

Frequently Asked Questions

Link: <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/faq.cfm>

Dual-Training Basics

1. What is a dual-training program?

Dual training is an earn-while-you-learn approach where the employer invests in their employee by providing training in competency-based work skills and related instruction. For an employee to qualify for a dual-training program, they must: (1) be employed by the participating dual training employer and, (2) be accepted into the employer's dual-training program that meets industry competency standards for a specific occupation. What does related instruction look like?

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Related instruction is structured learning provided by a qualified related instruction training provider to a dual trainee. Examples of related instruction training providers could include but are not limited to higher education institutions and private learning companies. Instruction may be delivered via classroom, online/distance, onsite, or in various combinations. Instruction must be instructor-led.

3. What does on-the-job training look like?

On-the-job training is administered by an employer to a dual trainee through modes of job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation, and discussion-based training. A dual trainee must make progress towards the occupation-specific competencies through on-the-job training, as outlined by MN Dual-Training Pipeline. Information about competencies must be included in applicable documents. Employer and dual trainee(s) will agree on terms related to how many hours per week worked. Employer must pay dual trainee for time spent in on-the-job training. If selected for a grant, more detailed information about on-the-job training will be collected through a work plan and budget document.

4. Can I, as an employer, be a qualified related instruction training provider?

YES. An employer may be a related instruction training provider if qualified by grant standards and has authority to grant industry recognized degrees, certificates, or credentials. The related instruction trainer cannot be the same as the on-the-job training supervisor.

5. Does the state have a list of approved related instruction training providers that can provide training for the DTG?

YES. The MN Dual-Training Pipeline maintains a Related Instruction Inventory online for each industry. The inventory includes known education or training programs related to eligible dual-

training occupations; however, employers may utilize a related instruction training provider not currently on the list. Grant applicants are responsible for following training provider selection procedures as detailed in the grant request for application. Applicants must enter into agreements with related instruction training provider(s) prior to applying for the grant.

6. Can I use part of the grant money for administrative expenses, including wages?

NO. The grant can only be used to reimburse for the cost of related instruction. Neither grantee nor the related instruction training provider may charge administrative expenses to the grant. The Office of Higher Education will make grant payments, on a reimbursement basis, directly to the grantee.

7. Can we be reimbursed for on-the-job training?

NO. Grant funds can only reimburse grantee for related instruction costs.

8. Must the dual trainee enroll in a minimum amount of credits each quarter/semester?

NO. There is no minimum, but a dual trainee may only use the grant for up to four years; therefore, the dual trainee should plan to finish the program within that timeframe. In addition, future funding is contingent upon available funding.

9. We work with a related instruction training provider that bills our company after the training is complete. How will they receive payment?

The grantee will directly pay the related instruction training provider in full. Then, the grantee will request reimbursement from the grant. Reimbursement requests are due to the Office of Higher Education within 30 days of the end of the term or course, whichever is later.

10. How does reimbursement work?

Grantee pays related instruction costs and submits a reimbursement request to the Office of Higher Education. Reimbursement requests include, at minimum, (1) Invoice, (2) Course Document and (3) Payment confirmation that the grantee paid related instruction costs. If applicable, the grantee needs to indicate any 25%+ match that the grantee will contribute. The Office of Higher Education will review documents and grantees must respond and complete follow-up items within 60 days of requesting reimbursement. Upon reimbursement request approval, the Office of Higher Education will send funds directly to the grantee via electronic transfer or check. If a grantee does not have sufficient funds to pay related instruction costs, please contact the Office of Higher Education.

11. Will we be penalized for an employee who leaves our employment while receiving this grant?

NO. Any related instruction costs incurred prior to a dual trainee ending employment, can be requested from the grant.

12. What if related instruction will cost less than \$6,000 per dual trainee?

Applicants are encouraged to work with related instruction training providers to keep costs manageable. Applicants are welcome to train more dual trainees for less cost as long as the applicant has capacity to administer the grant.

