



THE NEW CITB GRANTS SCHEME CHANGES

**An outline of the current
position, as viewed by Tony
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THE NEW CITB GRANTS SCHEME

An Explanation!

CITB have made massive changes to the Training Grant Scheme and although they have tried to explain the ramifications through workshops, their website and direct mail, as at today there are still a lot of people who do not understand what is going on (even at the CITB!), many queries about the detail, that remain unanswered and changes being made to changes.

However, the framework is in place and we will give our views on both what CITB have changed, their reasoning and how you might want to look at the way that you manage your training in future to ensure that you are maximising your training spend – which may not mean maximising Grants.

We need to mention that these are our personal opinions based on a lot of research, attendances at meetings, conversations, discussion and evaluation and they are not the views of the CITB.

There are still many decisions that CITB have to make, some on new matters and some as they review what they have announced in the light of feedback from various sources and so the current position will almost certainly alter in time. If you have signed up for this information booklet, we will update you as these decisions are announced.

PREVIOUS GRANT POSITION

You will either have been on a Training Plan and thereby claim everything that can be called ‘training’ for everyone in your organisation (but you did have to fill in databases, prepare reconciliations and final accounts), or you will have made Grant claims as and when you complete training via ‘A’ Claims.

These claims will either have been made by you, or in the case of things like CPCS or the Site Safety Plus titles (e.g. SMSTS or SSSTS), by the accredited training provider.

Where there were technical or professional qualifications (such as NVQs, BTEC, HNC or Degrees) there were Achievement Grants that had to be claimed by you.

Apprenticeships were either be managed by CITB and payments made direct to you, or they are managed by another provider (e.g. a college) when you had to register them under the YNET scheme, after which payments were made directly to you.

Some of this has been changed, some has been retained and some totally new rules have been introduced.

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE NEW SCHEME

CITB say that:

“employers of all sizes have issues with the current Grants Scheme in terms of what it supports, the complexity of the mechanism to claim grants and the need for it to provide greater support to help industry deal with skills gaps and shortages”.

We aren't so sure!

Under the Training Plan method of claiming, whilst it was somewhat complicated, at least you could claim for every item of training for all staff and NET CIS sub-contractors. This will no longer be possible - so how can there be an 'issue' as to 'what it (the Grant Scheme) supports'?

Yes, there has been a bit of complexity in claiming Grants but whilst some will be claimed in the same manner as now (e.g. Apprenticeships), all short duration courses (see later) claims have changed.

Despite CITB saying initially that employers wouldn't have to do any admin this has changed slightly in that there is some initial registering to do if you want your Grants.

Generally, Grants will be paid direct, thereby alleviating the burden for organisations making the claim themselves but the training providers will have to do all of the admin - (and see 'ATOs' - later).

As for the need to provide greater support to address the skills gap, as you will see later, CITB are restricting the courses that will receive Grant to those which they feel are not transferable to any other industry.

So, because they are not construction specific, many of the basic subjects like fire safety, manual handling, PPE and first aid courses will not attract Grant (although the latter will be paid to very small organisations). By doing this CITB think that they are helping with the industry skills gap!

THE MAIN CHANGES

Grants:

As from 1st April 2018, Training Plans will no longer exist.

The 10% Supplementary Grant that has been given out for several years and which was payable if an organisation had dealt with its Levy on time, has also ceased, except where an Apprentice had been taken on prior to 1st April 2018, when it will continue until the end of the Apprenticeship.

Grants will be payable for direct employees and all types of sub-contractors (although there are bound to be criteria for identifying the latter e.g. numbers on your Levy Return and, as at present, having to show proof that they worked for you at the time of the training).

Apprenticeships:

So far as Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships are concerned, CITB will continue to deal with them in the same manner as previously and payments (at the same rates as 2017-18) will continue. They will still only be paid to 'In-scope' organisations (i.e. those who work in construction) and must be construction related.

The definition of what type of work is 'construction related' is fixed and there are some anomalies, such as 'conservation' and 'property maintenance' not being included. However, this is still a 'work in progress' for CITB.

Work Placements:

Grants will continue for work placements of people undertaking construction-related Degrees e.g. for the 'year out' placement that many courses require. This will have to be claimed by the Levy Payer itself and there are strict rules as to when and how the claim is made.

Qualifications:

There are some changes to this aspect of Grant which need to be understood.

Grants will be paid on achievement and the qualification will have to be construction related (as above). There will be two categories - Short Period and Extended Period Qualifications. There is also a complex means of deciding whether a qualification attracts Grant.

Short Period ones will be those that last less than a year and where a person has to do less than 30 days classroom or course work. There will be no Grant for attendance.

The longer-term qualifications will be those that will take more than 12 months and require a minimum of 30 days classroom or course work. It appears that there will be Grant for attendance on some courses but full details are yet to be announced.

There is yet no list of what the actual qualification titles will be.

