

CARNEGIE EDUCATION FUND

Carnegie Vacation Scholarships

Applicant Guide 2027

What is a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship?

Taking part in real research as an undergraduate can open doors to postgraduate study and a wide range of careers. But for many students, the need to earn money over the summer means opportunities like this are out of reach.

The **Carnegie Vacation Scholarship** from Carnegie Education Fund (CEF) helps to address this problem. It provides a stipend to support you while you design and carry out your own independent research project over the summer vacation, under the supervision of an academic researcher.

The scheme is open to undergraduate students from low-income Scottish households who are approaching the final year of their degree at an eligible Scottish Higher Education institution.

The scheme aims to:

- Support students from low-income backgrounds who, because of financial constraints, are often unable to take up extra-curricular activities and learning during vacation periods
- Enable students to design and deliver a self-developed research project; and
- Equip students with knowledge, skills and experience that will be valuable for postgraduate study or the workplace.

Projects can involve lab work, field work, library, museum or archive visits, interviews, surveys and more. Scholars write up their findings, and some go on to see their results published in academic journals or presented at conferences. **No previous research experience is needed to apply.**

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 Guide explains:

- What the Scholarship covers
- Who can apply
- What projects are eligible
- How to apply
- What happens next

Before applying, you should also read the scheme's **Regulations** and **Terms and Conditions of Award**, all available on our website.

Need this guide in large print or another format, or help with applying? Please get in touch – see "How can I contact CEF?" at the end of this guide.



What does a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship provide?

A stipend

A Carnegie Vacation Scholarship provides a stipend to contribute to your costs while you carry out your summer research project, such as accommodation, travel and subsistence.

The stipend is calculated using the Scottish Real Living Wage rate for a 35-hour working week, multiplied by the number of weeks you are funded for. The rate is currently **£14.10 an hour**, which equals **£493.50 per full-time week**. Before awards are made, we will check for any increase in the Scottish Living Wage and adjust the value accordingly.

Project length (full-time weeks)	Indicative Scholarship amount
4 weeks (minimum)	£1,974
9 weeks (typical)	£4,441.50
12 weeks (maximum)	£5,922

Your stipend will be paid to you by your university in instalments at regular intervals over the course of your project. Your university should agree the payment schedule with you.

What isn't covered

There is no additional funding for research costs, equipment, materials, consumables, supervisor time or overheads. Your university is responsible for these costs, and your supervisor must make sure you have access to everything you need to complete your project.

A Carnegie Vacation Scholarship cannot be held alongside a similar award from another funder.

How many weeks should I apply for?

You should state the support you need in full-time (35-hour) weeks. Your weeks do not need to be consecutive, and you can carry out your project on a part-time basis, but your request must still be expressed in full-time weeks.

> For example, if you plan to work on your project 3 days a week over a 10-week period, that is 30 days in total, or 6 weeks full-time equivalent. You should request **6 weeks** of support on your application (not 10), and give start and end dates covering the full 10-week period.

Who can apply?

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

You are ordinarily resident in Scotland

At the time of applying, you must be ordinarily resident in Scotland under the definition used by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). This means your permanent home address (not your term-time address) is in Scotland. If you are in Scotland only to study, but would otherwise be living outside Scotland, you will not be eligible.

You have a substantial connection to Scotland

As well as having your permanent home in Scotland, you must meet **one** of the following:

- You have spent at least two full years in high school or college further education in Scotland (not including university)
- You lived in Scotland continuously for three years before starting university
- You lived in Scotland for a total of six years after leaving school (not necessarily continuously) before starting university
- You spent at least six years of your childhood (before age 12) living in Scotland. Time at boarding school does not count unless your home address was also in Scotland at the time
- You are an asylum seeker, or part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or a similar scheme, with the right to work in the UK for the duration of your project.

If you are unsure whether you qualify, please contact us before applying.

