

Carnegie Masters Grants - Regulations

Background

There is clear evidence that master's degrees can facilitate career advancement and enhance earning potential for students. However, there is no public grant funding currently available for postgraduate study in Scotland and the loan support on offer is often insufficient to cover the full cost of tuition. Fees therefore remain a significant (oft-insurmountable) barrier for students from lower income Scottish households.

Carnegie Masters Grants remove this barrier for 'qualified and deserving' students by providing top-up tuition fee support to eligible individuals wishing to pursue a taught or research postgraduate Masters' course at a Scottish university.

The scheme aims to:

- Support individuals from low-income backgrounds who are seeking to return to higher education to upskill or reskill in pursuit of a chosen career path or destination
- Increase the numbers of low-income Scottish-domiciled students undertaking study at Masters' level in Scotland to improve equity of opportunity.
- Equip graduates with the higher skills, expertise and knowledge to meet current and emerging areas of societal need in Scotland.

While there is no restriction on the subject areas that may be studied applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate how their chosen course applies to an aspect of Scottish societal need (at a national, regional or local/community level) as well as contributing to their planned career path.

The scheme will be open to applications annually **between 1st May and 31st July**.

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered eligible for a Carnegie Masters Grant, applicants must be able to satisfy all of the following criteria.

Applicant eligibility

1. Be ordinarily resident in Scotland under the definition employed by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). Specifically, you have made Scotland your permanent home, intending to stay and live here. If you are residing in Scotland to study, but otherwise would be living elsewhere, you are not considered to be ordinarily resident in Scotland.
2. Have either:

- a) undertaken at least two full years of secondary schooling in Scotland (full-time college education is also acceptable, but time spent at university is not).

OR

- b) be able to demonstrate (to the Fund's satisfaction) a substantial connection with Scotland on the basis of factors such as residency (excluding time spent at university) education (excluding university level education) family or working life. Applicants wishing to be considered eligible based on a substantial connection must contact the Carnegie Education Fund (CEF) to confirm their eligibility before applying.

3. Reside in a lower-income household. All applications will be subject to a financial means test based on household, rather than personal, income. The indicative thresholds for support used by CEF are provided in the table below. For additional information on how the we determine a household's total income, [click here](#).

Dependents	Single-person household	Couple
No children	£30,000	£35,000
1 child	£35,000	£40,000
2 children	£40,000	£45,000
3 children	£45,000	£50,000
Per additional child	£5,000	£5,000

4. Have secured a place on a postgraduate (taught or research) master's programme at one of the Scottish Higher Education Institutions listed under §7 below. There is no restriction on the subject areas that may be studied (refer to course eligibility below), but applicants must be able to clearly demonstrate in their application how their chosen course aligns with their planned career path and how that path would deliver wider economic and social benefits to Scotland.
5. Be eligible to access and have applied for the full postgraduate student support package offered by SAAS, specifically, the tuition fee loan (of £7,000 for a 1-year or 2-year, full-time course, or the equivalent if studying part-time) and living cost loan (of £6,900 for a 1-year, full-time course). Those studying part-time will need to demonstrate that they will have the means to cover their living expenses whilst studying. Students who are not eligible for the SAAS postgraduate support package due to their residency status, but who are able to satisfy all of the other criteria listed here should contact the CEF to discuss their circumstances.

6. Not have previously completed a postgraduate degree course, for example a Masters (taught or research) MPhil or PhD. Those holding a postgraduate Certificate or Diploma qualification are still eligible to apply.

Course eligibility

7. Application may only be made in respect to the acquisition of a first postgraduate Masters degree qualification awarded by one of the following eligible Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): University of Aberdeen, Abertay University, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier University, University of Glasgow, The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, University of the Highlands and Islands, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University, The Open University, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Scotland's Rural College, University of St Andrews, University of Stirling, University of Strathclyde and University of the West of Scotland.

