



**Student Experience Grants**



# STUDENT EXPERIENCE GRANTS GUIDELINES

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## WHAT ARE STUDENT EXPERIENCE GRANTS?

Student Experience Grants are one-off contributions to support innovative projects and initiatives that will have a significant impact on the experience of students at the University of Edinburgh. The scheme provides funding to enhance students' social, academic, entrepreneurial, sporting or cultural development.

Student Experience Grants are funded by the University of Edinburgh Development Trust. Without this ongoing support we would not be able to fund these projects which do so much for the quality of the student learning experience at the University of Edinburgh. We would like to thank all alumni, staff and other donors who support the Development Trust, including through its unrestricted [Edinburgh Fund](#).

The scheme is co-ordinated and administered by the Development and Alumni department at the University of Edinburgh.

## AREAS OF SUPPORT

We award grants of up to and including £5,000 to support innovative activities, which enhance students' social, academic, entrepreneurial, sporting or cultural development.

### Types of projects that we fund

#### Community and outreach

- Projects that will benefit people and communities living in Edinburgh and elsewhere;
- Projects that will support the Widening Participation agenda of the University.

#### Research, teaching and learning

- Projects that will enhance research and development activities at the University;
- Projects such as field trips, in person or online conferences and events<sup>1</sup> (organised by students or staff); or student group competitions. These must benefit the wider student community;
- Projects that will support teaching and peer-learning.

#### Student life and extra-curricular

- Projects that will help kick-start initiatives with long-term impact;
- Projects that will support cultural activities, excellence in sport or the creative arts;
- Projects that will aim to enhance student support and wellbeing at the University.

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<sup>1</sup> All events must be adhere to the [University's Events and Speakers policy](#).

## ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply, the applicants must fit at least one of the following criteria:

### Applications from individual students and staff

- Matriculated students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) of the University of Edinburgh;
- University of Edinburgh staff members on open-ended contracts. These include guaranteed hours contracts;
- Staff members on fixed-term contracts, including researchers, who hold a contract with the University for the duration of their project.

All staff applications must include a student co-applicant, undergraduate or postgraduate (including PhD students). All staff applications are required to demonstrate active student involvement in the project (e.g. conducting research or fieldwork, analysing data, website development etc.).

### Applications from student groups

- Student societies, social enterprises and peer groups recognised by the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA);
- Sports clubs recognised by the Edinburgh University Sports Union (EUSU).

A society/club can apply for funding in every round, but the project needs to have a different purpose and benefit a different group of students.

### Other funding

Staff who have applied for funding through the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) are not eligible to apply with the same project through the Student Experience Grants scheme.

Students who have applied for funding through the Go Abroad fund are not eligible to apply with the same project through the Student Experience Grants scheme.

## APPLICANT CONDITIONS

- You must be a matriculated student or member of staff for the full duration of your project. This requirement may be waived for final year students who are applying for funding through the Student Experience Grants scheme.
- We will not consider projects that:
  - have previously been submitted through the Student Experience Grants scheme whether they were successful or not;<sup>2</sup> or
  - have already been completed.
- Grants are available to fund (among other costs):
  - travel expenses

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<sup>2</sup> Under exceptional circumstances a successful project may apply for funding a second time, if the initial project has achieved impact and there is a strong case that further benefits can be delivered.

- accommodation
- equipment
- incidental catering costs
- salaries or wages of students, including PhD students (applicable to staff-led projects only)
- compensation for students for their contribution to a project in the form of vouchers up to the value of £50 per head (applicable to student-led as well as staff-led projects).
- Grants are not available to fund:
  - course fees
  - salaries or compensation of applicants and University staff (including buying out teaching time)
  - equipment, software or projects that the school or department would normally be expected to provide or fund
  - individual projects that contribute to students' final assessment
  - individual conference attendance
  - individual fees/costs to take part in organised voluntary work, charity challenges, internships/placements or other sponsorship type activities
  - activities abroad, if these can take place locally and have the same impact
  - core activities of societies and sports clubs, only specific projects
  - project merchandise
  - registration for third party venues when University venues are available for booking
  - project contingency.
- Please note that any Intellectual Property (IP) created in the course of a project funded by a Student Experience Grant would be treated in line with the [University policy on IP](#).

## SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

### Steering group

All applications are assessed by a steering group that has representation from the three Colleges, Edinburgh University Sports Union, Edinburgh University Students' Association and Careers Service.

Each application is assessed on its individual merit according to the selection criteria outlined below.

### Aims and objectives

A proposal should express clearly what it aims to achieve and describe the change it aims to bring about or its intended impact, as well as the results it hopes to deliver.

## Benefit to the student experience

- Proposed projects should enhance students' social, academic, entrepreneurial, sporting or cultural development.
- Projects that aim to benefit a wider group of students, beyond those involved directly in the project, will be of particular interest.

