

All enquiries should be directed to: **The TPN Administrator, Blackrock Education Centre, Kill Ave., Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: (01) 236 5000 Fax: (01) 236 5050 Email: tqn@blackrockec.ie**
www.tpnetwork.ie

1. Introduction:

The Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) has developed a scheme to provide supplementary funding to support the work of teacher professional networks generally, including those focusing on subjects and specific programmes. The scheme is now in its 7th year.

2. Objectives: To provide funding in a manner which:

- is coherent, equitable and transparent
- is consistent with national and DES priorities
- supports the continuous professional development of teachers
- complements the continuous professional development work of national programmes, support services, Education Centres and third level colleges
- supports capacity building in the system
- fosters a partnership approach
- reflects levels of planned relevant activities

3. Management of the scheme:

The scheme is centrally managed by a representative Steering Committee. The committee comprises representatives of TES, management and inspectorate; The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST); The Subject Association Representative Group (SARG), The Association of Teachers'/Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI) and Blackrock Education Centre (BEC). BEC provides administrative support to the Steering Committee and to the scheme.

4. Registration Form (TPN 2):

An official register of teacher professional networks has been established. These networks include existing subject associations and new networks. Where a subject or subject area is currently represented by a number of associations, these must come together to register as a network.

A new network must register with the scheme's administrator using TPN 2. An email will be sent to existing networks requesting them to update their contact details.

Each TPN nominates an Education Centre for the purposes of this scheme. The nominated Education Centre will:

- receive approved grants allocated to the TPN
- manage the lodgement and drawdown of funds
- process claims presented by
 - the National Executive
 - payment directly to creditors (to be agreed with nominated Education Centre in advance)
- maintain financial records for audit purposes.

Where a network agrees that its branches will not be required to handle funds in relation to activities it may decide to request the nominated Education Centre to retain the funds. In this instance a branch will not be required to open a bank account and will simply return a signed claim for payment, which has been approved by the National Executive, to the nominated Education Centre.

5. Identification and allocation of overall sum available to a given network:

Funding is centrally allocated by the Steering Committee and administered by Blackrock Education Centre.

The overall sum available to support the work of any particular network is determined by the Steering Committee in accordance with the objectives of the scheme, numbers of students taking a particular subject at Junior and Senior Cycle level and numbers of teachers involved.

Based on the above criteria, funding is made available to a network at one of three levels: 1, 2 or 3:

| Grant for Activities | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
| €3,750 | €7,500 | €15,000 |

6. Appeals in relation to the available funding:

Appeals may be made to the Steering Committee in regard to the overall amount of funding available. These appeals must be made in writing and within two weeks of notification of the sum involved.

7. Determination of actual sum to be made payable to a network:

Funding is made available to a network on receipt of proposals for activities. These proposals are made using TPN 4 (Branch Proposal Form) and 5 (National Network Composite Proposal Form).

Local branches must complete and return an application form (TPN 4) to the relevant National Executive to facilitate the submission of one composite application (TPN 5). The composite application (TPN5) should provide a list of all planned activities, coded, in chronological order, and be accompanied by a copy of each branch proposal (TPN4). Please note that a maximum of 50% of the grant for activities can be allocated to conference expenses.

The following criteria will be used to determine the overall amount available to support the activities of a particular network:

- Capacity of the activities to offer curriculum/programme/network support
- Level of response to national and DES priorities



- Extent to which the activities support the development and maintenance of links with other relevant national agencies, support services and educational institutions. **TPNs are encouraged to consult with the relevant support services and local Education Centres in preparing their proposals.**
- Capacity of the activities to support innovation in the system
- Extent of research focus involved
- Extent to which the activities concerned support capacity building in the system
- Anticipated levels of participation

The National Executive will be required to notify its constituent branches and the nominated Education Centre of the overall amount available to the network and to a particular branch. Branches will then organise their planned activities in the light of this figure and return signed claims (TPN3) to the nominated Education Centre on an ongoing basis. The total amount claimed must not exceed the amount available. The nominated Education Centre will then pay the amount in question to the bank account of the local branch where that exists. Alternatively the Education Centre may be requested to pay the claims directly (see paragraph 4).

8. Support for National Executives:

It is accepted that National Executives incur certain administrative/development costs. These costs might include items such as:

- the production of an e-letter
- the creation of a website
- maintenance of a website
- the acquisition or production of relevant resources
- support for the professional development of the National Executive itself
- meeting expenses
- communication expenses
- liaison with other TPNs.

National Executives are expected to complete a proposal form (TPN 6) outlining anticipated costs in this area. This form should be returned to the TPN Administrator, for the attention of the Steering Committee, by the agreed deadline.

Claims in relation to these costs should be made on an ongoing basis on the appropriate form (TPN 7) and should be supported by invoice/receipt. The budget for this aspect of support is set at a maximum of 50% of the overall amount available to a particular network with a minimum figure of €3,750 available to the smaller TPNs. Proposals and claims must not exceed this National Executive support figure. T&S claims for National Executives must not exceed 40% of total allocation.

| National Executive Grant | | |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
| €3,750 | €3,750 | €7,500 |

9. Services available from Education Centres to support the work of networks:

In addition to acting as the nominated centre for a given TPN, the network of Education Centres generally can provide meeting rooms and Centre facilities locally on request. The following charges will apply:



Centres will

- a. provide meeting rooms free of charge, when these are available, and during normal opening hours
- b. charge €60 for a night opening and €150 for a Saturday opening
- c. charge 5c for black & white A4 photocopying; additional charges will apply for stationery (envelopes, labels etc)

TPNs are requested to clarify the cost of staff time (e.g. mailshots) with Centres in advance. This also applies to the hire of specialist equipment or services (e.g. software installation).

10. Conditions and Quality Assurance:

As these funds come from public monies, activities supported/funded under the scheme must be ‘**open**’ to **all relevant teachers**. Each local branch, in association with the local Education Centre, will therefore be required to notify **all schools** in its catchments area of the planned activity.

An attendance register must be maintained and included with any claim as relevant.

Financial records are maintained by the nominated Education Centres concerned. Local branches of a network may open a bank account (if they do not already have one). They are obliged to submit invoices and receipts, coded according to proposal, in support of any claims made by them. National Executives and branches should maintain and retain all relevant records as these could be subject to audit and examination if required.

If an event requires the payment of lecturer fees or expenses in respect of travel and/or subsistence of participants/lecturers, DES guidelines for such payments will apply in all cases. To comply with Revenue regulations Education Centres are obliged to pay lecturer claims directly; the appropriate deductions will be made at source. Please refer to Appendix 1 in this regard. For claim forms to be used by either lecturers or participants please see Appendices 2 and 3. Your attention is drawn to public service regulations on T&S; in particular please note that the mileage rate reduces after 6437 Kms. Individuals should note that this figure is cumulative and aggregated across all publicly funded activities.

No funding for foreign travel is to be sanctioned for 2011/12. With regards to lecturers coming from abroad their participation must be sanctioned beforehand by the TPN Steering Committee in order to refund TPNs for their expenses.

It is strongly recommended that all events be evaluated and that evaluation forms be retained by the National Executive or local branch of the network as appropriate.

Events/activities will be open to Inspectors of the DES and to TES personnel.

