Department for Education

Cognition Learning Group

Teacher Mentoring Programme 2026-27 Mentoring Network Application Guidance Document

Introduction

Mentoring within the Further Education and Training Sector enables individuals and organisations to flourish. At an individual level it allows mentors and mentees to grow professionally, increase confidence, boost career motivation and equips people with the knowledge and skills for a long and successful career in FE. At an organization level it has proven to support with staff retention, become a more attractive place for current and prospective employees to work and ultimately provides the best experience to the learners as they have a happy, confident and knowledgeable teachers and trainers.

We know that some organisations are confident in managing a mentoring provision in their organisations, whereas others maybe early on in their mentoring journey or are looking at kickstarting the process. Wherever you are, Cognition Learning Group's 'Mentoring Network' grant may be able to support you.

What is a Mentoring Network Grant?

With funding from the Department for Education (DfE), we're able to offer grants of up to

£5,000 to mentoring networks to share their mentoring experience and learning with other organisations across the FE sector so they can become more confident in managing a mentoring provision within their organisation.

The grant provides an exciting opportunity to maximise on collaboration across the sector and to encourage creative ideas on how best to embed a culture of mentoring across FE. Below are some examples of what can be undertaken using the grant:

- FE providers building a sustainable network/partnerships which allows you to

share best practice and promote the benefits of mentoring with the wider sector.

- Organisations with 'Mentoring Alumni' from the main TMP professional development programme to utilise the grant to share learning from taking part in the programme 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 have a consistent mentoring approach.
- FE provider networks to host mentoring events, conferences and seminars (face-to-face or virtual)
- FE networks to produce mentoring materials and resources to help manage a mentoring provision with FE environments.

Whilst the above activity provides a guideline, Cognition Learning Group will explore different ideas with networks. Please note that activity outside those listed above will need to be agreed to on a case-by-case basis with the DfE.

How do I apply for a Mentoring Network Grant?

- **Step one -** Interested providers first need to complete an expression of interest. This stage will check your organisations eligibility and you will be asked to provide a short description of what you are hoping to undertake/achieve with
  the grant.
- **Step two -** Cognition Learning Group will review each expression of interest and where the description aligns with approved activity, we will invite you to attend a call with us to discuss the idea in more detail to check suitability.
- **Step three -** With the information provided at the expression of interest stage and from the suitability call, Cognition Learning Group will invite suitable networks to complete a formal application, including a completed budget template detailing how you will spend the grant.
- **Step four -** Cognition Learning Group will competitively assess applications when the application window closes.
- **Step five -** Final outcome communicated to applicants.

Who should be completing this application?

We understand that some mentoring networks will involve one organisation who will be utilising the grant to deliver a project that supports the wider sector. For some networks, a group of organisations may be delivering the project together.

If you are submitting for your own organisation and are not working with other organisations for the delivery of the project, a nominated Grant Lead should complete this application. This person should have permission from their organisation to submit this application and also be responsible for fulfilling the grants reporting requirements.

Where you are submitting on behalf of a group of organisations, a nominated Grant Lead that represents the Mentoring Network should complete this application and they should be from the nominated 'Lead Provider'. The Lead Provider should have consent from all organisations before submitting this application.

Please refer to our FAQs document which covers more of this in detail.

If you are having any issues, please reach out to the TMP Team who will be able to provide advice and guidance - tmpenquiries@cognitioneducation.com

When do applications open and close?

4 May 2025 - the application process opens on the Teacher Mentoring Programme website.

Applications will close once all grant funding has been awarded. Cognition Learning Group encourages networks to apply early to avoid disappointment.

Cognition Learning Group will assess applications on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Application outcomes are communicated with successful/unsuccessful providers within 2 weeks of submission.

4 May 2025 to 26 February 2027 - Mentoring Network ideas are delivered.

Providers are required to submit a certificate of expenditure which is signed by the Chief Financial Officer within 28 days of receiving their final grant payment.

Expression of Interest

As highlighted above, to be considered for the grant, you must first express your interest so that we can deem your eligibility alongside the motivations for your inclusion. Most of the questions will not require preparation; however, we would like to bring your attention to the following questions in the expression of interest:

22. **Please provide a short description of what activity you are hoping to undertake with the mentoring network grant (maximum 250 words)**

- What activities will you employ in order to promote effective mentoring across the network?
- How will this evolve post-project?
- You may host events/webinars or something that aids 'shared learning' across your network.

