The Alternative Guide to Postgraduate FUNDING
Student GRANTS from CHARITY!


Details of over 500 sources of Funding

Over 400,000 copies sold!

REVISED & UPDATED Student Guide for CHARITY FUNDING

DEMO VERSION

by LUKE BLAXILL & SHUZHI ZHOU 2015 › 2016
POSTGRADUATE STUDY continues to increase in popularity year on year. Whether it’s to learn new skills, increase employability, or kick-start an academic career, more and more of us are studying for a Masters, PhD, PGCE, MBA, or equivalent.

The problem, of course, is how to pay for it. Fees for a full-time home student for 2015/16 will average around £6,000, and more than double that if you’re from overseas or doing certain taught Masters courses. Independent maintenance - housing, food, utilities, study expenses - will be at least £12,000 year. Scholarships from universities or research councils are becoming extremely rare, and fewer than one postgraduate in fourteen manages to obtain one. While the new Postgraduate Loans System (details yet to be announced) is welcome, only £10,000 a year will be available, when the cost of study will be at least 50% (and maybe double) this figure. Even if they are prepared to get into yet more debt, most students will continue to struggle to meet the high cost of postgraduate study.

The Alternative Guide - now in its seventh edition - is designed to tackle this problem by helping current and prospective postgraduates think outside the box about funding. The Guide is all about ‘alternative funding’ from the voluntary sector: the thousands of charities out there which make grants to students. Charities are all around us, helping good causes where they find them. One of them might be your postgraduate study!

Charities are sometimes a bit unusual: obscure, hard to find, and funded by ‘old money’. But there will be dozens which will consider sponsoring you- whatever your course, university, nationality or background, and whether you need money for fees, maintenance, research costs, travel, or conferences.

But because charities are so different from ‘conventional’ funding sources, they require a unique approach: that’s where we can help. We’ll take you through identifying charities, to finding them, to applying strongly and correctly. Revised and expanded for 2015-16, the Guide features 150 pages and a refreshed ‘Top 500’ list of charity funding sources!

So, whether you need £3,000 to cover the cost of a research trip, or funding for full fees or maintenance for a whole PhD or Masters, this book can help! We are recent students ourselves, and won 55 charity awards between us. The Alternative Guide - as its name suggests - is a bit unusual, and a bit unconventional. But if you're creative and determined then you've got a good chance of joining the hundreds of students who have taken the often overlooked alternative path to funding their studies!

Luke Blaxill and Shuzhi Zhou
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The Purpose of this Guide

Your roadmap to the world of Alternative Postgraduate Funding

How to fund postgraduate study is a crucial question for the vast majority of students. Securing scholarships, bursaries, or grants to cover your fees, maintenance, and research costs during your Masters or PhD can be extremely challenging, especially if you have been rejected, or are ineligible to apply for a scholarship from a public funder, such as a university or research council. This guide is designed to explore the alternatives available through the voluntary sector - from charities, trusts, foundations and independent bodies - which will consider funding your fees, maintenance, research, travel, and conference expenses. There are thousands of charities out there that give out millions of pounds in grants every year. However, relatively few students know they exist, or have much idea how to apply to them strongly. Why? Simply because - before this book - there has been very little guidance available. Few students realised this kind of funding was even a possibility. We're happy to say that now this is changing.

You can apply to charities and trusts if you have an anticipated deficit in your funding package either for the current academic year or for one in the future. A deficit is simply where your anticipated expenditure exceeds your anticipated income. So if you are struggling to finance your PhD or Masters, fund your research or travel expenses, or budget for your fourth year of PhD study, there are almost certainly bodies out there who will be
The Purpose of this Guide

prepared to help you whatever your subject, nationality, age, or academic record. Whether you are looking for a few hundred pounds to pay for a research trip, or are trying to raise thousands to finance a whole PhD or Masters, you will gain a great deal by looking at what the voluntary sector can offer you.

The trouble is knowing where and how to begin. This guide is intended to solve that problem: it will show you not just how to find bodies, but also outline the winning techniques we’ve developed through working with hundreds of students and dozens of charities. This will give your applications the best possible chance.

Generally, there are two types of grants you can win from the voluntary sector. The first type is general support for your fees and maintenance, and this is the main emphasis of this guide. These grants will be useful for any student who does not enjoy ‘full funding’ at research council rates (i.e. payment of fees and a stipend of £1,000 or more a month). The second type is to support travel, research expenses, and conference attendance which you can apply to even if you already have full fund-
ing. Ultimately, finding and securing either type of grant involves similar techniques, and the guidance provided in the coming chapters applies to both.

