

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the TMP Mentoring Network Grant Opportunity

This document provides additional information to what is available on the Cognition Learning Group's [Teacher Mentoring Programme \(TMP\) website](#). We hope that this document answers any initial questions or queries you may have about the Mentoring Network grant offered through the TMP. However, if after reading this document your question has not been addressed, please contact the TMP Team via email at tmpenquiries@cognitioneducation.com

This document and will be updated to include further questions and queries that we have been asked, or if any aspect of the programme changes.

Q: What is a mentoring network?

A: The mentoring network grant is an opportunity for collaboration across the FE sector. The definition of a mentoring network has not been defined for this grant to allow for flexibility, creativity and encourage sector-led improvements to mentoring provision which is responsive to your areas of need.

Mentoring networks may be led by a single provider or a consortia of providers with the shared aim to deliver a project which will benefit the wider sector via shared learning and dissemination of best practice.

Some examples of what a mentoring network may look like are listed below. If your mentoring network format differs to this, we still encourage you to speak to the TMP Team as the list below is not exhaustive:

- A group of providers from the same college/training group
- A group of FE and training providers who are not part of the same group, but want to collaborate and share mentoring best practice
- A sole provider who wants to share learning and examples of mentoring best practice with other FE and training organisations
- Mentoring 'buddies' e.g. those who have successfully embedded a culture of mentoring within their organisations supporting those who are yet to do this.

Q: What activity can mentoring networks undertake with the grant?

A: We encourage all FE providers to be expressive and to adopt creativity when suggesting activities that will help address clear skill gaps in their organisations. For guidance, the following examples could be noted as approved activities;

- Support FE providers to build sustainable* networks / partnerships which allows you to share best practice and promote the benefits of mentoring with the wider sector.
- Enable organisations with 'Mentoring Alumni' from the main TMP professional development programme to share learning from programme participation and for continuing their mentoring in a supportive peer group. Please note: this includes Alumni from previous phases of the programme before being delivered by Cognition Learning Group.
- Support providers from the same college group to join up and adopt a common mentoring approach.

- Enable FE provider networks to host mentoring events, conferences or seminars (face to face or virtual).
- Enable FE networks to produce mentoring materials and resources to help manage mentoring provision within FE environments.
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As mentioned, if your idea falls outside of the list above, please speak to the TMP Team as this is not exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only.

Please note: mentoring network projects will need to be approved by Cognition Learning Group and the Department for Education (DfE).

Q: 'I want to use the grant to fund something that is not specified in the list of approved spending, what can I do?'

A: We review each expression of interest thoroughly to fully grasp the vision that each network has for their grant. We aim to meet with all providers over a call to fully discuss the idea in detail and to ask any clarification questions. We may also provide you with some advice and guidance to help refine ideas.

Cognition Learning Group welcomes and encourage creativity when outlining how you wish to make use of your grant. Any activities that fall out of scope of the examples of eligible activities listed above will require sign off from the DfE.

Q: What is the purpose and benefit of the mentoring network grant?

A: The mentoring network grant opportunity is an opportunity for FE and training providers to promote and foster a robust and lasting culture of mentoring within their organisations, as well as providing the chance to work with other FE providers and share ideas and thoughts on how to approach mentoring practices. The theme here is 'shared learning' which we feel is

what the activity guidance list looks to implement. Outputs from the networking grant will be unique to each network which allows for providers to take the lead and utilise funding in a way which best suits their needs and the needs of the wider sector.

Q: How many places are available on the Mentoring Network Grant Opportunity?

A: Cognition Learning Group can award up to ten grants in FY 24/25 if all mentoring networks apply for the maximum amount of £5,000. If we receive applications where funding is less, we may have the opportunity to award more than ten grants in 24/25.

Once the grants have been exhausted, we won't be able to accept any further applications.

Q: Can I utilise this grant alongside the main mentoring professional development course you offer?

A: Yes, the mentoring network grant is a separate opportunity. There is no prerequisite to be engaged in the main professional development programme to be considered for the mentoring network grant opportunity.

Q: My organisation is not a part of a wider group, can we still be considered?

A: Yes, there is no requirement for your organisation to be a part of a wider group.

As mentioned, your organisation may wish to deliver your own mentoring network initiative to share with the wider sector or you may wish to partner with other organisations to deliver the project.

Cognition Learning Group have published a network register detailing other FE providers. You can search this to find other organisations in your region which you may wish to collaborate with. You can find the network register [here](#).

Q: For collaborative networking bids (made up of multiple FE providers), is there a requirement for all providers to complete reporting responsibilities?

A: No, the application process will provide you with the opportunity to select a Grant Lead and/or Lead Organisation. This person/organisation will be responsible for all reporting, setting and executor of objectives, as well as distribution of funds across the network.

Q: What is a primary grant/organisation lead?

A: The primary/organisation grant lead is an individual who holds responsibility for managing the mentoring network, the delivery of the networks project and for completing reporting activities.

Q: Can all types of Further Education providers take part in the TMP?

A: Public and private FE providers wanting to take part in TMP must be in direct receipt of **at least one** of the following ESFA funding contracts to be eligible to apply:

- Apprenticeships (including carry-in, procured non-levy and Apprenticeship Service levy and non-levy)
- 16-19 Programmes (excluding Academy/School Funding)
- 16-18 Traineeships
- Adult Education Budget (excluding devolved AEB)
- 19+ Traineeships

- National Careers Service
- European Social Funding
- Advanced Learner Loans Facility & Bursary
- Skills Bootcamps Funding

You cannot apply if you are a School / School Sixth Form, Academy, Studio School or University Technical College even if you're in receipt of one or more of these funding streams. Sixth Form Colleges that are currently in the process of, or planning conversion to, an academy in 2024 to 2025 academic year are also not eligible to apply for the TMP.

Please note that the eligibility criteria is subject to change. Cognition Learning Group and DfE reserve the right to amend and update the eligibility criteria at any point. Please make sure you have read the eligibility criteria ahead of making an application.

Q: How will the funding be split across the group?

A: The nominated grant/organisation lead will receive the entirety of the funding and it will be their responsibility to distribute and share the funding in relation to where costs are incurred.

Q: As a network lead, can a non-eligible provider be part of my network and payment made to them?

A: No, providers that are not eligible for the programme would not be able to be a part of a mentoring network as they will be in receipt of funding. However, they would be able to be a beneficiary in other aspects, such as attending events and seminars that are hosted by a mentoring network.

Q: How will our spending be monitored and tracked?

A: Successful applicants will be required to outline their plans in terms of grant utilisation. There will be two reporting periods in which the primary grant lead and/or lead organisation will complete all relevant fields that informs us of how much spending has taken place and where it has been used. You can refer to the budget guidance document for a greater understanding of this.

Q: Can networks be extended across the next financial year?

A: Mentoring networks can apply to deliver/expand the same mentoring network programme in the following financial year. However, existing mentoring networks would need to demonstrate new, distinct objectives to achieve and focus on different outcomes.

Q: Can the grant be used to 'top-up' the grant from the professional development courses?

A: No, you will be required to confirm that the mentoring network grant is not being used on any other DfE-funded programme or subscriptions. This is to avoid duplications or overlaps in funding and applies to cross-funding between the two grants.

Please feel free to get in touch with our TMP team at **tmpenquiries@cognitioneducation.com** if you have any further questions or you would like help with aspect of your mentoring network grant or application process.