

BRITISH COUNCIL SCHOOL EXCHANGE GRANTS 2019

GUIDELINES

AIM

The aim of this programme is to enable secondary pupils in England 11-18, particularly the most disadvantaged, to have an international and intercultural experience by taking part in a school exchange with partner schools around the world, giving them the chance to experience different cultures, improve language skills and build independence, character and resilience.

ELIGIBILITY

State schools and colleges in England are eligible to apply. The eligible age group is students aged 11 to 18/19 (Year 7 to Year 13)

Types of eligible institution:

- Middle schools
- Secondary schools
- Special schools
- Sixth Form Colleges
- FE colleges

Applications from clusters of schools or cross-sector clusters are welcome.

Schools must have:

- **The backing of the Headteacher**
- **An established good contact in another country with a signed agreement with the head of the institution to work together on this project.**

***Not ready yet?** If your school doesn't yet have a partner school abroad, please see our FAQ document for suggestions on how to find a partner school.*

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND OBJECTIVES

Criteria

- Priority to schools and/or participating groups with significant levels of disadvantage (e.g. pupil premium, Opportunity Area, index of Multiple Deprivation, additional needs etc.)
- Suitable visit plan
- Realistic costs

Objectives

The funding is aimed at activities which fulfil the following **main objectives**:

- Contribute to the overall **education, quality of learning and skills development** of those directly as well as indirectly involved.
- Have an outcome **linked to the curriculum** (e.g. improve spoken French, understand what happened on WW1 battlefields) **or to soft skills** like resilience, self-confidence.
- Benefit the **most disadvantaged** pupils
- Prioritise **genuine, significant contact** between your pupils and their counterparts abroad and involve their families if possible
- have a **wider impact** on the school and local community and, ideally, actively involve a wider group of young people, with the travelling pupils taking on a role as ambassadors
- establish a basis for **future contact** and communication between the young people and strengthen school partnerships to make them **sustainable**.
- The project/activity should be **inclusive and accessible** and facilitate participation of young people who would otherwise not have the chance to take part.
- The project/activity must have the **support** of the headteachers/principals and/or senior leadership teams of all participating institutions.
- Should include **pre- and post- activities** that prepare and provide reflection opportunities for teachers and pupils
- A **language-learning** element is welcomed but is not compulsory.

A school exchange in this programme:

- Does not make a profit
- Is not a holiday
- Includes daily interaction and cooperation with same-age peers
- Encourages a sharing of interests, perspectives and attitudes from all young people involved
- Involves young people from two countries working and learning together
- Has a curriculum focus and/or supports soft skills development for both set of pupils

- Engages with a different culture and language
Develops understanding of different social and cultural realities

Cultural visits as part of the programme are eligible. They should be incorporated in the learning process (with reflection and debriefing as a structured part). We encourage cultural visits to be carried out together with the young people from the partner country, so experiences and reflections can be shared interculturally. Entrance fees cannot be covered by the grant.

We do not support exchanges organised by tourist companies, as this programme cannot include any profit for a business.

Each application will be judged on a case-by-case basis, according to the circumstances, activities and timelines of each applying school.

Please note that priority will be given to applications that show the school, or the exchange group of students, have significant levels of disadvantage (e.g. Pupil Premium, Opportunity Area, Index of Multiple Deprivation, Additional Needs etc.).

WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Please note: this funding is only available to facilitate visits for pupils in English schools to go abroad. You will need to discuss separate funding options with your partner institution(s) to facilitate their reciprocal visit(s) to the UK.

Funding is available for three different elements:

1. A short teacher pre-visit (to conduct risk assessment and plan the school exchange)

Up to 100% of the total cost.

Max grant: £500 (EU and wider Europe); £1000 (Rest of the world)

2. School exchange

Up to 100% of the total cost (families of pupil premium children should not be asked to contribute)

There is a minimum of 4 nights away. The average exchange will have up to 20 pupils and 2 to 3 teachers. We can accept larger groups if reasoning and explanation is given in the application form on the strength of the peer group interaction and personal learning/impact on individuals (which can sometimes get lost in larger groups).

Max grant: £10,000 (EU and wider Europe); £15,000 (Rest of the world)

*Applications may be considered for higher numbers than this depending on particular circumstances (for example if a higher staffing to pupil ratio is required due to the needs of the pupils). Please provide details in your application.

3. Administration and management

Up to 100% of the total cost.

Max grant: £500

Overall maximum grant available per school:

For visits to EU and wider Europe: £11,000

For visits in the Rest of the world: £16,500

Funding principles:

The total amount of the grant provided will be judged on a case-by-case basis, depending on the size, circumstances and numbers involved in the individual activities as outlined in your financial plan.

The grant can be used to cover the following costs:

- travel for pupils and accompanying teachers (*)
- accommodation and subsistence for pupils and accompanying teachers (*)
- local transport
- administration costs, including teacher's time and any costs related to DBS checks

*The appropriate ratio of staff to pupils normally ranges from 1:5 (for young people under the age of 12) to 1:10 (for young people aged 12 and above).

