

Initial Teacher Education Priority Subject incentive scheme: The scheme terms and conditions 2026

Overview

Initial Teacher Education Priority Subject Incentive Scheme 2026 provides a financial incentive for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students commencing a secondary postgraduate ITE programme in September 2026 enabling them to teach specific subject specialisms.

Background

1. The Welsh Ministers have powers to provide financial assistance under sections 14-17 of the Education Act 2002 for:
 - a. the promotion of the recruitment or retention of teachers or non-teaching staff
 - b. providing for a person's maintenance while he undertakes such a course
 - c. the remuneration of, or provision of other benefits to, teachers or non-teaching staff.
2. The Initial Teacher Education Priority Subject incentive scheme: The scheme terms and conditions 2026 ("this Scheme") is made in the exercise of those powers.
3. This Scheme comes into effect on 1 September 2026 and applies in relation to Wales. This Scheme replaces the Initial Teacher Education Priority Subject incentive scheme 2025.
4. The Welsh Ministers may issue guidance on this Scheme under section 10 of the Education Act 1996 to assist students and providers of eligible programmes. Persons applying for this incentive and those exercising any function under this Scheme must have regard to that guidance. The guidance for this scheme year can be found via these pages:
 - a. Student guidance: [Initial Teacher Education \(ITE\) Priority Subject Incentive Scheme: guidance for students | GOV.WALES](#)
 - b. ITE provider guidance: [Initial Teacher Education incentives: guidance for administrators | GOV.WALES](#)
5. This document sets out a brief outline of how this Scheme will operate and the purpose for which the incentive grant will be paid.

Summary of this Scheme

6. This Scheme makes provision for the Welsh Ministers to pay incentive grants to eligible persons undertaking an eligible programme to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) in Wales in specified subjects.
7. The Welsh Ministers will determine the number of instalments and when instalments will be paid to eligible persons. Payment will usually be divided into three instalments. The in-programme instalment may be claimed during an eligible programme, the QTS instalment after the eligible person has successfully achieved qualified teacher status, the Induction instalment is available upon successful completion of an induction period in a maintained school in Wales and may only be claimed by those who received both the in-programme instalment and the QTS instalment. The decision of the Welsh Ministers as to whether any payment under this Scheme will be made to any eligible person is final.

Interpretation

8. Except where the context otherwise requires, for the purpose of this Scheme:

“eligible programme” (*“rhaglenni cymwys”*) means a programme which: is a full-time or part-time secondary postgraduate ITE programme leading to qualified teacher status, which is accredited by the Education Workforce Council’s (EWC) Teacher Education Accreditation Board, established pursuant to regulation 5 of the Education Workforce Council (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Training) (Wales) Regulations 2017

“eligible student” (*“myfyriwr cymwys”*) means a person who qualifies for support under Regulations made under section 22 of the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 currently in force as they apply to that course¹

“employed” (*“cyflogedig”*) means employed under a contract of employment or engaged to provide services otherwise than under a contract of employment and “employment” (*“cyflogaeth”*) shall be construed accordingly

“employment-based teacher training scheme” (*“cynllun hyfforddi athrawon ar sail cyflogaeth”*) means a scheme made under regulation 8 of the School Teachers’ Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2012, including any amended or replacement scheme

“postgraduate ITE programme” (*“cwrs ôl-raddedig o hyfforddiant athrawon”*) means an accredited full-time, part-time or flexible postgraduate programme of initial teacher education which is provided at an ITE provider in Wales. In this context

¹ The Regulations which currently apply to the provision of support to students in relation to academic year running from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027 are the Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018 No. 191 (W. 42)). These Regulations will remain extant for academic year 2026/27.

“flexible” indicates that the length and pattern of the programme is determined by reference to the student’s experience and training requirements

“qualified teacher status” (“QTS”) (*“statws athro cymwysedig neu statws athrawes gymwysedig”*) means a person who is a qualified teacher within the meaning given to it by section 132(1) of the Education Act 2002: that is “a person who satisfies requirements specified in regulations” made under that section.

Incentive grants

9. The Welsh Ministers may, in their discretion, pay grants (“incentive grants”) by way of incentives to persons who satisfy the requirements of paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14 subject to paragraph 10.

10. Incentive grants made available under this Scheme are subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 16 to 22.

