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# **NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR SEN SUPPORT STAFF**

## **ROUND TWO - HANDBOOK**

**Last Updated: 18 March 2013**

## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. ROUND TWO	4
3. ELIGIBILITY	5
4. APPLICATION GUIDANCE	7
5. PAYMENT	12
Appendix 1 - Qualifications and Levels	13
Appendix 2 - List of eligible non-accredited qualifications	15
Appendix 3 - Assessors' Report from Round One	17
Appendix 4 - Case Studies from Round One	19

# 1. INTRODUCTION

A central premise of the Green Paper, *Support and aspiration*, was to raise the quality of special educational needs (SEN) provision in schools. Amongst the proposals was a commitment to develop a national scholarship for support staff working with pupils with SEN and disability (SEN/D).

## What is the National Scholarship Fund for SEN Support Staff?

The aims of the scholarship are to:

- foster high expectations of those working to support disabled children and children with SEN in the classroom ('children with SEN' refers to those at School Action, School Action Plus and those with a statement of special education needs).
- strengthen knowledge and understanding of SEN/D, both in support staff and across the school.
- open up career opportunities for SEN support staff and enable them to have more control of their careers.
- share learning, knowledge and expertise across the school system.
- bring about a culture change to create expectations within the sector about the importance of scholarship throughout a support staff's career.

Applications for Round One of the National Scholarship Fund for Support Staff closed on 17 May 2012 and 274 successful scholarships for Support Staff to develop their practice in SEN were announced on 24 August 2012.

## 2. ROUND TWO

Applications for Round Two will open on **8 April 2013**.

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE READ THIS HANDBOOK BEFORE STARTING YOUR APPLICATION.**

The second round will focus on staff who already have already attained a full level 3 qualification, (see *Appendix 1: Qualifications and Levels*) or hold higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) status.

All applications must be online. If an applicant has a special need or disability and cannot complete the online form, they should contact DfE general enquiries on 0370 000 2288 to discuss.

Online application will be available from **8 April 2013**.

The deadline for all completed applications is **midnight on 25 April 2013**.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply for the National Scholarship Fund for SEN Support Staff, you must meet all the criteria below:

- Work in an eligible school/college in England
- Spend at least 50% of your contracted time supporting disabled children and children with SEN in learning based activities.
- Have achieved qualifications equivalent to, at least, full level 3 (see *Appendix 1: Qualifications and Levels*) or hold HLTA status

### Eligible Schools/Colleges

- Maintained schools (including special schools)
- Non-maintained special schools
- City technology colleges
- Academies
- Free schools
- Pupil referral units (PRUs)

### Eligible Activities

Support staff working with children with special educational needs or disability are free to choose the course or activity that is most suited to their needs. Similarly, they are free to choose a provider. There are some restrictions, however:

- The activity should deepen your knowledge of SEN/D and enhance your ability to provide effective support to the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN/D.
- The programme of study must be at Level 4 (see *Appendix 1 - Qualifications & Levels*) or above, **or**
- An approved non-accredited specialist training course. (see *Appendix 2 - List of eligible non-accredited qualifications*)

Funding is not available to support staff who have already started their course or have completed some modules. The National Scholarship Fund is only available to applicants starting *new* courses or activities between September 2013 and August 2014. This is because the Government wishes to incentivise support staff who would not otherwise engage in such studies.

### Support of school / college

Applicants must provide a supporting statement from their headteacher. This should provide evidence that the applicant has the support of their school and will be able to both complete the proposed activity and demonstrate impact.

## Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants will be required to agree to the following conditions before receiving their award.

If, within three years, they voluntarily cease to work with pupils with SEN/D, or fail to complete the funded activity, they must return all funding awarded to the Department.

They must agree to share the learning from the activity; including participating in follow up activities such focus groups or conferences.

## 4. APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Please read this guidance carefully before completing and submitting your application form.