All costs must be kept to a **reasonable** level and expenses based on **standard fares**.

On average, we would fund up to £30 pppd for food.

All applications must include a costing for the visits based on standard cost per head for meals, and actual costs for travel and for accommodation.

If the visit is not reciprocal and involves a homestay, a small financial contribution for host families in the partner country can be included.

Funding is not available for:

- multilateral events (where numerous nationalities and groups come together)
- activities with a tourist focus and little or no interaction with the partner school
- performance tours, festivals or sports tournaments with little or no interaction with the partner school
- language courses or study visits (Examples: a course in a dedicated language school; an art course; a sports training course).

The following costs are excluded from the grant:

- visit-related expenses (such as entry costs, excursions, etc)
- hardware

We cannot provide grants in retrospect, i.e. after the activities have commenced. The grant agreement should be signed before the first date of the visit.

ORGANISATION AND HEALTH & SAFETY

The lead institutions in both countries have full responsibility for all organisational duties and Health & Safety measures.

In the case of groups involving young people under the age of 18, a vetted and qualified teacher must accompany the travelling group.

Host Families: Every reasonable step must be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of visiting children when they stay with families. Guidance on vetting of host families and other safeguarding requirements can be found in the Council School Exchange Safeguarding Checklist issued at Annex 3 to the Grant Agreement

The applying schools are responsible for ensuring that there is an **appropriate ratio** of staff to pupils.

This normally ranges from 1:5 (for young people under the age of 12) to 1:10 (for young people aged 12 and above).

In the grant agreement there is a section with a safeguarding checklist that you must follow.

The British Council can provide support, guidance and information on risk assessment and health & safety procedures.

DBS checks: please see the [ASCL guidance](#).

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must complete and submit a **full application**, including full costings. The application form can be downloaded [here](#).

Applications should be submitted by email to school.exchanges@britishcouncil.org

DEADLINE

Current funding is available until March 2020. There are no deadlines: we are accepting submissions on a rolling deadline basis. You must apply at least six weeks prior to your visit taking place. We are accepting applications now for projects that take place up to the end of the eligible period.

The last date for applications is 14 February 2020, to allow for grant processing by the end of the financial year.

Your visit can take place any time up until 31 May 2020.

PROCEDURES AND REPORTING

Assessment and selection

Applications will be assessed based on the criteria outlined in these funding guidelines and the extent to which the activity fulfils these requirements in terms of quality, relevance and impact.

Whilst the **quality** of the application is the most important factor, priority for funding will also be given to groups involving young people from **disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds** and those who will **gain the most** from this experience.

Priority will be given to schools who have significant levels of disadvantage (e.g. pupil premium, Opportunity Area, index of Multiple Deprivation, additional needs etc)

The selection panel reserves the right to exclude applications which are incomplete or do not comply with our funding guidelines.

The selection panel is made up of representatives of the British Council, the DfE as well as experts in the field.

Outcome and grant award procedure

Applicants will normally be **notified** of the outcome of their application within **six weeks** of submission

If the application is successful, the participating institution will receive an official **award letter by email** and will be asked to complete a grant agreement. (**grant agreement**).

Following assessment, applicants may be asked to submit additional information or development work in order for a final decision to be made. Usually, they won't be asked to write the whole application again, but just to provide supplementary information on additional documents.

If the application is unsuccessful, applicants will be informed by email and will receive guidance on developing future activities.

Funding procedure

Grants are provided in **two instalments**. 80% of the overall agreed grant will be paid before the first visit and on receipt of the official grant agreement and relevant payment details. The remaining 20% will be paid on receipt of a satisfactory report and financial reconciliation of actual costs.

Payments are made by bank transfer to the school which submitted the application.

If there is **significant variation** in the activity carried out or the total amount spent, the grant may need to be re-adjusted accordingly. Normally, this will be reconciled against the final payment

If the activity doesn't take place at all, differs substantially from the agreed proposal, or the reports and reconciliation are not provided, the grant has to be returned in full.

Reporting, reconciliation and publicity

Recipients of the grant must submit a **short report and financial reconciliation** one month after the end of the activity.

The report should focus on:

- How your visit met the objectives of the programme
- include feedback from the participating young people.

Guidelines and forms will be provided to successful applicants.

Keep receipts. Although the British Council will not ask for receipts from all schools, organisers should keep records and receipts of expenditure above £50. 5-10% of visits will be audited.

We encourage participating schools to publicise the project/activity in the wider community and will provide guidance to successful applicants. A press release template is available to advertise that your school has received a grant (in advance of the project) and a further one to use after the project.

Beneficiaries must **acknowledge the support of the British Council and the Department for Education** in all communications and publications about the project/activity.

CONTACT

If you have any questions, would like any additional advice or guidance or would like to discuss your application, please contact us at school.exchanges@britishcouncil.org