The Plus Programme has opened the 2019/20 Opportunities Fund designed to help students who would otherwise be unable, for financial reasons, to access extracurricular professional development opportunities offered through the University of Leeds or external organisations.

The purpose of this fund is to allow students to access non-compulsory activities which may enhance their employability or be related to their field of study or desired career, which they may otherwise not be able to access due to financial reasons.

**Please note, applications will usually be processed within 21 days, although this may increase during busy periods. As soon as you have completed the application form, this 21 day period will activate.**
Eligibility:

There are two main criteria to determine eligibility for the Plus Programme’s Opportunities Fund. You must meet both of them in order to be considered.

1) The Opportunities Fund is for Plus Programme students only. This means at least one of the following must apply to you:

- Successfully completed the Access to Leeds programme
- Successfully completed the Realising Opportunities programme
- Care Leaver
- Estranged student
- Refugee/Humanitarian Protection Status
- UG means-tested scholarship recipient
- Leeds Masters Scholarship recipient
- Young carer
- Successfully completed a Foundation Year programme with the Lifelong Learning Centre

2) You must be in demonstrable financial need by meeting one of the below criteria:

- You are in receipt of Leeds Financial Support. Details of this must be emailed to theplusprogramme@leeds.ac.uk after you have submitted your application or we will not be able to consider it. Instructions on how to do this are below.
- You are a recipient of one of the below scholarships. We have record of this, and you will not need to provide evidence:
  i. Undergraduate Means-Tested Scholarship
  ii. Leeds Masters Scholarship
  iii. Sanctuary Scholarship
Providing evidence of being in receipt of Leeds Financial Support

To do this please use the following instructions:
• Log into the portal: https://leedsportal.leeds.ac.uk/uollogin/login.html
• Click on Log me into Student Services
• Log into Student Services
• From the Home page click on Payments and Financial Support
• Click on Leeds Financial Support Summary
• Something similar to the page illustrated below will then be displayed
You will need to email this screenshot to theplusprogramme@leeds.ac.uk with the subject header of:
Opportunity Fund LFS Evidence [Your student ID here]

You must email this evidence as soon as you have completed your application!
Frequently Asked Questions - please read this before making your application

1) **What types of things will this fund pay for?**
Below are some examples of what we may fund, however if you have an opportunity which doesn’t fall under these categories, please feel free to apply anyway so that we can assess your case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of activities we might support</th>
<th>What we may fund to enable you to attend</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Internships, Work Experience and Volunteering Opportunities</td>
<td>• Childcare to enable you to attend an opportunity</td>
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<td>• Attendance at conferences</td>
<td>• Travel costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Accessing Lifelong Learning Centre / University of Leeds events</td>
<td>• Clothing (e.g. smart attire for an interview)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attendance at an interview or assessment centre</td>
<td>• Attendance fees for courses, conferences or residential training events</td>
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<td>• Attendance at a career insight day</td>
<td>• Accommodation costs associated with a work experience/placement opportunity</td>
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<td>• Attendance at a network event in your field of study/ chosen career area</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunities abroad such as summer schools or short placements</td>
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</table>

2) **Is there a limit on the amount of money I can request?**
Applications for funding in the region of £0 – £500 are normally considered. Awards above £500 can be considered but it is suggested that you contact us before making an application. No matter how much you request, you may be awarded less than this and this is at the Plus Programme’s discretion.

3) **Can I apply more than once in an academic year?**
In most circumstances, no student will be eligible to receive more than £500 of Opportunity Funding in one academic year. If you make one successful application for less than £500, we will consider future applications until your total has reached £500. To ensure the fund reaches as many students as possible, we also reserve the right to turn down applications from those who have accessed the fund already in the current academic year.

4) **How far in advance do I need to apply for the fund?**
The more notice you give us, the better. You must have sent in the application **before** your opportunity takes place as we will not accept retrospective opportunities. It may have taken place by the time we process your application, but we must have received the initial application before it does.

