

Applicant Guidance - Skills and Training Fund for Medium Sized Businesses

Help and Guidance

This guidance is intended for businesses with between 100 and 250 employees who wish to apply to the Skills and Training Fund for medium sized businesses. The guidance is intended to help you to complete an application, understand what's fundable and give you a clear idea of the information you need to supply.

If you would like someone to help you with your application, test out your ideas, or review your form, your local CITB Adviser will be happy to help. You can find your Adviser on our website: www.citb.co.uk/about-citb/contact-citb/

Section 1 Aims of the Skills and Training Fund

The aim of the Skills and Training fund is to provide direct investment to medium sized businesses. It supports a wide range of training or activity that helps to develop either **construction skills** or **management skills**.

The aim of the fund is to support the cost of introducing **new training** to help businesses improve.

Below are some of the things the fund will support businesses to do:

- Use training to improve the business, address challenges or take up new opportunities
- Introduce new ways of developing the workforce
- Introduce new skills into the business, or address skills gaps

Section 2

Available funding and who can apply

Any **CITB levy-registered** employer can apply for this fund. You must be up to date with your levy payments.

Your funding entitlement is based on the number of staff you employ (PAYE). Entitlements below are per year and are normally paid in upfront quarterly instalments. You can apply directly, and/or via a Training Group, but the combined total amount cannot exceed your entitlement shown below:

- 100 - 149 up to £15,000
- 150 - 199 up to £20,000
- 200 - 249 up to £25,000

Businesses that are part of a larger ultimate holding company but operate as independent businesses (and pay their own individual levy bill under a separate levy registration number) can apply to the fund independently. Funding of this type of business is at CITB's discretion. Establishments/sub-offices cannot apply to the fund.

You can apply for funding every year, providing that you have completed any previously funded programmes and submitted the necessary information about the completed programme. This is set out in the Terms of Funding on the CITB website.

Projects are typically for one year, but if you wish to apply for a longer-term programme (up to three years) you may do so. In this case your entitlement remains the same (i.e. the same amount per year) and is paid annually. We do allow changes to long-term programmes, to reflect changes in business circumstances, but you should be clear from the outset that the programme you are putting in place will meet your needs over the period for which you are applying.

You can use the funding to support workers in your supply chain (Net CIS). However, if these individuals work for levy-registered businesses they too can apply directly for Skills and Training Fund, so you may get more benefit if they access the fund themselves.

Section 3 Fundable activity

You can apply for a wide range of training, providing that it is either **construction-specific** or to develop **management, leadership or supervisory skills** (see section 4), this includes:

- CITB standardised training (grant eligible), if it is new to the business and forms part of a larger training programme
- Other training, including 'in house' training delivered by an appropriately qualified trainer

The fund also supports other types of 'people development activity':

- Activity specifically aimed at developing skills or knowledge e.g. mentoring
- Development of training resources designed to meet very specific business needs
- Help for businesses to understand and plan their training needs (through accredited business development, not consultancy)

All funded activity must be new to the business. The list below is not exhaustive; other skills development can be considered.

Not fundable:

- Consultancy fees
- Items of capital expenditure (physical things e.g. buildings, IT, equipment)
- Training awards, sponsorship, celebration events
- Purchasing of software and licenses
- Business accreditations or certification e.g. ISO9001
- Part-time, full-time posts
- Apprenticeships (to see info on CITB funding for this [click here](#))
- Educational activities and promoting careers
- Travel and subsistence

Fundable:

- Training listed in the CITB Grant scheme (*where this is new to the business and forms part of a larger training programme*)
- Construction or management training outside of the CITB Grant scheme – either accredited or where quality can be demonstrated
- Business development accreditation focused on people/ skills development e.g. IIP (excluding renewal)
- Coaching and mentoring delivered by an accredited coach or mentor
- On-line or distance learning

Development of learning resources for the individual company, that are not already available in the market, including:

- Training course content
- Development of a subject specific learning program
- Training videos or online courses (that make use of existing platforms)
- Company specific guidance or manuals for staff (where the purpose is the development of knowledge or skills)

Section 4

Requirement for funded activity to be either 'construction-specific' or management and leadership

This fund supports training that is either:

- a) construction-specific
- or
- b) management training (for those in leadership, supervisory or management roles).

