

Student Experience Action Fund Pilot 2023-24 Guidance for Students

What is the Student Experience Action Fund?

The Student Experience Action Fund is a new pot of money which all taught Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) students, including those on the Foundation Studies programme, can apply to for financial support to launch new projects or events which aim to improve the university experience of students in the Faculty.

This year is a pilot, and we have made £2,000 available for grants of between £50 and £250. Both individuals and established student groups from across the Faculty are welcome to apply and will be considered equally, and we hope to encourage an even spread of applications from students from School of Engineering, School of Natural Sciences and Foundation Studies.

We can offer support during the application process and advice to help you make your idea happen once funding has been approved.

Please contact the team on FSEteachingcollege@manchester.ac.uk with any questions.

Why have we created the Student Experience Action Fund?

We are hoping to make small cash investments to enable students to design and deliver projects, events or activities which will improve the student experience in Faculty of Science and Engineering. We hope these projects will bring people together by creating inclusive and welcoming spaces for students to socialise and learn new things. We want to fund projects which develop existing communities within Faculty of Science and Engineering as well as create new opportunities for those who may not otherwise have met to build relationships and develop networks.

Ideas we can fund

We are interested in hearing about projects big or small which will enhance the university experience of you and your peers. This might look like money towards group networking opportunities; events with external speakers; careers-focussed trips; celebration events; wellbeing-related activities; and any cultural or creative projects which benefit FSE students. This is not an exhaustive list, and we would encourage anyone with an idea to contact the FSE Student Success and Development Team for advice on whether their idea might qualify for funding.

Your idea must meet the following criteria:

1. The funded activity must benefit a group of at least 5 students from Faculty of Science and Engineering.
2. The cost of the activity must justify its benefit, and there should be some sustained impact on the students who take part.
3. The activity must build community, networks or create opportunities for collaboration in some form.
4. The activity must be designed with the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in mind (although this does not need to be the focus).
5. The activity should not replicate an initiative that is already taking place unless it will develop, extend, or complement it in some way. For example, we would not fund the creation of a student group who would replicate the work of one that already existed.

How do I use the funding?

Once approved, staff from the Faculty Student Success and Development Team will support you to bring your project or event to life by making purchases on your behalf or by providing you with the information needed to make an expenses claim via the University finance system. If you chose to make purchases in this way, it is vitally important that you keep hold of all receipts.

How do I apply?

Please complete the Student Experience Action Fund online application form, which will ask you to explain your idea and all associated costs. This should be submitted to FSEteachingcollege@manchester.ac.uk and will be checked over and given to our Student Experience Action Fund panel. The panel will convene four times per academic year: in October, December, March, and May (see submission deadlines below) but if your activity is time-specific the panel will aim to meet on an ad-hoc basis to discuss and approve or reject it within a reasonable time frame.

You will be notified of the outcome by email after the panel has been taken place, and if you have not been successful in securing funding then we will offer feedback to help you improve your application for next time.

Deadline to submit application	Panel takes place	Decision communicated by
1 st March	mid-March	Last working day of March
1 st May	mid-May	Last working day of May

1 st October	mid-October	Last working day of October
1 st December	mid December	Last working day of December

We ask, where possible, that you use your funding within the same academic year. Once your activity has taken place, we will also require a short (approx. 500 words) report to be submitted within 28 days. This will help you to reflect on and assess the effectiveness of your project and help us understand and evaluate the impact of the Student Experience Action Fund over time. We will share a template for this report with you when your funding is confirmed.

The panel

The panel is made up of:

- Emily Cooksey and Jo Cartwright - Associate Deans for Student Experience and Graduate Outcomes
- Fran Moss and Stacey Casey - Student Support and Development Officers (IAG) from School of Natural Sciences and School of Engineering
- Amal Al-Amin - Student Success and Development Officer, Faculty TLSE (Teaching, Learning and Student Experience) Team
- One student representative from the Faculty

Please follow the link below to make your application:

[Student Experience Action Fund Application Form](#)

Student Experience Action Fund FAQs

Pre-Application

Q. What should I/we include in our application?

Please follow the prompts in the online application form. We are keen to hear about who will benefit from your idea, what you hope to achieve and any lasting impact you anticipate your project will have.

Q. I have an idea I would like to attempt, but I am not sure how practical it is. What should I do?

If you would like advice to see if your idea seems like something we can fund, or whether we can make suggestions about how to make it happen please get in touch. We can advise on campus room bookings, catering, communicating with students - as well as what student experience activities already exist in the Faculty.

Q. I have an idea, but I do not know any other students who can help me make it happen. What can I do?

We may be able to offer support to find a group of students to work with, e.g. students on our programmes, Student Reps, Pass Leaders or Peer Mentors, or a relevant Student Society.

During Panel

Q. Can we appeal a decision to reject our application?

There is no formal appeal process. If your application is rejected, we would encourage you to carefully consider the feedback provided and resubmit an updated application. If your idea would be better considered by another University team or fund, then we will make this clear and signpost you to the information or staff member who can help.

After Awarding

Q. How will we receive the award?

Once approved, staff from the Faculty Student Success and Development Team can either make purchases on your behalf or provide you with the information needed to make an expenses claim via the University finance system. If you chose to make purchases in this way, it is vitally important that you keep hold of all receipts.

Q. What if the cost rises unexpectedly?

If the cost of a speaker, event space, or anything else related to your proposal unexpectedly rises, please contact us. We can discuss other avenues of funding, ideas to save costs, as well as consider whether we can offer more funding for your project.

Q. What if no one shows up to our event?

If you are worried about attendance of your event in advance, please contact us and we can discuss ways you can advertise to other students. If you have hosted an event with poor attendance, take a moment to reflect and assess your advertising methods and please contact us to let us know. These things happen, and while you might be disappointed, it is all part of learning, and your experience will help inform how we manage the fund in the future.

Q. What if our project falls through after I have received funding?

This might be for many reasons - speakers can pull out, external events can be cancelled, the weather can be a problem - and lots of other things can happen that are hard to predict. Please just keep in touch with us so we can work with you to decide how to proceed, or whether we can help you cancel without cost implications if possible.

Q. We are struggling to write our report – what should we do?

If you are struggling to finish your report, please contact us. In the pilot year especially, these reports are an important part of the Student Experience Action Fund. They will guide the support provided to students in the future and will influence how we take the project forward into 2024/25.