13. Can we use the grant for current high school students, instead of high school graduates?

YES. The students must still meet the other qualifications, including be employed by an employer in one of the four recognized industries, and receive an industry recognized degree, certificate, or credential at the end of the training. For the related instruction to be covered by DTG funds, the employer must incur a cost. If the dual trainee's cost of training is paid for under Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) or another concurrent enrollment program, then there will be no cost to the employer; hence, no Dual Training Grant funds.

14. Are we penalized if we apply and are granted funds for 10 dual trainees, but only end up identifying 8 dual trainees?

NO. Any unused funds will be reallocated back into the Dual Training Grant fund for future grant cycles. However, to ensure the most possible amount of applicants who can benefit from the funds, applicants are encouraged to make an educated decision on the number of dual trainees.

15. What information will you make public? Can you explain what information you will share about the employer, related instruction training provider, and dual trainee?

Applicant name and address become public upon submission of grant application. Once an application is approved, most grantee information becomes public, including the application and training agreement. Grantee financial records (not directly associated with the grant) and trade patents remain confidential. In addition, all identifiable information about dual trainees remains private and **will not** be available to the public. The only two exceptions would be if the Legislative Auditor requested dual trainee information or if there is an exception made in statute.

Application

16. What if my company would like to apply for a Dual Training Grant, but our occupations are not on the list?

An applicant must choose from the validated MN Dual-Training Pipeline occupation list. The MN Dual-Training Pipeline Team has identified and published information online about industries and occupations approved for this grant cycle. If an applicant is currently working with the MN Dual-Training Pipeline Team to establish a new occupation, the applicant should contact the Office of Higher Education to determine if the applicant is eligible during this grant cycle. In addition, if potential applicants would like to begin working with the MN Dual-Training Pipeline Team to establish a new occupation, please send an email to PIPELINE.Program@state.mn.us.

17. How do I apply for the grant if I have dual trainees from multiple occupations?

If an applicant has employees among different occupations, then the applicant will list all occupations on the application. If an applicant has employees among different industries, then the applicant will need to submit one application per industry.

18. Can I apply as an organization on behalf of several employers?

YES. A membership or partnership organization can apply. The organization will be responsible for submitting all grant documents, collecting grant data, and facilitating financial procedures. An organization will want to be sure to have permission from employers to collect personally identifiable information about dual trainees.

19. We would like to work with multiple related instruction training providers. If so, what is the proper process to use?

Applicants may enter into agreements with more than one related instruction training provider. A training agreement document must be completed for each related instruction training provider and included in the application.

20. Who completes the Training Agreement?

The training agreement document is completed by both the applicant and related instruction training provider. The agreement is submitted with the application by the applicant.

21. Can we submit our application early to ensure all steps are complete?

YES. Applicants can submit application content early to the Office of Higher Education. This is encouraged, because if the application is not complete, the Office of Higher Education will not progress the application to the review committee. Note, early submission of an application will not result in an early score or granting of award.

22. How do we submit the application?

The application is available online unless the applicant contacts the Office of Higher Education for an alternative format. Supporting and applicable application documents can be mailed, faxed, or emailed to the Office of Higher Education. If emailing, documents should be in a Word doc or PDF format.

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St. Paul, MN 55108
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23. If indicated on the forms, do we have to provide an ink-signature?

YES. The only document that requires an ink-signature is the Letter of Intent. Once the document is signed, the applicant can scan and email the letter.

Eligible Dual Trainees

24. Can I apply if I plan to use new hires for the dual-training program?

YES. The Office of Higher Education will ask for further information prior to allowing dual trainees to begin training through the work plan and budget document and dual trainee release form. New hires can be added to the grant anytime during the grant contract dates. Ideally, grantees should have already hired or be in the process of hiring the employees who will be trained with the use of DTG funds.