23. **What benefits or outputs are you hoping to achieve if awarded a mentoring network grant (maximum 250 words)**

- What does success look like?
- What areas of development are you currently looking to focus on?
- What are the main benefits that you would achieve on the basis of receiving this grant?

Please note that the bullet points are there for example purposes only and we encourage you to only use them as a guide.

Your answers to these questions will be crucial in whether you are invited to the next stages of the application process, so we recommend being thorough and providing as much detail as possible in your answers.

Formal Application Questions for the Mentoring Network Grant

Below are the questions that will appear on the formal application. We would recommend looking at the questions and begin to make revisions on how you will approach them.

Where questions ask for project details, you will need to outline the benefits, outputs and

how your project will strengthen mentoring in your network and wider sector. Responses to these questions will be reviewed and scored by the TMP Team using a scale of O - 2 (0 being unsatisfactory, 1 being satisfactory, 2 being excellent). Any responses scored O will be asked to resubmit.

Questions:

1. Please confirm that you have read, understood and agreed to the privacy statement, policy and notice.
2. Please confirm that all individuals and or organisations you are submitting this application on behalf of have read, understood and agree to the privacy statement, policy and notice.

Contact Details

1. Full name of Primary Project/Grant Lead
2. Email address of Primary Project/Grant Lead
3. Full name of Secondary Project/Grant Lead
4. Email address of Secondary Project/Grant Lead
5. Organisation Name/Lead Organisation
6. If applicable, if your mentoring network is being delivered by multiple organisations, please confirm the name of each organisation.
7. If applicable, please confirm if your mentoring network is being delivered by multiple organisations, are they from the same college group?
8. Please provide your organisation address. If your network is being delivered by multiple organisations, please provide the address of each organisation.

Project Details

Following up from your proposed mentoring network project call with Cognition Learning Group, please can you answer the following questions to explain the project in more detail.

9. Please can you provide a description of the benefits and outputs that your mentoring network project will achieve. Your response must outline any benefits or outputs that will be sustainable after the grant funding ends. (500 words maximum)

- What would success look like?
- What changes are you looking to see post-project?
- How will you monitor the effects of the project during and post-project?

10. Please can you explain how your mentoring network project will strengthen mentoring within your own network and the wider FE and Training sector. (500 words maximum)
    - What barriers/obstacles are currently in place and how will you go about removing them?
    - How will this project benefit you and others in the network?
    - Is there a clear skill gap? Can this be evidenced and reviewed?

11. If your network is made up of multiple organisations, please outline the project responsibilities of each organisation. This should include delivery, monitoring and evaluation and reporting responsibilities. (250 words maximum)

Please note: if your network is NOT made up of multiple organisations, please mark as N/A.

Budget

You will need to complete the budget template to detail the grant funding required and how you will utilise the £5,000 available. Please refer to the budget guidance document

for instructions on how to complete the template (found on our website).

Please note, as part of the conditions of the grant you will need to confirm that you agree to the grants monitoring and auditing purposes. In advance of completing your application, the following apply:

- You will be required to submit two progress reports detailing activity completed and grant spend. You will also be required to attend two progress calls with Cognition Learning Group. You will also make 2 claims across both reporting periods.

- Sample checks: **10%** of providers will be selected for a audit check. If your organisation is chosen, you will be asked to provide evidence supporting the information provided in your progress report and budget. Examples of supporting documentation could include timesheets to validate recorded mentoring
  activities, salary calculations to justify hourly rates, or documentation produced using grant funding. While these are examples, organisations may have their own methods of recording activity, and any documentation that supports your report and use of grant funding is welcomed.

- Statement of Grant Usage: All providers will be required to complete a State-ment of Grant Usage, which must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or Finance Director of their organisation and returned to Cognition Learning Group within 28 days of the end of the financial year. The Statement of Grant Usages
  purpose is for providers to certify that grant funds were used for the purposes set out in the Grant Funding Agreement and Grant Offer Letter.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the audit requirements, please contact the TMP Team - tmpenquiries@cognitioneducation.com