Short Duration Courses (also called 'Assured Products')

The massive change is to the way that short duration courses are to be delivered and the way that Grants are paid - and this is where we feel that there will be some complex economic decisions that organisations will have to make if they wish to maximise their training spend.

The reasoning behind the change is that:

“(CITB wish) to increase the standardisation and transferability of training in the UK Construction Industry, which will improve the benefit of funded training to employers and individuals. This will enable CITB to target funding on the training areas of most impact and importance to the construction industry and reduce wasted effort and spend on duplicated training of the employee.”

We won't waste time giving our opinion on whether this new scheme is likely to achieve this!

CITB have identified anything between 350 and 500 subjects (exact number yet to be seen) for which they have, or will, produce 'Standards' and these will be the only courses that will attract Grant.

These 'Standards' will be for every subject on their list and they will consist of a two-page document that outlines everything that must be adhered to, in order to deliver the subject (and receive Grant), including duration, purpose, what the instructor must have by way of qualifications or experience, the type of delivery required be it classroom, On Site Assessment, distance or e-learning (but see later), the quality assurance requirements and the learning outcomes.

CITB are devising these 'Standards' for all subjects on their list, although, logically some may say, in cases where there are already bona-fide accreditation bodies (e.g. CPCS or CISRS for

scaffolding) they have accepted their processes and it is likely that many other accredited courses (such as NPORS) will be adopted. This is still a work in progress.

There are still a vast amount of subjects for which CITB are developing the 'Standards' and some anomalies within these Standards. They all state a minimum time for a classroom course but then then allow e-learning which, in all circumstances, takes far less time than classroom courses and so won't meet the Standard! These anomalies are still being brought to the attention of CITB and decisions will have to be made on them.

There are 4 levels ('Tiers') of Grant payment, all paid on achievement (so there is no attendance element any more). The decision as to what Tier a course comes under is made by CITB using another complex process but is related to the duration and complexity.

Grant for Tier 1 (½ - 1½ days) will be £30, Tier 2 (2-3 days) £70, Tier 3 (4 -5 days) £120 and no courses have yet been allocated Tier 4 (6+ days) and no amount set.

The other major change is that Grant will only be payable on these Assured Products (short duration courses) if they are delivered by an 'Approved Training Organisation' (ATO). This means that, if your preferred trainer is not an ATO, you will not receive Grant.

ATOs

This is where we perceive that there are going to be problems and some economic decisions will have to be made by organisations.

There are three type of training that an ATO can apply to deliver:-

- Assured Products (short duration courses)

- Existing CITB Products(e.g. Site Safety Plus (SMSTS or SSSTS) or CPCS)

- Third Party Recognised Products (e.g. City & Guilds)

Accredited providers who deliver existing CITB products will automatically be approved as an ATO if they apply.

In-house training departments can apply, provided that they are not offering commercial training (i.e. external people pay to come on their courses) and they can offer Assured or Recognised courses. There will be no fee for them to become Approved but they must offer the 'Standard' courses if they want to attract Grant.

Lastly, a commercial training provider who wishes to deliver Assured Products (short duration courses) will have to apply for Approval.

Any Short Duration Courses (using the 'Standards'), if delivered by an ATO will attract Grant but only these - no other short duration type training will attract Grant. It will be the ATO who has to deal with the administration, follow all of the quality requirements and abide by the Standard of a course.

Levy Payer has to register with CITB for on-line services in order to receive Grants.

The ATO is responsible for uploading all of the course and delegate details that are required by the CITB system and so, if there are any mistakes, the Levy Payer will not actually know until they receive a payment and have to cross check it.

ATOs will be required to go through a lot of 'hoops' to be Approved. The current criteria run into 27 different sections including requirements for various policies, quality management systems, resources, documentation and processes for registering courses, registration and treatment of participants and recording.

For each course, ATOs will have to register it, input the details of the participants including various personal information of delegates (there is still no guidance on whether this might include NI numbers, or dates of birth for some courses and some queries as to Data Protection considerations), report on outcomes and make the Grant claim. As well as going through the hoops mentioned, the annual fee for an ATO will be £750 p.a.

It is our view that this will increase the cost of training, as providers will have to cover the time spent on the additional administration, as well as the registration fee and we have already seen this happening.

It is also our view that many smaller training organisations will not wish to undertake the complex requirements that CITB set to become an ATO and so they will not bother.

Therefore, if you wish to use your preferred, non ATO, supplier because they are cheap, or you don't want a 3 hour course when a one hour would do, you will not be able to receive Grant.

The Construction Training Register

<https://myportal.citb.co.uk/learner/>

This is designed to be an online register maintained by CITB that will hold a record of individuals' construction training courses, qualifications and achievements. Over time it is hoped that it will build a comprehensive picture of skills training across Great Britain.

CITB are also proposing that employers will be able to check the skills and competence of their workforce and new recruits, helping to confirm they have the right skills and improve productivity. You will need to be registered for CITB on-line services to access the site.