On a cautionary note, it is important to remember that although the voluntary sector is an extensive and underrated source of student funding, it does have its limitations. Charities seldom have the resources of big government bodies like research councils, and individual awards are unlikely to exceed £2000 each. If you want to use charities to fund an entire PhD or Masters, it's very unlikely that you will gain 100% of the money you need to cover the full costs of fees and living which will usually be around £15,000-20,000 per year, and much more if you're from overseas. What is possible - with determination, perseverance, and creativity - is to build up a portfolio of modest awards from a number of bodies, and you can raise a good portion of what you need. If you
supplement this with work and savings, you can finance postgraduate study without a full scholarship.

The contents of this guide are self-explanatory. In section 2, we begin by outlining public funding sources like research councils and discussing how you can maximise your chances. In section 3, we introduce the diverse world of voluntary sector funding before offering advice on finding and approaching these bodies in sections 4 and 5. Sections 6 and 7 describe how to make a strong application, and sections 8 and 9 illustrate this further by showing example personal statements, and an example financial statement. In section 10, we present a list of around 500 charities and trusts, and some other useful links, which will get you off to a great start when you begin your hunt for funders. Sections 11 and 12 briefly explore two other important allies in balancing your budget: effective cost-cutting and part-time work. Next, Section 13 considers some innovative new approaches for fundraising if you really want to push the boat out, such as crowdfunding. Finally, Sections 14 and 15 consider the wider positive impact that securing charity funding might have on your career, and deal with frequently asked questions.
The Voluntary Sector

The world of Alternative Funding

Historically, Britain has a strong tradition of philanthropy, and there are many thousands of charities, trusts, and foundations which are active today. Some of these voluntary bodies are huge multi-million pound organisations like Oxfam, but most are quite small. They are usually run by volunteers: members of the general public who act as the trustees in their spare time. The charity might be connected to a utilities company like British Gas, a local church, a school, an old merchant’s guild, an academic society, or more or less anything. A large number of charities distribute funds for education, and some of these are prepared to consider postgraduate student applicants. These are the bodies for you.

A number of the better known voluntary bodies may be listed on your university’s funding webpage, but the majority are fairly obscure, difficult to find, and based on quite specific and occasionally somewhat eccentric eligibility criteria. Many are pots of ‘old money’ and make grants by interpreting the wishes of their often long-deceased patrons. In practical terms, this may involve you showing that you are of a certain religion, have resided in a certain part of the country, or have a family link to a particular trade. Some charities look to allocate funds to applicants of a certain nationality, others are exclusive to particular age groups, and some are only available to women. The bottom line is that charities are completely different from public funding sources, and you must treat them entirely differently to have a good chance.
A glance at section 10 of this guide will show you just how diverse charities are. The Vegetarian Charity, for example, will only support students with histories of vegetarianism or veganism, and the Leverhulme Trades Charities Trust will only make awards to the sons and daughters of grocers, chemists, or commercial travellers.

