

Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Skills Hub Training Grant – Guidance and FAQ's

Section 1 – Eligibility

- Must be based in Staffordshire LEP region. This is made up of the 9 Local Authority Areas
 - Staffordshire Moorlands
 - Stoke-on-Trent
 - Newcastle-under-Lyme
 - East Staffordshire
 - Stafford Borough Council
 - South Staffordshire
 - Cannock Chase
 - Lichfield Borough Council
 - Tamworth Borough Council
- Must be a SME
 - Less than 250 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff
 - Less than €50 million t/o
- Any sectors or industries, including B2C, B2B and Charities.
- Must have been trading for more than 6 months.
- If there is a parent/holding company then they must also meet the requirements of an SME

Why all the evidence required? As this is European Social Funding (ESF), then the Skills Hub must adhere to the requirements set by them.

1. Grant Offer Letter Signed and returned. – **Confirmation you have received the offer**
2. Copy of the SLA agreement between you and the provider (a sample will be sent out with the offer letter that can be used) – **This is not essential, but a recommendation. It would be best practice to have an agreement between an Employer and a Supplier.**
3. After the training has taken place:
 - a. Claims and Monitoring Form completed (sent out with grant offer letter) – **Confirmation training delivered as expected.**
 - b. Copy of invoice – **confirmation of the cost of the training**
 - c. Evidence of defrayal – copy of a bank statement to show payment leaving your bank account and paying the provider (cannot be paid by credit card) – **Confirmation that the training has been paid for, and by the employer being given the grant.**
 - d. Certificate/Learner record/confirmation, that the training took place – **If it was a short day course, then a letter head with a list of names and signature from the training provider will be enough.**
 - e. Evidence of employment for all the participates. – **we cannot support voluntary staff or contractors, so therefore need evidence the beneficiaries of the training are employees. If that person is a sole trader/registered directors then we can use information on companies house to confirm this.**

Section 2 – Company Information

- Basic company information to confirm the eligibility criteria is met.

Section 3 – De-minimis Aid Declaration

- This is a self-declaration to confirm previous funding the business has received.
- This includes other training funding, Growth Hub reviews business grants.
- Previous Skills Hub grants would need to be included, but only once the money has been received.

Section 4 – Tell us about your training

- Training that can be supported must not be funded elsewhere
 - If the course can be achieved through an apprenticeship
 - Similar to courses where courses are available through other funding streams such as Skills Support for the Workforce or AEB

- The grant cannot be used for mandated/legally required qualifications for the job
 - Areas such as HGV licences/ACCA qualification, where it is required to do the job
 - First Aid in the Workplace/Fire Marshalls – where depending in the size of the workforce, this is a legal recommendation
- Is the course training?
 - Training must demonstrate a skills shortage, how the course will overcome this skill shortage and how this will support the business.
 - The grant cannot support coaching/mentoring where a business/individuals is support to find how they can improve, and where the issues are. If the issues identified require training then this can be supported.
- Dates – can be TBC, as they may not be booked until after the grant is confirmed. However, all training currently needs to be completed by 22nd October 2021, as that is when the funding runs out.
- If the given training dates change, as long as completed by the 22nd October 2021 then the offer will still stand.

Section 5 - Why does your organisation need this training grant?

- Remember the application is scored, so the more detail given as to why the training is needed and the benefits of this, the higher the score you will receive.

Section 6 – Value for money

- The training does not have to be the cheapest, as long as it is justified and value for money.
- The preference is for a Staffordshire based training provider to deliver the training, but not essential
- For certain training there will not be options for alternative quotes, please just put this in the free text box as to why alternatives have not been sourced.

Section 7 – Please list the training activities and courses you will carry out.

- Ensure the amount listed for the cost of the course matches the invoice net value. If this changes please amend the application and re-submit.
- Ensure the calculation is correct for 52% employer contribution and 48% for grant unless it reaches the £5,000 limit.
- Please specify the number of employer participants. For recording purposes for the ESF we have to specify either Male/Female

Section 8 – Declaration

The form needs to be returned in a Word document. Once we have received this, it will be returned to you through DocuSign for confirmation.

Confirmation:

If there are any issues with the submitted application form, then your Skills Advisor will be in touch to discuss this. Cant do this but put these two sentences on the same line! Once the application has been scored and reaches the minimum threshold then you will receive an Offer Letter.

Scoring –
8+ Automatically processed
6/7 – Skills Advisor will contact to discuss further
1-5 – Will be rejected with reasons.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can we claim payments in stages for longer courses?

- Yes – if the training is broken down into modules, and each module you receive confirmation of completion/pass.
- If there is 1 invoice, then this needs to be broken down to the different costs for each module.
- The same invoice/defrayal can then be used to evidence each module as completed – as long as collectively reaches the amount on the grant offer.

Can we make amendments to our application?

If there are any changes to the training and the costs then please contact your Skills Advisors to discuss.

Applications can be amended at any stage up until the evidence is submitted, depending upon the reasons for this.

When will we receive the Grant?

The grants are submitted at the end of every quarter once we have received the evidence. The request for the funding is submitted to the DWP and then paid to Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce. This is then reimbursed on the same day to the employers.

Once the Skills Hub has submitted the claim, there is no control on when we receive the payment, it is currently taking 10-12 weeks to receive the payment from the end of the quarter. i.e. QTR2 - Apr-Jun, funds are received mid-September.

Multiple Grants?

Currently there are no limits on the number of applications that are made by one organisation however if multiple types of training are required by a company these need to be different from that already taken.

Needs to be for different type of training and connected to a different training project.

Evidence submission deadlines –

QT1 2021 – 09/04/2021 (Dates for invoice/defrayal/completion, must be dated prior to 31/03/21)*

QTR2 2021 – 09/07/2021 (Dates for invoice/defrayal/completion, must be dated prior to 30/06/21)*

QTR3 2021 – 08/10/21 (Dates for invoice/defrayal/completion, must be dated prior to 30/09/21)*

QTR4 2021 – 05/11/21 (Dates for invoice/defrayal/completion, must be dated prior to 22/10/2021)*

* Please note, if you miss the deadline for submission you can submit evidence in the following quarter.

If you need to extend on these deadlines then we will try and accommodate, but please contact the Project Manager prior to the deadlines to discuss.