### Important notes

- Applicants **must** apply online on the DfE website. Forms submitted via any other route or in any other format will not be accepted. If an applicant has a special need or disability and cannot complete the online form, they should contact DfE general enquiries on 0370 000 2288 to discuss.
- The deadline for all completed applications is **midnight on 25 April 2013**. Any applications received after this deadline will **not** be accepted even if delay is due to technical difficulties.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted and will not be returned.
- Applicants must ensure that they are eligible to apply and that their proposed activity meets the scholarship criteria. (See the 'Eligibility' page on the website)
- Applicants should ensure that spelling, punctuation and grammar are checked and of an appropriately high standard.
- Applications must adhere to the word count.
- Any application which includes plagiarised text will not be accepted: this includes text copied from course information (other than course titles, text copied from other applicants and multiple entries using the same text. In particular, every section of the scholarship proposal must be completed in the applicant's own words and with respect to the applicant's individual situation.
- Successful applicants will be notified by 22 August 2013. Please note that notification will be by email so please ensure you supply a correct email address.
- We are not able to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

### Completing the form

**Gather all your information before starting to fill in the form.**

***It is essential that you have all the information to hand because the application form cannot be saved and will need to be completed 'in one sitting'. It is recommended that you prepare your answers ready (e.g. in a Word document) to cut and paste into the form.***

You will also need to contact your headteacher to ensure that you have their support. They will need to provide you with written text to insert into Section 4 of the application form. It is recommended that you have their response ready (e.g. in a Word document) to cut and paste into the form.

## The Form

The form is divided into 4 sections:

- Personal details
- The activity
- The proposal
- Support from the school / college

All sections must be completed in full. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

### Part 1: Personal Details

In addition to standard contact details, we will also require:

- Your personal email address
- Your school email address

All mandatory fields must be completed accurately and in full. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

### Part 2: The Activity

- The formal, accurate title of the planned course or activity
- Name and address of the provider
- The course code (if applicable)
- Start and end dates of the course/activity
- Reference number
- Course fees (estimated if necessary)

The National Scholarship Fund is only available to applicants starting *new* courses or activities between September 2013 and August 2014.

This section requires factual information about the course or activity you wish to undertake. If the actual cost of the activity is not yet available then you should provide the *best estimate* based on consultation with the provider.

The award will be based on the figures (and timescales) provided in the form and cannot subsequently be changed.

Do not leave any part of this section blank. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

*Please note that the maximum award is 50% of the total cost up to a maximum of £2000. Current funding is only available until 31 March 2014.*

*Applicants should also note that due to the highly competitive nature of the scholarship they should not undertake any commitments based solely on the possible success of their application.*

### Part 3: The Proposal

This is the key part of your application. Before you begin to compose answers, please read through all the sections carefully to ensure that there are no overlaps, repetition, or gaps.

Only evidence included in each section will contribute to the score for that section

<b>1. What is the nature of the professional development activity you wish to undertake?</b> Max 300 words
<b>2. How will your school and pupils with SEN/D benefit from your proposed professional development activity?</b> Max 200 words
<b>3. How will you disseminate your learning beyond the school?</b> Max 200 words
<b>4. How will you evaluate the impact of implementing actions associated with the proposed activity?</b> Max 200 words
<b>5. How will completion of the proposed activity benefit your career and practice in SEN/D?</b> Max 200 words

#### Question 1: The activity

- Will the proposed activity strengthen your **knowledge and understanding** of special educational needs and disability? Will it enhance your ability to **provide effective support** to teaching and learning of disabled children and children with special educational needs?
- Is the proposed activity rigorous and academically challenging? How can you demonstrate this?
- What is the *purpose* of the activity i.e. have you identified the intended outcomes? What difference will undertaking the proposed activity make: in the classroom, for your colleagues and on the wider school system beyond your own place of work?

### Question 2: Impact on learners

Applicants are expected to consider how their pupils and the wider school will benefit from their having undertaken the proposed activity.

