Scholars' Fund 2026-27

Reimbursement and Finance Guidance

This guidance sets out how expenditure for Scholars' Fund projects should be claimed and reimbursed. It is intended to ensure a simple, consistent and transparent approach that is proportionate to the size and nature of the Fund.

At a Glance: Key Requirements

- Most projects supported through the Scholars' Fund fall in the region of £20,000–£40,000. This range is intended as an indication of typical project scale; the Panel may consider proposals outside this range where there is clear and proportionate student benefit.
- All expenditure must be incurred using Faculty/Service budgets first, then reclaimed from Global Advancement (GA).
- No administrative overheads, staff time, or routine operational costs can be reimbursed.
- Claims must include clear supporting evidence (T1 transaction reports, invoices, receipts).
- Reimbursement is only possible for costs included in the approved Full Proposal.
- All claims must be submitted within the 2026–27 delivery period (Aug 2026–July 2027).
- Successful projects must submit an outcomes and expenditure report to GA once complete.

1. How project costs are paid

Before submitting an EOI or Full Proposal, applicants must confirm that the relevant budget holder has agreed to cover all project expenditure upfront, as the Scholars' Fund does not provide advance payments.

All activities supported by the Scholars' Fund must be paid for initially through departmental or service budgets. Project teams must retain appropriate evidence of spend. Once costs have been incurred, they may be reclaimed from Global Advancement (GA), who administer the endowment and process reimbursements upon receipt of required documentation (e.g., T1 transaction reports, invoices, or receipts). This reimbursement approach applies to all Scholars' Fund awards and is consistent with University practice for managing other philanthropic funds.

2. How to claim reimbursement

When a cost has been incurred, the project team should submit a reimbursement request to: GEDFunds@exeter.ac.uk. Your email must include:

- A brief description of the expenditure (what was purchased and why)
- The total amount being claimed
- The budget code(s) that require reimbursement
- Supporting evidence, such as:
    - a T1 transaction report
    - invoices
    - receipts
    - confirmation of internal transfers or internal bookings

Global Advancement (GA) will review the claim and arrange for reimbursement to the relevant budget code(s) once all documentation has been verified. No reimbursement can be made without clear, auditable evidence of expenditure.

To support timely processing:

- Ensure your claim relates only to activities and costs approved in the Full Proposal
- Where possible, submit claims in batches rather than individually
- The final claim must be submitted before the end of the delivery period (July 2027)
- Keep a local record of expenditure for audit purposes (e.g., internal tracker)

3. Reimbursement for Guild and SU projects

Any student-led projects must be delivered in partnership with, and submitted by, the Students' Guild or Students' Union. The Students' Guild and Students' Union are external organisations and therefore follow a slightly different reimbursement process from University departments. For projects delivered by the Guild or SU:

What Guild/SU must submit

Because the Guild and SU cannot provide T1 transaction reports, they must email the following directly to 📧 GEDFunds@exeter.ac.uk:

- Invoices or receipts for all expenditure
- The total amount being claimed
- Confirmation that the claim relates to the Scholars' Fund (e.g., "This claim is for reimbursement from the Scholars' Fund")
- All expenditure must meet the same eligibility criteria as University-led projects, including the requirement that all costs directly benefit students and that no administrative overheads or staff time are included.

What Global Advancement will do

Once documentation has been checked, Global Advancement (GA) will:

1. Raise a payment request to reimburse the Guild or SU bank account; and
2. Process an internal journal entry to allocate the expenditure to the appropriate Scholars' Fund endowment.

Guild and SU project teams should retain clear, auditable records of all expenditure and ensure that all claims align with the approved Full Proposal and the Scholars' Fund cost eligibility criteria. This helps avoid delays and ensures compliance with the Fund's auditing requirements.

