Carnegie Vacation Scholarships

Regulations

October 2026

Background

The opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activity and learning is well known to have the potential to boost academic achievement, employability and future opportunities. But financial inequality may prevent some individuals from having the opportunity to take up such activities and learning.

To help widen access to such extra-curricular opportunities, the Carnegie Vacation Scholarships Scheme aims to enable undergraduate students from low-income households in Scotland to undertake an independent summer research project, building independent research and other skills and experience thereby better equipping them for postgraduate study or employment.

Scholarships are intended to contribute to recipients' living costs while they undertake their research.

The Carnegie Vacation Scholarships Scheme is open to eligible Scottish-domiciled students from low-income households undertaking a degree course at an eligible Scottish Higher Education Institution (HEI) who wish to undertake a programme of independent research during the summer vacation. The Scheme aims to encourage students to learn how to design and execute a small-scale research project gaining experience that will be of value whether they choose to pursue further (postgraduate) study or enter the workplace.

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered eligible for the scheme applying students and their prospective research supervisors must be able to satisfy the following criteria.

Applicant (student) eligibility

1) Stage of study

At the time of applying applicants must be:

- An undergraduate student at one of the eligible institutions listed in (2) below; and
- Enrolled for the entirety of their degree at that institution, or have transferred from a Scottish College to the eligible institution after completing a HNC or HND; and
- Either:
    - Be in the third year of a four-year degree, **OR**
    - Be in the third or fourth year of a five-year degree **OR**
    - Be in the second year of a three-year degree (e.g. BA Nursing, BA Acting, BA Production and Design etc.)

Part-time students must be at an equivalent stage of studies to the above.

2) Institution where student studying

Applicants must currently be studying their undergraduate degree at one of Scotland's 19 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), or at a Scottish College where the degree will be awarded by one of those 19 HEIs. The eligible HEIs are:

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.

3) Residency status and connection to Scotland

Applicants are required to be **ordinarily resident in Scotland** (under the definition employed by the Student Awards Agency Scotland) at the time of applying, and be able to demonstrate **a substantial connection with Scotland**. This means applicants must:

- Have their **permanent** home (ie. excluding their temporary study address/location) located in Scotland;

AND have either:

- Undertaken **at least two full years of high school or college further education in Scotland** (ie. excludes time spent at university);

OR

- **Have three years continuous residency in Scotland** before starting at University;

OR

- **Have a total of six years post-school residency in Scotland** (not necessarily continuous) before starting at University;

OR

- **Have spent at least six years of their childhood upbringing (ie. before the age of 12) living in Scotland** (excluding boarding school unless also having their home address in Scotland at the time);

OR

- **Be an asylum seeker, part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or other similar immigration scheme with the right to take up study and employment in the UK for the duration of the research project.**

Applicants must possess the right to work in the UK at the time of applying. CEF is unable to award Carnegie Vacation Scholarships to students whose immigration or residency status prohibits them from taking up employment.

4) Financial situation

Applicants must (in relation to their permanent address) reside in a low-income household. CEF will look at household income on average over the last 12 months ie. prior to application. CEF uses the following indicative household income-earning thresholds to assess financial eligibility for support[1]:

Dependents	Permanent address: Single-person household	Permanent address: Living as a couple or with 1 parent/guardian*	Permanent address: with 2 parents/ guardians*
No children	£27,000	£40,000	£60,000
1 child	£32,000	£45,000	£65,000
2 children	£37,000	£50,000	£70,000
3 children	£42,000	£55,000	£75,000
Per additional child	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000

* Applicants who indicate that they are estranged from their parents/guardians will be considered under the single-person or couple's thresholds as appropriate.

5) Other criteria

A student may only be awarded a single Carnegie Vacation Scholarship during their undergraduate degree studies.

[1] These are derived from Real Living Wage and OECD adult equivalence ratios (0.5 equivalence per additional adult) and allowances for additional children.

Students on intercalated years forming part of a medical degree will be considered eligible provided they are able to meet the other criteria laid out above.

