

Primary Academy Chain Development Grant

Grant letter and claim form

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# Primary Academy Chain Development Grant: grant letter and claim form

Building on the success of the Primary Chain Grant for groups of primary schools converting to academies and forming Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), the Secretary of State has agreed a Primary Chain Development Grant offer to support even more primary schools to realise the benefits of forming strong primary academy chains. A one-off grant of £100,000 will be offered to 3 schools creating a MAT. An extra £10,000 is available for each school joining the new MAT, up to a maximum of an additional £50,000. The grant is available to schools meeting the criteria set out below, subject to availability. Schools will need to have applied to convert and received their Academy Order before their grant is processed.

This grant should fund a 2-year chain development programme. The grant can be claimed by a group of schools (a minimum of 3) setting up a new Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Open and converting academies are also eligible to apply, provided they are setting up a MAT with at least 2 primaries applying to convert (not including a sponsor led school). The MAT must contain a majority of primary Academies. The grant is intended to contribute towards the implementation of new joint processes and structures across the group of schools.

Additional financial support for small primary schools (with under 210 pupils) joining the new MAT is also available through the **Small School Supplement**. Primaries with 100 pupils or less are eligible to apply for £5,000 and those between 100 and 210 pupils are eligible to apply for £2,000. The supplement is intended to provide additional support to the eligible school in meeting expenses associated with the conversion process. For details, see Small Schools Supplement on the DfE website.

The Primary Academy Chain Development Grant builds on the success of the Primary Chain Grant, which has been issued to 230 schools (52 chains) since its introduction in 2012. In June 2013 it was increased from £25K to £50K in response to feedback from schools that the grant was not sufficient; and the criteria was extended to allow open stand-alone academies to form chains with converting primaries.

Schools tell us that they have found the grant helpful in creating the right foundations for success in their first critical months of operation. They were attracted to claiming the grant and converting as chains because:

* they felt it was a good way to broaden the range of expertise and resources available to their member schools. By working flexibly these new academy chains were better able to raise standards and innovate.
* working in clusters helped them to maximise their funding. By stream-lining ‘back office’ functions, pooling procurement and putting in place business managers; - these chains have been able to make their existing funding go further.
* as part of a larger group they have felt better able to manage the impact of leadership and staff changes – enabling them to sustain excellence over time.

The grant has been used to fund business management, HR, licences, training, and IT. Early feedback suggests primaries would like resources to embed and strengthen these arrangements post conversion, especially in relation to director training/support, staff development, continuation of financial expertise, and strengthening collaboration across the chain.

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| --- |
| 1. This grant is paid subject to the [Department for Education Grant Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grant-funding-agreement-terms-and-conditions) as displayed on its website under accordance with the department’s standard terms and conditions. All schools eligible to receive the grant will be required to have received their Academy Order before their grant is processed. The funds can only be used for the establishment of and advancement of the MAT, set out in **Annex A - further information List of objectives for which the grant is being paid**
2. You should retain records to show that the grant has been used for the establishment and advancement of the MAT, for 6 years after the end of the financial year in which the expenditure has taken place. The books and records of the school relating to the claiming and use of grant will be open to inspection by the National Audit Office and representatives of the Secretary of State as and when they may require. You are also required to complete the **Certificate of Expenditure within two years of receipt of the grant (Annex C)**.
3. In the event that the conversion into a MAT does not occur then any unused grant should be repaid to the Secretary of State within 10 working days of notifying us that you are withdrawing your application to convert into a MAT academy chain.
4. In the event that the membership of the MAT should drop below the agreed amount as stated in the grant funding agreement you must notify the Department. Should the other remaining schools still intend to convert into a MAT you may apply to the Secretary of State to keep the remaining grant confirming that it is still to be used for the same purposes as set out above. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis. Should your application be unsuccessful any unused grant should be repaid to the Secretary of State within 10 working days of the Secretary of States decision.
5. When procuring goods and services for the MAT, you are reminded of the requirement to comply with EU and UK procurement law and regulations when appropriate.
6. This grant must only be used for the benefit of the MAT as a whole, and all decisions regarding how the grant is to be spent must be taken in partnership with the rest of the schools also joining the Trust. A signature from each school intending to join the MAT is required before the application can be processed.
7. To accept this offer of funding, please sign both copies of the **PACDG finance claim form (Annex B)** and return a copy to your named contact/project lead at the Department for Education (DfE). Once your application has been approved we would aim to make payment within 14 working days.
8. This Grant Offer Letter, relevant annexes and the Grant Terms and Conditions together make up the Grant Funding Agreement.
9. Any grant paid by the Secretary of State will be paid pursuant to Section 14, Education Act 2002 and will accordingly be paid only in respect of approved expenditure incurred by the MAT for the purpose of the funded activities. This letter must be read in conjunction with the relevant annexes
 |

# Annex A: list of objectives for which the primary chain development grant is being paid

This primary chain development grant provides financial support to enable new clusters of primary schools to build and formalise their partnership, enabling them to achieve their shared vision of improved results, better outcomes and significantly improved standards more quickly. The MAT shall use all reasonable endeavours to achieve these aims.