**NB** *In addition to evidence supplied in this section, applicants will also need to provide a supporting statement from their headteacher. This should provide evidence that the applicant has the support of their school and will be able to both complete the proposed activity and demonstrate impact.*

### Question 3: Impact beyond the school

A key aim of the scholarship fund is to share knowledge across the school system so that the impact of the activity extends beyond the applicant's school. Applicants must explain how this will be achieved.

### Question 4: Measuring the impact

Having identified intended outcomes in section 1, how will you measure that these have been achieved? Please ensure that the intended outcomes are evident in this section as it will be scored in isolation.

### Question 5: Impact on your career

In this section you should consider your career goals and plans. How will this activity help you progress your career and/or improve the quality of your practice in SEN/D?

## **Part 4: Support from the school / college**

Please note that this section must be completed in full on behalf of the headteacher. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

This should provide evidence that you have the support of your school and that your employer is satisfied that you will be able to both complete the proposed activity and demonstrate impact.

In preparing for this section, you will need to ask your headteacher to write a statement of support. They will also need to answer a number of questions in writing. You should retain these and use to complete this section of the form.

The statement of support should answer the following question in up to 200 words.

**How will this development activity contribute to your school's ability to meet the needs of pupils with SEN/D?**

Additional questions for the headteacher:

- Does the applicant have the full support of the school?
- Does this member of staff play a significant role (i.e. at least 50% of their contracted time) in supporting teaching for pupils with SEN/D in the school?
- Are you satisfied that Impact evaluation measures are in place?
- Will the applicant be assured of:
  - Appropriate protected time to access and complete the activity?
  - Appropriate access to pupils with SEN/D to meet the requirements of the activity?
  - Access to internal and external networks to disseminate learning?
  - Access to school/college or external data to support the scholarship activity (provided that this complies with legislation and school/college policies)?

## 5. PAYMENT

The value of the awards will vary according to the nature of the activity proposed. The maximum award is 50% of the total cost (i.e. course fees) of the proposed activity, up to a ceiling of £2000. The current funding commitment is only until 31 March 2014.

Applicants should also note that due to the highly competitive nature of the scholarship they should not undertake any commitments based solely on the possible success of their application.

The scholarship funding can only be used for the activity specified in the application form. Applicants must cover 50% of the course fees, and will also be responsible for any additional costs such as travel and accommodation.

### Payment Process

Applicants are required to provide factual information about the course or activity in the application form. If the actual cost of the activity is not yet available then the applicant must provide the *best estimate* based on consultation with the provider.

Please note: The award will be based on the figure (and timescales) provided in the form. These cannot subsequently be changed.

Successful applicants will be provided with a sponsorship letter for presentation on enrolment.

Payments will be made directly to the provider of the course/activity. The provider will be issued a grant agreement detailing the scholars who will be supported, their course/activity and the amount of their awards. Once the provider returns a signed copy of the grant agreement, the Teaching Agency (TA) will release the funds.

## Appendix 1 - Qualifications and Levels

### Full Level 3 Qualifications

In order to be eligible for the SEN Support Scholarship applicants must hold a *full level 3 qualification*.

### What are 'levels'? What does full level 3 mean?

Different qualifications are grouped together into various 'levels'. This can help you (and employers) see how qualifications compare and how one type can lead on to another.

Different qualification 'levels' are contained in three qualification 'frameworks':

- National Qualifications Framework
- Qualifications and Credit Framework (the new framework for vocational, or work-related qualifications)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

The frameworks group together qualifications that place similar demands on you as a learner. However, within any one level, qualifications can cover a wide mix of subjects, and take different amounts of time to complete.

The frameworks can also help you see how one type of qualification can lead on to other, higher levels of qualifications.

**National Qualifications Framework (NQF):** sets out the level at which a qualification can be recognised in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

**Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF):** contains vocational (or work-related) qualifications, available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These qualifications are made up of units that are worth credits. You can study units at your own pace and build these up to full qualifications of different sizes over time.

