

FAQ

FAQ based upon current Minnesota Statute [136A.246](#) Dual Training Grant

Questions? Contact Jacquelynn Mol Sletten, Office of Higher Education at (651) 355-0609 or jacquelynn.mol.sletten@state.mn.us.

Terms:

OHE: Office of Higher Education

DLI: Department of Labor and Industry

DTG: Dual Training Grant

RFA: Request for Application

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Dual-Training Basics

1. What is a dual-training program?

A dual-training program is a structured educational system for an employee that follows a list of guidelines to improve on-the-job performance, employee occupation credentials, and improve wages. To qualify for a dual-training program, a person must be an employee of a participating employer; and work toward obtaining industry specific competency standards through means of on-the-job training and related instruction.

2. What does related instruction look like?

Related instruction is structured learning provided by a qualified related instruction training provider to a student/employee. 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.

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

On-the-job training is structured supervision, assessment, feedback, and means of improvement administered by an employer to a student/employee. Student/employee must make progress towards the occupation-specific competencies, as outlined in the [Occupational Competency Summaries](#) by DLI. Information about competencies must be included in

applicable documents. Grantee and student/employee(s) will agree on terms related to how many hours per week worked. You must pay your student/employee for time spent in on-the-job training. If selected for a grant, more detailed information about on-the-job training will be collected on the Work Plan and Budget.

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. DLI 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 RFA. Applicants must enter into agreement with related instruction training provider(s) prior to applying for the DTG.

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. OHE will make grant payments, on a reimbursement basis, directly to the grantee.

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

No. DTG funds can only reimburse grantee for related instruction costs.

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

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

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

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

10. How does reimbursement work?

Reimbursement requests include, at minimum, (1) Invoice, (2) Course Document and (3) Payment confirmation that grantee paid 100% of costs. If applicable, be sure to indicate any 25%+ match that grantee will contribute. If grantee does not have sufficient funds to pay the related instruction training provider in full, please contact OHE.

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 student/employee ending employment, can be requested from the grant.

12. What if related instruction will cost less than \$6,000/student?

\$6,000 will be assigned to each student even if costs are less. Any unused funds will be reallocated back into the DTG fund for future grant cycles. In circumstances where an employer would like to train more than 25 students/employees due to related instruction costing less than \$6,000 per student/employee, the employer may indicate the request in the *Letter of Intent* for application. The request may be considered but is not guaranteed.

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 student/employee'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 DTG funds.

14. Are we penalized if we apply and are granted for 10 students/employees, but only end up identifying 8 students/employees?

NO. Any unused funds will be reallocated back into the DTG fund for future grant cycles.

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

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 students/employees remains private and **will not** be available to the public. The only two exceptions would be if the Legislative Auditor requested student/employee information or if there is an exception made in statute.

Application

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

Applicant must choose from the given list. DLI has identified and published information [online](#) about industries and occupations approved for this grant cycle. If applicant is currently working with DLI to establish a new industry and/or occupation, applicant should contact OHE to determine if applicant is eligible during this grant cycle. In addition, if potential applicant would like to begin working with DLI to establish a new industry and/or occupation, please send an email to PIPELINE.Program@state.mn.us.

17. How do I apply for the grant if I have student/employees from multiple occupations?

If applicant has employees among different occupations, then you will list all occupations on the online application.

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

YES. A membership organization can apply. The organization will be responsible for collecting grant data and submitting all grant documents.

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

Applicant may enter into agreement with more than one related instruction training provider. A *Training Agreement* must be completed for each related instruction training provider and included in the application.

20. Who completes the Training Agreement?

The *Training Agreement* 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. Applicant can submit online application and additional application documents early for OHE to verify completeness. This is encouraged, because if the application is not complete, OHE may choose to allow a limited amount of time to submit the missing documents. 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 online application is available online unless applicant contacts OHE for alternative format. Additional application documents can be mailed, faxed, or emailed to OHE. If emailing, documents should be in a Word doc or PDF format.