8. The following courses are **not** eligible for support:

- i. Postgraduate courses awarded by institutions other than the CTUS eligible Scottish HEIs listed under §7.
- ii. Master of Business Administration (MBA) courses
- iii. Postgraduate courses leading solely to a Certificate or Diploma qualification (e.g. PGDip, PGCert, PGCE, PGDE)
- iv. The postgraduate component of an undergraduate Architecture programme (i.e. M.Arch)*
- v. MPhils and PhDs

*This is funded by SAAS at the undergraduate tuition rate so is not regarded as a standard postgraduate Masters' course.

9. Other than the exclusions listed above there is no restriction on the subject or mode of study, and applicants may hold an offer to study on a full-time, part-time (minimum of 0.5 FTE) or distance learning basis. Awards can only be made **before** the course start date. Retrospective applications from students partway through a programme of study will not be considered.

Level and purpose of award

10. Carnegie Masters Grants are intended to supplement the postgraduate student support entitlement offered by SAAS for courses leading to a Masters' degree qualification. All grants will comprise a contribution toward tuition fees, with some (at CEF's discretion) also including a stipend component with the following thresholds:

- **Tuition fee payment** – up to a maximum value of £10,000 for a 1-year full-time course or up to £5,000 per year for a 2-year full-time or part-time programme. The tuition fee component of the award is intended as a top-up payment and is contingent on an applicant taking up their full SAAS postgraduate tuition fee loan

entitlement. The value of a PMGs tuition fee component will be determined on an individual basis upon reviewing the amount of SAAS tuition fee loan available to the applicant, the course tuition fees charged by the host HEI and the applicant's circumstances.

- **Stipend** – up to a maximum value of £5,000 for a 1-year or 2-year full-time programme or the pro-rata equivalent if studying part-time. Stipends are not a guaranteed PMG component and will be awarded on a case-by-case basis in accordance with perceived need and the available budget. CEF assesses applications holistically and considers an applicant's personal as well as financial circumstances when judging if it is appropriate to offer a stipend.

11. Should a tuition fee shortfall remain post-award the applicant must demonstrate (to the Fund's satisfaction) that they have the means to cover the outstanding fee balance.

12. Awards are only available to cover Masters tuition fees charged at the "Home" rate and applicants liable for international or Rest of UK (RUK) fees will not be considered.

Assessment of applications and selection process

Applications to the scheme are accepted between 1 May and 31 July with the assessment process taking place shortly after the closing date.

When assessing applications, CEF considers a variety of factors before deciding whether an award should be made, and if so, how much will be awarded. CEF takes a holistic approach to the assessment of applications and those submissions that do not align with the aims of the scheme or CEF's charitable purposes are rejected. All applications are subject to means-testing.

Stage 1: Initial sift

Upon receipt by CEF applications are checked to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria (as listed above). Incomplete applications or those unable to satisfy the scheme's criteria are rejected as ineligible. All eligible applications are progressed to the assessment stage.

Stage 2: Assessment

Eligible applications are independently reviewed by CEF and scored across the three broad criteria set out below.

- **Motivation for study:** Applicant has clearly articulated their professional aims and aspirations and has demonstrated how the course they have selected will aid their achievement of their ambitions, including the outcomes they expect to see.

- **Contribution to wider society:** Applicant has considered the wider social and economic benefits of their chosen path and can evidence the contribution that they might make to Scotland at a national, regional or local (community) level.
- **Education and employment:** Applicant demonstrates good previous academic record and evidence of strong engagement with learning and/or work (not necessarily paid employment) which is relevant to their chosen path or demonstrates understanding of it.

Stage 3: Award

Reviewers meet to discuss their scorings before collectively ranking the candidates according to overall score. The top ranked 25% of applications will automatically be offered grants while the lowest scoring 25% will be rejected. For the remaining 50% of applications, funding is apportioned using a randomised selection process, with awards allocated until the available budget has been distributed.

Stage 4: Appeals

As applicants are assessed on the strength of their application there is a subjective element to the assessment which could lead to questions about judgement or complaints. However, there will always be multiple individuals involved in making decisions and this along with the use of clear selection criteria and a randomised selection process should mitigate any concerns regarding unconscious bias. Consequently, the CEF does not operate an appeals process for the scheme. Applicants are also permitted to reapply the following year.

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