

By registering with TPN an association accepts that it has read and understood this document and that it accepts the following terms and conditions in full.



TPN Funding Terms and Conditions

What is the Teacher Professional Networks Scheme (TPN)?

The Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) has established a supplementary funding scheme, TPN, to support the work of Teachers' Groups and Associations (TGAs) which afford Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and professional peer support to all Post Primary teachers.

Objectives

The principal objective of the TPN is to advance the teaching, learning and/or classroom management skills of post primary teachers in order to bring about improved learning outcomes for students. Events organised by TGAs should include suitable strategies to support teachers and have meaningful links with the national priorities being implemented by the DES.

TPN funding is provided in a manner which is coherent, equitable and transparent and TGAs are expected to operate in a manner that:

- is consistent with national and DES priorities,
- supports the continuous professional development of post primary teachers,
- complements the continuous professional development work of national programmes,
- supports capacity building in the system,
- fosters a partnership approach,
- reflects the level of planned activities,
- provides value for money, and
- improves outcomes for students.

Management of the scheme

The scheme is centrally managed by a representative Steering Committee which comprises of representatives from:

- TES, management and inspectorate,
- The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST),
- The Subject Association Representative Group (SARG),
- The Association of Teachers'/Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI), and
- Blackrock Education Centre (BEC).

BEC provides administrative support to the Steering Committee and to the scheme.

To avail of TPN funding a TGA must submit a proposal for activities to the Steering Committee. These activities **must** be open to all post primary teachers including those who are not members of that TGA. If the programme of activities is approved, the funding is made available to the TGA through a nominated Education Centre.

TPN funding is available in two categories:

- a) CPD activities, and
- b) National Executive administration.

It is recognised that TGAs have other sources of funding including membership fees and activities for the general public or for students. Activities restricted to members only must be funded from these sources. TPN funding is recognised by TES as supplementing the TGAs own sources of funding.

TGAs will be required to certify annually to their nominated Education Centre that the TPN funding granted was used in accordance with the purpose for which it was intended and in compliance with DPER circular 13/2014 (*Appendix 4*).

Registration

An official register of TGAs has been established. A TGA must register with the TPN administrator using a registration form. Each TGA must nominate one TPN coordinator to manage the administrative matters between the nominated Education Centre and the association. An email will be sent to existing groups requesting them to update their contact details.

Each TGA nominates an Education Centre for the purposes of this scheme. If the nominated Education Centre agrees to act on behalf of the TPN for the purposes of the scheme, it will:

- review and approve the proposals,
- receive approved grants allocated to the TGA,
- process claims and payments related to approved proposals presented by the TPN coordinator,
- maintain financial records for audit purposes,
- provide advice and support, and
- in addition, and by agreement, Centres may also assist in the management of local CPD events.

Identification and allocation of overall sum available to a given network

Funding is centrally allocated by the Steering Committee and administered by Blackrock Education Centre.

The overall sum available to support the work of any particular TGA is determined by the Steering Committee in accordance with the objectives of the scheme and the number of students taking the subject at Junior and Senior Cycle level. The sum granted will also reflect the degree of activity and participation levels in preceding years.

The overall funding available under the TPN scheme will be distributed based on the criteria set out in this document. The grants outlined below are the maximum available. TGAs may not receive the maximum amount. Funding allocated in any year does not provide any guarantee to levels of funding for future years.

Based on the above criteria, the maximum funding available to a network is at one of three levels:

Current Maximum Grant for Activities		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
€3,000	€6,000	€12,000

Appeals in relation to the available funding

Appeals may be made to the Steering Committee in relation to the overall amount of funding available. These appeals must be made in writing and within two weeks of notification of the sum involved.

Determination of actual sum to be made payable to a TGA

Funding is made available to a TGA on approval of proposals for activities by the TPN Steering Committee. These proposals are made using the *Local Activity Proposal* form and the *TGA Summary Proposal* form. **A detailed report of the previous year's activities must be included.**

Local branches must complete and return a branch proposal form to the relevant TPN coordinator to facilitate the submission of one application which is then forwarded to the TPN Administrator, **after it has been discussed and approved by the director of the nominated EC**, for the attention of the Steering Committee and by the deadline notified by Blackrock Education Centre (BEC). The summary form should provide a list of all planned activities in chronological order and be accompanied by a copy of each branch proposal. Please note that a maximum of 50% of the grant for activities can be allocated to conference expenses. Consideration will be given to the level of activity in preceding years in determining the amount available for conferences. A large discrepancy between proposed and actual activity in a year will affect conference funding for the following year.

