Plus Programme Opportunities Fund 2022/23 Guidance

You must read this in full before applying for the Opportunities Fund

The Plus Programme has opened the 2022/23 Opportunities Fund designed to help students who would otherwise be unable, for financial reasons, to access extracurricular development opportunities offered though the University of Leeds or external organisations.

The purpose of this fund is to allow students to access activities which may enhance their employability or be related to their field of study or desired career.

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.

The fund is open for opportunities taking/which began from 1st September 2022 and will have completed by 31st August 2023. If your opportunity is not an event to 'attend' (for example, a subscription to a professional body), then you must have paid for the opportunity during this period.

If your opportunity will not have completed by 31st August 2023, unfortunately we cannot agree to fund it at this stage. You will need to apply when the fund re-opens in early Semester 1 in the 2023/24 academic year.

The final date for applications from this cycle of funding will be 17th August 2023. No new applications for opportunities taking place between 1/9/22 – 31/8/23 will be accepted after this date.

Eligibility:

The Opportunities Fund is for registered Plus Programme students only (both undergraduate and postgraduate)

If you are unsure as to whether you are on the Plus Programme, please send us an email theplusprogramme@leeds.ac.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

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.

Examples of activities we might support	What we may fund
• Internships, Work Experience and Volunteering Opportunities • Attendance at conferences (virtual or in person) • Accessing Lifelong Learning Centre / University of Leeds events • Attendance at an interview or assessment centre • Attendance at a career insight day • Attendance at a network event in your field of study/ chosen career area • Short courses/ training, for example an Online Marketing course offered outside of the university	• Travel costs • Clothing (e.g smart attire for an interview) • Attendance fees for courses, conferences or residential training events • Accommodation costs associated with a work experience/placement opportunity in the UK • Subscriptions/ professional body memberships

On course or course related costs

We are now able to approve requests for funding towards *some* course related costs. Examples of these would include:

- DBS check required for research/placement/practical module
- Professional Body Membership
- Qualifications which are earned through taking part in a university module but there is an extra cost associated
- Materials for practical courses such as Art and Design, Fine Art and Graphic Design. We will award up to the following amounts for these materials. Receipts for equipment must be provided.

    Level 1- £150

    Level 2- £200

    Level 3- £350

- Research project costs- for example if you require access to a journal that is not available through the library, or you need to travel to somewhere like the British Library or a museum to conduct research.
- Revision courses such as those for practical courses like Medicine

Please note we will not pay for laptops, PCs or books.

What evidence do I have to provide in order to receive the money?

All successful applicants must provide three pieces of evidence in order to receive their payment:

1) Evidence that the opportunity is definitely taking place. For example, this could be a copy of the email inviting you to your interview or a link to the conference page.
2) Evidence you have paid for everything you are requesting funding for. This must be a receipt or email confirmation, clearly showing the date of purchase and amount paid. **We cannot accept screenshots of bank statements.**
3) A completed Opportunities Fund Report. This is a short online report you complete after your opportunity has taken place, reflecting on the impact the opportunity has had on you.

When do I have to submit my evidence by?

Depending on when your opportunity is completing/taking place, you will have a deadline to submit all your evidence by. If all the required evidence is not submitted by the deadline, your application will close.

The deadlines and dates are listed below:

Opportunity date (when it completes if over a longer period), date you paid for the costs or date your application was accepted (whichever is later)	Deadline to receive all evidence by
1st September 2022 – 23rd November 2022	16th December 2022
24th November 2022 – 21st February 2023	14th March 2023
22nd February 2023 – 26th June 2023	10th July 2023
27th June 2023 - 31st August 2023	14th September 2023

Can I submit receipts over a longer period and receive multiple payments?

Normally, we will only make one payment to students for their opportunity. This means, if you are paying for several things over a longer period, we request that you wait until you have *all* the receipts so that we can pay you for everything in one go. If this will cause financial difficulty, we will consider making multiple payments over a longer period. Once your application has been accepted, let us know if this is the case.

If waiting until after my opportunity has taken place will cause me severe financial difficulty, can I receive my reimbursement earlier?

If this is the situation, let us know once your application has been accepted. In some circumstances, we may agree to make your payment early without your Opportunities Fund Report being completed. You will still be required to complete the report once your opportunity has taken place.

Is there a limit on the amount of money I can request?

Applications for funding in the region of £0 – £500 are normally considered. No matter how much you request, you may be awarded less than this and this is at the Plus Programme's discretion.

For smart clothing- we will offer up to £150 per academic year.

For accommodation, we can fund up to £120 per night. This must be at a bookable, short-stay accommodation for which you can provide a receipt such as a hotel or AirBnb. We are unable to fund costs relating to staying with family or normal term-time accommodation.

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.

How far in advance do I need to apply for the fund? Can I apply for opportunities that have already happened?

If your opportunity began after 1st September 2022 and will have completed by 31st August 2023, you will be eligible to apply for the fund during this academic year. If your opportunity is not an event you will be 'attending' (such as a subscription to a professional body or equipment), you must have incurred the cost during this period.

Will you pay for me to go abroad?

We will consider applications relating to studying/ working/ volunteering abroad. Please note that the trip must be in line with current travel restrictions and guidance. We can also only fund activities which can go through and be signed off by the university's Risk Assessment process for activity abroad. We will contact you with more information about this if you apply.

Turing Funding Update

The University of Leeds has been awarded Turing funding which can support students with the cost of a number of activities abroad which come under the following categories:

- Study placements
- Summer schools
- Volunteering
- Postgraduate research
- Work placements
- Recent graduates
- International Internships
- Medical Electives

This means that you may be eligible for this Turing funding, for example if you are undertaking a medical elective abroad. There are requirements, for example the activity must be at least four weeks long.

We will only consider you for the Opportunities Fund if you are **not eligible** to receive Turing funding. We will not duplicate any funding you are being offered via the Turing scheme.

It is your responsibility to find this out- either by contacting the person in charge of your activity planning or the Turing scheme operations team.

Please find out more about the Turing scheme here

How will I receive the money?

In most cases we will 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. If you do not have the funds available to make the purchase and claim back, you can indicate this once your application has been accepted. We will work with you to purchase the item(s) via university purchasing methods, although this will not always be possible.

In order to receive reimbursements, you must ensure your bank details are correct on Minerva.
https://students.leeds.ac.uk/bankdetails.

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. Please allow time for the team to work on your application before chasing it up, as we are expecting a high volume of applications.

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.