Please check that everything included in your application fits under one of the definitions below.

Construction Training

Construction-specific training must focus on the skills needed on site, or in other construction operations. These are the skills needed by people whose roles are focused on construction activity, rather than the more general day to day running of the business. A list of construction activities can be viewed here:

<https://www.citb.co.uk/levy-grants-and-funding/citb-levy/how-to-register/who-should-register/>

We will consider funding activity outside of this list where a strong case can be made that the proposed training has a direct link to construction operations. Questions to consider include:

- Are the skills being developed to perform a construction activity?
- Are they essential to deliver a construction activity?
- Are the skills being developed for someone in a construction-specific role (trade or profession)?
- Is the activity on site? Or are workers on site directly dependent on it to do their jobs?

General business functions such as administration, sales, HR, accountancy, finance or payroll are not considered to be construction-specific activities (and would not be funded).

Management and Leadership Training

This means training that is focused on developing skills to lead, manage or supervise. People who receive this training must be either:

- Employees whose *main* job is leader, manager or supervisor
- Employees who are being developed to be leaders, managers or supervisors

Management training does not need to be construction-specific, nor does it need to lead to a qualification, it can be any type of management training or skills development required to direct people and control resources, not the specific subject matter. Proposals can include programmes that seek to tackle specific challenges or change company culture, through developing new skills or knowledge amongst managers, leaders or supervisors. The learning must focus on the management skills, not the subject matter.

Management training must focus on improving an individual's skills as a leader and manager, so that they can decide what needs doing and direct people to do it. It is not about learning to do the task that they are managing. For example, financial management is about understanding how to manage budgets and oversee financial plans for the company, not learning how to use the accounting system (this would not be funded).

Similarly, there is a difference between coaching and mentoring, which helps people to develop the skills to make management decisions and become better leaders whereas consultancy is about receiving business advice about how to improve the organisation or provide a solution to a specific problem (consultancy would not be funded).

CITBs definition of Management and Leadership includes activity to develop people under the following themes:

- Providing Direction
- Facilitating Innovation & Change
- Working with People
- Using Resources
- Achieving Results
- Managing Self

CITBs Leadership and Management Framework can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.citb.co.uk/standards-and-delivering-training/training-standards/nvg-svq-standards/management-and-leadership-competence-frameworks/>

Section 5

Application Form – step by step

The application form is in four sections:

1. Tab 1 – Application details: facts about your business and eligibility
2. Tab 2 – Five questions about the programme of activity you are proposing
3. Tab 3 - A table set out to capture each non-grant eligible deliverable (a deliverable is a training course or other activity)
4. Tab 4 - A table set out to capture grant-eligible training

Tab 1: Application Details

The front page is for you to provide information which allows us to check how much funding you are eligible to receive (see section 2). Please complete all the boxes, except those which are grey and will auto-populate (e.g. total costs from the two tables). You will need your levy registration details, bank details and an up to date number of people who are directly employed by the business. Your levy registration details can be found at the top of any letters from CITB or in the CITB Portal.

Tab 2: Describing the programme of activity

In this section you are asked to describe the programme of activity you wish to deliver by answering five simple questions. Overall, you should make sure that your answers summarise where you are now, where you hoping to get to and how you will know it has worked. There is no minimum or maximum word count, you just need to provide enough detail to cover the points set out in the guidance below. If the application is missing essential detail, you may be invited to resubmit.

Individual questions:

1. What is the business challenge or opportunity that you would like to address?

In this section you need to describe the business objective. It must be an objective that can be achieved through improving management or construction skills in the business. It might be something that you need to resolve (e.g. reducing defects, shortage of site managers) or a business development goal (e.g. introducing technology or improving the skills of your middle managers).

