Department of Education
www.education-ni.gov.uk

Centre for Educational Excellence & Improvement
Northern Ireland
TransformED



Initial Teacher Education **Bursary Scheme**

INFORMATION FOR BURSARY STUDENTS 2026/27

WHAT IS THE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION BURSARY SCHEME?

The Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Bursary Scheme has been introduced by the Department of Education (the Department) to help increase the uptake of ITE places in key post-primary subjects, with a view to addressing teacher shortages across Northern Ireland.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAMMES AND SUBJECTS

You must be enrolled on an eligible programme and subject at a Northern Ireland Higher Education Institute (HEI) to be considered for the Scheme.

The eligible ITE programmes and subjects are as follows:

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE): One-year postgraduate programmes in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Computing / ICT, Technology & Design, as well as the Irish-medium Enhancement Programme.

Bachelor of Education (BEd): Four-year undergraduate programmes in Mathematics and Technology & Design. The Scheme is administered by the four HEIs in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department.

Individual HEIs will determine eligibility as part of their admissions and enrolment process. Full eligibility criteria and guidance issued to these institutions is available on the Department's website.

HOW TO APPLY

There is no need for a separate application for the Scheme. Having applied for a relevant course, the appropriate HEI will assess and confirm your eligibility.

Once you have completed enrolment, your HEI will then confirm your eligibility to the Department.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Funding awards are fixed at the point of enrolment and are intended to cover the full duration of the ITE programme, subject to you continuing to meet the terms and conditions of the Scheme. In the case of the PGCE, living-cost payments will be made to you monthly in arrears by your HEI.

The funding value for each eligible programme commencing in the 2026/27 academic year is set out below:

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

- Full tuition fees, plus a living allowance of £1,000 per month paid in arrears for 12 months.

Bachelor of Education (BEd)

- Full tuition fees covered for the duration of your programme.

Payments will be suspended if you:

- Withdraw from your course.
- Take a temporary break from your studies that affects your ability to complete the course.
- Defer entry.
- Become ineligible for the bursary.
- Fail the programme.

STUDENT FINANCE

Receiving funding under the Scheme does not prevent you from applying for maintenance support through Student Finance Northern Ireland. Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for a Maintenance Loan or means-tested Maintenance Grant. Further details are available on the Student Finance Northern Ireland website.

Once you receive confirmation that your tuition fees will be covered through the Scheme, you should log into your Student Finance Northern Ireland online account to withdraw any tuition fee loan request you have already made.

PGCE students should note that, for Student Finance purposes, Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training courses are considered undergraduate programmes. Further information is available on the Student Finance Northern Ireland website.

POST-QUALIFICATION SERVICE

In return for any award of funding under the Scheme, you will be required to work as a teacher in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland for a minimum of two years after qualifying. At enrolment, your HEI will ask you to complete a written declaration confirming this.

NON-COMPLIANCE AND RECOUPMENT

The Department reserves the right to recoup the full value of the funding payments made to you if you fail to complete the ITE programme or where the post-qualification teaching commitment is not met, unless:

- You can demonstrate extenuating circumstances.
- There is a documented lack of suitable teaching opportunities within your eligible subject area.

SUMMARY

- The Scheme provides financial support for students studying eligible BEd and PGCE programmes in priority subjects.
- The Scheme provides full tuition fee coverage for eligible students who are awarded funding under the Scheme, with additional living-cost support available for PGCE students awarded funding under the Scheme.
- In return for the funding, recipients must teach in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland for a minimum of two years after qualifying.
- If you are eligible and awarded funding under the Scheme, tuition fee payments will be made automatically to your HEI. For PGCE students, living-cost payments will be paid monthly in arrears through your HEI.
- If you have any questions about your eligibility for the Scheme or how payments will be administered, please contact your HEI in the first instance.