You live in a lower-income household

Your permanent address must be in a low-income household. We look at your average household income over the 12 months before you apply, and use the following indicative thresholds to assess financial eligibility:

Dependents	Single-person household	Living as a couple or with 1 parent/guardian*	Living 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

* If you are estranged from your parents or guardians, we will assess your application using the single-person or couple thresholds, as appropriate. Full guidance on how we calculate household income is available on our website.

You are studying at an eligible institution

You must be studying your undergraduate degree at one of Scotland's 19 higher education institutions, or at a Scottish college where the degree will be awarded by one of those 19 institutions:

- 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
- The Open University
- 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

You must have been enrolled at that institution for the full duration of your degree, or have transferred there after completing an HNC/HND at a Scottish college.

You are at the right stage of your degree

You must be in:

- the 3rd year of a 4-year degree; or
- the 3rd or 4th year of a 5-year degree; or
- the 2nd year of a 3-year degree (for example BA Nursing, BA Acting, BA Production and Design).

Part-time students must be at an equivalent stage in their course. Medical students on an intercalated year are eligible if they meet all the other criteria.

You are entitled to work in the UK

You must have the right to work in the UK at the time of applying. We cannot award scholarships to students whose immigration status prevents them from taking up employment.

You have not held a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship before

Scholarships can only be held once during your undergraduate studies.

Who can't apply?

You are not eligible if:

- Your permanent home address is outside Scotland
- You are not studying an undergraduate degree at, or awarded by, one of the 19 eligible institutions listed above
- You are not approaching the final year of your course (for example, you are due to graduate in summer 2027)
- You have held a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship in the past
- Your immigration status does not entitle you to work in the UK.

What projects are eligible?

Scholarships support discrete, novel research projects that would not normally form part of your course. Projects may lead to new scientific, academic or intellectual knowledge, or to a new product, technology or creative output.

Your project must:

- Last between 4 and 12 weeks and take place between mid-May and 31 August 2027
- Address a clearly specified research question(s), aim(s) or hypothesis
- Involve you in personal research over the period stated in your application
- Give you enough scope to develop your ideas, use your initiative and build your research and analytical skills
- Be based at your home university or a Partner Host Institution, in Scotland or elsewhere. The Partner Host Institution must have suitable facilities, and appropriate supervision must be in place both where the research takes place and at your home university.

Projects that are not lab-based may involve work in libraries or museums, or visits to fieldwork sites, stakeholder organisations or any other location holding resources, materials or data relevant to your research.

> **You must write your own project proposal.** Applications will be disqualified if the application and/or Case for Support appears to have been written by a supervisor, another individual, or entirely by generative AI.

What isn't eligible?

The following activities are not eligible for support:

- Projects that form part of your normal degree course or assessed coursework. For example, your project cannot be your final-year dissertation, although it could address a subset of issues or questions that might later be expanded into a thesis
- Projects that are a direct continuation or expansion of an existing or larger project or study
- Participation in group expeditions
- Projects that consist solely of a literature review
- Work placements (paid or unpaid) or volunteering activities
- Attending summer schools, language schools or any other training course.

Your project supervisor

Every project must be supervised by an academic researcher at your university (your home institution). Your supervisor plays an important part in your application and in the success of your project.

You must find a Project Supervisor, and they must have agreed to supervise you, before you begin your application. This could be your Director of Studies or another member of academic staff. Your supervisor will need to complete a section of your application form.

Who can be a supervisor?

A supervisor may be a group leader, lecturer, senior lecturer, reader or professor (including emeritus). Graduate teaching assistants and hourly paid tutors cannot act as supervisors, although postdoctoral researchers or PhD students can help with day-to-day supervision. Your supervisor should be familiar with your academic record and with the topic of your project.

Each supervisor can only endorse **one student per academic year**, so it is worth approaching a potential supervisor early.

What will my supervisor need to do?