Current contacts

- Guild: *Jonah Corren* and *Becky Rowe*
- SU: *Rhian Robertson*

4. Key Principles for Funded Projects

The following principles apply to all projects supported by the Scholars' Fund and reflect the University's standard approach to administering philanthropic funds:

a) Total project costs

Most projects supported through the Scholars' Fund fall in the region of £20,000–£40,000. This range is intended as an indication of typical project scale; the Panel may consider proposals outside this range where there is clear and proportionate student benefit.

b) No advance payments can be made

All project expenditure must be incurred using the relevant Faculty, Division or Service budget in the first instance. The Scholars' Fund does not provide upfront payments under any circumstances.

c) Costs must be incurred first and then reclaimed

Only once eligible expenditure has been incurred—and supported by clear evidence—can a reimbursement request be submitted to Global Advancement (GA). Reimbursement is made to the relevant budget code only after GA has verified the documentation.

d) Only costs included in the approved Full Proposal will be reimbursed

GA can reimburse only those activities and cost types explicitly approved by the Scholars' Fund Scoring Panel. Any additional, revised or substituted costs require prior approval before reimbursement will be considered.

e) All funded costs must directly benefit students

The Scholars' Fund cannot support administrative overheads, staff time, departmental operations, or activity normally funded by Faculties, Divisions or Professional Services. This includes teaching materials, core wellbeing provision, and compulsory course costs. (See EOI Guidance for further detail.)

f) All claims must be submitted within the delivery period

Reimbursement claims must be submitted between August 2026 and July 2027, and the final claim must be received by GA before the end of the project year. Late claims cannot be processed.

g) Claims must be supported by clear, auditable evidence

Each claim must include a T1 transaction report, or invoices, receipts, or confirmation of internal bookings/transfers as applicable. Reimbursement cannot be made without this evidence.

h) Budget holder approval is required before submitting an EOI

Applicants must secure confirmation that their budget holder agrees to cover upfront expenditure during the project delivery period. This ensures departmental capacity to incur costs before reimbursement.

i) Project teams must maintain a local audit trail

Teams should keep a clear record of expenditure, internal coding, and supporting documents to ensure compliance with donor-funded audit requirements and expedite reimbursement processing. Projects are required to provide a short outcomes and expenditure summary at the end of the delivery year and to cooperate with any light-touch requests from Global Advancement for student insights or case-study material, where feasible.

j) Notification of underspend

Projects must alert Global Advancement as soon as a material underspend becomes likely. Underspends may be reallocated to other Scholars' Fund projects where feasible, or returned to the endowment for use in future cycles.

k) Queries should be directed to GA

If you are unsure whether a cost is eligible, or if you have questions about the reimbursement process, please contact: GEDFunds@exeter.ac.uk

5. Eligible and ineligible costs

The Scholars' Fund can only support expenditure that provides direct financial benefit to students and directly supports their access, participation, success or progression in higher education. All costs must go to students personally, either

through a financial transfer or through the purchase of items or services issued directly to an individual student.

a) Eligible costs (examples)

These costs must directly support students' access, participation, success or progression, and must be given directly to students:

- Bursary or hardship payments made directly to students to address financial barriers
- Vouchers for food, clothing, travel, digital access, study materials or essential living costs
- Purchases of items for individual students (e.g., laptops, tools, assistive equipment) that support learning or engagement
- Internship related payments such as:
    - internship bursaries
    - wage subsidies or payments made directly to students to enable participation
- Participation enabling payments, including:
    - travel or subsistence funds *given to students*
    - childcare or caring-cost support
    - accessibility-related payments (e.g., assistive devices for individual students)
- Consumable materials issued directly to students for voluntary, project specific activities (not programme required)

Important:
Eligible costs must not cover compulsory elements of a programme or anything a department would normally be expected to fund, in line with institutional responsibilities described in the EOI Guidance (e.g., compulsory field trip costs, mandatory equipment, teaching materials, core services).

b) Ineligible costs (examples)

The Fund cannot support any expenditure that does not directly transfer benefit to students or that covers core institutional responsibilities. Examples include:

- Hidden course costs, such as:
    - compulsory field trips
    - mandatory programme equipment
    - essential course materials
- Activity normally funded by Faculties, Divisions, Professional Services, the Students' Guild, or the Students' Union.
    - teaching, programme delivery, or learning materials
    - baseline wellbeing services
    - digital infrastructure or software licences
- Staff costs, including backfill, casual hours, training, or project management
- Administrative or operational costs, such as:
    - events organised and led by staff
    - room hire, hospitality, printing
    - equipment retained by a department
- Research funding or support for research projects
- Multi-year commitments are only eligible where the Fund has explicitly approved Year-2 funding following a new application and assessment process.
- Any expenditure not included in the approved Full Proposal
- Anything not issued directly to students

These exclusions are consistent with the Fund's financial principles:

- no staff time;
- no institutional responsibilities;

- no compulsory course costs;
- reimbursement only for approved, evidence supported items;
- spend must be directly for students' benefit.