### Public Funders versus Charities: the main differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Funders (Research Councils, University Scholarships)</th>
<th>Charities (Private funding)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually heavily academic: your research project and/or your academic record are critical.</td>
<td>Variety of criteria, often non-academic interests are considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants are large (fees plus a maintenance grant of £1,000 a month). They are not means-tested. You get the same scholarship regardless of your financial situation.</td>
<td>Grants can be more flexible, tailored to the needs of each individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very formal, rigid application process where you must stick to word-limits and cannot provide extra documents/information.</td>
<td>Informal, flexible application process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely competitive. Only a very small number of students gain public funding.</td>
<td>Competitive, but often more funding available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow. You have to apply many months in advance. Decisions are also slow.</td>
<td>Faster decision-making process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One deadline per year.</td>
<td>Multiple deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility criteria is usually not an issue, except in a couple of areas. Awards usually available to all students.</td>
<td>Eligibility criteria can be more specific and funds are often targeted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-known, well advertised funds with clear information widely available.</td>
<td>Less well-known, sometimes more difficult to find information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seniority of your referees, and their academic profile, can be critical to your success.</td>
<td>Personal characteristics and networks are more important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often will not fund vocational Masters Courses, fourth year PhDs, or research costs.</td>
<td>More flexibility in funding areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are few bodies: seven research councils, plus universities themselves.</td>
<td>Many more bodies, often with more specific funding opportunities.</td>
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Overall, although there are also many general bodies which will consider any student, the majority of your potential funders will be fairly specific to you, your background, and your studies. Your list of 'target bodies' will therefore probably be quite different from someone else's, and this is why it's essential to do your own research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charities and Trusts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually much less academic. Your research project and/or your record are much less important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller grants of £500-2,000. Need to win multiple awards (plus yearly renewals) to raise larger sums. Grants are usually means tested: you must show you have a deficit in your funding package for your course (does not apply for research and travel costs.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually informal. You can include extra documents, there are no word limits, and you can be quite creative in your approach. You can even phone them up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness varies: some are, but others are much less so. The reason few students are funded by charities isn't due to stiff competition, but simply because few know about them!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast: charities will usually reply in a month, sometimes less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually multiple deadlines per year: 4, 6, sometimes even 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility criteria are common. They can sometimes be complex, unusual, or idiosyncratic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often small, obscure organisations which are quite hard to find out about (they often do not have a website or email address) and which are sometimes a little 'old fashioned'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who your referees are is much less important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will fund anything: you just need to make the argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tens of thousands of bodies of all kinds and sizes.</td>
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</table>
One of the biggest differences between charities and conventional academic scholarships is that charities are often not particularly interested in your subject of research. They are usually not set up with students specifically in mind, and are often simply concerned with helping eligible people who are facing hardship realise their potential in life - especially in relation to training or education. What 'hardship' means is nothing dramatic or extreme: it simply refers to an applicant facing financial difficulties. In the case of a postgraduate student, hardship will mean that they face a deficit or an anticipated deficit in their funding package in a given academic year. This might be due to fees, living costs, or essential research expenses. If you're reading this, it almost certainly applies to you.

Individual awards are unlikely to exceed £2,000, and most will be £1,000 or less. However, few bodies make contributions of less than £500. The trick is to secure backing from multiple sources and thereby accumulate a more sizeable sum, especially because most bodies will renew the awards each year. This might sound like a lot of work, but once you have assembled an application to one charity, you will probably be able to re-use substantial parts of it in your applications to others. Once you've done a couple of applications, others are quite quick!

The final big difference between charities and public scholarships is speed. Charities often have 4, 6, or even 12 deadlines a year. They also usually reply within a month, so they are perfect for quick fundraising, even for a Master's course with a few months remaining.

The table on the previous page summarises the main differences between charities and public scholarships. If this all seems a little unusual, don't worry! The rest of the Guide will go through each stage of the charity funding process, and they will soon seem a lot less mysterious!
Funding from Charities: Determining your Overall Strategy

To begin your hunt for funding, you must firstly ask yourself what kind of a student fundraiser you are. This will depend on what your current funding situation is, and whether you are a current or a prospective student. Consult the flow chart below:

**Student A:** Has full funding (tuition fees and maintenance covered), and needs a small amount of funding (less than £4,000 per annum) for conferences, fieldwork, research costs etc. They may also require fourth year PhD writing-up costs, which are fees and maintenance for up to a year. The strength of student A’s starting position means his/her hunt for funding will be easier than for Student B and C. We therefore recommend adopting the targeted approach (see below) and cherry-picking of a small cohort of the most promising charities. Avoid charities with any emphasis on ‘hardship’ (unless circumstances are exceptional) as you already have a full stipend. However, learned societies will probably be a particularly useful source.
Making your Application

How to win your grant

Hopefully, you will now have heard back from some bodies and been invited to apply. You will have received instructions on what to do, and probably have been given a form. Now you must prepare the application to give yourself the best chance of success. It is worth stressing once again that bodies have different primary focuses—be they awards for high achievers, support for students in financial difficulty, or funding for research, travel, and conference expenses. It is important to gauge the priorities of the body, and make your application as relevant to them as you are able.

Always fill in each section very carefully, and pay special attention to all the instructions they give you. Unless they say otherwise, you can assume that it is permissible to attach extra sheets to your application. You can use-
fully include your CV, an additional information sheet to expand on any sections of the form where there is insufficient space for your answer, and a personal statement for support if there is not a section for it on the form. Most charities will also either ask you to provide a financial statement, or have included space for one on the form.

