

## **Student Group Funding Policy Framework**

### **1. Overview**

- 1.1 A significant proportion of the Students' Union's block grant (approximately 60%) is spent on supporting student groups. A proportion of this cost is attributed to staff salaries which support and enable circa 130 student groups to function (for example by organising Freshers' Fairs, arranging training sessions and fixtures, supporting events with guest speakers, training the committee, processing financial and other admin requests). The remaining budget is allocated to student groups through grant funding and insurance costs.
- 1.2 For the purpose of transparency, student groups should be aware that there are also significant costs that are unseen by groups which are paid directly by the Students' Union on a group's behalf (for example, some affiliation and competition costs). While these costs are paid from the grant funding budget there are other in-kind costs that are not borne by the student groups or the Students' Union – for example on campus facility costs which are absorbed by the University.
- 1.3 While funding is available, it is a limited pot which sees on average a ratio of funding requests to available funds of 2:1. This means that for every £1 requested there is only £0.50 available to be allocated. As a result, we need to be stringent in how we allocate funds and we should ensure that principles and criteria are robustly applied.
- 1.4 As a general guide, student groups should not expect funding from the Students' Union and should plan their group's activity for the year based on the income from their membership fees, as well as through exploring sponsorship and fundraising opportunities. A list of funding principles and criteria which will help govern all funding decisions can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 The purpose of this framework is to set out the objectives, principles, criteria and stages of funding available to student groups to ensure a transparent and fair process.

### **2. Aims & Objectives**

- 2.1 It is our aim that group membership costs and any other income (sponsorship and fundraising as examples) should cover a large proportion of the group's activity in the year. As a general guide we would expect that at least 80% of the group's activity cost is covered by the group's self-generated income. If it is any less than this then we would wish to meet with the group to discuss the group's financial viability and sustainability and support them in putting in place mechanisms to help address this.
- 2.2 There are multiple funding opportunities provided to student groups throughout the year, to enable groups to react and respond to changing circumstances. Each funding stage has its own set of criteria to ensure equal and transparent access to this funding for all student groups.
- 2.3 While all funding applications will be considered and fairly assessed against relevant principles and criteria, no funding is guaranteed.
- 2.4 Generally student groups should seek to spend the majority of the income they generate from their membership within the same financial year to ensure that those individuals paying the membership are benefiting from the activity.

- 2.5 Fundraising, sponsorship and other income may be carried over as a surplus into future years but we would like to work with the student group to understand the purpose of this surplus and whether they have specific development plans in place for this money. This will help us ensure that accrued funds are protected and this development is considered in the funding process.
- 2.6 Where an application for grant funding is successful, a grant is awarded to a student group to be spent within the academic year in which the grant is awarded. At the end of the academic year any grant funding remaining will transfer back to the Students' Union.
- 2.7 Where a student group has inherited a deficit from previous financial years and previous committees, this deficit will not be funded by the Students' Union. Instead we will work with the student group on a Deficit Management Plan which works towards wiping out this deficit.
- 2.8 Funding will be made on the content of the application from the current committee. While previous years may need to be taken into consideration for contextual purposes (for example where there are historical issues that arise every year), no funding will be allocated or not allocated on the basis of reward or retribution (i.e. any known activity of the group from a previous year).
- 2.9 To help ensure progress towards independence and financial sustainability, student groups should aim to generate income to cover all required expenditure during the year and not leave a deficit for the following year's committee.
- 2.10 Where a group is in significant surplus at the end of the year, then an appropriate budgeted loss for the following year is acceptable.

### **3. Eligibility**

In order to be considered for any form of funding the following criteria must apply:

- i. The student group should have been ratified by the Students' Union.
- ii. A core committee should be in place (elected or co-opted), as per the student group's constitution. The Students' Union considers the three core positions to be President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- iii. The group should contain a sustainable number of members.
- iv. The committee will have discussed the funding request and be in agreement with the application.
- v. If a historical deficit exists, the student group must have a working Deficit Management Plan in place.
- vi. The group must have adhered to the published deadlines and completed a comprehensive application form within the timeframe given.

### **4. Funding Stages**

Multiple funding opportunities are provided throughout the year, enabling student groups to react and respond to changing circumstances. Each funding stage has its own set of criteria to ensure equal and transparent access to this funding for all student groups:

#### **A. New student group funding**

Once a new group has been formally ratified, it will automatically receive a set amount of funding to seed fund the start of the group's activity. This amount of

funding will be a flat amount that will be applied to all new groups irrespective of activity. The amount of funding new student groups will receive is £100.

New student groups will have further opportunities within the year to apply for Phase 2 – End of Term 1 Funding (depending on when the group ratifies) and Development Funding.

#### B. Phase 1 New Academic Year Funding (June / July)

The purpose of this funding is to help newly elected committees ensure an effective start to their group's year ahead. While it is expected that the majority of the cost of running the group for the year will be generated through the group's membership income, as well as fundraising and sponsorship, we recognise that membership numbers are unknown at this stage, which makes it difficult for groups to accurately project their income and expenditure.