25. Is this grant only for new hires?

NO. You may submit an application that includes new hires as well as incumbent workers. However, the Office of Higher Education must give priority to applications that include dual trainees who recently graduated from high school or earned a GED.

26. What happens if I have more dual trainees that need training or want to apply again?

Applicants are welcome to train more dual trainees as long as the applicant has capacity to administer the grant. Employers must apply each year, if they plan to continue training for dual trainees beyond the contract dates. Each dual trainee can participate in the Dual Training Grant for up to four years.

27. Will we need to provide the names of the dual trainees as part of the application?

NO. If awarded funds, grantee will need to provide more detailed dual trainee information prior to signing the grant contract.

28. Can an employer offer employment contingent upon the completion of related instruction?

NO. Dual trainees benefiting from Dual Training Grant must be current and active employees. Completion of related instruction cannot be a contingency for future employment.

29. Can the dual trainee participating in the dual-training program be an intern rather than a full-time employee?

YES, in regard to a student taking an internship course for academic credit. The internship could be paid or unpaid but if the Dual Training Grant is being used to reimburse for the internship credit cost, then it is considered related instruction. As a result, the grantee would still need to compensate (via wages) the dual trainee for time spent in on-the-job training.

30. Can a dual trainee be temporary or part-time, or does the grant only apply to full-time employees?

A dual trainee may be temporary (example: intern), but they must be employed for the duration of the training. A contractor or temporary employee that is either independent or from a staffing agency is not eligible for grant funds. A dual trainee may be employed part-time. There is no minimum hours per week required to participate in the grant. However, related instruction and on-the-job training must coincide within the same timeframe, so an employee only working a few weeks out of the year would not qualify.

31. Does the dual trainee have to attend related instruction during regular work hours?

NO. Dual trainees can attend related instruction during and/or outside regular work hours. On-the-job training must be done during regular work hours.

32. Are there any requirements about my company being based in Minnesota?

NO. Although the Office of Higher Education will consider granting to non-Minnesota based businesses, permanent and physical work location of the dual trainee must be in Minnesota. If a dual trainee is re-located to a location outside of the state, the grantee will no longer be eligible to receive funding from this grant for that dual trainee.

33. Does the dual trainee need to be a Minnesota resident?

NO. The main requirement is the permanent work location of the dual trainee must physically be in Minnesota.

34. How much time does a dual trainee have to complete related instruction to qualify for the grant?

If an employer continuously applies for the grant and is awarded, a dual trainee can be part of the grant for up to 4 years. By submitting a grant application, an employer is acknowledging that the related instruction will result in an industry recognized degree, certificate, or credential by the end of the dual-training program. In some instances, a student may obtain several degrees, certificates, and/or credentials throughout the dual-training program.

35. What happens if the dual trainee drops the course and does not complete the training?

If the related instruction training provider issues a refund for the course and the grantee has already receive reimbursement from the Dual Training Grant, the grantee will need to return funds to the Office of Higher Education.

36. What if we terminate the dual trainee or they quit the position while attending the training program?

The dual trainee is no longer eligible to be part of the DTG. Grantee may submit a new and similar dual trainee as a replacement. The new dual trainee will only be able to utilize Dual Training Grant funds that were not already spent by the prior dual trainee. For example, Dual Trainee A had \$2,500 in related instruction paid for through the Dual Training Grant. Dual Trainee A's employment was terminated half way through the grant cycle. Dual Trainee B replaced Dual Trainee A and has up to \$3,500 in Dual Training Grant funds to use until the end of the grant cycle.

37. Must every dual trainee submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or state financial aid application?

NO. Only dual trainees attending a Federal Pell Grant or state financial aid eligible institution must submit a FAFSA or state financial aid application. Depending upon the timing of the grant cycle, dual trainees may have to submit two FAFSAs or state financial aid applications to cover both aid years.