**Writing your Personal Statement**

The personal statement is the most important part of your application, and it should be between 500-800 words in length. In it, you need to make your case convincingly and tell your potential funder why you are a deserving applicant. In particular, you need to show why you have a deficit of funds. The reason for this will vary from person to person, but it will be far more convincing if it is due to some factor beyond your control, even if this is simply something general like the rising cost of education, housing, or not being able to make enough to support yourself through poorly-paid part-time work. It might equally be that your research costs ended up being higher than you anticipated, and that you need to raise money to finance an essential trip, project, or conference visit that you weren’t aware of at the beginning of your course. Point out that borrowing money isn’t really an option in the current financial climate. You could also mention that you have a student loan still outstanding, and that you are not eligible for a Career Development Loan if your subject is not deemed vocational. If you have been rejected for a university or research council scholarship despite excellent grades, now is the time to point this out.

If you are looking to raise money before your course has started, you must be especially careful in the way you present this statement. Avoid arguments which sound like you are thinking about doing a graduate course and are looking for money to pay for it - a charity’s response
Top 500
Charities & Trusts

This list gives short summaries of approximately 500 charities based on our own experience and research. Because charities all work by their own unique rules, and have different deadlines each year, we have not tried to provide comprehensive descriptions. The intention is to give you enough information to decide whether to contact the charity to make an initial enquiry, as described in section 5. While every care is taken to ensure accuracy, charities often change their eligibility criteria and deadlines. This makes it doubly important that you contact them before you apply.

NOTE also that this is far from a definitive list. There are thousands of charities out there, but we present here 500 of the best ones, many of which we - or students we have worked with - have had experience in dealing with. To find more charities yourself, please consult the advice in section 4.

Charities which are NEW! for this 2015/16 edition appear here for the first time. Charities marked UPDATED! have changed from the previous editions based on new information we have received.

Special: University Hardship Fund (Previously the Access to Learning Fund) UPDATED!
Contact your university funding office
This body is not a charity, but is a government hardship fund for postgraduate and undergraduate students experiencing unexpected or unforeseen financial difficulty. Grants (usually up to £2500) are awarded on the basis of need. Note that notional figures will be used for your living expenses, and your income, rather than the actual ones. In practice, this fund is most helpful for postgraduates who have secured the majority of their funding, but also need to alleviate unexpected financial difficulties. Apply early in the year as funds may become exhausted. The fund is not intended to provide for graduate students who were underfunded at the start of their course, or to be used to cover fees. In assessing applications, a formula is used that takes into account an assumed minimum income level per week, and existing bank statements. See your university funding office for details.

42 Foundation
Ms Claire Harris, Withers LLP, 16 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7EG
Sponsors musicians, applications should include a CV, copy of acceptance letter for the course, academic references and evidence of applications to other organisations. Applications are considered around July.

9/11 Scholarship Fund
http://www.britishcouncil.org/911scholarships.htm
Supports international students who were directly affected by the 2001 terrorist events in the US.

Aberdeenshire Educational Trust
http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/funding/EducationalTrusts.asp
Promotes education in visual art, music and drama for students living in Aberdeenshire.

Acton (Middlesex) Charities
http://actoncharities.co.uk/
Students whose home residence is in the former ancient parish of Acton. Applicants up to 18-25 years of age, who have entered a full-time course, which will lead to a recognised qualification. Grants of £200 per year to assist with equipment/ study cost.
If the answer is YES to any of these, this guide is for you. It shows you how to access a hugely underrated funding resource: charities. They can be obscure and hard to find, but they have money, and there are thousands of them. So whether it's the Leathersellers Company, the Vegetarian Charity, or the Leverhulme Trades Charities Trust, there are bodies out there for you! You just need to know where to find them, and how to craft a strong application. This award winning Guide, written by real students, is now in its seventh edition. It will give you all the tools and guidance you need to access this major but neglected source of postgraduate funding.

**IN THIS GUIDE**

- How to find the right charities for you
- How to craft a winning application
- Model personal and financial statements
- Details of over 500 sources of funding

**FIND FUNDING FROM PLACES YOU NEVER KNEW EXISTED!**

- Struggling to fund Postgraduate Study?
- Need to finance fees and living expenses?
- Looking to raise money for a course?
- Looking to fund research, travel, or conferences?
- Seeking an alternative to Research Councils and loans?