This funding opportunity enables student groups to start the academic year with some funds to purchase any items, cover any essential costs or purchase some marketing material to help them kickstart the term before membership income starts to be paid in. All active student groups will receive funding based on their risk status. This status will be assessed by VP Societies and Sport and the Student Opportunities team on the following factors:

- i. Current financial status – how healthy is the student group's account and are they at risk of going into deficit?
- ii. Cost of core activity – is the cost of their core activity high and do they have essential purchases coming up that may be before receiving income from memberships?
- iii. Stability of the group – is the student group in a good position to operate in term one or are they likely to struggle?

Based on the above, groups will be assigned a status of high, medium or low risk and will then receive the following:

- i. Low risk - £150
- ii. Medium risk - £250
- iii. High risk - £500

Where a student group has been assigned the status of high risk, a plan must be put in place with support of the Student Opportunities team in order to identify steps on how to reduce the level of risk throughout the year. The group should not be at the same high risk status the following year, and thus would not receive that level of funding in two consecutive years.

Student groups at medium or high risk, should put the funding towards expenditure that will help improve their stability.

#### C. Phase 2 Support Funding (November / December)

Having been functioning as a student group with new memberships for approximately 8 weeks, the purpose of this funding opportunity is to enable student groups to take stock of their membership numbers and more accurately project their income and expenditure for the remainder of the year. It allows student groups to react to changing circumstances and take proactive action ahead of Term 2 and Term 3.

The funding will be based on the funding principles and criteria outlined in Appendix 1 and is not guaranteed to all student groups. Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of two Sabbatical Officers, two student representatives from the SSO Executive, and two members of the Students' Union senior management team.

To be eligible to apply for funding at this stage, as well as the eligibility criteria outlined in 3 above, groups should provide evidence of fundraising or sponsorship attempts, as well as evidence of any deficit repayment under the Deficit Management Plan.

Any funding awarded not spent by the end of the academic year will be reclaimed by the Students' Union.

#### D. Development Funding (Term 2)

Development funding can be applied for throughout term two, allowing for continuous funding opportunities being available to groups throughout the year and gives student groups the opportunity to develop plans and ideas for development after term one.

This funding is different from Phase 1 and Phase 2 funding as applications should only seek funding which will directly contribute towards the student group's development. This may be one-off costs for equipment, events or activities that hadn't previously been considered that would benefit the group's growth and/or its members. The maximum funding that will be allocated per application will be £500, and where possible a match funding approach is preferred.

Applications will be reviewed by VP Societies and Sport and the Student Opportunities team and must be based on the criteria outlined in Appendix 2.

Any funding awarded not spent by the end of the academic year will be reclaimed by the Students' Union.

#### E. Competitions Funding (Ongoing)

Throughout the year, funding opportunities will be available to student groups taking part in competitions relating to their core activity. The maximum funding available per group for competitions in an academic year is £400. Groups must fill out the competitions and fixture request form on Freshdesk and reach out to the Student Opportunities team to apply for funding. This funding applies to entry fees of competitions only. Any other associated costs should be funded by the group or members, and where additional support is required the group should apply for funding during Phase 2 Support Funding.

The caps on funding outlined below will be reviewed annually to ensure it is reflective of current competition fees.

##### i. Team Entries

Where a student group is entering teams into a league, funding will be based on a tiered membership system outlined below:

Members	Funding
0 to 40	Equivalent of 2 teams, up to £200

40 to 80	Equivalent of 3 teams, up to £300
80 +	Equivalent of 4 teams, up to £400

ii. Individual Entries

Where a student group enters individuals into competitions or leagues, they can receive funding for this providing they do not have a team alternative. If they are able to enter teams into competitions or leagues, then individual entries should be covered by the individual. Additionally, all members should be given the opportunity to take part in the competition in order to receive funding. Funding would be based on membership numbers:

<b>Members</b>	<b>Funding</b>
0 to 40	Up to £200
40 to 80	Up to £300
80 +	Up to £400

iii. Individual Competitions

A student group may enter individual competitions throughout the year rather than enter a league. In order to receive funding, all members should be given the opportunity to take part in the competition. Funding will be based on membership numbers:

<b>Members</b>	<b>Funding</b>
0 to 40	Up to £200
40 to 80	Up to £300
80 +	Up to £400

## Appendix 1

### Phase 2 Funding Principles & Criteria

Principle 1 – Core Purpose		
Rationale	Criteria	Amounts
Supporting the main purpose of the group's activity (as outlined in the group's constitution) to ensure a high quality experience that benefits all members, relative to the costs of accessing the activity.200	<b>What we may contribute towards:</b>	
	1.1 Coaching that benefits all members.	Up to a maximum of 10% of total cost or £500 (whichever is the lower)
	1.2 Transport costs for training, fixtures and/or events and competitions.	Up to a maximum of 10% of total cost or £500 (whichever is the lower)
	1.3 Officiating costs for competitive home fixtures and competitions.	Up to a maximum of 10% of total cost or £250 (whichever is the lower)
	1.4 Facility cost where that facility cannot reasonably be provided on campus.	Up to a maximum of 50% of total or £750 (whichever is the lower)
	1.5 Affiliations associated with competing and training.	Up to a maximum of 100% of total cost or £250 (whichever is the lower)
	1.6 Event set up costs for an event that is held in relation to the core purpose of the group and benefits all members (with the exception of guest speaker costs as below).	Up to a maximum of 25% of total cost or £250 (whichever is the lower).
	<b>What we won't contribute towards:</b>	
	1.7 Coaching that only benefits specific teams.	
	1.8 Any activity that benefits individual members rather than the collective membership.	
	1.9 Any social activity, including trips and tours.	
	1.10 Any activity that falls beyond the scope of the core purpose of the group as identified in the group's constitution.	