- Confirm in the application form that the project is suitable and that they are available and willing to supervise your progress during the award
- Complete and submit their part of your application before the deadline, including a reference covering how they know you, your academic ability and your suitability for the project
- Make sure your project is completed within the agreed timescale
- Work with their department to ensure your stipend is paid to you on time
- Make sure you have access to the equipment, consumables and other resources you need, and receive the training to use them
- Make sure all statutory requirements are met before research begins – including any ethics committee approvals, animal licences and the requirements of regulatory authorities where these apply – and that you follow the health and safety and other policies of your university and any Partner Host Institution.

If your project is based elsewhere

If your project will take place at a Partner Host Institution, you must be supervised on site by an academic researcher employed by that institution, and the Partner Host Institution must provide the facilities and resources you need. Your home supervisor must make sure suitable supervision is in place there and that health and safety and other statutory or policy requirements will be met. Your project can take place in Scotland or anywhere in the world. You are responsible for having all travel documents, permissions and adequate insurance in place, especially for any activity outside Scotland.

For fieldwork, you should work under the supervision of a local researcher or research team and follow your institution's regulations.

> **Tip:** Don't worry if you haven't approached anyone yet, but do build in time for this. Discuss your project idea in detail with your prospective supervisor before you start your application – but remember, the proposal itself must be your own work.

How can I apply?

You apply using our **online application portal**, accessed through our website. You and your supervisor complete the form together in two parts. Your application is only complete once both parts have been submitted.

1. **Find a Project Supervisor.** Ask your Director of Studies or another member of academic staff whether they would be willing to supervise your project. They must agree before you apply.
2. **Read the scheme documents and plan your proposal.** Read this guide, the Regulations and the Terms and Conditions of Award. Our research proposal planning form on the website can help you structure your ideas.
3. **Check your eligibility.** Use the eligibility checker on our website. If you appear eligible, a link to the online application form will appear. The checker's result is only indicative: eligibility is confirmed using your application, supporting evidence and your supervisor's statement.
4. **Complete your part of the application.** Fill in the online form and upload your evidence (see 'What will I need to provide', below) and Case for Support. When you submit, your supervisor will automatically receive an email asking them to complete the rest of the form.
5. **Your supervisor submits the application.** If changes are needed, they can return the form to you with comments. You will receive a confirmation email when you submit your part, and another when your supervisor has submitted theirs. **Allow your supervisor at least 5 working days before the deadline** to complete their part.

How are scholarships awarded?

Every application is checked for:

Your eligibility	The eligibility and feasibility of your project	Your supervisor's endorsement and supervision arrangements

Each eligibility decision is reviewed by a second member of staff. If anything is missing or incomplete, we will contact you.

Because an experienced university research supervisor has already endorsed your project, every eligible application is considered likely to benefit you and worthy of funding. To be fair to everyone, **all eligible applications are anonymised and placed into a randomiser**, and awards are allocated until the budget for the year is used up.

The quality of your proposal still matters: your supervisor must be satisfied that it is a strong, achievable project with a clear research question, suitable methods and a realistic timetable before they will endorse it.

If you require any reasonable adjustments (perhaps because of a disability or health issue) to apply to the Scheme, please contact us as soon as possible BEFORE the application deadline so we can try to help.

What will I need to provide?

The online form will ask about you, your household finances, your education to date and your proposed project. To complete it, you will need to upload:

Proof of identity and residence

- If you receive a SAAS living-cost loan: your passport photo page or driving licence and your SAAS Award Notice letter for the current year
- If you don't receive a SAAS loan and are a UK citizen: you will be asked to explain why
- If you are not a UK citizen: evidence of your indefinite leave to remain, or of limited leave to remain on a visa route leading to it, together with Home Office documentation confirming your visa route
- If you are an asylum seeker or part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or a similar scheme: Home Office documentation confirming your status and your right to work in the UK

Proof of Scottish connection – one of:

- The Summary of Attainment page of your SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate
- An HND certificate
- A letter from your school or college confirming your period of attendance

If you are relying on a residency or childhood connection rather than your school or college education, please contact us before applying to confirm what evidence you need.