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

YES. Although most questions on the forms can be typed (which is highly encouraged), there are sections where ink-signatures are required. You can print the documents, sign, scan, and email the documents to OHE. Applications with unsigned documents will be rejected and not reviewed.

Eligible Students/Employees

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

YES. OHE will ask for further information prior to allowing employees to begin training, including completing the Work Plan and Budget and Student/Employee 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, OHE must give priority to applications that include students/employees who recently graduated from high school or earned GED.

26. What happens if I have more student/employees that need training or want to apply again?

In circumstances where an employer would like to train more than 25 students/employees due to related instruction costing less than \$6,000 per student/employee, the employer may indicate the request in the *Letter of Intent* for application. The request may be considered but is not guaranteed. Employers must apply each year, if they plan to continue training for students/employees beyond the contract dates. Each student/employee can participate in the DTG for up to four years.

27. Will we need to provide the names of the student/employees as part of the application?

NO. If awarded funds, grantee will need to provide more detailed student/employee information prior to signing the grant contract.

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

NO. Students/employees benefiting from DTG must be current and active employees. Completion of related instruction cannot be a contingency for future employment.

29. Can the student/employee 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 DTG is being used to reimburse for the internship credit cost, then it is related instruction. As a result, the grantee would still need to compensate (via wages) the student/employee for time spent in on-the-job training.

30. Can an employee be temporary or part time, or does the grant only apply to full-time employees?

A student/employee 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 student/employee 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 employee have to attend related instruction during regular work hours?

NO. Students/employees 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 be based in Minnesota?

NO. Although OHE will consider granting to non-Minnesota based businesses, permanent work location of the student/employee must be in Minnesota. If student/employees is re-located to a location outside of the state, grantee will no longer be eligible to receive funding from this grant for that student/employee's training.

33. Does the student/employee need to be a Minnesota resident?

NO, but the permanent work location of the student/employee must be in Minnesota.

34. How much time does an employee have to complete related instruction to qualify for the grant?

If an employer continuously applies for the grant, an employee 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 certificates or credentials, which would be part of an individualized plan on the Work Plan and Budget.

35. What happens if the student/employee drops the course and does not complete the training?

If the related instruction training provider issues a refund for the course and grantee has already receive reimbursement from the DTG, grantee will need to return funds to OHE.

36. What if we terminate the student/employee or they quit the position while attending the training program?

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

37. Must every student/employee submit a FAFSA or MN Dream Act application?

NO. Only students/employees attending a Federal Pell Grant or MN State Grant eligible institution must submit a FAFSA or MN Dream Act application. Depending upon the timing of the grant cycle, students/employees may have to submit two FAFSAs or MN Dream Act applications to cover both aid years.

To find out if student/employees 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 student/employees will be attending a MN State Grant eligible school, please review the list of participating schools

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

FAFSA: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

MN Dream Act application: <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2065#instructions>

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

YES. DTG funds can be used for related instruction costs of a student/employee for up to four years.

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

OHE 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?

OHE in collaboration with DLI 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. OHE 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 OHE are final and cannot be appealed.

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

YES. Applicants and grantees may request review scores by sending an email to pipeline.project@state.mn.us, but only after OHE has announced final decisions on grant awards.

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

Grantees must submit reports containing data elements identified by OHE (similar to Work Plan and Budget data elements). If a grant award is \$50,000 or more, the grantee will 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 DTG funds be used for NIMS (National Institute for Metalworking Skills) credentialing, including the incurred expenses?

YES. Grantee may utilize grant funds for upcoming NIMS credential training in eligible occupations, but not for prior training. OHE will only reimburse for the cost of training that the student/employee has not attained the competency standard prior to the commencement of the grant. As a reminder, DTG cannot be used for administrative expenses.

45. 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.

Employer Match

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

NO. Grantee must pay an employer match of at least 25% of the cost of related instruction directly to the related instruction training provider. Cost of related instruction includes (1) tuition/fees and (2) required book/materials.

47. 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 student/employee 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 grantee pays the 25% employer match, grantee will need to show a breakdown of costs when requesting reimbursement from the grant.