

# QUALIFICATIONS SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2023

## Guidance & Key Principles

### Programme Aim

1. The aim of this funding is to help to limit any long-term adverse impact of Covid-19 disruption through the provision of additional learning and teaching support for learners preparing to take examinations in the 2022/23 academic year. In particular, the funding aims to address the additional needs of Year 12 learners who are completing their GCSEs in 2023, but without the benefit of the full range of assessment adaptations that were available to those completing GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications in 2022. While the adaptations available in 2022 are no longer appropriate as we journey back to more normal examination arrangements, it is nonetheless recognised that learners faced significant disruption to teaching and learning in 2021/22, which was the first year of a two-year course of study for Year 12 GCSE students. However, the funding may also be used by schools to support individuals or small groups in other exam years identified by the school as requiring additional support in preparing for exams during the 2022/23 academic year.

### Programme Objectives

2. The objectives of the programme are detailed below:
  - To provide a programme of targeted support, primarily for Year 12 learners<sup>1</sup> to address any identified deficits in specification coverage required to ensure they are adequately prepared for the first full series of public examinations, in summer 2023.
  - To provide a programme of targeted support primarily for Year 12 learners to address identified needs in relation to planning and managing revision for public exams, and development of relevant skills to ensure adequate preparation for the first full series of public examinations, in summer 2023.

### Specification, Revision and Examination Support Interventions

3. To meet the programme's objectives, the funding may be used to provide targeted support such as additional teaching on a one-to-one basis or in small-groups, provision of afterschool or holiday tuition or revision classes, or acquisition of additional learning resources e.g. revision booklets, purchase of subscriptions to online educational tools etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional support may be provided to learners in other exam years where there is a need identified by the school.

4. Schools are allowed to determine the content of their support programme and associated delivery arrangements, including the structure and timing of additional teaching support, and the qualifications to be targeted in order to focus and tailor the programme to best support those pupils identified as requiring additional assistance to be adequately prepared for the public exam series in 2022/23 academic year.

### **Funding Allocation Arrangements**

5. A total of £2M has been made available for the programme. As the programme is designed to primarily target Year 12 learners, funding allocations for each school have been calculated on a per capita basis using the most recent (2021/22) Year 11 census data. Details of individual allocations due to each school have been published on the Department's website. The funding programme is for one year only and your allocation must be used by 31 March 2023. To find out your school's allocation please refer to the following link on the DE website: - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/qualifications>.
6. The funding has been allocated to the Education Authority as an earmarked fund which they will allocate directly to school LMS accounts or, in the case of VG / GMI schools, allocations will be made via the EA school payments team.
7. Please note that it is the responsibility of schools to manage their allocation on the basis that the resources being made available must be spent in full by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**.

### **Programme Monitoring Arrangements**

8. All schools are required to complete a funding plan using the Qualifications Support Programme funding planner application which can be accessed via the Wholeschool School Development Planning platform and shares the same design functionality as the TSN/Engage Planner which is also hosted on the platform. This app will capture a range of key information in respect of how the funding is being used and will help with evaluation which will be required to demonstrate the impact of the funding. The app has bespoke options to reflect the specific aim, objectives, targets and characteristics of the programme. Schools can choose from pre-populated drop-down menus or can use the facility to customise their plan.
9. Schools are required to complete the Qualifications Support Programme planner in two stages:

- **By end January 2023**, completion of Sections 1 to 3 setting out the school's qualification support plan for 2022/23, and how they intend to use the additional funding to meet their specific targets.
  - **By end October 2023**, completion of Sections 4 and 5 reporting the school's evaluation of the impact of the funding.
10. Schools must ensure that the information captured on the planner, including any expenditure to date, is accurate and complete and updated on a timely basis as this will be used for monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes. Please note that the completion of the planner is **mandatory** in order to account for the use of these public funds.
11. For audit and accountability purposes, the EA has also put in place specific function codes that will enable programme expenditure to be tracked. Schools should also maintain an audit trail and sufficient documentary evidence to demonstrate that expenditure has been appropriately incurred. VG/GMI schools should also operate and maintain a similar system, tracking expenditure separately for reporting purposes. Details of the function codes have been provided below:-

NISTR Alpha Code	<b>QF</b>
DE Function Code for Teacher Hours	<b>8024</b>
EA Resourcelink Function Code for Classroom Assistant Hours (Ballymena & Dundonald Region)	<b>9175</b>
EA Oracle Function Code	<b>80436</b>

12. Schools should ensure that existing EA processes and procedures for the recruitment of fixed term staff or to draw down additional resource from the NISTR are adhered to. Public procurement policy should also be applied for expenditure on resources. The EA's Finance team can provide further help and support in this area if needed.
13. Please note that the Qualifications Team will periodically review the funding plans and potentially carry out a sample spot check on audit trail documentation maintained by schools.

### **Programme Outcomes and Evaluation**

14. There are no specific targets for this funding in terms of system wide improvement of examination outcomes. The programme is intended to provide support for individual or small groups of learners who are identified as requiring additional help

to be prepared to sit examinations for which they are entered. Individual schools should identify intended outcomes and the particular success criteria for the support funding in line with their own specific target objectives, as well as the associated measures (formal/informal, qualitative/quantitative as appropriate) to evaluate the effectiveness of their approach and the impact of the additional support funding. At a system level, the ETI will carry out an evaluation of the programme as part of the overall evaluation of the Engage III Programme as to assess the overall impact of the funding.

## **Help and Support**

15. The Education Authority's School Improvement Professionals should be the first point of contact for seeking help and support on the day-to-day management and delivery of the programme. However, depending on your query, you may also find that following points of contact useful listed below:-
  - For any finance related queries such as the coding of expenditure, use of the specified alpha code, please contact your designated Finance Officer within School Operations;
  - If you have access to the Qualifications Support Programme funding planner but find it is not functioning correctly, please contact Wholeschool at: [support@whole.school](mailto:support@whole.school);
  - If you need procurement advice the following general email address should be used [procurement@eani.org.uk](mailto:procurement@eani.org.uk).
  
16. For any other general enquiries regarding the Qualifications Support Programme, please contact DE's Qualifications Team at [qualifications-team@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:qualifications-team@education-ni.gov.uk).