Your university transcript

Showing your marks to date, plus your HNC/HND results if you transferred from college.

Your Case for Support

A detailed description of your project (see "Writing your application", on the next page).

You will also need details of your household income (ie. your income, your partner/spouse's income and/or your parents' or guardians' incomes if your permanent address is with them) to complete the finances section.

Documents should be uploaded as PDF or image files (JPEG, JPG, PNG, BMP or TIFF – not HEIC). Your Case for Support must be a PDF of no more than 5 MB.

From your supervisor

Your supervisor will complete Part 2 of the form, confirming the suitability of the project, supervision arrangements, any ethical or regulatory approvals needed and their reference for you. If your project is hosted elsewhere, they will upload a signed letter of support, on letter-headed paper, from your host supervisor.

> **Incomplete or unendorsed applications will not be accepted.** Please check you have everything ready before the closing date.

Writing your application

Your application should have a clear structure and a clear research question. We are interested in your methodology, the objectives of your research and a timeline showing the scope of what you hope to achieve. Before you start, think about:

- How will your research benefit you?
- What other benefits might your research bring?
- How long will it take, and what resources will you need?

Your Case for Support

This is the detailed description of your project. It should explain:

- The issue, problem or topic your project addresses, and why it matters
- The specific research question(s) or hypothesis you will investigate
- Your methodology and the research activities you will carry out
- How you will analyse and write up your data, findings or results
- What you will do with your findings – how you will share them, and whether they will be used beyond your project.

Your Case for Support must:

- Be no more than **2 pages of A4**, including any figures, tables and references
- Use **Arial font, size 11**, with line spacing of at least 1.15 and margins of at least 2 cm
- Not include extra pages, CVs or statements of support.

Applications that don't follow these rules may be disqualified.

Elsewhere on the form

You will also give a project summary that a non-specialist can understand (avoid jargon and abbreviations), a timetable of activities and milestones, and answers to two questions about your motivation: how you became interested in the subject, what skills or knowledge you hope to gain, and how this fits your plans for future work or study.

> **Plan with our research proposal form.** Our website has a short planning tool to help you structure your proposal. Your answers are saved on your device so you can return to it later. It is for planning only – please don't submit it as part of your application.

Your questions answered

When can I apply?

Key date	2026-27 round
Applications open	Mid-November 2026
Closing date for applications	Friday 19 February 2027
Outcomes notified	By early April 2027
Projects can start from	Mid-May 2027

What happens after I apply?

We will check your application for completeness and eligibility, and contact you if anything is missing. Outcomes will be emailed to applicants, supervisors and institutions **by early April**. Outcome emails are sometimes filtered into spam, so please check there before getting in touch. If you applied using your student email address, make sure you can still access it over the summer.

If you are successful, your scholarship is paid to your university, which will pay it to you in instalments over your research period. Awards cannot be transferred to another student or project.

Can I appeal a decision?

No. Because missing information is followed up with you directly, every eligibility decision is checked by a second member of staff, and awards are then made at random, there is no appeals process for this scheme. If you have a complaint about the process or how we have handled your application, you can raise it under CEF's Compliments and Complaints Policy, available on our website.

Can I hold another award at the same time?

No. A Carnegie Vacation Scholarship cannot be held alongside a similar award from another funder.

What if my project doesn't go to plan?

Please contact us as soon as possible. A scholarship may be cancelled if satisfactory progress isn't made, if the project is abandoned, or if the scholarship isn't taken up. If a project ends early, funding is adjusted to reflect the number of full weeks completed.

Are there any reporting requirements?

Yes. If you are successful, you must submit an **end-of-Scholarship report in early September** using a template we will provide. We may also contact you each year for up to **five years** to ask how you are getting on. This helps CEF understand the long-term impact of the scheme.

How can I contact CEF?

If you have any questions about the scheme, would like to discuss your eligibility before applying, or need this guide in large print or another format, adjustments or help with applying, please contact us – we are happy to help:

grants@carnegie-edfund.scot | 01383 724 990



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