Incentive grant eligibility

11. To be eligible for this incentive grant, a person must:

- a. have undertaken an eligible programme in Wales which commenced on or after 1 September 2026 but prior to 31 August 2027
- b. be an eligible student
- c. not already be a qualified teacher on commencement of study towards QTS
- d. on commencement of study towards QTS not be employed to teach at a school or other institution as a teacher
- e. not be a participant in training organised under an employment-based teacher training scheme
- f. not be undertaking a further education course of any kind
- g. be studying wholly or mainly one or more of the following priority subjects or on an eligible programme: Biology, Chemistry, Design & Technology, Digital Technology and/or Computer Science, Mathematics, International Languages, Physics, Welsh hold at entry to the eligible programme a first degree or equivalent qualification awarded by a United Kingdom institution, or an equivalent degree or other qualification awarded by a foreign institution, of a 1st, 2.1 or 2.2 classification, or a PhD or Masters or equivalent. The first degree or equivalent qualification is not required to be in the same subject as that undertaken on the postgraduate ITE programme.

12. In relation to the in-programme instalment of this incentive grant a person must:

- a. meet the eligibility requirements as set out under paragraph 11
- b. intend to continue and complete their eligible programme

- c. meet any additional requirements as set out in the guidance issued under paragraph 4 of this Scheme, to which persons claiming this incentive grant and those exercising any function under this Scheme must have regard.

13. In relation to the QTS instalment of this incentive grant a person must:

- a. have met the eligibility requirements for this incentive grant and have received the in-programme instalment as per paragraph 11 and 12
- b. have successfully completed an eligible programme and obtained QTS in accordance with the School Teachers' Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2012.

14. In relation to the Induction instalment of this incentive grant a person must:

- a. have met the eligibility requirements for this incentive grant and have received the in-programme instalment and the QTS instalment as per paragraphs 11, 12 and 13.
- b. have successfully completed an induction period within three years of having been awarded QTS, in any maintained secondary setting in Wales and in accordance with the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015.
- c. claim within the specified timescales as set out in the guidance issued under paragraph 4 of this Scheme.

15. Eligible persons for this incentive scheme are also entitled to claim other initial teacher education incentives available in Wales, providing they meet the eligibility criteria of those schemes in the academic year of study.

Conditions

16. No grant under this scheme will be paid to a person unless they have made an application to the Welsh Ministers in such form, at such time and containing such particulars as the Welsh Ministers may from time to time determine.

17. The Welsh Ministers may at their discretion decide not to pay an incentive grant to persons accepted onto an eligible programme after the intake allocation for that programme has been reached (as determined by the Education Workforce Council).

18. A person who is eligible for an incentive grant and joins an eligible programme, but leaves their programme before its completion, or fails to be awarded QTS or satisfactorily complete an induction period, as applicable, will not be eligible to receive any further grant instalments over and above those already paid to the person, in accordance with any guidance and payment schedule produced by the Welsh Ministers from time to time.

19. Incentive grants (whether in-programme instalment, QTS instalment or Induction instalment) which may be due to eligible persons who started an eligible programme in one academic year but then, following a deferral, resumed the programme in the next academic year, will continue to be paid at the applicable incentive grant rate (if any) under the scheme which applied in the academic year that their studies initially started unless the Welsh Ministers decide otherwise in their discretion, in writing.
20. Where a person eligible under this Scheme has, prior to 1 September 2026, received, in either full or in part, any incentive grant payment associated with an ITE programme with a secondary subject specialism, under any other schemes or arrangements, in connection with undertaking initial teacher education, the incentive grant payments due to them under this Scheme will be reduced by an amount corresponding to the incentive grant payments previously received by them under those other schemes or arrangements. This also applies to incentive grants received by eligible persons prior to 1 September 2026 under any arrangements applying in England which the Welsh Ministers are satisfied correspond to those made in respect of incentive grants in pursuance of this Scheme.
21. Outstanding payments for eligible persons who withdraw from an eligible ITE programme, do not achieve QTS or fail to start or complete an induction period may be withheld, in accordance with any guidance and payment schedule produced by the Welsh Ministers from time to time.
22. The Welsh Ministers may require any incentive grant paid to be repaid in whole or in part if:
- a. after receiving any instalment of an incentive grant, the recipient fails to meet any eligibility criteria adopted by the Welsh Government, set out in this Scheme in relation to a subsequent instalment
 - b. the recipient has provided in, or in connection with, their application for an incentive grant, information which is false or materially misleading
 - c. there is evidence that the recipient had never intended to complete the eligible programme or, having completed it, to enter teaching.

Payment of incentive grants

23. Incentive grants may be paid in such instalment amounts and at such times as the Welsh Ministers may determine.
24. The Welsh Ministers will provide funds to an institution which provides an eligible programme, at such times as the Welsh Ministers may determine, for payment to an eligible person on an eligible programme.

25. The Welsh Ministers will provide funds, at such times as the Welsh Ministers may determine, for payment to an eligible person, such times to be after the eligible person has successfully completed an induction period.

Administration

26. The Welsh Ministers may make a payment to institutions providing eligible programmes that distribute the incentive grant in recognition of the administrative and other associated costs related to making those payments. The institutions will be required as part of any such payment to have regard to any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers (referred to in paragraph 4).

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