

Trust Funds: How to make your application stand out...

Applications to trusts are assessed on a **competitive basis** – there are limited funds and limited numbers of awards. As such you should ensure that you take the time to show the panel why you should be selected for an award. This means going beyond just proving that you are eligible and instead making a strong case that allows your application to stand out.

Follow these simple steps to help make your application stand out.

Read, read and read again

You should read the application and any supplementary materials carefully. These will outline who is eligible, how you apply, what supporting evidence is essential, how you submit the application and how the application is then assessed. Reading the information carefully will ensure you don't miss anything important.

Are you eligible?

Eligibility criteria will be noted online, on the front of the application form and on any promotional materials advertising the fund. It might sound obvious but there is no point wasting your time (and the panels time) if you don't meet the criteria. So, if applicants have to be under 25 and you are 28, don't apply. Instead, keep looking for funds that you are eligible for.

To be eligible for most of our trusts, you will need to have taken out the maximum support available to you, which includes student loans and any discretionary or childcare funds. If you are eligible for, but have yet to apply for any of these, you won't meet the eligibility criteria and should instead prioritise applying to for these.

Check the closing date and how to apply

You should treat applications for trusts like a job application and apply on time and in the way that's set out in any instructions provided. Check the supporting evidence that might be required and ensure you leave enough time to collate everything. Trust applications often require an academic reference which can take a lot of time to arrange, especially if your lecturer is being asked for one by more than one student.

Your application v. everyone else

The point of your application is to persuade the panel to give you money over the other applicants. If you assume that everyone who applies is eligible, you will quickly see the need to put much more effort in to your application than merely proving your eligibility. What's your story, what makes you different from any other applicant, how do you plan to use the money, why are you studying, what will you gain from your studies and what are your goals beyond university?

Sadly, there are lots of hard-up students out there so it's usually not enough to say 'I'm a student, I'm hard up and I need money'. The panel needs to understand your financial situation. Is it a temporary crisis that you are facing? Are there exceptional circumstances such as illness, disability, or childcare responsibilities?

What will you use the money for?

The panel will be assessing your need for funds against everyone else so it is important you tell them why you need this additional support. Will it help you do a project that would not otherwise be possible? Is it to buy a new laptop? To cover travel costs?

You should also ensure you demonstrate why the funds you already get are not sufficient. It is particularly useful to show the panel that you are not short of money because you are spending extravagantly.

Supporting Evidence

The required supporting evidence will be noted on the application but you should not restrict yourself to this. The list of required evidence should be seen as the minimum required and is unlikely to result in a successful application.

Put yourself in the position of proving everything you say. If you tell the panel that your travel costs are high, prove it. If you tell the panel that you live in Renfrewshire, prove it.

You may find the following tips useful, but should also put some thought into this yourself.

○ Financial Evidence

You will need to demonstrate a financial need for the fund. The best way to do this is to provide a monthly budget of what comes in and what goes out, and to evidence these costs. From this, the panel can see your day-to-day financial situation and can then move on to look at why you need the funds. You should also provide evidence of the costs you need help with.

For example, Joe Bloggs applies to a trust for help paying the cost of car repairs. He provides a monthly budget and evidence of his outgoings that show he is just able to make ends meet each month. He also explains his need for having a car to get to work, and provides proof of the cost of repairing his car.

Remember, it is your responsibility to highlight the important elements of your evidence/application that you want the panel to see. **Do not** submit printouts of your bank statements without any notes as the panel will be unable to spend time looking through this.

○ Academic Evidence

In most cases, you will need to demonstrate academic ability and attainment. You can do this by providing a copy of your most recent results from banner (if you are a continuing student) and/or an academic reference.

Your academic reference needs to stand out so it is important you express the importance of this to your lecturer and ensure you ask a lecturer who is able to confirm that you are a good student who regularly attends and contributes.

Final touches

Put yourself in the position of the panel and read over your application (or even ask a friend to). Does it answer all the questions you think it should? Have you evidenced everything you need to? Is it easy to read and match your circumstances to the evidence provided? Is it clear and concise? Keep a copy of the application. If it was successful, you can use it as a guide to apply to other trusts.

Submit the application in plenty of time to the location advertised, usually The Hub/Student Link. It's important to consider the opening hours of The Hub or Student Link as late applications will not be accepted.

If you want to post your application (just make sure the guidance doesn't say you must submit this in person), it's vital you use the correct postage, the correct address and post it in enough time so that it arrives by the closing date. We strongly recommend submitting such applications in person, but you will find postal addresses for our team on each campus on the next page.

Feedback

If the panel felt you were not eligible, or that you did not include the necessary evidence, they may tell you this. However, given the volume of applications, if your application was just not as strong as other applications, the panel are normally unable to specify why you have not been selected for an award.

Good luck!

Our Postal Addresses

Please ensure you use the correct amount of postage as we are unable to take responsibility for applications we do not receive. We recommend you use recorded or special delivery options.

If you do not study at one of our main campuses, please send your application to our Paisley Campus.

Ayr Campus

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