**Framework for Higher Education Qualifications:** has been designed by the higher education sector, and describes all the main higher education qualifications. It applies to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards granted by a university or higher education college (apart from honorary degrees and higher doctorates).

For the purposes of the scholarship, applicants must have achieved a pass grade in one of the following qualifications.

- Level 3 Diploma in specialist support for teaching and learning in schools
- Level 3 Certificate in supporting teaching and learning in schools
- NVQ 3 in supporting teaching and learning in schools
- NVQ 3 for Teaching Assistants
- Level 3 Certificate for Teaching Assistants
- NVQ 3 in Early Years Care and Education
- Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce
- NVQ 3 Childcare and Education
- NVQ 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development

Or any of the following:

- 2 or more A levels (A2) (Grade E or above)
- 4 or more AS levels (Grade E or above)
- An NVQ 3
- A Level 3 Advanced Craft
- A National Certificate
- A National Diploma
- A GNVQ Advanced
- An AVCE Double Award
- An Access to Higher Education Course
- 4 Scottish Highers
- SVQ Level 3
- 4 Irish leaving certificates (Higher)
- Irish Level 5 Certificate
- NARIC certified non-UK equivalent qualification (to be verified by the headteacher)

## Level 4 Qualifications

In order for an application to the SEN Support Scholarship to be accepted it must be for a programme of study at Level 4 or above, or an approved non-accredited specialist training course (please refer to list of approved courses).

Level 4 qualifications include Certificates of Higher Education such as BTEC, Professional Diplomas Certificates and Awards, HNCs, and NVQ 4.

For more information about qualifications and levels please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>

## Appendix 2 - List of eligible non-accredited qualifications

Course Number	Name/title of course	Name of training provider/sponsor
1	Supporting the learning needs of young people LAC and SEN with Attachment deficits	National Centre for English Residential Child Care
2	Intervener training (for working with deafblind children)	SENSE
3	Strategies for supporting children with autism based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis	Beyond Autism
4	The Inclusion Assistant	Alliance for Inclusive education
5	Communication, Language and Reading for children with Down's syndrome aged 2-11 years	The Down's Syndrome Association
6	Supporting social development and behaviour for children and young people with Down's syndrome	The Down's Syndrome Association
7	Support and Practice in Early Years Education for Children with Down's Syndrome	The Down's Syndrome Association
8	Support and Practice in Primary Education for Children with Down's Syndrome	The Down's Syndrome Association
9	Support and Practice in secondary education for children and young people with Down's syndrome	The Down's Syndrome Association
10	Access and Success - practical workshop for teachers working with pupils with Down's syndrome	The Down's Syndrome Association
11	Using Numicon to Support Understanding and Use of Number for Children with Down's Syndrome	The Down's Syndrome Association
12	Face to Face 2 days MSI	Sense specialist and a local NATSIP local authority partner
13	RCE: 7 Day Course: A Practical approach to supporting access to learning for children and young people with deaf/blindness/MSI	Sense/NatSIP
14	Intervener MSI 5 days non-accredited	Sense
15	Working with deaf children from diverse families	The Ear Foundation
16	Deaf Teenagers: Social & Emotional Issues	The Ear Foundation
17	Developing listening & language through classroom routines	The Ear Foundation

