Subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) funding manual

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

September 2017
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Introduction

1. This manual is a guide to requesting National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) 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:

   - physics
   - mathematics
   - chemistry
   - biology
   - design & technology
   - languages
   - computing
   - geography
   - English, 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 paragraph 11

   - be offered to participants who, without SKE, would be highly unlikely to meet the subject knowledge requirements of the Teachers’ Standards by the time his or her ITT course is complete

   - end before the participant completes his or her ITT course and before a recommendation for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is made
be no longer than the minimum duration that is 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 that 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.

Course durations that are eligible for funding are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme length category</th>
<th>Number of claimable weeks for a full-time equivalent programme and the number of study hours a participant will need to complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>8 weeks (200 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 weeks (300 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>16 weeks (400 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 weeks (500 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
<td>24 weeks (600 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 weeks (700 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. 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
- be undertaken by participants on a part-time or full-time basis

8. SKE funding will not be paid for SKE courses relating to ITT cohorts that start before the relevant UCAS application process. 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.

9. 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 or not the conditions of the ITT offer have been met.

10. 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

11. 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.

12. 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 will continue at current levels when making the decision to defer their ITT.

13. NCTL reserve the right to request evidence of deferred conditional offers 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

14. SKE programme funding can only be claimed for one SKE course (with the exception of MFL, see paragraph 49) within the academic year. Any exception to this will need to be approved by the SKE team prior to funding being agreed.

15. To be eligible for SKE programme funding, a participant must have accepted a conditional offer of a place on an eligible ITT course (which may be a deferred ITT place as outlined in paragraph 11). The completion of an NCTL-funded SKE course must be a specific condition of their conditional ITT offer, and it is the responsibility of the SKE provider to verify the evidence produced and deem what is acceptable proof. NCTL reserves the right to request evidence of SKE being made a specific condition of an ITT offer for monitoring and assurance purposes.

16. NCTL do not specify that all ITT course entry requirements must be met before a SKE programme starts, other than the conditional offer of an ITT place. Any separate entry requirements for a SKE programme specified by the SD lead school/ITT provider are a separate matter and must be agreed with the participant.
17. SKE funding can only be claimed for participants who have accepted a conditional offer of a place on a NCTL funded UNDERGRADUATE ITT route with QTS.

**Postgraduate ITT courses**

18. SKE funding can only be claimed for participants who are eligible for a postgraduate ITT bursary, as indicated in the ITT Bursary guide. Please see section 3 (a) of the Training Bursary guide for more information on eligibility.

19. Participants with a 3rd class degree are not eligible for a SKE bursary; however, the programme costs can be claimed by the SKE provider 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.

**Overseas Participants**

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

**SKE Training Bursary Funding**

**Eligibility**

21. To be eligible for a SKE training bursary, participants must satisfy the SKE programme costs eligibility criteria as detailed in paragraphs 14 to 16, and the training bursary criteria set out in 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.

22. 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 NCTL funding and should

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1 Bursary funding is available for eligible participants on designated undergraduate courses in secondary maths and physics that lead to QTS; participants on opt-in secondary undergraduate physics, computing, maths or modern foreign language courses that lead to QTS. Participants on a four-year undergraduate course that leads to the award of QTS and that also leads to the award of a Master’s degree, will also be eligible.
follow the arrangements set out in paragraph 32. Participants should receive their bursary award phased over the course of the SKE programme in monthly instalments in line with ITT bursary guidance.

23. A SKE training bursary can only be claimed for one SKE course (with the exception of MFL, see paragraph 49) 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 responsibility of the SKE provider to inform NCTL of this, so bursary payments can be curtailed.

24. 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 process that all SD lead schools/ITT providers are required to complete. Please see paragraphs 55 to 60 for more information.

25. Participants with a 3rd class degree are not eligible for a SKE bursary; however, the programme costs can be claimed by the SKE provider for these participants.

Teach First

26. Providers may start claiming SKE bursary funding for Teach First candidates 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 28).

Oversea Participants

27. 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

28. 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 bursary\(^2\). 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

\(^2\) If the participant is undertaking SKE in Design & Technology in parallel with their ITT course and their degree class is lower than 2:1, then the SKE bursary will be paid in this instance, as the participant will not receive an ITT bursary for these subjects.
requested and detailed on the claim form, must be reduced to reflect the duration of any parallel delivery.

**Funding arrangements for SKE**

29. Funding for SKE is requested from NCTL using the SKE claim form.

30. 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 annex A must be signed by the Accounting Officer. The form only needs completing once and should be returned to the SKE team at [ske.inbox@education.gov.uk](mailto:ske.inbox@education.gov.uk). By completing this document, the SD lead school/ITT provider agrees to the [grant terms and conditions](#) for receiving SKE funding.

31. SD lead schools/ITT providers that commission a SKE provider to deliver a SKE programme may nominate them to claim SKE funding, if the SKE provider is also a SD lead school/ITT provider. This can be done by indicating on the SKE claim form that the SKE provider should receive the funding.

