# **The Stirling Fund 2025-26**

# **Guidelines and Application for Funding**

**Introduction**

The *Stirling Fund* was established in 2011 to support specific projects to enhance the student experience. Any current student or staff member, representing a body of students, is eligible to apply in support of **innovative projects** that will **enhance the Stirling experience** for the **wider student community.**

After 10 years supporting over 150 projects, we have reviewed the Stirling Fund award structure in order to encourage larger, more impactful and ambitious projects, while continuing to offer kick-starter support to clubs and societies. We have introduced two different funding programmes:

* **Main Grants Awards**: for projects up to £5,000 per year. Under this stream, we aim to fund no more than 2 projects of up to £5,000, and no more than 5 projects of up to £1,000.
* **Small Grants Awards:** for projects up to £250 per year. We aim to fund a significant number of projects under this funding stream, requiring a shorter application form.

For projects to be successful under the Main Grants Awards programme, they should be ambitious and have multiple groups collaborating on a specific proposal. We advise that before developing a larger scale project that you discuss your planning with the Students’ Union. Their contact details can be found at the end of the document.

**Criteria for Projects**

To be awarded funding, projects must demonstrate that they will enhance the student experience across the wider student community, benefitting current and future generations of students and making Stirling an even better place to live and study. Projects will be awarded funding on the condition that a proposal outlines how the student experience can be enhanced safely, in a way which incorporates careful planning and a thorough risk assessment.

The Panel **will consider** supporting initiatives in the following areas:

* Projects that will benefit Stirling as a whole and the wider community, or which promote the reputation of Stirling to the benefit of all, or that enhance the student experience.
* The provision of equipment (which benefits multiple students).
* Student-led extra-curricular academic activities or projects.
* Club or society projects that will enhance the experience of students.
* Projects which require an initial outlay, provided that any recurrent costs can be met by the Faculty/Department concerned.
* Projects that involve fundraising events or initiatives as long as they adhere to the [*Code of Fundraising Practice*](https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code), ensuring ethical and responsible management of donor funds. *However, please note that projects seeking grants to host fundraising events for sensitive or potentially divisive causes, such as international conflicts or political campaigns, will not be considered.*

The Panel **will not** consider:

* Projects that commit the Panel to recurrent funding.
* Items of regular equipment such as general office furnishings, etc.
* Equipment or initiatives that only benefit one student.
* Catering, staff and/or capital or building costs.
* Applications from individuals for scholarship, tuition fees, bursaries or prizes, or trips abroad that benefit only one student.
* Funding for trips that are part of a module already included in the faculty's curriculum, such as a mandatory field trip for a course.

**However, the panel may consider applications for trips (local or abroad) if:**

* **The trip demonstrates clear and significant benefits to the University community.** For example, a student-led research expedition that culminates in a public lecture or seminar series, sharing valuable findings with the University. Trips with limited or unclear impact, such as recreational retreats or activities that primarily serve individual interests without broader engagement, will not be funded. *Please note that funding for travel abroad or locally to participate in competitions, tournaments, or games, such as a sports event or a debate competition, will not be considered*.
* **Projects are strongly encouraged to demonstrate clear evidence of partial financial support from other sources, as this reflects a strong commitment to the project's success and shared responsibility.** For example, if a trip has been partially funded through student society fundraising activities, this illustrates a collaborative effort toward achieving the project’s goals.

**Conditions of receiving funding**

Successful applicants **must**:

* Provide a clear and structured breakdown of the budget required.
* Be enrolled in the current academic year and have a plan to spend the funds before you cease to be a student (student applicants only).
* Acknowledge the award on social media using the hashtags @StirAlumni #StirlingFund with information and updates about your project, and by promoting the project with the *Stirling Fund* icons which will be sent to successful recipients.
* Provide **written feedback** (a written report with a minimum of three high-quality images and quotations) on the success of the project and how the award has assisted you **by the date agreed as part of your acceptance of the award**. Please send this to [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk).These reports and any other materials will be used in future publicity of the *Stirling Fund* and for reporting back to the donors, and are an essential condition of funding
* Ensure that expenditure plans and timelines are clearly outlined. Typically, funds should be spent within **12 months**, with the release of funding based on the agreed financial schedule. If this timeline is not met and no extension is arranged, the panel may withhold funding to ensure that sufficient resources remain available for future applicants.