However, it will only contain details of training that is approved by CITB (e.g. CITB Approved courses or the Assured Products short duration courses) and so any other training will not be recorded.

CITB have said that, for Data Protection purposes, the employer will have to get the consent of the person, to check their records and as that person will have their own log-in, they will have to give this to the employer who wants to check.

The site is now on-line but there are some teething problems!

The Construction Training Directory

<http://www.citbni.org.uk/Training/Approved-Courses.aspx>

This is also on-line now. The objective is that it will be a searchable online directory of construction training courses, tests and qualifications delivered by ATOs or providers of qualifications etc to the defined training standards. Employers will be able to search a provider, based on location, price and timing, making it easy to select a course that best meet their needs.

Our reading of what they want to provide is that it will be similar to websites such as Easybook Training or BookMyCourse, although CITB will not be acting as a broker. ATOs will merely upload their courses and therefore have a marketing tool at their disposal.

The site is up and running but it doesn't seem to be fully developed yet as when you search for a subject, you merely get the names of providers who deliver that course but then have to click the name to get what may, or may not, have a link to their website. If it does, you have to go to that to book.

The geographical search is also a little awry as you can search for a course based in London and get courses in Manchester. This is all being worked on to make improvements.

Economic Considerations

Undoubtedly, there will be concern over costs. As an example, the following might occur:-

Up until now, you have used your preferred trainer to deliver Abrasive Wheels refresher training. It takes 2 hours - so no Grant is payable under the existing scheme as the Standard is for a 3 hour course. It costs you £200 for 5 people, or £40 a person.

From 1st April, you can claim £30 a person for this training but it will mean that you have to use an ATO and it has to last the 3 hours.

The ATO may charge £300 to cover the additional work and time required of them - so £60 a person - but the Grant reduces that to £30 net cost per person.

Sounds like a good deal? But will that £30 cover the extra hour of wages? Will it cover the extra hour of lost production? Does it cover the admin required from you? So, would it be more economic to maintain your existing non-ATO, or to go with an ATO?

There is also the argument that basic courses that can be done through e-learning at say £25 per person and which take 45 minutes, are far more economical than classroom courses and so the Grant is virtually unnecessary.

We have no doubt that, to maximise your training spend, there will be a multitude of decisions that have to be made as to where and how to buy in training. It will no longer just be an exercise to locate best value providers, or negotiate rates, it will be a more complex (and time-consuming) exercise.

How We Can help You

Helmsman Services have been managing the training for construction companies for nearly 20 years and for many years we have also been running two large CITB funded Regional Training Groups.

As such, we have an in-depth knowledge of the subject and one which we do not think that any other outsource provider can match.

There may be training companies who say that they can manage and do the administration for your training but, in the end, they want to tie you in to using their courses.

Our Training Management service is totally independent ('vendor neutral') as we do not deliver training, nor do we earn anything from organising it, and so you will always get the best, most economic solution for your needs.

We have just produced a package with various levels of support (see overleaf) that will give you the peace of mind that you are making the right economic decisions and it can also take away part, or all, of the burden of basic admin from you.

These packages are totally flexible as we want to work with you in the way that you want us to, not dictate to you what we will do.

For further information about how we can help you, please contact Tony Willson

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PEACE OF MIND TRAINING SUPPORT PACKAGES

Annual contracts give you the peace of mind that all of your training requirements can be supported
Simply select one of the following annual packages to suit your business, or call us for a chat

12 months of cover for your training requirements	ADVICE £60 p.m.	SUPPORT from £100 p.m.	FULL SERVICE from £150 p.m.
A 'Help Line' to our experienced Training Co-ordinators whenever you have a question about any aspect of your training and development, CITB Grants or accreditation applications*			
Regular e-mails that will keep you up-to-date with best practice, CITB changes and legislation updates			
Advice on strategic approaches to statutory training requirements, and best practice, for new and existing employees and sub-contractors			
Signposting the best places to find training courses and calculating whether it is economically practical to use CITB Approved Training Organisations, or not			
All of the above plus a consultation on your current requirements to identify the most effective, efficient and cost-effective ways to deliver training	-		
Obtaining competitive quotes for your training requirements and reporting to you (taking away the need for you to search and negotiate these)	-		
Dealing with all of the administration of your training courses. Booking courses that you require, including making arrangements with provider and venues and contracting with them on your behalf.	-	-	
Providing all pre-course paperwork to provider and your delegates including Signing in Sheet, Delegate List, Joining Instructions etc	-	-	
Obtaining post-course paperwork, checking Certificates and forwarding to you, checking Evaluations and taking up any matters with provider	-	-	
Providing training data for PPQs or Tenders, S106 Agreements, CRM requirements, CHAS or other applications and approvals	-	-	
Keeping records, advising on expiries, advising you on budget spend, ensuring that CITB Grant is paid correctly, supplying monthly reports, providing individual and company training records	-	-	