



Opportunity Bursary 2025-26

Guidance notes for students

Who can apply?

To apply for the Opportunity Bursary, you must:

- Have completed a Sutton Trust programme OR the Aspiring Professionals Programme, run by JP Morgan and the Social Mobility Foundation.
- Have completed at least 1 year of undergraduate study.
- Be enrolled onto a course (undergraduate or postgraduate) at a UK university for the academic year 2025/2026.

Applicants will be assessed in priority according to our social mobility criteria, in addition to the quality of the project proposals - for full information, please see the [website](#).

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for a 20-minute online interview in November, before final recipients are chosen in December.

Important: Eligibility Check Required Before Applying

To apply for the 2025/26 programme, you must first complete an eligibility check form.

- **Eligibility check opens:** 6th August 2025
- **Eligibility check closes:** 9am, Monday 15th September 2025

Only the top 200 applicants who meet the eligibility criteria most strongly will be invited to proceed to the full application stage.

Applicants can expect to hear shortly after the deadline whether they have been selected to continue to the next stage.

How Much Can I Apply For? When Can I Use the Funds?

We will award grants of between £2,500 and £5,000. You can apply for any amount within this range – your application will be assessed on the quality of your project proposal, and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged based on the amount you request.

- Funds offered will be confirmed in December 2025.
- The funds will be issued in instalments throughout the academic year.
- All funds must be spent by December 2026.

When Can I Apply?

Following the eligibility check (for those invited to apply):

- **Application window opens:** 18th September 2025
- **Application window closes:** 9am, Monday 13th October 2025

No applications will be assessed or accepted before the window closes.

What Can I Use the Funds For?

The bursary is intended to help you develop skills, enhance your student experience, and increase your employability.

Examples of suitable activities:

- Funding travel/accommodation for an internship, work experience, or research trip
- Supporting the costs of completing an internship in the UK*
- Covering costs of a professional qualification or language course (under 6 months long); membership of a professional body
- Attendance at events, conferences, and training courses
- Paying for specific equipment or software to enable freelance work in your area of interest

- Reducing the need for paid part-time work to free up time for volunteering or student societies (e.g. committee role)

**If you are applying for this option, please clarify whether the proposed internship would be paid and how much — so we can understand the need for additional bursary support.*

You can apply for funds to cover more than one category – for example, the cost of some software and a relevant training course.

What Can I Not Use the Funds For?

The bursary is not intended to fund:

- Educational fees or standard maintenance costs
- Longer programmes (6+ months), such as a Law conversion course
- Sandwich years – e.g. placement years in industry or a year abroad

What Information Will I Need to Provide?

- Personal details (to match or verify your records with the Social Mobility Foundation)
- Household income and any existing financial support you receive
- Ethnicity (optional, but requested to support our diversity targets: at least 60% of recipients will be from a Black or minority ethnic background, with a minimum of 30% being Black students)
- A reference contact from an academic or employer
- An outline of your proposed project, including the skills and goals you hope to achieve
- The total amount of funding requested, with a detailed cost breakdown

Things to Remember

- Research is key – you don't need a fully developed plan but show evidence of research.

- Back-up plan – if your proposal depends on acceptance into a scheme or the cooperation of someone else, include a Plan B.
- Think about your goals – focus on how your proposal supports skills development and employability.

What Have Students Used the Funds For in the Past?

Some examples of past student projects:

- Completing a volunteering project in Costa Rica to support female workers
- An ancient history research internship in Italy
- Volunteering to run philosophy sessions for primary school children and developing an outreach resource for their university
- Attending pharmacy conferences and completing a summer shadowing placement

As you can see, there are a wide range of possibilities for the bursary — we can't wait to hear your ideas!

Questions?

If you have any further questions, please contact us at: alumni@suttontrust.com