To request an application form, or to ask any questions not covered here, please email [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk)

Please submit your application to [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk)

**IMPORTANT**

**Application Guidelines**

**Main Grants Awards Application: A Guide**

Below are some guidelines for writing your application to the *Stirling Fund*. A well-written and thought through application is far more likely to be successful in being funded, so be sure to check over your application thoroughly before submitting.

Previous successful applications can be found online [here](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/our-people/alumni/support-stirling/the-stirling-fund/). For an example of a successful application form, please email [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk.](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk)

* A detailed description of your project
  + Write clear objectives that are easy to understand.
  + Include the reasoning for the project as well as whether the project is urgent.
  + Link your project directly to the student experience at Stirling – how will receiving the funding help the students?
* Who will benefit from the project?
  + Provide a clear explanation of how the project will benefit a broad range of students, including various groups within the student community. Include a projection of the expected number of beneficiaries, both direct (e.g., participants) and indirect (e.g., future students or community members).
  + Detail the specific group or category of students who will benefit, such as student clubs, societies, or academic groups. Focus on larger communities within the University and provide a precise estimate of how many students will be impacted.
  + Estimate the number of students who will benefit from the project. Since main grants support larger initiatives, projects that have a broad impact across the student body or involve multiple student groups are encouraged.
  + Explain how the project will offer sustained benefits, such as ongoing student engagement, continued community involvement, or enhanced contributions to the University's reputation.
* Breakdown of costings for the project
  + Include hyperlinks and details of where different purchases are from, along with alternatives places to purchase if possible.
  + If a price is particularly high, then tell us why.
  + Detail whether you have received or are pursuing other sources of funding – a project is more likely to be successfully funded if various funding sources have been considered.
* Clear outline of a project timetable
  + How long will the project last overall? What will happen in each month/week?
  + Why is this the timescale? Is there a particular reason why the event/project is happening at this time?
* How will the project be publicised?
  + Will physical promotion be used?
  + How will social media be used? What platforms? How regularly?
  + How will photos be used? Will video be used?
  + Will there be a need for promotion by the Students’ Union and/or University? If so, how will this be organised?
* How will you keep the Development and Alumni Relations team up to date?
  + Is there an event you would like any of the team to attend?
  + How will a report be produced afterwards?
  + Will the project’s output have a direct effect on the University as a whole?
* How will you recognise the *Stirling Fund* as a sponsor of your project?
  + There are specific icons that can be included in both print and digital materials that will be given to successfully funded projects.
* References
  + **Students’ Union projects**: If the project is student-led and part of the Students’ Union, your referee should be the Activities and Volunteer Coordinator, the Sports Development Coordinator, the VP Communities, or the Sports President.
    - If you are applying as part of a club, society, or sports team, it is strongly recommended that you discuss your application with the Activities and Volunteer Coordinator or Sports Development Coordinator before submission.
* **Academic projects**: Student projects with an academic focus must provide a reference from the relevant faculty. For example, a psychology project requires a referee from the Psychology Department.
* **Authority to sign off**: All projects must be signed off by a member of university staff (academic or professional) who has the authority to approve your project.
  + **Your project must have faculty or staff approval to proceed, and any additional funding must be formally signed off by the relevant faculty.**
  + **Their approval confirms that the university is aware of your proposal, that it is authorised to proceed, and that any financial impact is either not applicable or covered by an existing departmental budget.**
* Referees should be aware that DAR will contact them directly.
* **Cross-departmental projects**: If your project requires resources from another part of the university, such as Estates or Sport, you must obtain a referee from that department to confirm feasibility and support.
* Referees cannot be committee members, peers, or friends. Previous employers may only act as referees where directly relevant to the project.

