

May 2015

Re: Provision of €7m for the supply of software and hardware to schools for use in Design and Communications Graphics.

Dear Principal,

The Minister for Education and Skills Jan O’Sullivan T.D. announced on 15th October 2014 the provision of €7m for the supply of software and hardware to schools for use in Design and Communications Graphics (DCG).

I now write to inform you that block grants for all ETB schools will be paid directly to their respective Educational Training Boards under this scheme.

The Department had originally proposed that funding would be based on average candidate numbers who sat DCG in the Leaving Certificate between 2012 and 2014 plus funding for one additional computer for teaching purposes in the DCG Department. However, due to numerous representations from Education Partners and schools indicating an increase in the numbers of students studying DCG, the grant amounts will be calculated as follows: 3 year average of 2012 to 2014 or 4 year average of 2012 to 2015, plus funding for one additional computer for teaching purposes in the DCG Department. Funding will be awarded on whichever is the higher of the two averages. Funding is based on a grant of €1,150 per computer.

As the Department is providing public funding, schools or Educational Training Boards **should** purchase the computers from the successful suppliers, via the Departments drawdown facility. This drawdown facility was put in place following a public procurement competition which included comprehensive testing and evaluation. The computers are specially customised to meet the demands of running SolidWorks in a classroom environment and achieved the highest score in a public tender competition coordinated by the Department of Education and Skills and involving PDST, the State Examinations Commission (SEC), the Inspectorate, a number of highly experienced DCG teachers/practitioners and PDST Technology in Education.

Desktop

The Fujitsu Celsius 530 Mini Tower PC is the approved computer for Irish schools. The approved supplier is ‘SmartSchools’, (www.smartschools.ie). The cost for the Mini Tower PC is €1,135.02 incl VAT.

Notebook

The Lenovo Thinkpad W541 is the approved Notebook for Irish schools. The approved supplier is ‘PC Peripherals’, (www.pcp.ie). The cost for the Notebook is €1,351.77 incl VAT.

Full details on how to order the Mini Tower PC & Notebook computers, including order forms, are available at www.t4.ie.

The Department of Education and Skills following a separate public procurement process has procured CAD software i.e. SolidWorks Education Edition 2015 and associated services from Solid Solutions Ireland (www.solidsolutions.ie). All computers purchased through the Department drawdown facility will be shipped to schools with SolidWorks Education Edition 2015 and Microsoft Windows 7 Professional operating system (64 bit) preinstalled. Any additional software is the responsibility of the school to install.

Schools or Educational Training Boards must purchase the computers before the end of December 2015 to ensure compliance with Circular: 13/2014, Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. Please refer to: circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf.

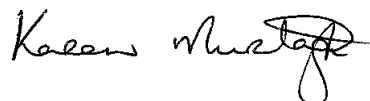
Professional Development & Training will be provided for DCG teachers in the new CAD software. A professional development plan is being formulated at present by the PDST and will be communicated to schools once agreed.

Schools are reminded of their obligations in relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts, 1997 and 2003.

Please refer to the T4 website (www.t4.ie) for FAQ document in relation to this funding scheme.

Any queries in relation to this letter should be addressed by email to Karen Murtagh at ictpolicy@education.gov.ie or by telephone to (01) 889 6413 Pat Lynch at patlynch@pdst.ie.

Yours sincerely



Karen Murtagh
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Department of Education