

Volunteering Grant Funding Guidance

Queen Mary Students' Union
2025/26

Updated August 2025



Background

Each year, Queen Mary Students' Union support student-led activities through grant funding. A proportion of this grant money is made available to the Students' Union's Volunteering Groups. This year funding will be available to Volunteering Groups in 2 ways:

Volunteering Groups Start-up Fund

- £40 given to each affiliated Volunteering Group at the start of the year.
- No need to apply. This will be automatically transferred to your subs
- Used to promote your group and to help recruit new volunteers
- Will be recalled if unspent after Christmas

Volunteering Groups Development Fund

- Available for all affiliated Volunteering Groups to apply for funding
- Money awarded to help support groups in meeting their aims + objectives e.g. equipment, volunteer reward + recognition, training resources
- 3 funding rounds across the year (detailed in the Before you Apply section)
- Any money left unallocated after the round closes will be carried over to the following round (for round 1 unallocated funding will carry over into round 2, round 2 unallocated funding will carry over into round 3).

The Students' Union has limited grant funding available and is a competitive application process. It is there to support new activity or ideas that develops your group in line with your aims and objectives. We encourage you not to rely on receiving funding from the Volunteering Groups Development Fund for your regular activity and equipment but also consider how you can source other income for your projects/events/activities.

In this document, you can find the information you need to spend your Welcome Fund and prepare a strong application to the Development Fund and some practical information about application deadlines

Start-up Fund

Every year the Students' Union allocates money to Volunteering Groups to help them recruit volunteers for their activities that year. This money is given a spending deadline which is usually Christmas of that academic year unless otherwise specified. If it is not spent by that deadline, it will be recalled back and reallocated to the Volunteering Groups Development Fund for use by groups throughout the year.

The focus of the spending should be on attracting new volunteers to your group. Some ideas include:

- Reusable items to make your Welcome Fair stall stand out (in person or virtually)
- Resources for a Welcome Meeting (including food)
- Low sustainability impact advertising e.g. poster with a QR code linking to an information page/mailling list sign-up
- Paid marketing campaigns on social media
- Essential equipment you may need to run your activities

Due to the Students' Union's commitment to sustainability disposable marketing materials will not be funded e.g. leaflets, stickers.

Volunteering Groups Development Fund

Before you apply

Volunteering Groups with over £1,000 in their subs account are not eligible for funding, unless in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to discuss this further or request your subs balance, please e-mail us at su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk.

If you are planning to apply for grant funding, it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with the deadlines. We can't accept late applications, so please plan ahead and get your application in on time. You can find the current dates of the funding rounds on our website. Think about when you may need to the money and which round suits this timeline.

Making your application

To apply for funding from the Development Fund you must submit an application form by the deadline set (late applications will not be accepted).

All applications must be signed off and submitted by the President or Treasurer. If you hold a different role in the committee (e.g. Events Officer), you are welcome to help write the application, but remember it must be submitted by the President or Treasurer.

Please note that only applications from groups where the President and Treasurer have completed training will receive funding.

Application Questions

In addition to providing basic information about your Volunteering group and who exactly is completing the form (this should be the President or the Treasurer of your group), you will be asked a series of questions (listed below) about why you are applying for a grant from the Development Fund. Make sure to give as much detail as you can and read the guidance associated with each question carefully.

- **Please provide a summary of the project/event/activity/equipment that you are applying to the development fund for.**

It would be good to include: purpose or aims, what it involves, how many students will be involved, who will be involved in organising it, will you be collaborating with anyone?

Please explain how this project/event/activity will contribute to the aims and objectives of your volunteering group and how it will benefit your volunteers or activities.

- **How much money are you requesting from the Development Fund?**

If you are requesting to fund multiple items, break each of them down here and provide a link to them if relevant: e.g. Item A (link to Item A): £54.99 (Includes £4.99 delivery), Item B: £100, Item C: £75, TOTAL: £229.99

- **When will you spend the money by?**

Any unspent money after this date will be recalled and put back into the fund.

*Your application will be rejected if you need this money before when the outcomes are circulated for that round.

- **Why have decided to purchase/pay for these items?**

For example, if you are not asking for the cheapest option explain why you need a more expensive version of that product. If it is to pay for services/hire, explain why you want to use that service.

- **Please provide a full project budget, all including a full breakdown of all income and expenditure or upload a budget.**

Include details of how much the project costs in total if you are not asking to fully fund please include details of other income if you are using it, e.g. 'We will also be using £500 from our subs and will be making another £200 from selling tickets'.

- **Volunteering Board will also take into consideration how much money you have in your subs account. Please explain why your subs cannot cover it.**

If you have enough money in your subs account to cover your activity/event, please explain why you are unable to use this.

