers must have a signed [grant offer letter](#) (GOL) in place. All highlighted sections in the grant offer letter must be completed and the Accounting Officer must sign annex A. The GOL only needs completing once and should be returned to the SKE team at ske.inbox@education.gov.uk. By completing this document, the SD lead school/ITT provider agrees to the DfE [grant terms and conditions](#) for receiving SKE funding.
34. SKE providers who are also SD lead schools and/or ITT providers may receive SKE funding directly from the DfE. Alternatively, they may nominate the commissioning ITT provider or lead school, to receive the funding. All relevant parties must hold a relevant GFA to draw down SKE funding. This can be done by indicating on the [SKE claim form](#) that the SKE provider should receive the funding.
35. If a SKE provider is not a SD lead school/ITT provider, it will need to invoice the SD lead school/ITT provider for the cost of delivering the SKE programme. The SD lead school/ITT provider will then need to claim the SKE funding for the programme and the training bursary from DfE on the SKE provider's behalf. The SD lead school/ITT provider must retain the invoice from the SKE provider for

² The only exception is where the participant is undertaking SKE in design & technology in parallel with their ITT course and their degree class is lower than 2:1. In this instance, the SKE bursary will be paid as the participant will not receive an ITT bursary.

audit purposes (see paragraphs 58 to 63 for further information). Please see paragraphs 48 to 50 for further guidance on working with third party providers.

Allocation of SKE funding

36. SKE units have been allocated to individual providers to fund claims for SKE programme costs from 2 October 2017 to 31 March 2018 and separately, from 1 April 2018 to 28 September 2018. These allocated funding amounts will be monitored, throughout the year.

37. The overarching principles of this process are:

- that additional units will be allocated in response to demand and where SKE providers have filled all existing allocated units,
- that SKE providers request extra funding in writing once they have recruited, or are about to recruit participants to their programmes and finally,
- that the allocation of additional units, once approved and a [SKE claim form](#) received, will be managed dynamically to ensure flexibility for both SKE providers and for DfE.

38. DfE reserve the right to hold back SKE units for subjects that are harder to fill. This may mean declining requests for SKE units in a particular subject, in order to provide extra SKE for the subjects that are harder to fill. DfE will continue to monitor the level of ITT applications by subject and will write to providers with reasonable notice if such restrictions are to be applied.

39. In some cases, the ITT provider or lead school may feel that the initial decision on the length of SKE course the participant needed was incorrect, and may wish to extend the programme. In such cases an updated [SKE claim form](#) will be approved providing that, evidence can be supplied outlining the decision to extend the length of programme; and that the participant has not already undertaken 28 weeks of DfE-funded SKE.

SKE funding rates

40. SKE funding is made up of programme funding for providers to deliver SKE and training bursary funding for participants to assist with additional costs that participants incur while undertaking the programme.

41. For all SKE courses that have a start date after 2 October 2017:

- the maximum rates of funding for programme costs is £200 per week per participant. There is no additional funding to cover administration of SKE programmes or training bursaries, and;
- the participant bursary funding is £200 per week for all participants.

42. The maximum rates of funding that can be claimed for participants undertaking full-time SKE programmes are shown in the table below.

Programme band	Number of claimable weeks for a full-time equivalent programme and the number of study hours a participant will need to complete	Maximum programme funding	Training bursary funding
Short	8 weeks (200 hrs)	£1,600	£1,600
	12 weeks (300 hrs)	£2,400	£2,400
Medium	16 weeks (400 hrs)	£3,200	£3,200
	20 weeks (500 hrs)	£4,000	£4,000
Long	24 weeks (600 hrs)	£4,800	£4,800
	28 weeks (700 hrs)	£5,600	£5,600

43. It is a condition of SKE programme funding that participants should not be charged for undertaking the programme. This is to make SKE accessible to all and helps prevent recruitment being adversely affected.

How to claim SKE funding

Within the original allocation

44. The process for completing the [SKE claim form](#) is explained below:

- i. The [SKE claim form](#) is available on the [SKE introduction web page](#). Requests for multiple participants can be included on one request form, however, providers may not use an existing claim form that has already been submitted and approved to request funding for new participants.
- ii. The [SKE claim form](#) must be completed in full, including the names of all parties involved with the SKE request. SD lead school/ITT providers must ensure that, from the first day of the training, the participant meets, and continues to meet, the eligibility criteria to receive SKE funding. Providers must complete each section on the request form correctly before submitting it.
- iii. The cost of each SKE programme and SKE training bursary included in the [SKE claim form](#) should be known before submitting the request.