The Primary Academy Chain Development Grant can be used flexibly over the course of two years.

Examples of its use include:

* covering expenses incurred during the formation and agreement of the chain’s new governance arrangements (i.e. setting up the Multi-Academy Trust);
* recruitment of a school business manager;
* putting in place a new executive leadership model;
* engaging lawyers or education specialists to assist the implementation of new governance structures;
* helping cover some of the costs of consolidating administrative functions across the new chain;
* restructuring and increasing the internal cross chain school improvement and CPD capacity expertise and best practice to bring about improvements in standards across the board;
* reviewing and revising the curriculum offer across the chain;
* funding and planning work to implement flexible deployment of staff across the partner schools.

## Conditions for claiming the Primary Academy Chain Development Grant

A one off payment of £100,000 will be offered to 3 schools creating a MAT. We will then offer an extra £10,000 per school joining the new MAT, up to a maximum of an additional £50,000.

In order to claim the grant, schools must meet the following conditions:

* there must be three or more schools intending to form a MAT
* Open and converting academies applying for the grant must set up a MAT with at least 2 primaries applying to convert (this is over and above any schools within the MAT being sponsored) and contain a majority of primary Academies.
* the group of schools applying to convert can include a secondary school but must include a majority of primary schools (or special schools with primary age pupils) and the grant can only be used for the benefit of the primary schools in the chain;
* the chain must intend to use a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) governance model.
* at least one school in the chain must meet the ‘performing well’ criteria for converting schools, the criteria is on the Department’s website.
* the grant can be used flexibly, as per the examples above, but can only be used for the establishment of and advancement of the MAT as a whole.
* Within one year of receipt your chain will need to:
	+ provide a case study for the Department for Education website and
	+ use your experience to help others. This could include; becoming an academy sponsor; applying for teaching school status; mentoring another group of primaries interested in conversion.

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| In addition, you may find the eligibility table (below) useful to determine if your chain meets the criteria. **All four criteria must be met for the proposal to be eligible.*** Is the proposal to form new MAT or to expand an existing single school MAT?
* Will the proposal create a MAT with a minimum of 3 schools?
* Are the majority of schools in the proposed MAT schools delivering education to children of primary school age?
* Is there a minimum of 2 converters (schools that have applied to convert – not those being sponsored) in the MAT?
 |

If you are unsure, your Department contact/Project Lead will be able to advise.

# Annex B - Claim Form for Primary Academy Chain Development Grant

|  |
| --- |
| Please read and complete the information below. When you have completed the form, please return a copy to your named contact/project lead at the Department for Education. |

## Declaration:

As representative of [insert name of new MAT] I have read both the Grant Offer Letter and associated annexes, and the Department for Education Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions supplied. I agree to comply with the notified conditions of the grant on which the offer is made.

I confirm the grant will be used for the following deliverables:

* To cover expenses incurred during the formation and agreement of our chain’s new governance arrangements (i.e. setting up the Multi Academy Trust)
* To help cover some of the costs of consolidating administrative functions across our new chain.
* To fund planning work to implement flexible deployment of our staff across your partner schools

|  |
| --- |
| **Signed by a person authorised to sign on behalf of your overall MAT**  |
| **Name (please print)** |  |
| **Signature** |  | **Date**  |  |
| **Position in organisation** |  |
| **Telephone no.** |  | **Email address** |  |
| **School Address** |  |

Additional information and consents: MAT partners

Please complete the table below for each school in the chain

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School name & address | Phase  | Headteacher | Signature  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Bank account details of the designated claimant school

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bank account name** |  |
| **Sort code** |  |
| **Account number** |  |

# Annex C – Certification of Expenditure

Certification of Primary Academy Chain Development Grant Expenditure for financial year 2014-2016 (two years)



[*Insert date*]

**Re: Annual Certification of Expenditure**

Dear Sirs,

**Re: Annual Certification of Primary Chain Development Expenditure for Financial Year 2014-15 and 2015-2016**

| **Insert name of new MAT** | **Amount Claimed** | **Details of actual expenditure** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |

I [*insert name*] confirm/certify that the above entries are accurately stated and have been spent for the purposes intended and in line with any notified conditions of grant. I also confirm that there are no adverse comments in either the (**insert name of new MAT**) accounts or in any reports issued by (insert name of new MAT) auditors relating to regularity, propriety and/or fraud with regards to this expenditure.

Yours faithfully,

[Signed by independent auditor/accountant appointed by the MAT (this is to be signed off at the end of the grant period)]

**Signature:**

**Name (please print):**

**Date:**

[*Insert signature / print name in full of policy lead/grant manager*]



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