## Innovation

- Innovation does not mean inventing something completely new and ground-breaking; innovation and invention are not the same thing.
- Invention is creating something from scratch; innovation is taking something and improving it.
- Innovation can involve taking something that exists and using it in a different setting or context.
- Innovation doesn't have to involve a moment of genius; it can simply be finding a better way of doing something.
- A tweak or marginal improvement in something can count as innovation.
- Innovation can come from addressing a problem and finding a new solution or noticing a problem others are experiencing and finding a better way.
- Invention is also welcomed!

## Feasibility

- A proposal should set out how the project will be carried out, the resources needed and the timeline that will be followed.
- It should show that it is feasible for the project to be successfully completed within the given timeline and proposed budget.

## References

To be eligible an application must be supported by a referee competent to verify that the project idea has merit. The referee will be nominated by the applicant and should be appropriate for the type of application being submitted.

- **For students** – the referee provided in the application should be the personal tutor, or research supervisor, or another relevant member of staff.
- **For sports clubs** – the referee provided in the application should be the current Sports President or a staff member of the Edinburgh University Sports Union.
- **For student societies, social enterprises or peer groups** – the referee provided in the application should be a staff member from the Activities Office at the Edinburgh University Students' Association.
- **For academic staff** (including researchers who hold a contract with the University for the duration of their project) – the referee provided in the application should be the appropriate Head of School/Deanery or their authorised deputy/delegate.
- **For non-academic staff** – the referee provided in the application should be the director of your department or unit.

Once the application has been drafted, the applicant should send an email to the referee with an outline of the project, its aims and objectives, the benefits to the student experience, what

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makes the project innovative and the feasibility of the project. The applicant may wish to cut and paste appropriate text from their application for this purpose.

The applicant should ask the referee to review the project and to confirm that they believe it has merit and the proposal is sound.

If the referee is unable to support the proposal, they may choose either to decline the project altogether, in which case the application would not proceed, or to suggest areas for improvement. Applicants should therefore allow sufficient time for referees to consider their proposal ahead of the end of the application period.

Assuming the referee is happy to support the application, they will confirm that to the applicant and provide a few lines explaining the reasons for their support (supporting statement).

The applicant will add the referee's details and the supporting statement to the application and by completing the section 'Referee details' they will confirm that the referee has reviewed the application and has their support.

The applicant(s) will be responsible for final submission of the fully completed application and should retain the email from the referee in case it is needed by the Grants team at a later date.

Applications without a referee statement will not be considered by the steering group.

On submission of a completed application, an email will be auto-generated and sent to the referee, informing them that a completed application bearing their name and support has been received.

## INFORMATION FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

### Use of grant funding

- Grants must be used for the purpose awarded.
- Grants must be used within one year from the date the results are announced or must be returned to the Grants team.
- Any funds remaining must be returned to the Grants team.

### Reporting

- All successful applicants are required to complete a grant report, which includes project feedback and detailed expenditure. The report should be completed and returned, along with receipts, within one month of completion of the project and no later than by the reporting deadline respective to your application, unless written permission is sought. [Please refer to our website for reporting deadlines.](#)
- All equipment or fixed assets purchased should be used for the specific project and will remain the property of the University of Edinburgh after the project is completed.

## SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications can only be submitted online using the [Student Experience Grants website](#) (with your University login).

**If your application includes staff costs (salaries or wages), please make sure your school or department has reviewed your application prior to submitting.** This is to ensure that the correct 'on-costs' are being used.

Please ensure you have answered all the questions and submitted the application online by the deadline. This deadline is strictly enforced and late or incomplete applications cannot be accepted. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure it is received complete and before the deadline. Once the deadline has passed, the website will not allow you to submit an application, even if it has already been started.

If you need guidance on how to complete the online application form, please refer to our [online application guide](#).

## DEADLINE

One annual four-week long application window opening in the middle of October and closing date in the middle of November each year. Exact dates are published on our website.

## RESULTS

Results will be made available approximately eight working weeks after the deadline. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive email confirmation of the outcome. The decisions reached by the steering group are final.

## GRANT ACCEPTANCE AND PAYMENT

- A grant acceptance form and a grant confirmation email will be sent to all successful applicants soon after the results have been made available. Please ensure you provide us with your payment details and return your completed acceptance form to [student-experience-grants@ed.ac.uk](mailto:student-experience-grants@ed.ac.uk) at your earliest convenience as we cannot make a payment to you without receiving it. The grant acceptance form must be returned within three months of receipt or the award may be withdrawn.
- No grant disbursements will be made in July.
- **All successful staff, and PhD students when applicable, are advised to contact their finance office at the end of financial year to ensure any unused funds have been carried forward.**
- A payment confirmation email will be sent out to successful applicants once the grant disbursement has been made.
- A grant report will be provided electronically via email after the payment has been processed.

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## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be creative, be daring but, most importantly, be accessible. Reading your application should animate and inspire, regardless of the subject matter.
- Think carefully about the feasibility of your project and the budget you require. Include as much detail as possible about your costs and how they enable delivery of the project.
- See the bigger picture. We favour projects that benefit more than one student and demonstrates long-term impact to the student experience at the University.

## FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If you need further assistance, please contact the Grants team at [student-experience-grants@ed.ac.uk](mailto:student-experience-grants@ed.ac.uk) or on 0131 650 2240.