45. The process for submitting claims is explained below:

- i. DfE will not provide funding for any SKE claims that are submitted more than two weeks after the programme start date unless there are genuine reasons for a delay. It is advised that claim forms are submitted as soon as participants are recruited to avoid delay in payment when the SKE course commences.

- ii. Completed SKE claim forms must be password-protected and sent, via secure mail, to ske.inbox@education.gov.uk. The password for the file will need to be sent in a separate email to ske.inbox@education.gov.uk. Incomplete claim forms will not be processed and SD lead schools/ITT providers will be asked to update and resubmit them, which will cause delays to SKE payments being released.
- iii. SD lead schools/ITT providers must have signed the [GOL](#) and returned it to DfE before any funding can be released.
- iv. Ordinarily the SKE team will not respond to emails containing SKE claim forms until they have been processed, which is around 5 working days from the date of submission.
- v. Where SKE claim forms are repeatedly submitted with inaccurate data, which could result in incorrect funding being paid, DfE reserve the right to make deductions from future programme costs to take account of the additional resource required to remedy the issue.

Requesting extra funding

46. Requests for extra funding must be supported by evidence of recruitment, e.g. [SKE claim forms](#) relating to individuals who have been enrolled onto SKE courses.

The overarching principles for this process are:

- that additional units will be allocated in response to demand and where SKE providers have filled all existing allocated units,
- that SKE providers request extra funding in writing once they have recruited, or are about to recruit participants to their programmes and finally,
- that the allocation of additional units, once approved and a SKE claim form received, will be managed dynamically to ensure flexibility for both SKE providers and for DfE.

47. To request extra SKE funding for participants that have already started on programmes or have been recruited to start, please submit a request to: ske.inbox@education.gov.uk stating the name of your institution in the subject line of the email and that it is a '*Request for additional funded units*'. Additional claim forms totalling the units requested will then be approved and the additional funding will be confirmed to you in writing.

Third party providers

48. If you are an ITT provider or lead school, you may consider commissioning a third party SKE provider (that is not an ITT provider or SD lead school) to deliver SKE for your candidates. Alternatively, participants may choose to take their SKE course with a third party SKE provider if you have made SKE a condition of their ITT offer. Third parties cannot receive SKE funding directly from DfE, so you must ensure you have a signed [GOL](#) in place prior to commissioning the services so that you can draw down SKE funding on their behalf.

49. You must ensure that, in all cases where a third party is commissioned, an appropriate written agreement is put in place between the ITT provider or SD lead school and third party and signed by both parties, which clearly outlines:

- the recipient of the funding,
- the body responsible for delivering SKE,
- assurances that the funding will be used solely for delivery of SKE,
- any timeframes for payment of funds,
- details of any fees for administrative services, if appropriate,
- that the third party is responsible for looking after their own tax affairs, and that it is not the responsibility of the commissioning ITT provider or lead school to provide assurance of this.

50. Any third party activity commissioned by ITT providers/lead schools under the grant funding agreement will be subject to audit by the DfE and must be included in the Audit Grant or Annex G process at the end of each academic year including, where applicable, evidence of withdrawals or non-starters.

SKE Funding Payment Process

51. The payment process is explained below.

i. DfE aims to pay SKE programme funding in full, within the next available DfE monthly payment run after the start of the SKE programme, following receipt and acceptance of the completed SKE claim form.

ii. SKE bursary funding is paid in arrears. DfE aims to pay SKE training bursary funding from the next DfE monthly payment run following the start date of the SKE programme, which must be recorded on the SKE request form. Failure to record the start date of the programme in the request form will result in the form being rejected. The SKE training bursary will be paid over the duration of the SKE programme in monthly instalments.

iii. SKE claim forms are processed at the end of each month and payment is made by electronic BACS transfer at the start of the following month. To help ensure that payments are made in the correct month, SKE claim forms must be submitted to the SKE team as soon as possible, and preferably before the SKE programme start date. It is advisable for providers to submit the SKE funding claim form as soon as the participant is recruited, allowing the opportunity for the claim to be processed in the same month as the course start date.

Languages

52. DfE fund two SKE courses in languages so that participants are equipped to teach two languages, where required. This may include a refresher SKE course in their main foreign language and, where appropriate, familiarity with the national curriculum.
53. It is for the SKE and ITT provider/lead school to decide how much SKE their participants need and whether two SKE courses should be a condition of the participant's ITT offer. As a guide, however, we would suggest that participants doing two SKE courses will take a short (usually eight week) course in their main language and a longer course of up to 28 weeks in the other language.
54. The languages participants to which this applies may include (but is not restricted to) native speakers from within the EEA, language graduates and UK nationals who have lived abroad and are fluent in another language.

