



Student Opportunities Fund 2025/2026

Application Guidance and Terms and Conditions

About the Fund

The Student Opportunity Fund is available to support students with a low household income to access development opportunities both academic and extra-curricular to support your employability through professional and/or personal development.

You may apply for up to £500 to fund an opportunity that will help you gain experience and skills to boost your employability.

Apply

Apply to the fund using the online application.

[Student Opportunity Fund application 2025-26 – Fill in form](#)

Deadlines

For 2025/26 Academic Year deadlines, visit <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/student-finance/scholarships-and-bursaries/>

Completing the application form

You should complete all questions in the application form. Applications with missing details may be rejected.

The application has three main sections that require your input:

- 1) About You
- 2) About the opportunity
- 3) About the associated costs.

Below you will find guidance about what to include in these sections. There is also a Documents section towards the end of the form where you should upload any evidence you have to support the costs you're seeking to cover.

About the opportunity

Provide a description of the opportunity (maximum 1000 characters) including:

- What it is and when (if time bound)
- Where the opportunity is
- Organisation leading the opportunity/involved
- What your role/responsibilities will be
- How this opportunity could enhance your employability and/or personal development
- Can you describe any wider benefit to the community from participating in this opportunity?

Costs

Outline reasonable and necessary costs to undertake the opportunity (maximum 1000 characters). These can include:

- Travel/accommodation/ subsistence.
- Equipment/resources- that are necessary for the opportunity
- Course/training fees
- Other costs- anything that doesn't fit above.

Supporting documentation

You will need to upload supporting expenditure details and evidence - any example documentation to outline the costs you have described. This can be evidence such as travel fares, receipts/quotes, booking confirmations, etc.

How applications are assessed

A panel with representation from the Money Advice and Careers Teams will select successful applicants.

Contact details

If you have any questions, contact the Money Advice Team using the [Student Enquiry Point](#).

Student Opportunities Fund 2025/26

Terms and Conditions

The Student Opportunities Fund (“SOF”) offers small, non-repayable grants to eligible University of Cumbria students seeking to fund a project or activity that will improve their career opportunities and enhance their employability. Recipients of the SOF are subject to several conditions as detailed below.

PURPOSE

1. Funds must be used to support a project or activity that will improve the recipient's career opportunities and enhance their employability.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

2. The Applicant must be a University of Cumbria undergraduate student eligible for the Student Loan, with a household income of under £25,000, assessed by the Student Loans Company Bursary Administration Service.

Funds are limited, applications will be prioritised using the following characteristics, in line with the university's [Access and Participation Plan](#):

- Estranged from parents*
- Care Leaver*
- Student with a disability
- Black heritage

*You must be identified as a Care leaver or Estranged from your family by the Student Loans Company.

Declared disability and ethnicity will be confirmed through the student record.

3. Students are **not eligible** if they are:

- International students
- Full-time members of staff are not eligible to apply.
- Apprentices

- Registered as students with our collaborative partners
- Distance Learners

4. The Applicant must be a current, registered student completing the activity during or before their graduation.
5. Successful Applicants may only receive a maximum of one Award from the SOF for each academic year.
6. Students can be in receipt of the Cumbria Bursary and be eligible for this.
7. Students can be in receipt of the Turing Scheme funding and be eligible for this, however, applicants will be prioritised who are applying for a unique opportunity not funded by other schemes.

FUNDED ACTIVITY CRITERIA

8. The Funded Activity must commence no earlier than 2nd February 2026 and complete before 31st August 2026. For final year students, the activity must complete before their graduation date.
9. The SOF is to support the Funded Activity, which should be developmental in nature and go beyond the Recipient's current studies. It is not intended to:
 - a. pay towards assessed and/or compulsory elements of the Recipient's degree course or course field trips;
 - b. pay towards trips to the Recipient's home country/area of residence;
 - c. pay for activity that is not directly related to enhancing the Recipient's career opportunities and employability (e.g. holidays, personal travel, etc.).

APPLICATION AND DEADLINES

Eligible Applicants must apply via the online application form as instructed on the SOF webpage, which can be accessed using the following link:
<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/student-finance/scholarships-and-bursaries/>

10. Applications are expected to open from 10AM GMT on 5th January 2026 and will close at 5PM GMT on Monday 25th May 2026. There are normally three application Rounds (“Round” or “Rounds”) each academic year with the following deadlines:

Round 1: 5PM (GMT), Monday 30th March 2026

Round 2: 5PM (GMT), Monday 25th May 2026.

Round 1: 5PM (GMT), Monday 9th November 2026

Round 2: 5PM (GMT), Monday 29th March 2027

Round 3: 5PM (GMT), Monday 24th May 2027

Where an application is submitted after a Round deadline, it will not be considered until the next Round. No further applications for the academic year will be considered after the Round 3 deadline.

Retrospective applications are not acceptable. Applicants must apply BEFORE the Funded Activity takes place for their application to be considered.