Course Number	Name/title of course	Name of training provider/sponsor
18	Assessing functional listening	The Ear Foundation
19	Behaviour Management: Deaf children under 11	The Ear Foundation
20	Complex needs and Deafness: for staff in Special education settings	The Ear Foundation
21	Deaf children in the Early Years: for Teaching assistants	The Ear Foundation
22	Deaf children at Primary School: for Teaching assistants	The Ear Foundation
23	Deaf children at Secondary School: for Teaching assistants	The Ear Foundation
24	Understanding visual impairment in children and young people	RNIB
25	Pathways to Literacy	Ewing Foundation
26	Cerebral palsy in the classroom: An introduction to the causes and effects of cerebral palsy on the child and adolescent, common learning difficulties and strategies to support classroom learning	Scope
27	Neurologically based behaviours: An introduction to the way that behaviours are compelled within the brain and strategies to support behaviour managements based on environmental changes	Scope
28	Working with families of disabled children: An introduction to the journey families undertake with their disabled child and ways to support them and work together	Scope
29	Multi-sensory learning: Ideas for working with children operating within P Scales 1-3	Scope
30	AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) in the classroom: Practical ideas to teach and include children who use alternative methods of communication.	Scope
31	Speech Language and Communication Framework (follow link to individual courses)	ICAN and The Communication Trust

## Appendix 3 - Assessors' Report from Round One

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the performance of applicants for the National Scholarship Fund for SEN Support Staff 2012. This report has been compiled following the completion of the first round of scholarships and includes feedback from assessors and from the expert panel. All applications were assessed and verified using a criterion-based scoring methodology. The assessment process, including scoring and internal verification, was scrutinised and ratified by an expert panel of eminent educationalists.

The following comments are intended to help SEN Support Staff to complete applications by having a better understanding of what is expected of them. The feedback within this report would also be valuable to employers and providers in understanding what their staff/students/prospective students need to do to secure scholarship funding.

The standard of applications was generally very high, but some common difficulties/issues emerged from the feedback received. These have been summarised below and is followed by analysis of each section.

### Successful applicants:

- Completed all sections of the application form fully, using the maximum word count.
- Ensured that the nature of the activity was very clear.
- Were explicit about how the programme would help strengthen **knowledge and understanding** of special educational needs and disability and enhance ability to **provide effective support** to teaching and learning of disabled children and children with special educational needs.
- Explained how the need for development had been identified and related this to, for example, the school improvement plan or performance review.
- Were not only aware of existing networks, but clearly described their own role in them and how they would use them to share their learning.
- Had given careful consideration to desired outcomes and impact measures for the pupils/school.
- Had developed or were developing strategies to ensure the benefit/impact of the proposed activity.
- Provided original responses that related to the individual's own circumstances, the school and its pupils.

### Common Errors

- Failure to read the question.
- Failure to complete all sections.

- Providing very short/minimal responses that lacked specific detail/evidence.
- Taking insufficient care with spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Using generic, plagiarised or 'pasted' text.
- Exceeding the word count.

## Section Feedback

Section	Assessor Feedback
Please provide a brief description of the activity you would like the scholarship fund to support, demonstrating its academic and intellectual rigour. Please draw upon your most significant prior professional achievements as appropriate.	<p>The aspect of this section that applicants clearly found the most challenging was to demonstrate how the proposed activity would specifically improve their knowledge and understanding of special educational needs and disability and enhance ability to provide effective support to teaching and learning of disabled children and children with special educational needs.</p> <p>Some applicants also failed to clearly identify the nature and level of the proposed activity and/or to explain and evidence the required academic and intellectual rigour.</p>
Please describe how their school/pupils will benefit from your proposed scholarship activity.	Applicants who scored the most highly in this section used their word allowance judiciously to link their application to work undertaken with their school/pupils and to clearly demonstrate that strategies were in place to incorporate the outcomes in their work.
What will be the impact for you and your career?	<p>Successful applicants specifically identified how the proposed activity would benefit their career</p> <p>The best applications also clearly explained how the proposed activity would impact on the quality of practice in the priority area.</p>
How will your learning impact beyond your own school?	<p>Many applicants found this section challenging and a significant number of responses to this question were very brief.</p> <p>Assessors were not only looking for evidence that the proposed activity had the <i>potential</i> to have an impact beyond the applicant's school, but also that strategies were in place to share knowledge and effective practice outside the applicant's school.</p>
How will you provide evidence of impact following the completion of your scholarship activity?	<p>Assessors reported that this was generally the weakest section. Some applicants had given very little consideration to evaluating the impact of the proposed activity. The greatest challenge, however, was for applicants to clearly identify intended outcomes and impact measures in relation to school, pupils and beyond.</p> <p>Many applications failed to identify impact measures, and evidence about impact was very process-based rather than offering a demonstration of how the activity would impact on practice/outcomes.</p>

