

Student Communities Fund

Purpose of the fund

Your SU Student Communities Fund exists to support student led community building initiatives within the University of Sunderland (City Campus and St Peter's). Any registered student can apply to the fund for financial support towards a student led¹ event or project that helps to bring students together and build a community through a shared interest or goal.

The total funding available in the Student Communities Fund is approved by the Board of Trustees each year (the SU's financial year runs 1st August – 31st July every year). Additional funding may be made available each year to support student led campaigns and other activity that contributes to Your SU's purpose and strategic plan.

The fund will be open for applications 1st September – 30th June annually.

Skills building

Writing grant applications, event planning, and budgeting are useful skills to for many career paths, and you will develop all of these through the Student Communities Fund application process. As with all funds, money is limited so you will need to practise your persuasive writing, demonstrating how your idea will help build community, and providing a detailed breakdown of the costs involved.

Support is available from Your SU staff with planning out your idea so please do get in touch via yourcommunities@sunderland.ac.uk to arrange a meeting.

An example of an event budget can be found here:
sunderlandsu.co.uk/resources/budget-tracker-template.

What can be funded?

- Essential costs of events and social activities, including guest speaker costs, entertainment, and food and drink (non-alcoholic).
- Subsidising accommodation and travel² for trips and residential activities.
- Equipment purchases (any equipment remains the property of Your SU).
- Publicity costs.

¹ Events and initiatives must be planned and delivered by current University of Sunderland students to be eligible for funding.

² See terms and conditions for restrictions.

Please note: Your SU can provide general resources such as cups, napkins, cutlery etc. for approved on campus activities, for up to 200 people. Please give plenty of notice so we can make sure we have stock! You can also ask students to be environmentally and economically sustainable and bring their own reusable cup to events.

What cannot be funded?

- Personal/individual owned items (i.e. clothing).
- Alcoholic products.
- Prizes for competitions that do not directly benefit your society members.
- Retrospective items (we cannot fund activities that have already happened).
- Donations, in any forms, to other charities or organisations, or any items involved in fundraising activity, including raffle prizes.
- Repeating payments/regular costs e.g. costs for weekly meets or annual external affiliations – these should be covered through society membership and ticket income.
- Materials supporting political parties; Your SU is a charity, and so funds cannot be used to support political parties.
- Anything illegal!

Terms and conditions

- a) Successful applicants³ to the Student Communities Fund are expected to provide a short impact report on how funding helped achieve the aims of the initiative. The applicant will not be eligible for further funding within the same academic year until a sufficient impact report is received (guidance will be provided).
- b) Applicants can submit up to **4** applications in any one academic year.
 - There is no limit to how much can be applied for, but applicants should be mindful that it may not be possible to fund all requests in full or at all, to enable as many students to benefit from this funding as possible.
 - Multiple events can be grouped into one application if they are part of the same initiative e.g. monthly activities in the same venue with the same format. Separate applications are required for distinct resources/requests.
- c) For events, the organiser(s) must complete the Event Essentials e-learning before any approved funding is released.

³ Applicant(s) refers to the student/committee organising the initiative, be that a registered society, student representative or student volunteer.

- d) For societies, grant funding should be used to supplement other sources of income, which could include memberships, ticket sales, fundraising and sponsorship. The society committee should plan and budget so that regular activities are financially sustainable without the continued requirement of grant funding. Societies will need to explain in their application why grant funding is required if they have sufficient funds in their account to cover the costs applied for.
- e) To receive financial support with events and trips, the applicant will need evidence of student interest e.g. student feedback, a poll or sign-ups. Funding for this kind of activity may be awarded on a per-person basis.
- f) Funding must be claimed within one month of the activity or intended purpose it was applied for, and before the end of the financial year (31st July). Any unspent grant funding will be reclaimed back into the Student Communities Fund to enable others to benefit from it.
- g) As an ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, public transport should be used as much as possible, with car and air travel used as a last resort. Car mileage can only be claimed if the driver has business insurance and a current MOT certificate, which must be on record with Your SU. Travel by taxi should be for short journeys only and where travel by public transport is not available, not accessible, or may not be deemed safe.
- h) Any resources/equipment purchased with grant funding are the property of Your SU. Societies should maintain an inventory of equipment. Please contact the staff team if you require storage space.
- i) All applications are taken at face value on a case-by-case basis, so it is your responsibility to ensure all costs and quantities are correct; that all evidence is included and that you have provided a clear explanation and justification for what you have applied for.

How to apply for funding

- 1) Plan and research your community-building initiative, gathering supporting evidence for your application.
 - Determine how your idea will help to build community and give students a sense of belonging.

- Create a budget and identify other funding sources that will help to cover the costs, such as ticket sales, fundraising, and even external grant funding.
 - Ensure that you have researched different options and have determined the best value for money - remember there may be student or charity discounts available.
 - Make use of budgeting resources on the Your SU Communities Hub (on the website) and support available from a member of the Student Communities team (email yourcommunities@sunderland.ac.uk).
- 2) Complete the application form online.
- Include as much detail and evidence as you can, otherwise your application may be rejected.
 - Evidence could include a screenshot from a website which shows the cost, a screenshot of a quote from a company, or a photo of the price in a shop.
 - Also include any evidence of student interest e.g. student feedback or the results of a poll.
- 3) Await the outcome of your application. Please read on for information on timescales.

Deadlines:

- Small grants (applications £499 and under) - Recommended 4 weeks before funding is required, with an absolute deadline of 2 weeks beforehand.
- Large grants - Recommended 6 weeks before funding required, with an absolute deadline of 4 weeks beforehand.

Any applications received after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

How funding is awarded

Small Grant (applications £499 and under):

- Assessed by the Student Communities staff team.
- Applications are usually discussed once a week during term time, so it may take up to 10 days for a decision to be communicated back to the applicant.
- During university vacations, decisions may take longer due to staff leave and training, or office closure.

Large Grant (applications £500 and over):

- Assessed by a student officer (either a President or Student Communities Officer) and the Student Communities staff team.
- Decisions may take up to 2 weeks to be communicated back to the applicant but could take longer during university vacations.

Automatic grants

- Registered societies attending Freshers and Refreshers Fairs will receive financial support for marketing resources.
- Registered societies taking part in the Give It A Go programme will receive funding towards the cost of their activities.