The following criteria will be used to determine the funding made available to support the activities of a particular TGA:

- capacity of the activities to:
 - provide curriculum/programme support;
 - support innovation in the system,
- level of response to national and DES priorities,
- extent to which the activities support:
 - development and maintenance of links with other relevant national agencies, support services and educational institutions (TGAs must outline how they have consulted with the relevant support services and local Education Centres in preparing their proposals);
 - capacity building in the system,
- anticipated levels of:
 - participation, - a minimum of ten participants must be enrolled for a TES funded CPD event to proceed and receive funding - exceptions may be approved for smaller TGAs, but only with prior approval;
 - activities in the previous year, including the level of activities relative to the annual conference, and
- quantity of research focus involved.

The TPN coordinator will be required to notify constituent branches of the overall amount available to the TGA and to a particular branch. Branches will then organise their planned activities in the light of this figure and return signed claims (*Local Activity Report*) to the TPN Coordinator within thirty days of the delivery of the activity. The total amount claimed must be based on standard TES payment rates and must not exceed the amount approved. The nominated Education Centre will then review and approve the claim and pay the amount in question to the bank account of the TPN. Ongoing claims **MUST** be made no later than 30 days after a meeting or activity. Late claims will incur in a 10% surcharge.

Support for National Executives

It is accepted that National Executives incur certain administrative/development costs. These costs might include items such as:

- production of an e-newsletter,
- web hosting and domain expenses,
- the acquisition or production of relevant resources to supplement those available from the support services,
- support for the professional development of the National Executive itself,
- National Executive meeting expenses, and
- liaising with other TGAs and communities, such as membership of international associations.

National Executives are required to itemise anticipated expenses in the appropriate section of the SUMMARY Proposal for the current year. All resources produced with any support from TPN must be available to all teachers in electronic form. Where a TGA provides printed versions of such resources these can be made available to members at the TGA's expense.

Claims in relation to these costs should be made in a timely manner on the appropriate form (*National Executive Administration Expenditure Claim*) and should be supported by invoice/receipt. Proposals and claims must not exceed the maximum National Executive support figure, as outlined below. Travel and subsistence (T&S) claims for National Executives must not exceed 40% of total National Executive allocation.

Current maximum National Executive Grant		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
€2,500	€2,500	€5,000

Ongoing claims MUST be made no later than 30 days after a meeting happens. Late claims will incur in a 10% surcharge.

Services available from Education Centres to support the work of networks

In addition to acting as the nominated centre for a given TGA, any Education Centre can generally provide meeting rooms and facilities locally on request. Education Centres should be considered before the use of any commercial venue. If using commercial venues (e.g. hotel rooms) the cost will have to be justified. The following charges will apply to the use of Education Centres:

- free of charge for meeting rooms, when these are available, and during normal opening hours, and
- €15 per hour for a night opening and €75 for a Saturday opening, plus caretaking charges (local rates apply).

Note: National Programme rates apply for photocopying, etc.

Conditions of Funding

As the funds provided to support TGAs come from the exchequer, activities supported/funded under the scheme must be available to all teachers, members and non-members alike. Each local branch will therefore demonstrate how they have notified all schools in its catchment area of the planned activity. As the network of Education Centres has direct access to all schools in the country, notifying teachers should be done in association with the local Education Centre whenever possible.

Financial records are maintained by the nominated Education Centres. As payments are made on a vouched basis, local branches are obliged to submit invoices and receipts coded according to the proposal. National Executives and branches should maintain and retain all relevant records as these are subject to audit and examination.

If an event requires the payment of lecturer fees or expenses in respect of travel and/or subsistence of participants/lecturers, DES guidelines for such payments will apply. To comply with Revenue regulations Education Centres are obliged to pay lecturer claims directly and the appropriate deductions will be made at source. Education Centres should refer to current TES rates in this regard. For claim forms to be used by either lecturers or participants, updated templates are available on www.tpnetworks.ie. Your attention is drawn to public service regulations on T&S; in particular please note that four travel bands have been introduced since 1/4/17: 0 – 1,500km, 1,501 – 5,500km, 5,501 – 25,000km and 25,001 and over (see *Appendix 1*). Individuals should note that this figure is cumulative and aggregated across all publicly funded activities.