- **Does this project involve interaction with under 18s or adults at risk?**

Adults at risk includes, for example, those who need care because of mental health issues, disabilities, age or illness. This is a Yes/No question.

You might also want to think about including in your application the following considerations:

- **How will your event be accessible and inclusive?**

This will not impact if you get the funding or not, this question has been added to get your group to consider the accessibility and inclusivity of your events. If you want to discuss how to make your group more accessible and inclusive email su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk for help.

- **How is the item/activity/event being funded sustainable?**

This will not impact if you get the funding or not, this question has been added to get your society to consider the sustainability of your events. If you want to discuss how to make your group more sustainable email su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk for help.

Anything else you'd like to tell us about your application?

Here you can add anything you have not already mentioned which you think might support your application.

You can find the link for the application form on our website.

How much can my group apply for?

We advise that Volunteer Groups apply for no more than £600 over the course of the year. It's important when you make your application(s) to understand what your group really needs the money for. We also have this guidance in place so that one group is not receiving an unfair amount of grant funding compared to other groups who have applied for funding. The Board will allocate funding fairly across groups, where they think there is most need for the funding.

Please do not assume that your application will be fully approved by the Board. We recommend having a plan in place in case you are allocated part of the amount you applied for, or if you do not receive funding at all. For example, you could raise money for your group through selling tickets to a social event.

What can be funded?

- Volunteer recruitment and promotion – promotional items
- Project equipment – new equipment or replacing and maintaining equipment core to your group's activity
- Training & Development – training resources, conferences or development activities for volunteers
- Volunteer retention and reward – different ways to thank your volunteers provided it is not already offered by the Students' Union

What cannot be funded?

- Travel – volunteers can already claim travel to and from volunteering activities in line with the Students' Union volunteering expense claim policy

- Anything that has already taken place or bought before the outcome deadline for that round (known as retrospective bids)
- Donations or affiliations to a charity or political body: As the Students' Union is a registered charity, we cannot fund any donations to other charities, political parties, campaigns or trade unions. We can also not subsidise your charity fundraising activities.
- Alcoholic drinks
- Committee Merchandise e.g. hoodies
- Single-use plastics/promotional materials: as a Students' Union we have a commitment to sustainability

Top Tips

To ensure you have the highest chances of receiving grant money, we have some top tips below:

- Make sure you check how much you are eligible for before planning what you are going to apply for
- Read the application questions, and any guidance associated with individual questions carefully. Make sure to include all the details that are asked for.
- Provide as much detail as possible – the more detail that you provide the less the grant panel will question why you need the funding
- Link it to your aims + objectives as a group – make sure you demonstrate why it will help you to meet the groups targets for the year
- Include links/research into costings – it is always a good idea to show that you have done a little bit of research into where to source things from, especially when it is a more expensive item
- Showing that you have other sources of income for a project shows that you are being proactive and not just relying on the Development Fund – don't be afraid to tell us if you have already received funding from other sources

Submitted your application – what happens now?

When you've submitted your application, the Volunteering Board review all submitted applications from that round with the support of the Volunteering staff team and allocate the Grant Funding. The Volunteering Board base their decisions on a set of criteria, as outlined in the 'funding criteria' section of this document. They will also look at the detail of your application when they make their decision, you will need to make it clear what you are bidding for to get funding. Incomplete applications are also unlikely to be funded.

Once the decisions have been made you will be notified about what has been funded, what has not and why.

Spending awarded grant funds

- You are only able to use the money that you have been granted for the purpose for which they awarded – this will be explained in the funding e-mail.
- Awards funds will be transferred to individual group Grant Accounts. For information on how to access or spend this money see the Volunteering Groups [Finance page](#).
- All grant monies not spent by an agreed spending deadline date will be returned to the Students' Union for re-allocation in future Development Fund rounds, unless otherwise agreed.
- If necessary, you will also be reminded to submit any relevant paperwork (such as budget sheets or risk assessments) for the event/project/initiative.
- For events and/or events or activities involving under 18s or adults as risk, Safeguarding measures need to be discussed with the Volunteering Team.

If your funding application is not approved by the board you will receive a reason why. If the reason is not clear you can request further information from the Volunteering Team on su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk. If, after speaking to the Volunteering Team about the reasons why your application was rejected, you are still not satisfied with outcome you can appeal the decision by contacting an Executive Officer.

Please note that unspent grant funding cannot be carried over to be spent in the next academic year. It will be recalled if you do not spend it by July of the current Academic Year.

Anything else?

If you have any questions – now or after you've submitted your application, you can contact the Volunteering Team on su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk. Please note that it may take us a few days to get back to you.

Good luck with your application!