32. 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 NCTL on the SKE provider’s behalf. The SD lead school/ITT provider must retain the invoice from the SKE provider for audit purposes (see paragraphs 55 to 60 for further information). Please see paragraphs 45 to 47 for further guidance on working with third party providers.

**Allocation of SKE funding**

33. 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, reviewed and may be adjusted throughout the year.

34. 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 claim form received, will be managed dynamically to ensure flexibility for both SKE providers and for NCTL
35. NCTL reserve the right to hold back SKE units for subjects that are harder to recruit to. This may mean declining requests for SKE units in a particular subject, in order to promote extra SKE for subjects which are harder to fill. NCTL 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.

36. In some cases, the SKE provider 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 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 NCTL-funded SKE.

**SKE funding rates**

37. 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.

38. 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.

- The participant bursary funding is £200 per week for all new participants.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme band</th>
<th>Programme duration and the hours of study</th>
<th>Maximum programme funding *</th>
<th>Training bursary funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 weeks (200 hrs)</td>
<td>£1,600</td>
<td>£1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 weeks (300 hrs)</td>
<td>£2,400</td>
<td>£2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 weeks (400 hrs)</td>
<td>£3,200</td>
<td>£3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 weeks (500 hrs)</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 weeks (600 hrs)</td>
<td>£4,800</td>
<td>£4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 weeks (700 hrs)</td>
<td>£5,600</td>
<td>£5,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
40. It is a condition of SKE programme funding that participants should not be charged for undertaking the programme. This is to prevent ITT recruitment being adversely affected.

**How to claim SKE funding**

**Within the original allocation**

41. The process for completing the 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 before submitting it.

   iii. The cost of each SKE programme and SKE training bursary included in the claim form should be known before submitting the request.

42. The process for submitting claims is explained below:

   i. From 2 October 2017, NCTL 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 should be password-protected and sent, via secure mail, to [ske.inbox@education.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:ske.inbox@education.gov.uk). Incomplete claim forms will not be processed and SD lead schools/ITT providers will be asked to resubmit them.

   iii. SD lead schools/ITT providers must have signed the GOL and returned it to NCTL before any funding can be released.

   iv. The SKE team will contact providers only if their claim has been unsuccessful.

   v. In the event of repeated inaccurate data quality relating to claim forms which may result in the incorrect funding being paid, NCTL reserve the right
to make a deduction from the total programme cost per individual, which takes account of the additional resources needed to deal with the issue.

vi. NCTL 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.

**Requesting extra funding**

43. Requests for extra funding must be supported by evidence of recruitment, e.g. claim forms relating to individuals who have been enrolled onto SKE courses.

44. 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 in the subject line of the email 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**

45. If you are an ITT provider or lead school, you may consider procuring the services of a third party to deliver your requirements. You must ensure you have a signed Grant Funding Agreement in place prior to procuring the services.

46. You must ensure that, in all cases where third party services are procured:

   - you have carried out due diligence checks, this should include ensuring that for the purposes of HMRC all necessary taxes and VAT is being paid by the third party,
   - an appropriate written agreement is put in place between the ITT provider/school and signed by both parties, which clearly outlines:
     i. the recipient of the funding,
     ii. the body responsible for delivering SKE,
     iii. assurances that the funding will be used solely for delivery of SKE,
     iv. any timeframes for payment of funds, and;
     v. details of any fees for administrative services, if appropriate.

47. Any third party activity procured by ITT providers/lead schools under the grant agreement will be subject to audit by the DfE and must be included in the annual grant return.
SKE Funding Payment Process

48. The payment process is explained below.

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

ii. SKE bursary funding is paid one month in arrears. NCTL aims to pay SKE training bursary funding from the next NCTL 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.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

49. NCTL fund two SKE courses in modern foreign languages (MFL) 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.

50. 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.

51. The MFL 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

52. 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 MFL 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

53. 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.

54. 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 audit of SKE

55. The data submitted in the SKE claim form will form part of a regular analysis and review by NCTL. NCTL 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.

56. Recipients of SKE funding may be subject to audit during the year and must, therefore, retain all invoices corresponding to the SKE claim form. Recipients of SKE funding may also be asked to submit relevant documentation to NCTL at the end of the year.

57. NCTL will collect information from SKE providers in early October 2017 relating to funding for participants registered on eligible SKE programmes between 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017, to calculate an indicative clawback adjustment which will take place in late 2017. The information provided in the Audit Grant Return will formulate a final clawback adjustment to be recovered in early 2018.

58. NCTL reserve the right to investigate variances between the forecast and final adjustment based on the information submitted by providers.
59. An Audit Grant Report (AGR) will be sent out by NCTL to all recipients of ITT-related funding at the end of the 2016 to 2017 academic year, to reconcile funding from NCTL and actual spend. SKE funding will be incorporated within this return. Funding will be recovered in full for any participant that did not start the SKE programme. Providers in receipt of any SKE funding will be required to report directly to NCTL in relation to unspent funding when requested.

60. The recipient must complete the relevant section(s) of the AGR, arrange for the AGR and Annex G of the GOL to be signed by a registered independent external auditor and submit to NCTL by 31 December 2017, to financial.monitoring@education.gov.uk.