Please be as specific as you can about the problem or challenge you are trying to solve and how better skills/training will help with this.

2. Why have you selected **this** programme of activity?

Describe the programme and give an overview of how it will be delivered. You should provide a clear description of all the main deliverables. This is especially important where the deliverable (training or activity) is not widely recognised. In this case, information that describes and quantifies what is being paid for is important e.g. how many times the training/activity will be delivered, number of hours, which roles in the business will benefit. This information will help to make it clear exactly what is being funded and help to justify the cost.

Please say why you have chosen this training or approach in preference to anything else. Describe the benefits of the approach and why you think it is the best way to achieve the business goals set out in the first question

3. How does it address the specific challenge or opportunity described above?

There should be a clear link between the skills and knowledge the training will provide, and the goals set out in question one. For example:

If it will help you to take up an opportunity and improve your business, say how the training will help you to do that?

If you are trying to solve a problem, how does it relate to staff having better skills and knowledge, or being able to perform different activities?

4. How will you measure the success of this programme?

You need to show two things: that the programme you propose will make a big difference to your business and that you have identified the right success measures.

Please explain what success measures you will use to identify how well the programme of activity has contributed to the goals described in question one. e.g. goals relating to efficiency could be measured in reducing wasted time or resources, goals to improve quality could be about there being fewer defects recorded. You may have measures or KPIs in place already, so it may not be necessary to introduce new ones. You should also use this section to set out how big an impact the programme training is likely to have on your business.

You need to say how much difference it will make to the business. Strong bids will make a good case that the funding will result in significant business improvement.

5. How is this programme different from any training or activity that has been previously undertaken by your business?

The programme of training/activity described must be completely new to your business. You should not include training/ activity that you have done before, unless you are making significant changes to how it's delivered, or it is benefitting a completely different group of people (i.e. different roles). You should explain how the programme is innovative for your business and how it differs from the what you have done before.

New training could relate to:

Driving improvements to how the business runs, is managed or how quality is assured

Ensuring that the business has enough skilled team members to implement new practices or technologies

Introducing new training methods to fit the needs of a developing business, for example because new contracts require new skillsets

Tab 3: Table of non-grant eligible training or activities

Complete the boxes in the table for all courses, activities or other deliverables. Please double check to make sure that you have only included training or activity that is supported by this fund (set out in section 4).

Do not include any grant eligible training in this table (there is a separate table for this).

Please note the following:

- For each training or activity, make sure that you have provided an adequate description of what's being delivered (some of the description may be included in your answer to question 2).
- Start date and end date should be provided. These are indicative. We recognise that things change, and you may need to alter timings, but please include them. Funding cannot support training or qualification that have already started so please only include your future plans.
- In the quality section, you should refer to both the quality of the training/ deliverable and the provider. Applications that do not provide good evidence of quality will not be approved.
- How you evidence quality will differ, depending on the training or activity. For training courses this would normally mean professional standards or accreditation. If the course you want to deliver does not have a standard or accreditation, you need to make a strong case that explains how you know what is being delivered is good quality and has the right content.
- You need to say how you know that training will be delivered to a high standard. For providers, they should be a CITB ATO (Approved Training Organisation) or have a good OFSTED, SQA, or similar rating. In exceptional circumstances we will accept alternatives to formal accreditation, but you will need to provide strong evidence that they deliver to a high standard. This could include things like formal evaluation/ feedback, we will not accept word of mouth recommendation or assurances by the provider themselves.
- You need to provide evidence that each deliverable offers good value for money. Applications that do not provide good evidence of value for money will not be approved.
- This requires that there is a clear description of what is being delivered and that it can be easily quantified (e.g. how many people/ how long).

- You should explain how you know that the cost is appropriate, evidenced by quotes or other information about market rate. If the cost of what is being delivered is unusually high, please provide a clear justification e.g. location, specialism, need for a bespoke product. Having used the training company before is not an acceptable response.

