Author: Rachel Challinor, Student Support & Development Manager, SEED
Date: 17/08/26 v1.0

Student Experience Funding 26/27

The Student Experience Fund will again be available to departments within SEED to support Student Experience activities.

The application form for the 2026/27 academic year fund will go live at 9am, Monday 7th September 2026 and applications are invited from then until it closes at 5pm, Friday 4th June 2027.

Who can apply to the fund:
We are now welcoming applications from SEED colleagues and students for activities that benefit SEED UG & PGT students at programme or school level.

Please note that the SEF is not available for PGR only events as the fund allocation is based on PGT and UG student numbers only.

How have funds been allocated:
A portion of the fund has been allocated to each department within the SEED. Accessibility to events is encouraged to be broad and does not need to always be programme specific.

Registered and established SEED student societies are offered a one-off allocation in advance to use to support their activities, pending receipt of an annual financial report. This means they do not need to apply for SEF funding for their activities and instead should contact the relevant society. Supported societies in 25/26 were MUGS (including for Geography Sports), Tree Muskateers, Education Society, GDI for Palestine, One World Together. These groups should not apply directly to the Student Experience Fund.

How to bid

1. You can make an application via the **SEF form.** The form will open in line with the above dates/times.
2. Once you have submitted the form, the Panel will receive this automatically and there is no need to email with a follow up.
3. Applications will be reviewed and approved on a regular basis by the Panel, and we will get back to you if approved, declined or if further information is required.
4. Please note the final deadline to apply is 5pm on **Friday 4th June 2027.** This is to enable sufficient time for the end of financial year reconciliation.

The Panel
The Panel includes:
Kathryn Telling; Associate Director for Academic Advising and Wellbeing
Rachel Challinor; Student Support and Development Manager

What we are looking for:
The Panel are keen to invite applications from students and/or staff that support the following agendas:

- Assessment and Feedback
- Career and employability opportunities
- Sense of belonging and learning community
- Well-being and mental health
- Student voice and student partnership
- Widening participation (Access, Success and Progression)

The fund can be used for programme specific, departmental or whole school student activities, such as social activities that sit outside the teaching environment. The fund cannot be used to supplement costs for activities that are associated with teaching, such as catering for a teaching activity or an activity on an already planned programme optional or mandatory field trip.

The panel will look favourably on co-created wide reaching and collaborative proposals.
The panel also encourages applications to demonstrate value for money and accessibility to a broad range or number of students, as well as inclusive and sustainable activities.

The panel will consider partial contributions towards large student social activities e.g., a departmental or programme Ball, but advise that the application should also demonstrate how they will subsidize costs through their own fundraising activities.

In recognition of university guidance to prioritise on-campus activities and utilising internal catering first, the application should clearly demonstrate the benefits of any off-campus or alternative catering activity proposal. All catering requests should demonstrate efforts to reduce food waste.

To speed up a decision, your application should include:

- Details of how the activity aligns to one of the above categories and/or priorities.
- Information about where you will go and what you will do and how this enhances the student experience.
- Finalised cost and supplier details – and if on the approved supplier list (see next section).
- Demonstration of an inclusive and sustainable approach.

Plan ahead to spend your funds

It is important that you have considered how your funding, if approved, can be accessed. We can only make payments to organisations already on the approved supplier list, so you should choose your venue, activity and/or caterer carefully. Contact procurementhub@manchester.ac.uk directly to check if a supplier is on the system. Last minute requests will have to be rejected if the supplier cannot be easily invoiced. Contact Seed.Hub@manchester.ac.uk if you need support raising a Purchase Order (PO). Advice on Purchase Orders/paying invoices is here. It should be noted that invoices are usually paid within 30 days of receipt of invoice/goods receipted.

Credit card payments are a last resort for payments under £1000. See guidance on how to do this on the SEED staffnet finance pages. We cannot use a credit card for restaurant payments and since it can take several weeks to get a company approved as a supplier you need to plan carefully. Credit Card payments are not instant; you should submit a request form (available at the link above) and the process requires at least 10 working days.

Substantive staff do have the option to use Expenses to pay for costs and get reimbursed. However, we advise against this unless for a small sum as it can take some time to process and there is significant scrutiny over entertainment claims. Claims can be submitted via MyView, and ensure you have read and comply with the policy.

If you are looking to purchase vouchers with SEF funds, the IAG team can help or you can make an order via vouchers@manchester.ac.uk. See further guidance.

We highly recommend that all trips are subject to a risk assessment. SEF funded activities should always have an academic or PS member of SEED staff involved through attendance or organising of the event.

Please note that where catering is being requested, the fund will only support the purchase of soft drinks, including for restaurant bookings. To remain as inclusive as possible the fund cannot be used for alcohol.

Organising a Ball
We strongly recommend a programme or departmental student-staff organising committee to help share the work when organising a Ball. IAG can be approached for administrative support if needed.

Requests for funding a Ball should include:

- Confirmation of student engagement in the planning process.
- Confirmation of expected numbers.
- Confirmation of ticket sales management (often arranged through the SU societies online shop).
- Confirmation of ticket price point.
- A detailed budget plan for venue hire, entertainment, food and drink package and extras.
- Confirmation of any additional advancement of funding required and how this will be reimbursed to the SEF.
- Details of how any staff tickets are to be funded.

The student experience fund is unlikely to be able to fund the full cost of a Ball for every programme and strongly encourages cohorts to group together to reduce administrative and financial costs. The SEF can help subsidise cost to students but there is an expectation that tickets sales are part of the funding process. This will also go some way to encourage attendance from students.

Examples of what the Fund has supported previously:

Both PS and academic colleagues met the challenge to adhere to the SEF criteria in creative, engaging ways. Activities supported by the SEF previously have included:

- Environmental volunteering
- Student sports league subscriptions
- Field work kit including clothing loans
- Walking tours and museum trips
- conference resources and goodies
- Society members t-shirts and hoodies
- Dissertation hand-in party
- Local National Trust estate visits
- Career and employability focussed events
- Social activities, networking opportunities and end of year celebrations.

We encourage you to think of new and interesting ways to enhance our students' university experience beyond the classroom, often related to the subject area or the city and region they have chosen to study and live in. Students themselves are full of good ideas so do engage the student voice (and tell us when you do!) in your planning.

We look forward to receiving your application and supporting the student experience.