



Undergraduate Tuition Fee Grants

Applicant Guide 2026-27

What is an Undergraduate Tuition Fee Grant?

Going to university can help open doors to a range of careers, new opportunities and higher earning potential. But tuition fees can be a barrier.

The Undergraduate Tuition Fee Grant helps people from low-income households in Scotland who cannot get support from the Scottish Government or other public funding to pay their tuition fees at a Scottish Higher Education Institution.

The scheme aims to:

- reduce financial barriers to undergraduate study in Scotland;
- support students in Scotland who cannot access public funding for undergraduate tuition fees; and
- offer a second chance at university.

Each application is looked at individually. The Trust considers applicants' finances, background, and reasons and motivations for study.

Many of the students this scheme supports have had different or difficult paths into higher education. Some started university or college before but had to leave early – perhaps due to ill health, money worries, or personal circumstances.

Others have found their course was not right for them and want a fresh start. The scheme also supports some students who are seeking asylum in the UK, who often cannot access public funding. In exceptional cases, it can also help people take second degrees if they are unemployed or facing redundancy.

About Carnegie Education Fund

Carnegie Education Fund (CEF) is an independent charitable trust that aims to support participation in and improvement of Scotland's higher education system through grants and research.

It was established in 1901 as the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland (SC015600), and re-branded to CEF in 2026.

Its founder, Andrew Carnegie, believed university should be open to everyone with ability and ambition, not just those who can afford it.



About this guide

This handbook explains:

- What the grant can cover
- Who can apply
- How to apply
- What happens next

It is here to help you understand if this grant could support you to start again, continue, or return to university.

There is information for new applicants, and for applicants who have received a grant from this scheme in previous years.

What does an Undergraduate Tuition Fee Grant provide?

Support for tuition fees

The grant helps pay for your annual undergraduate tuition fees only.

You can apply for one year at a time, as your eligibility for funding from **Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS)** may change over the duration of your undergraduate degree course.

- The maximum award is **£1,820 per year** (the Scottish Home fee rate)
- The grant is **paid directly to your university**
- The grant may **cover the full fee or part of it**, depending on your situation
- The grant can support fees for **full-time or part-time study**

This grant does not cover living costs, such as rent, food or travel. You might want to look at [Turn2us Grants Search](#) – it is a good source of information about other grants available to individuals in the UK.

Using other funding first

This grant is not a replacement for public funding.

- You must check and apply for SAAS or other student finance first.
- If you are eligible, you must take up all available SAAS support including the maximum student loan amount. We will ask you to go back to SAAS to increase your loan amount if you haven't.



- The Trust will normally only consider applications where you are not eligible for public funding, or public funding does not cover your full tuition fees.

For part-time students:

- If SAAS covers only part of your fees, you may apply for help with the rest

Who can apply?

You are likely to be eligible for the grant if you meet **all** of the following criteria:

You live in Scotland or you are ordinarily resident in Scotland

This means that Scotland is your permanent home. If you only live in Scotland to study, you are not considered ordinarily resident and will not be considered eligible.

You have a meaningful connection to Scotland

As well as having your permanent home in Scotland, you must be able to demonstrate a meaningful connection to the country, meaning you must either have:

- Completed two years full-time at a Scottish secondary school or college

OR

- A substantial connection to Scotland through:
 - residency (not including time at university);
 - earlier education;
 - family life (at least one parent living in Scotland for a minimum of 15 years);
 - work life.

If applying on the basis of a "substantial connection," please contact us before applying.

You live in a lower-income household

Grants are normally for students whose household income falls within the following thresholds:

Dependants	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

**Parental income may be taken into account for students aged under 25 unless particular circumstances apply. See our website for more details.*



You have secured a place on an eligible course

Before applying you must be enrolled on an undergraduate degree course in academic year 2026/27 (either full-time, part-time, or distance learning) at one of the following Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Scotland:

- 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 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Scotland's Rural College
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the West of Scotland.

An undergraduate degree course validated by one of the above institutions but delivered at a different HEI located in Scotland is also eligible.

Fees for access courses, postgraduate qualifications, and sub-degree qualifications are not supported.

Your tuition fees are not fully covered by public funding

You are either:

- not eligible for tuition fee support from SAAS or other public bodies, or
- you have used all available support but it does not fully cover your tuition fees.

A note on second chances

The Fund will consider an application from you if you are returning to study, changing direction, or if you have faced difficult circumstances. You will not be disadvantaged for taking a different path, but we will ask you to tell us why you're feeling more confident about sustaining your studies this time.



A note on second degrees

Normally the Fund will support you if you don't already have an undergraduate degree. In certain circumstances we will consider an application towards a second degree. You must meet all the requirements above, and:

- have completed your previous degree more than two years ago.
- have not been able to get a job in the field of your previous course, or are unemployed, or have been made redundant or are facing redundancy.
- wish to reskill in a different field where there is a skills shortage in Scotland (health & social care; IT & computing; engineering & architecture; economics, statistics & actuarial science; geosciences; biosciences; cultural & creative studies).

A note if you are not a UK national

If you are not a UK national and you live in Scotland, you will also need to have:

- indefinite leave to remain in the UK, or
- limited leave to remain in the UK and a valid visa for the duration of your course, or
- be an asylum seeker.

How can I apply?

You can apply using an [online application form](#) on our website. This will ask you for information about you, your financial circumstances, education and work history and your chosen course of study.

To complete the application, you will **need to provide**:

- Proof of identity
- Passport or driving licence
- Proof of Scottish connection

Examples of documents include:

- Scottish Qualifications Certificate summary page
- Scottish school attendance letter
- College certificates
- Residency evidence (if claiming substantial connection)
- SAAS award notice (which will show you have accessed your full loan entitlement)
- Your university offer letter (this must show your name; course title; course start date; whether the offer is conditional or unconditional)

You can send in scanned or digital copies of your documents, or digital photos of them (from your phone for example).



Your questions answered

When can I apply?

The scheme will open for applications on **1st June 2026**.

The closing date for applications is **1st December 2026**.

Decisions will usually take **2-3 weeks**, unless we need further information from you.

Can I apply if I've had a grant from the scheme before?

Yes. If you've had a grant for a previous academic year of study for the same course, we may consider you for a grant for the next year of the course. But we will check if you now qualify for SAAS or other public funding for tuition fees.

If you dropped out of a previous course when CEF was contributing to tuition fees, we will look closely at the circumstances before considering a further award, and we are unlikely to do so a third time.

Can I apply if I have a job?

Yes. You can work alongside your studies as long as your household income stays within the eligible thresholds, but please note:

- Full-time students should work no more than 16 hours per week during term time.
- Paid/unpaid work must not affect academic progress.

Will I need to report back to Carnegie Education Fund?

Yes - If you are successful, you must complete a short online form at the end of the academic year (or if you withdraw from the course before then).

After that, we will contact you occasionally for up to 5 years after the end of your grant to find out how you are getting on. This is to enable CEF to evaluate the long-term impact of the scheme. Plus we're keen to stay in touch and help celebrate your achievements!

How can I contact CEF?

If you have any questions about the scheme or would like to discuss your eligibility before applying, please contact: **grants@carnegie-edfund.scot**