Tab 4: Grant Eligible Training Table

Please complete this table with any new grant eligible training that you wish to include in your proposal.

Grant eligible training is CITB standardised training, normally supported by applying for a grant payment upon completion (rather than funding). There should be a clear link to the wider programme of activity.

- Complete the boxes in the table for every course
- You need to add the “GET reference” for each grant eligible training course, found in column B of the GET code list (tab 5 on the application form).
- When you add the GET reference the course title and grant tier will auto populate. Qualifications e.g. SVQ, NVQ, HND can be included and reference numbers for these have been provided (in the yellow lines at the top of the GET list). In this case you will also need to add the specific course title and qualification level in column F as they will not auto populate. A list of the courses we support can be found on our website [click here](#)
- Some of the cells in the table have been formatted to help you avoid mistakes (if you enter incorrect information you will get an error message e.g. it won't allow you to add a levy registration number with the wrong number of digits). The table also provides a running total of costs on the Application Details tab.

Please note the grant eligible amount for these courses will be deducted from the fundable amount and you will need to claim this separately via the CTIB Portal (unless you are working with an Approved Training Provider (ATO) in which case they will process the claim on your behalf). Any grant eligible training funded through Skills and Training Fund will count towards your 'grant cap' (the number of grant claims your company can make in a year).

Section 6 Criteria

Criteria are used to assess your answers and determine what programmes of activity, or separate deliverables, can be funded. The highest scoring bids each month are awarded funding.

The assessment criteria are productivity (improving the business), innovation (new to the business), impact, quality and value for money.

Section 5 of this guidance takes you through the application form and sets out what information you will need to provide to develop a strong application.

Section 7 Application, assessment and approval

Please submit your application form via email to skills.training@citb.co.uk. Applications will only be accepted when received directly from the business (not from Training Providers or other intermediaries).

Please consider your application carefully before submission and ensure the training you are asking for is as accurate as possible to reflect your plans for the year ahead. Amendments to your training project (known as a variation) are permitted if there are exceptional circumstances, we strongly discourage this within the first 3 months of an application being approved and recommend only 1 change during the funded period. All variations must be approved in advance of any changes being made by contacting skills.training@citb.co.uk

Assessment rounds take place at the end of every month and decisions will normally be communicated to you around the middle of the following month. If we have not been able to approve your application, you will be notified and may be asked to resubmit. This means that the application has not been declined outright, but key information is missing, or you have not fully met one of the criteria. Your CITB Adviser can help to explain what's needed and why (although a resubmission does not guarantee funding).

We cannot currently provide funding for all applications that meet the criteria, so only the strongest will be approved. Applications are scored and the highest scoring are awarded funding in line with the available budget each month.

Terms of Funding and Terms of Bidding can be viewed on the CITB web site (Skills & Training Fund pages). Please make sure you read the terms and conditions, particularly in relation to the steps we take if you cannot evidence delivery of the activity you have been funded for.

Funding is paid up-front, by quarter. When you provide us with evidence that shows that you have delivered the activity you were funded for in quarter one, you will be paid the next quarter. Applicants are subject to credit checks and those deemed very high risk are offered funding once the activity has taken place and invoiced/evidenced. Our credit checks do not impact your credit rating.

Section 8 Application checklist

To avoid the most common mistakes, and increase your chances of a successful application, please check the following:

- You have checked that you are eligible to apply for funding (you are CITB registered and your Levy is up to date)
- You have not asked for more funding than you are entitled to for your business size
- Any previous Skills & Training funding is complete

- You have not included the cost of buildings, equipment, consultancy, or anything on the 'not fundable' list in section 3
- All training / activity fits the definitions of leadership & management OR is construction-specific
- You have provided quotes or other strong evidence to support value for money and assured the quality of each deliverable & training provider
- A training provider has not completed the form for you (without you being fully aware of what else you could use the funding for)
- Spoken to your CITB Adviser for additional support

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