Project eligibility

1) Topics and nature of research activity

Carnegie Vacation Scholarships are to support students who intend to carry out a discrete, personal research project, either at the institution they are currently attending for their undergraduate degree (their 'Home Institution') or at another research organisation (a 'Partner Host Institution'). Projects that are not laboratory based may involve work in libraries or museums, visits to fieldwork sites, stakeholder organisations or to any other location that holds resources, materials or data relevant to the subject of the proposed research.

The topic and nature of the research will vary according to the field of study, but it should engage the candidate in a programme of personal research over the period specified in the application.

Project proposals must focus on clear research question(s) or aim(s) and should provide the student with sufficient scope for the development of ideas and initiative as well as research and analytical skills.

The project description within the application form and the research proposal must be written by the applying student. Applicants will be disqualified if a project proposal appears to have been authored by the supervising academic, any other individual or entirely by Generative AI technologies.

2) Duration of research project

The minimum length of a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship Project is four weeks and the maximum length is twelve weeks.

3) Location of research project

The project may be undertaken in Scotland or anywhere in the world, provided that projects are not ineligible (see below) and all Project Supervision arrangements are in place (see next section). Scholars are responsible for all travel documents, permissions and adequate insurance.

4) Ineligible projects

The following activities are **ineligible for support** under this scheme:

- Projects that form part of the student's normal degree course (e.g. final year dissertation, although it could address a sub-set of issues or questions that might be expanded into a thesis).
- Projects that are a direct continuation or expansion of an existing/larger project or study.

- Participation in group expeditions.
- Projects that consist solely of a literature review.
- Work placements (whether paid or unpaid) or a volunteering opportunity.
- Attendance at summer schools, language schools or any other training course.

Project supervision

The project must be supervised by an academic researcher at the institution at which the applicant is enrolled for their undergraduate degree (the Home Institution). A supervisor may be a group leader, lecturer, reader or professor (including emeritus) but not a graduate teaching assistant or hourly paid tutor. Supervisors are permitted to enlist post-doctoral research assistants or postgraduate research students in the day-to-day supervision of the project.

The supervisor is expected to be familiar with the applying student's academic record and with the topic of the proposed project. Supervisors are asked at the time of application to comment on the suitability of the project and on their own availability and willingness to supervise the student's progress during the period of award. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the project is completed within the timescale agreed at the time of applying.

Supervisors may only endorse one Carnegie Vacation Scholarship applicant in a given academic year.

Where an application is successful, the supervisor must ensure that the student will:

- have access to the necessary equipment, consumables or any other resource needed to conduct their research project; and
- receive all required training to operate said equipment and/or undertake the proposed research activities; and
- satisfy all statutory requirements (including, where applicable, gaining ethics committee approval, obtaining animal licences and meeting the requirements of regulatory authorities) for the work they will undertake; and
- follow the relevant health and safety and other relevant policies of their institution and where applicable any Partner Host Institution (see below); and
- have adequate travel documents and insurance in place especially for any activity outside Scotland.

When a project is to be conducted at a research organisation (a Partner Host Institution) which is different to the applicant's current undergraduate degree university/HEI (the Home Institution), the applicant must be supervised on-site by an

academic researcher employed by the Partner Host Institution. In such instances, the supervisor at the applicant's Home Institution must ensure that suitable supervisory arrangements are in place at the Partner Host Institution and that Health & Safety or any other statutory/policy requirements will be met. Regarding fieldwork, applicants are expected to work under the supervision of a local researcher or research team and adhere to that institution's regulations.

Scholarship value

Carnegie Vacation Scholarships only cover the cost of stipends to students whilst carrying out their research project. Stipends are intended to contribute to the student's costs whilst carrying out the research such as accommodation, travel and subsistence.

No additional funding is available for other research project costs or items such as equipment/materials, consumables, supervisor time or overheads. The Home Institution or its Partner Host Institution must cover all these and any other research project costs.