There is no TPN funding for foreign travel. Lecturers coming from abroad must have their expenses sanctioned beforehand by the TPN Steering Committee. The cost of the lecturers will not exceed the agreed national levels.

It is required that all events be evaluated and that evaluation forms be retained by the National Executive or local branch of the network as appropriate. Evaluation forms must be made available to BEC or the DES/TES as required (*Appendix 5*).

Quality assurance

Effective CPD enhances the professional lives of teachers and has a direct impact on the quality of learning for students. In order to be effective, teachers' professional development must be underpinned by active learning, coherent content and a focus on student learning and enhanced teacher engagement. High quality TPN events have the potential to enable teachers to develop a powerful understanding of what and how they teach and of how students learn. The following sets out the expectations for the purpose of promoting and assuring quality in the organisation and delivery of TPN events. The Inspectorate undertakes a quality assurance role in the approval and evaluation of the TPN scheme. Events/activities will be open to inspectors of the DES and to TES personnel.

The TPN Steering Committee is committed to ensuring that TPN funded events provide teachers with relevant learning experiences that enhance and improve their expertise and skills. TPN events need to be relevant and focused on implementation. Key considerations for all involved in the course organisation, design and administration, are that courses are of a high quality and that they make a direct impact on the learning experiences and outcomes of students in schools.

The course tutor plays a crucial role in ensuring a high quality learning experience for participating teachers. Tutors need to have extensive experience and expertise in the specific course content and should have good facilitation skills. The tutor needs to be guided by the course aims and learning outcomes; one of their key roles is to maximise the engagement of participants.

Organising an event

The TPN Co-ordinator will ensure that:

- a minimum of ten participants must be enrolled for a TES funded CPD event to proceed and receive funding - exceptions may be approved for smaller TGAs, but only with prior approval from the nominated Education Centre;

- roll books/attendance registers must be maintained and evaluation forms completed, compiled and submitted as required.

Delivery and monitoring

The TPN Co-ordinator will ensure that:

- full particulars of approved events are made available to all teachers in good time, including overall course aims and intended learning outcomes for module/course units,
- to facilitate reasonable accommodation for participants with special needs or with special requirements,
- to communicate a minimum of one week advance notice of cancelled events to the nominated education centre and enrolled participants,
- each event is not undersubscribed, and
- each participant completes an evaluation form for the event in question.

Post-delivery phase

The TPN Coordinator will receive the *Activity Report* documents, the attendance roll and any claims or invoices relating to the event, from the organising branch or group. The Coordinator will then compare with the approved proposal and forward to the nominated Education Centre for payment.

All participant evaluation forms are retained for a period of two years.

The evaluation of TPN events

The Inspectorate will evaluate a selection of TPN events on behalf of the TPN Steering Committee. The purpose of these evaluations is to:

- affirm the high quality of CPD events and identify any improvements that might be made in CPD delivery,
- inform the Steering Committee on the overall quality of provision, and
- make recommendations to the Steering Committee and to individual TGAs on how the learning outcomes and experiences for participating teachers can be improved.

The evaluation of events will take cognisance of the following criteria:

- course content,
- participant learning experience,
- course management, and
- reflection of national priorities.

Addressing recommendations

The focus of all evaluation of TPN events will be on ensuring that courses are of the best possible quality. The reporting inspector may make recommendations to enhance the quality of course content, learner engagement, course management and/or reflection of national priorities. TGAs are expected to implement recommendations as soon as possible.

As funding comes from exchequer funds, the TPN Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that there is accountability and transparency in the way funds are allocated, spent and managed for guaranteeing that the taxpayer receives value for money. Education Centres can be audited and are obliged to maintain financial records in compliance with Revenue regulations. By receiving TPN funding your teachers' group/association agrees to conform to TPN Terms and Conditions and actively engage with your nominated Education Centre.

DES reserve the right to withdraw approval of a TPN event where an evaluation has found that it does not meet the criteria and has failed to address the stipulations communicated to the TPN Coordinator.