	1.11 Any non-student campaigns (funds must be spend on activities that directly affect students as students).	
	1.12 Any kit that is owned by individual members.	
	1.13 Any income generating events; it is expected that the group must cover all associated costs with the exception of fundraising events for other causes.	
	1.14 Any additional costs in relation to a Guest Speaker, including travel or security arrangements.	
<b>Principle 2 – Sustainability</b>		
<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
Supporting costs that will ensure the group can exist for many years to come and aren't just quick wins. Applications should show an effort to be sustainable without funding through appropriate membership fees and fundraising and sponsorship considerations, as well as evidencing plans for the future sustainability of the group.	<b>What we may contribute towards:</b>	
	2.1 A projected in-year deficit (a deficit that you think will be generated based on your income and expenditure for the year to come) to support you to deliver your plans (on the condition that your budget and membership fee is reasonable and you have considered other ways to cover a potential in-year deficit i.e. through sponsorship and fundraising).	Up to a maximum of £500
	2.2 Unforeseen costs or impacting factors that will affect your core operation.	Up to a maximum of £500
	2.3 Displacement facility cost for one year where your activity has previously been absorbed on campus at no cost to your group but that space is no longer available and alternatives cannot be found.	Up to a maximum of 80% or £1,000 (whichever is the lower).
	2.4 Promotional material for Freshers' Fair and other promotional activities.	Up to a maximum of £50
	<b>What we won't contribute towards:</b>	
	2.5 Where a historic surplus is held in the group's restricted account unless in cases where we are aware of a specific development plan for the group where a 'saving' is required.	Surpluses in excess of £1,000
	2.6 An inherited historic deficit from previous financial years and previous committees. Instead the Union will work with you on a Deficit Management Plan which works towards wiping out this deficit. Note – we will help fund other club activity but not the deficit itself.	Deficits in excess of £100
	2.7 A one off payment for an item that will last less than 12 months, unless this is overridden by another principle (e.g.) safety.	

	2.8 Any merchandise that will be used to make money for group (mainly hoodies and clothing etc)	
	2.9 Any items or activity where the cost outweighs the benefit (e.g. expensive equipment that can be hired).	
<b>Principle 3 - Inclusivity</b>		
<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
Encouraging innovative thinking to provide an offer that is inclusive and ensures equal opportunities for engagement to all.	<b>What we may contribute towards:</b>	
	3.1 Equipment or resources that make the core purpose of the group more accessible to students.	Up to a maximum of 50% or £200 (whichever is the lower).
	3.2 Solutions that provide reasonable adjustment which will help include more students in the activity.	Up to a maximum of 50% or £200 (whichever is the lower).
	3.3 Opportunities which are being offered to engage with students who wouldn't usually be able to engage with the activity?	Up to a maximum of 50% or £200 (whichever is the lower).
<b>Principle 4 – Health, Safety &amp; Risk Management</b>		
<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
Supporting costs that ensure the group operates with effective controls in place for the health and safety of its members.	<b>What we may contribute towards:</b>	
	4.1 The maintenance or purchase of equipment or other which is directly related to the health and safety of the group's members.	Up to a maximum of £1,000.
	4.2 Safety and/or legal compliance expenditure required by the Students' Union to ensure effective health, safety and risk management purposes (i.e. first aid for fixtures, media law training).	Up to a maximum of £1,000.
<b>Principle 5 – Capital items / large projects</b>		
<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
To support the longer term development of the group.	<b>What we may contribute towards:</b>	
	5.1 Funding towards equipment or resource that will benefit the longevity of the student group and will benefit future members, in circumstances where the student group has put in place plans to match fund.	Up to a total amount of £500.



## Appendix 2

### Development Funding Criteria

Rationale	Criteria
Supporting opportunities that enable members to obtain or grow skills, networks and experiences, as well as wider group development.	1.1 Events, courses, purchases or collaborations that will benefit the employability of all members
	1.2 Events, courses, purchases or collaborations that will benefit the career prospects of all members
Rationale	Criteria
To support the longer term development of the group.	2.1 Funding towards equipment or resource that will benefit the longevity of the student group and will benefit future members, in circumstances where the student group has put in place plans to match fund.
Rationale	Criteria
To support the growth of a student group that will enable further engagement from students	3.1 Events, courses, purchases or collaborations that will benefit the club and its members in terms of expanding core activity.
	3.2 Projects that will offer a wider breadth of opportunity relevant to core purpose to expand members experience and engagement