

Manchester Societies Development Grant information

At The Union we want to support our societies to grow and develop. As part of this support, we have a dedicated pot of money that societies can bid for throughout the year to support their activities.

Who can apply?

Any accredited Union society can apply for a Societies Development Grant.

If you are applying for a grant you must meet the following criteria;

- Have a least 10 paid members signed up to your society
- Have attended the in person Finance training.
- All Society Committee officials (Chair-Person, Treasurer, Secretary & other miscellaneous roles) have paid and/or registered with the society.
- Not in debt with the Students Union
- Be applying for something specific and have researched specific costs and obtained relevant quotes.
- (if for an event) The event has been approved by the Opportunities team in advance.

What can societies apply for?

Societies can apply for grants to support their activities, events, trips and to purchase equipment for the society. Any grant application should be consistent with the aims and objectives of your society, which you wrote down as part of your accreditation. You should also consider the impact of the grant you're requesting on The Union's priorities:

- Life – the welfare and wellbeing of your members, being active, staying at University
- Learning – contributing to the education of your members, developing new skills, sharing knowledge, bringing in expertise for your members
- Belonging – creating a community in your society, collaborating with other student groups, contributing to the wider community, being a safe place for students, being inclusive

Below is an indicative list of the things we would consider funding:

- Equipment – purchase of new or replacement equipment which is essential for the society activity. Hire of essential equipment.
- Travel Costs – such as coach hire, train tickets, taxis for short journeys (i.e. within greater Manchester)
- Entry fees – such as competitions, educational conferences or insurance
- Education – Opportunities for members to further develop their knowledge and learning a topic core to your society (for example external speaker costs, tickets for a conference, coaching/trainer costs, resources to aid learning)
- Event costs – such as tech hire, security costs

When can societies apply?

There will be three rounds of Societies Development Grant Funding in the first term. There are deadlines for grant applications ahead of each Development Grant panel meeting. The application deadline dates for the year can be found on the application form.

Please keep an eye on your emails and the application form for further application dates for 2022

How much can societies apply for?

There is no limit on the amount that a society can request – each application will be considered on its own merit. However, the amount requested must be justifiable in terms of your membership numbers, how many people will be affected, the level of impact and your own financial contribution to costs. If you are applying for £500 or more, you must attend the decision panel to discuss your application with the Societies Council Committee. We have a finite budget for the Societies Development Grants, so it's important for societies to be realistic – we won't give one society the whole lot!

What can't The Union provide funding for?

There are some restrictions on what The Union (and therefore societies) can spend money on.

Everything your society does should in some way be “for students, as students”, and if there is an educational purpose to what you're doing it's generally OK for this to be funded by The Union.

Some key areas we can't fund include:

- Alcohol
- Subsidising charity fundraising (you can still fundraise, but it needs to cover the costs or use money not given to the society by The Union)
- Donating Union money to other charities or to political parties
- Campaigns not related to our members as students – we might also refer campaign ideas over to our Union Led Projects Coordinator or other relevant member of Union staff.
- Subsidising places on demonstrations which don't relate to student issues
- Purely social events such as end of year celebration events, Christmas parties, Student Group Tours
- Food & Drink (unless core to your society for example Cake society wanting ingredients for a bake off event)
- Clothing (i.e. t-shirts & hoodies)
- Affiliation to a political or charitable body
- Personal use
- Security deposits for external venue hire
- Retrospective payments (i.e. to fund something that has already occurred)
- Legal fees
- Purchase of items considered to be environmentally harmful (such as single use plastics, production of unnecessary printed materials).

Who decides?

Every grant application will be considered by the Societies Council committee at Grant Decision Panels, and will be agreed by simple majority. The subgroup committee will make a decision to:

- Approve your application for the full amount requested
- Approve your application for part of the amount requested
- Request further information from the society – you will be given a deadline to provide this to enable the council to consider your application again within that week, or your grant application will be considered at the next panel
- Reject your application. Reasons will always be given for this, so you can improve your chances of a successful application in the future.

If Union staff believe an application has been approved in error (i.e. against a policy or charity law), we will refer it to the appeal panel to review the Council Committee decision

Tips for a good grant application

- Make sure the application form is filled in correctly and completely. If it looks like you can't be bothered to answer fully the committee might think that you won't be bothered to organise your activity properly.
- Be realistic, it's very unlikely that your application for £200 worth of decorations for a single event would be approved.
- Generally, we like to see as many people as possible benefiting from the funding so make sure you highlight this in your application.
- Show value for money, can you buy in bulk? Can you share equipment with other societies? Have you asked different suppliers for quotes?
- Has your society thought about if and how it will contribute to the costs involved? If you are asking for the full amount you should demonstrate that you are not just relying on Students' Union funding?
- Be specific – know exactly what you want to deliver/buy and why
- Relate your application back to your society aims and objectives
- Show the benefit – think about who will benefit and how. The wider and bigger the impact the more likely it is your application will be successful

What happens if our application isn't successful?

You can appeal in writing to the Societies and Development Officer if you think the Societies Council committee have made the wrong decision based on our grant criteria. An appeal committee will review the decision, which will include Trustees of The Union. If you're still not happy you can appeal to the President. The President's decision will be final.

If you can see why your application was rejected, you can always submit an amended application or apply for something different. There is no limit to the number of applications you can submit during the year – but there is a limit to the amount of money in the pot so we will try and make sure the highest number of different societies can benefit.

How can we spend grant money?

If your application is successful the money will be transferred into your budget account. This can then be spent through the usual financial procedures using the Purchase Order system or claiming expenses. You should check with us before making any purchases to ensure the companies can comply with our policies on purchasing. All the information about suppliers and using your society account are on the resources section of the website. You must spend it on the activity/items you applied for and the money must be spent before the end of the academic year. Any money not spent from the grant will be taken back and redistributed for future grant applications from societies.

Reclaiming Unspent Grant Money

At the end of each term, the Opportunities team will review spending of grants awarded during term one. If grant money remains unspent, The Union will reclaim this and it will go back into the grant funding pot for all societies to bid for the remainder of the year.