## Appendix 4 - Case Studies from Round One

### Applicant: MA Autism (Part Time)

The professional development activity I wish to undertake is the MA in Autism. The main purpose of undertaking this activity would be to further develop, enhance and strengthen my knowledge of Autism. I work in a Special Needs Secondary School where 80% of the pupils have a Statement of ASD many with additional special needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. I am passionate about my work and as such have recently successfully completed NVQ Level 3 in Autism. I was commended throughout my coursework on my understanding and perception of the syndrome. I feel that I would be able to develop my knowledge and skills further by completing the MA in Autism as it will deepen my understanding of the spectrum disorder through learning more about the causes, social implications and impact on the family of those with ASD. From a school prospective I am a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team through my enhanced post of Dyslexia and Dyscalculia co-ordinator, for which I am currently studying NVQ Level 3 in Dyslexia and Dyscalculia. I feel that through the learning from the MA I will be able to model best practice and disseminate this to my colleagues whilst linking my heightened knowledge of Autism with my knowledge of these other conditions. I recently supported the Deputy Head in the delivery of two NVQ Level 3 in Autism courses to 35 members of staff within our school. I also marked and second marked the course work which was externally moderated. The external moderator was impressed that the school had developed me to such a level. An outcome of completing the MA would be that I could further disseminate my knowledge through holding additional NVQ courses and training sessions for staff from other settings.

### Applicant: Foundation Degree SEN

I hope to raise the quality of my support to students and teachers in the classroom, by adapting my teaching methods specifically to the SEN/D's of pupils, enabling them to actively engage in and access the curriculum effectively and successfully, ultimately raising self-esteem and self-belief, motivating them into reaching their individual potentials. I'd assist my colleagues to provide a better quality of support by passing on my acquired knowledge and understanding of underlying issues that can block effective teaching and learning, overcoming these by sharing best practice. I'd reinforce my recently learnt skills with plausible discussions and arguments with reference to modules researched and explored, enthusing and motivating colleagues and providing in-house presentations and training, raising their awareness, standards and confidence. I'd be more knowledgeable and confident when communicating and collaborating with colleagues and other professionals from outside agencies. By increasing consciousness of all aspects that affect a child's learning and development with improved dialogue with other professionals responsible for their well-being, leading to a more holistic approach, resulting in more suitable tailored support and customised teaching of our SEN/D pupils. This will have a positive impact on pupil's overall school experience, promoting a happier and more favourable learning environment.

Applicant: Special Educational Needs Postgraduate Diploma

The theory of Ecological Systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) proposes that various systems; family, culture, school and the community each play an interactive role during child development. This approach is essential to my practice as LSA. Sharing my knowledge of SEN by communicating with teachers, pastoral, leadership teams, and external agencies such as “Kids Company”, and Speech and Language Services can tackle whole school attainment, behaviour and child-protection concerns; having a direct positive effect on students’ engagement in the community. Sharing knowledge with multi-disciplinary practitioners promotes a continuous learning process in our roles which only seeks to raise standards of practice across contexts. I communicate with parents’ regularly as a joint registration advisor. Disseminating my learning promotes a dual approach between school and home, encouraging parents’ active involvement in their child’s development. Increasing parents’ knowledge and understanding of their child’s needs can improve quality of life at home. I hope to disseminate my learning to aid students’ progress and development out of school. Sharing my knowledge of useful support strategies with students encourages meta-learning. By motivating students to reflect on learning processes that work best for them, they can implement such techniques in their transition to college, employment and everyday life.



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