11. Applications are assessed by the Student Opportunities Fund Disbursement Panel (“the Panel”). The Panel will agree which applications are successful and the value of any Award to be made. The decision of the Panel (acting reasonably) will be final. Applicants will usually be contacted about the outcome of their application within four weeks of the applicable Round deadline. Where additional information or clarification is required, decisions may take longer to confirm.
12. Applicants should not include content within their application that is automatically generated or created by artificial intelligence (including but not limited to chatbots such as ChatGPT or similar software applications).
13. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
14. University of Cumbria will not accept responsibility for applications that are lost, mislaid, damaged or delayed in transit, regardless of cause, including, for example, as a result of any equipment failure, technical malfunction, systems, satellite, network, server, computer hardware or software failure of any kind.

AWARD

15. The maximum value that will be offered to a successful Applicant as a contribution towards the cost of the Funded Activity is £500.
16. The Award value offered may be less than the maximum value.
17. The Award offer will be communicated via email to the Applicant's University email address. The Applicant has 14 days from the email date to claim the Award by replying to the email notifying them that their application has been successful. If the Applicant does not claim the Award by this date, the offer may be withdrawn. The Award may not be claimed by a third party on the Applicant's behalf.
18. By accepting the Award, the Recipient agrees to adhere to these terms and conditions, including but not limited to the following obligations:
 - a. The Recipient will use the Award only for the purposes of carrying out the activities specified in their application.
 - b. The Recipient will not make any significant change to the Funded Activity without University of Cumbria's prior written agreement.
 - c. While the Funded Activity is an independently arranged and managed activity, when conducting the Funded Activity, whether at University of Cumbria premises or elsewhere, the Recipient is required to behave in a fashion fitting for a representative of the University.
 - d. Recipients may be publicised on the University website and in the media. Recipients will be expected to provide appropriate feedback (e.g. Reports, blogs, pictures and/or videos) to support this.
 - e. The Recipient will be required to submit a brief impact report which maybe uploaded to the website, reflecting on how they benefited from the funds towards their career and employability prospects, to demonstrate impact and encourage future applications.
 - f. Reporting will typically be via a short, online form, instructions for which will be provided. The information will be used in literature to promote the value of the Award and provide feedback to the University. If reporting is not completed to a satisfactory standard, this may result in subsequent applications from the Recipient for the SOF or other University awards being denied.

19. The University of Cumbria accepts no responsibility for any additional costs or liabilities arising from the Funded Activity.
20. The Recipient is responsible for ensuring that appropriate checks and assessments for risk are carried out to ensure their safety and the safety of others when undertaking the Funded Activity.
21. The Recipient may be required to complete additional supporting paperwork for the Funded Activity (e.g. Risk assessment details) at least one week prior to the Funded Activity date. If this requirement is not fulfilled, incomplete or not complete to a satisfactory standard, this may result in the Award being withdrawn.
22. Payment of the Award will be arranged upon completion of any additional action required under clause 23.
23. Payment shall be paid by electronic bank transfer into a UK bank account of the Recipient only. Payments cannot be made into the account of another person.
24. The Award is not negotiable or transferable.
25. The Recipient accepts that the Award will not be made if University of Cumbria does not have available funds or is for any other reason unable or not permitted to provide the funds.
26. University of Cumbria will have no liability to the Recipient for any losses caused by a delay in the payment of the Award however arising.
27. If, by reason of any emergency or other circumstance, the Recipient is unable to complete the Funded Activity, in part or in whole, the Recipient will be required to refund all, or part of the Award as may be considered reasonable in all the circumstances.

APPEALS PROCESS

28. Students are scored against the prioritisation criteria to determine who receives an award. To maximise the beneficial impact of awards, and to maintain consistency, each student will be scored once only. Students may appeal if they believe the process of scoring for an award may have been adversely affected by errors or omissions in the scoring process. For example, if you have new information that you did not include in your original application. Please contact

us by emailing moneyadvice@cumbria.ac.uk within 14 days of the original decision outlining your circumstances.

GENERAL

29. In the event of any changes to a Recipient's status at University of Cumbria, University of Cumbria reserves the right to reassess whether the Recipient is eligible for the Award, which may result in the Recipient being required to repay all or some of the Award.
30. If the Recipient:
 - a. fails to complete all and/or any part of the Funded Activity;
 - b. fails to comply with any provision in the terms and conditions; and/or
 - c. is found to have misled University of Cumbria about any aspect of their application then University of Cumbria may require the Recipient to repay all or part of the Award, at its absolute discretion.
31. The Recipient must promptly repay to University of Cumbria any money incorrectly paid to it either because of an administrative error or otherwise.
32. University of Cumbria reserves the right to hold void, suspend, cancel, or amend the SOF where it becomes necessary to do so.
33. These terms and conditions are governed by English law. If any Applicants and/or Recipients wish to take court proceedings, then they must do this within the courts in the United Kingdom.
34. The following definitions apply to these terms and conditions:

“University of Cumbria” means University of Cumbria an exempt charity and higher education corporation, whose principal place of business is at Bowerham Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3JD, United Kingdom.

“Funded Activity” means the project or activity identified in the Applicant’s/Recipient’s application.

“Applicant” means an eligible student in accordance with clause 3, 4 and 8 who has applied for the SOF in accordance with these terms and conditions.

“Recipient” means an Applicant who is offered an Award to support the Funded Activity in accordance with these terms and conditions.

END.