Stipends are calculated using the Scottish Real Living Wage rate. Consequently, the value of Carnegie Vacation Scholarship awards increases each year in line with adjustments to this hourly rate. Prior to selecting the successful Carnegie Vacation Scholars for summer 2027, CEF will check for any increase in the Scottish Living Wage rate and adjust the scholarship value accordingly. Presently, the hourly rate is **£14.10**, which equates to a Scholarship value of **£493.50 per week** based on a 35-hour full-time week.

This means that the **indicative minimum value of a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship award will be £1,974 (4 weeks)** and **the indicative maximum would be £5,922 (12 weeks)**.

Please note that while scholarship value is calculated based on a full-time 35-hour working week, the research activity does not necessarily need to be completed on a full-time basis. Applicants are expected to indicate the duration of the project in full-time weeks, however, the research may be undertaken non-consecutively or part-time over a longer period. For example, an applicant may wish to undertake a project equivalent to 4 weeks (20 days) of full-time activity but complete the research over an 8-week period, which would equate to 0.5 FTE. In this case the applicant would indicate a project duration of 4 weeks but provide start and end dates spanning an 8-week period. For further guidance on this please contact CEF at grants@carnegie-edfund.scot.

Applicants are responsible for considering and checking any tax or benefits implications of receiving a Scholarship.

Application and selection process

Applications

CEF will only accept applications submitted through our online portal which is accessible via CEF's website.

The application process is divided into two sections; the first must be completed by the student after which the project supervisor is invited to complete and submit the second part. Please note that an application will only be deemed complete once both parts have been received.

The on-line application portal will open approximately 10 weeks before the **closing date of Friday 19th February 2027**.

Applications will be checked for completeness; applicants may be contacted to provide any missing or incomplete information, which must be supplied no later than a week after it is requested by CEF.

Eligibility checks

Applications will be assessed for eligibility:

- Applicant eligibility
- Project eligibility & feasibility
- Supervisor endorsement and supervisory arrangements

Selection

Initial assessment of research project quality and feasibility, and applicants' motivation, ability and suitability to carry out that project, is inbuilt to the application process by virtue of an experienced University research supervisor endorsing the project for funding consideration. It is also therefore the case that all eligible applicants are considered likely to benefit from carrying out the research project, gaining skills, knowledge and experience, and ultimately meeting the aims of the Scheme.

Accordingly, all applications which pass CEF eligibility checks above will be deemed worthy of potential funding from the Scheme.

To be fair to all eligible applicants, CEF will therefore place all eligible applications into a randomiser, with anonymised awards then allocated until the available budget has been fully allocated.

Award notification

Outcomes of the selection process will be communicated to applicants, supervisors and institutions by early April.

NOTE: Awards are non-transferable between students or projects.

No Appeals

As incomplete applications will be followed up with applicants directly, the eligibility of each application will be reviewed by a second member of staff, and a randomised selection process will be used thereafter, concerns regarding the risk of unconscious bias or errors are mitigated. Consequently, CEF does not operate an appeals process for this Scheme.

If applicants or other individuals have any complaints regarding the process or actions of CEF in relation to this Scheme, these may be raised in line with CEF's Compliments and Complaints Policy, available on the CEF website.

Reporting

Students are required to submit an End of Scholarship report to CEF in early September using a supplied template. Further details regarding this will be provided to successful applicants.

To help CEF evaluate the long-term impact of the scheme, Scholars may also be asked for annual updates for a period of up to 5 years after completion of the programme.

Managing the Scholarships

Carnegie Vacation Scholarships are **not** paid directly to the student by CEF. Instead, the student's HEI is expected to distribute the scholarship to the recipient at regular intervals (as agreed with the student) over the period of the scholarship.

Reimbursement of distributed funds will be made directly by CEF to the HEI on receipt of an invoice. A single invoice should be issued for all Carnegie Vacation Scholarships held by students at the same HEI once all project end reports have been received.

A scholarship may be cancelled if a student fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress during the project period, abandons it, or fails to take up the scholarship.

Should a project be cancelled or abandoned after the start date, the amount invoiced to CEF will be adjusted based on the number of full weeks completed by the student.