Eligibility

55. Participants who have received a conditional offer in languages ITT, which specifies the completion of a (dual) SKE course as a condition of their offer, will be eligible for up to two SKE courses. Participants on the opt-in languages undergraduate routes to QTS are eligible for SKE, and we expect that they would do a single SKE course in a different language to that of their undergraduate degree.

Funding

56. Eligible participants will receive a SKE bursary if the SKE is completed before their ITT starts. SKE providers should submit claims in the usual way to ske.inbox@education.gov.uk using the [SKE claim form](#) on gov.uk. SKE providers may request an extension to an existing claim for an individual, or submit up to two claims per individual, depending on when they do the additional SKE. Where a participant is doing two SKE courses in parallel they will receive one SKE bursary during this time. Providers will receive £200 per week if they run two language courses in parallel.

57. This offer is restricted to languages only and is not applicable to any other ITT subject. Full programme cost funding will be paid to SKE providers in the usual way, upon approval of a claim form.

Monitoring, analysis and assurance of SKE

58. The data submitted in the [SKE claim form](#) will form part of a regular analysis and review by DfE. DfE reserve the right to request additional data as appropriate on participant registrations, to monitor and evaluate take up, quality and impact of the SKE scheme.

59. Recipients of SKE funding may be subject to audit during the year and must, therefore, retain all invoices corresponding to the [SKE claim form](#).

60. Recipients of SKE funding may also be asked to submit relevant documentation to DfE at the end of the year. Relevant documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- i. a copy of the applicant's degree certificate, with final classification (or final transcript if an overseas degree) or evidence of the expected degree award;
- ii. evidence of a conditional ITT offer being made to the applicant, stating that SKE is a specific condition, or in the case of Teach First trainees, confirmation of eligibility from the charity and;
- iii. evidence of the applicants' eligibility to receive DfE funding, i.e. proof of home status for the purpose of drawing down student finance.
- iv. Evidence that SKE training has taken place, e.g. if face to face then attendance registers, or if online then correspondence between the SKE provider and participant

61. An AGR (or Annex G) will be sent to all recipients of SKE grant and bursary funding, at the end of each academic year to reconcile funding received from DfE and actual spend. SKE funding will be recovered in full for any participant that either did not start or withdrew from the SKE course. Providers in receipt of any SKE funding will be required to report directly to DfE in relation to unspent funding when requested. Where applicable, SKE providers will also be asked to provide details of participants that took SKE courses in that academic year.

62. The recipient must complete the relevant section(s) of the AGR, arrange for the AGR or Annex G of the [GOL](#) to be signed by a registered independent external auditor and submit to DfE at financial.monitoring@education.gov.uk **no later than 31 December 2018**. Schools who receive less than £40,000 in SKE funding

should ensure that the relevant Accounting Officer has signed Annex G of the GOL.

63. DfE reserve the right to monitor SKE programme take up and spend. Any SKE programme funds deemed to have been used inappropriately will be recovered in full.

Changes since the last publication (October 2017)

Readers should note that other than minor wording changes, significant changes to note are listed below for ease:

Paragraph number	Change
1	Note added: NCTL will cease to operate on 31 March 2018. DfE from 1 April 2018 onwards will supersede any references to DFE within this document.
19, 23 & 60	Requirement to <u>retain</u> evidence of applicant eligibility added; examples of evidence added (paragraph 60 only)
21	Clarification of undergraduate bursary funding added.
25	New paragraph added to confirm Teach First eligibility for SKE funding
29	Clarification on Teach First trainees added.
34	Clarification added for SKE providers who are also ITT providers.
45 ii	SKE funding claim forms must be password protected.
45 v	Clarification on deducting administration costs from future claims where repeated incorrect claim forms are submitted.
46	Clarification on requesting additional SKE funding added.
51 i	Clarification added on when programme funding is paid.
51 ii	Clarification added on when SKE bursary funding is paid.
59	Guidance added for schools entering into agreements with third party SKE providers
62	Confirmation that Annex Gs relating to less than £40,000 can be signed by an Accounting Officer

Useful links

Contacts:

ske.inbox@education.gov.uk

financial.monitoring@education.gov.uk

Published documents:

[SKE introduction web page](#)

[SKE claim form](#)

[Grant offer letter](#)

[Grant terms and conditions](#)

[ITT bursary guidance](#)

[ITT funding guidance](#)

[ITT Allocations Methodology for AY 2018/19](#)

Other links:

[Teachers' Standards](#)

SKE on [Get into Teaching](#)

SKE on [gov.uk](#)



Department
for Education

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