5) **Will you pay for me to go abroad?**
In some circumstances we will pay for your travel abroad, for example for a study abroad placement, volunteering or research placement. Please bear in mind that if you are travelling a long distance, we may only be able to put a contribution towards the travel costs. You must ensure that you have looked at all other possible sources of funding for a year abroad (studying or working) before you request Opportunity Fund money. This includes:

[-Student finance England Travel grants for students](#)
- Erasmus+ grants (subject to change due to Brexit)
- Enhanced maintenance loan

SFE Travel Grant

If you qualify for the SFE Travel Grant to cover flights, daily travel costs, medical insurance or visa costs, we will not pay for these from the Opportunity Fund, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

The SFE Travel Grant is available to students who are receiving student finance that depends on their household income (i.e. means-tested), and who are spending at least 50% of any qualifying period:

- studying at an overseas university or college (including Erasmus+ students);
- on an Erasmus+ work placement abroad;
- working as an Erasmus+ British Council Language Assistant

Acceptable Claims under the SFE travel grant include:

- For a full year placement, up to 3 return journeys between the UK and an overseas institution;
- Any necessary daily travel costs while abroad for the purposes of attending the institution;
- The cost of medical insurance purchased for the purpose of studying abroad;
- 40% of a travel insurance premium, but this must include medical coverage;
- The cost of visas and medical tests that are a mandatory condition of entry to the host country

Please see this link for further details of the Travel Grant- please note that this the Opportunity Fund team cannot help students with any queries about the SFE travel grant, please contact the Funding team.

Study Abroad early starter

If the first day of term at your host university is earlier than the first day of term at Leeds by 5 weeks or more, the University of Leeds will request an early release of the first instalment of your maintenance loan in line with the start of year study year abroad. Please make sure you have checked your eligibility for this before applying for the Opportunity Fund.

Work Placements Abroad

If you are applying for funding for an opportunity related to your work placement abroad, please make it clear in the application form whether you are receiving a full funding maintenance loan (for ERASMUS+ and Special Case work placements) or if you are receiving a reduced maintenance loan for other work placements abroad. Please see this fact sheet for more information.

6) How will I receive the money?

This will depend on what we are funding. For travel requests, we may book these ourselves through the University travel site and then give you the tickets, for example a return train trip from Leeds to London. For some items we may request that you make the purchase with your own money, send us the receipt or proof of purchase and then we will reimburse you. In this case, you must remember to keep all receipts and proof of expenditure or we will not be able to reimburse you.
You must submit all receipts/proof of purchase for reimbursement within 21 days of the opportunity ending. If you do not submit within 21 days of the opportunity ending, the funding award will be rescinded, and you will not receive the money.

7) Why are there so many questions on the application form?

We receive a large volume of requests to the Opportunity Fund and we need to ensure that we have enough information to assess your application fairly. If you are unsure about any of the questions, please email us on theplusprogramme@leeds.ac.uk

8) How will I know if I have been successful in my application for the Opportunity Fund?

We will get in touch with you between 2-3 weeks of you submitting your application, but this may be longer during busy periods. We advise you to include as much supporting information as possible to your application to avoid any delays. Please also ensure you apply for funding with plenty of time prior to your opportunity taking place (as far as possible).

9) How can I apply for LeedsforLife Conference Awards?

You can download an application form by following this link. This is a separate pot of money which will be assessed by a separate panel to the Plus Programme Opportunities Fund. LeedsForLife will only fund up to 50% of a conference fee- if you have been approved for this funding, the Opportunities Fund may be able to provide additional funding, if you would be otherwise unable to attend the conference.

10) Do I have to do anything after my opportunity has taken place?

As part of the funding award, you are required write a 500 word report about how the opportunity has benefitted you personally, academically and/or professionally as well as how the funding enabled you to access the opportunity. We may use quotes from your report as testimonials for areas such as our website, however we won’t use your name without asking for your permission first. This report will need to be submitted within 28 days of your opportunity taking place.

11) I submitted an application but didn’t receive a confirmation email straight away. Did my application go through?

Confirmation emails are not automatically sent through when an application is sent. However, if you reach the completion screen, your application has gone through. We will contact you within 21 days of your application (usually quicker) to confirm/decline/request further information.

12) What if I have any more questions?

If you have any more questions before submitting your application, please email theplusprogramme@leeds.ac.uk and a member of the team will get back to you as soon as possible.