**Small Grants Awards Application: A Guide**

Below are some guidelines for writing your application to the *Stirling Fund*. A well-written and thought through application is far more likely to be successful in being funded so be sure to check over your application thoroughly before submitting.

The Small Grants Awards application is shorter and requires less detail than the Main Grants Awards application form, so please make sure you highlight and address all the main points of your project while being concise.

* A detailed description of your project
  + Write clear objectives that are easy to understand.
  + Include the reasoning for the project as well as whether the project is urgent.
  + Link your project directly to the student experience at Stirling – how will receiving the funding help the students?
* Who will benefit from the project?
  + Provide a clear explanation of how the project will benefit a smaller range of students. Include a projection of the expected number of beneficiaries, both direct (e.g., participants) and indirect (e.g., future students or community members).
  + Detail the specific group or category of students who will benefit, such as student clubs, societies, or academic groups. Focus on smaller communities within the University and provide a precise estimate of how many students will be impacted.
  + Estimate the number of students who will benefit from the project. Since small grants can still support larger initiatives, projects that have a broad impact across the student body or involve multiple student groups are encouraged.
  + Explain how the project will offer sustained benefits, such as ongoing student engagement, continued community involvement, or enhanced contributions to the University's reputation.
* Categories of students
  + Please detail whether your project is addressing a particular category or group of students.
  + Projects addressing minorities or under-represented groups are more likely to be successful.
* Previous funding
  + Applications for recurring funding or previously successful projects will not be accepted.
* Budget
  + Provide a breakdown of estimated costs for how the funding will be spent. Ensure that the estimates are as close to actual costs as possible.
  + Feel free to use the template table provided for a clear and organised presentation of your budget.
  + Aim for accuracy in your cost estimates to reflect a realistic and achievable budget.
* How will you keep the Development and Alumni Relations team up to date?
  + Is there an event you would like any of the team to attend?
  + How will a report be produced afterwards?
  + Will the project’s output have a direct effect on the University as a whole?
* How will you recognise the *Stirling Fund* as a sponsor of your project?
  + There are specific icons that can be included in both print and digital materials that will be given to successfully funded projects.
* References
  + Academics should include a reference from a School Manager or Dean.
  + If the project is student led and part of the Students’ Union, it is recommended that the Activities and Volunteer Coordinator, Sports Development Coordinator) VP Communities or the Sports President be used.
    - It is also recommended that your application be looked at or discussed with the Activities and Volunteer Coordinator or Sports Development Coordinator before submitting (if applicant is a student associated with a club, society or sports team).
* A member of University staff, whether academic or professional, with authority to sign off your project, must agree to act as a referee.
* Your referee should be aware that they will be contacted by DAR.
* Please ensure that your project has faculty approval to proceed and, where applicable, that any additional funding has been approved by the relevant faculty.
* References should align with your project's goals. In addition, if your project involves resources from a different department, such as estates or sport, it is important to obtain a reference from that department

**USEFUL CONTACTS**

Relevant academic staff may also be interested in hearing about your project. For example, speaking to Arts and Humanities if heritage and culture are a focus of the project. If you are unsure of whom to contact, please email [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk) and we will point you in the right direction.

**STIRLING STUDENTS’ UNION**

Union President ([president.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:president.union@stir.ac.uk))

VP Communities ([communities.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:communities.union@stir.ac.uk))

VP Education ([education.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:education.union@stir.ac.uk))

Sports President ([sports.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:sports.union@stir.ac.uk))

**ESTATES AND CAMPUS SERVICES**

[ECSAdmin@stir.ac.uk](mailto:ECSAdmin@stir.ac.uk)

To request an application form, or to ask any questions not covered here, please email [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk.](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk)

Please submit your application to [philanthropy@stir.ac.uk](mailto:philanthropy@stir.ac.uk)

**Please see the** [***Stirling Fund’s* webpage**](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/our-people/alumni/support-stirling/the-stirling-fund/apply-to-the-stirling-fund/) **for closing date**