To find out if dual trainees will be attending a Federal Pell Grant eligible school, please use the look up tool located https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/schoolSearch?locale=en_EN

To find out if dual trainees will be attending a state financial aid eligible school, please review the list of participating schools <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/stateGrantSchools.cfm>

38. We were awarded a Dual Training Grant during a prior grant cycle, so can we reapply with the same students?

YES. Dual Training Grant funds can be used for related instruction costs of a dual trainee for up to four years.

39. Are there tax implications for my business participant in the grant?

The Office of Higher Education is not authorized to provide tax advice to employers. Employers should consult a tax professional about how this grant may impact the filing of taxes and the reporting of employee wages.

Process Questions

40. Who will make the decisions on the grant awards?

The Office of Higher Education in collaboration with the MN Dual-Training Pipeline Team will ensure that applicants meet all eligibility and minimum requirements prior to full review of applications. A review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications. The committee remains anonymous and is composed of state agency and industry specialists with regional content knowledge who do not have a conflict of interest with applicants. The Office of Higher Education will grant the final awards based upon eligibility, minimum requirements, and review scores.

41. If I apply and am not selected for an award, is there a process for appeal?

NO. The decisions of the Office of Higher Education are final and cannot be appealed.

42. Will I be able to see the scores of the review committee?

YES. Applicants and grantees will be sent application scores and comments.

43. If I am selected for an award, what are the reporting requirements?

Grantees must submit reports containing data elements identified by the Office of Higher Education (similar to work plan and budget document elements). If a grant award is \$50,000 or more, the grantee must also participate in a monitoring visit each year. Failure to meet reporting and monitoring requirements will impact grant reimbursement and future grant eligibility.

Credentialing

44. Can Dual Training Grant funds be used for National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) credentialing, including the incurred expenses?

YES. Grantee may utilize grant funds for upcoming NIMS credential training in eligible occupations that result in NIMS credentials.

45. Can Dual Training Grant funds be used for “Test Out” or “Prior Learning Credit” fees?

NO. The Office of Higher Education can only reimburse for the cost of training associated with competency standards that have not been attained. Therefore, “Test Out” and “Prior Learning

Credit” fees are not eligible for reimbursement, because the dual trainee has already attained the competency standards.

46. Can Dual Training Grant funds be used to maintain a certification that was previously attained but requires continuous education and certification?

NO. The Office of Higher Education will only reimburse for the cost of training that leads to the primary or original industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential.

47. Does the dual-training program need to result in a credential at the end of the program?

YES. The related instruction must result in an industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential at the end of the training. This is an eligibility requirement of the grant. The credential is the result at the end of the dual-training program, which may or may not be at the end of the grant cycle.

48. Does an exam leading to a credential need to be through the same related instruction training provider who provides the related instruction?

.To be an eligible related instruction training provider, the provider must be able to provide both the related instruction and grant the industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential. In limited cases, an exam outside of the training provider may be approved for reimbursement. Contact the Office of Higher Education for more details.

49. Can Dual Training Grant funds be used toward a certificate of completion?

NO. Dual Training Grant funds cannot be used toward professional development, continuing education credits, certificate of completion, or individual courses. Dual Training Grant funds can only be used toward programs by which an authoritative institution grants industry-recognized degrees, certificates, or credentials by means of organized related instruction.

Employer Match

50. Can I pay the required employer match in form of wages or other in-kind contributions?

NO. A grantee must pay the employer match of at least 25% of the cost of related instruction directly to the related instruction training provider. Cost of related instruction includes tuition/fees and required book/materials.

51. For the 25% employer paid portion, can we use our allocated tuition reimbursement and/or scholarship funds or do we need to pay this directly and not as a result of any other program?

YES. Grantee may use a tuition reimbursement program, but only if those funds are paid directly to the related instruction training provider. The dual trainee cannot pay for the 25% of the cost of training and then you reimburse them for that money. Funds must be paid directly to the related instruction training provider. If the grantee pays the 25% employer match, the grantee will need to show a breakdown of costs when requesting reimbursement from the grant.