

Grants Policy

Oversight Body: Grants Review Committee

Date Passed by Council: March 25, 2020

Date of Next Review: March 2022

Related Policies, Bylaws, Legislation: Bylaws 6, 7, and 10; Financial Policy Section 3;
Dalhousie University Alcohol Policy

Definitions

Fiscal Year: The period beginning on April 1 of a given calendar year and ending March 31 of the following calendar year.

Grant: A portion of money awarded to a society or individual member through the process laid out in this policy, to be drawn from the Grants Fund.

Committee: The Grants and Sponsorship Committee, a standing committee of the Union established under Bylaw 6.11.

Society: A student organization subject to oversight by the Dalhousie Student Union and fulfilling all necessary requirements to be designated as a Dalhousie Student Union society as set out in the Society Policy.

Union: The Dalhousie Student Union

Purpose

This policy lays out the general procedure and regulations for the allocation of funds from the Union's Grants Fund.

Scope

This policy applies to all members and societies of the Union and to the operations of the Grants and Sponsorship Committee.

Policy Statement

1. Eligibility

1.1 Grants are available to any active, ratified society or member of the Union in good standing.

1.2 Grants cannot be used to fund the activities of any group, association, corporation, or charity other than the specific society or student applying.

1.3 Grants cannot be used to fund activities that contravene any legal statute, governing document of the Union, or the Dalhousie University Alcohol Policy.

1.4 Grants cannot be used to fund tuition or other education-related expenses at Dalhousie University, including its affiliated or collaborative programs.

1.5 Grants cannot be used to fund clothing or other durable goods unless those goods are distributed to members at-large at no cost.

1.6 Capital purchases (e.g. computers, sporting equipment, furniture, etc.) purchased with Grant money are considered property of the Union. Grant requests for capital purchases must include information on where items will be stored and how items will be transferred year over year.

1.7 Grants cannot be used to purchase alcohol.

1.8 Grants may not be awarded for events to be held at venues that are in direct competition with Union-operated venues. Exceptions to this provision may be made if the proposed venue is of equal or lesser cost to an equivalent Union-operated venue, or where the proposed venue meets some event requirement that cannot be met by a Union-operated venue. In such cases, the reason(s) for holding the event at the proposed venue must be clearly laid out in the grant application. The Grants Committee reserves the right to deny applications for events to be held at non-Union-operated venues.

1.9 Societies may seek grants for fundraising events if a society has exhausted all forms of funding avenues in support of the fundraising event, and the cause is consistent with objectives of the Union.

1.10 The Union reserves the right to award funding at lower levels than requested or to offer in kind support in place of cash funding.

1.11 Societies that have an outstanding balance owing to the Union may be deemed ineligible for grant funding.

1.12 The Union reserves the right to refuse any application.

2. Funding Distribution

2.1 Grants are intended to help defray operational costs incurred by a society or conference, competition, or event costs incurred by a member. Grants are not designed to compensate more than the actual costs incurred.

2.2 Societies who receive funding in excess of their actual expenses will be required to repay any surpluses within thirty (30) days of the award.

2.3 Societies seeking funding for services of which the Union is a provider (e.g. room reservations, printing and photocopying at Campus Copy, rental of equipment) will be encouraged to use the services provided by the Union.

2.4 The maximum value of grants is determined each fiscal year as part of the Union budget.

2.5 In each fiscal year, grant funding will be distributed as follows:

2.5.1 Twenty per cent allocated from April 1 – August 31;

2.5.2 Thirty-five per cent allocated from September 1 – December 31; and

2.5.3 Fourty-five per cent allocated from January 1 –March 31

2.6 The Committee shall hold a minimum of two (2) meetings in each semester. The Committee Chair will set and announce the dates for these meetings at the outset of each semester. A minimum of one (1) meeting shall be scheduled for the following months: May, July, September, November, January, and March. The Committee will consider grant applications submitted up to five (5) days prior to each advertised meeting date.

2.7 The Union may request receipts for items or services funded through the grants fund within thirty (30) days of the funded activity. Failure to provide such receipts within the prescribed time may result in the society or individual member being required to remit, in whole or in part, the funds originally awarded.

2.8 Should a society or individual member receive funding for a given event through means other than the Grants Fund (e.g. other students' unions, community organizations, funding agencies, or donations) that was not accounted for in the grant application, an equivalent portion of the awarded grant must be remitted to the Union within thirty (30) days of securing said external funding. Funds returned to the Union shall not be considered awarded to the society or individual member and shall not count towards the funding limits laid out in sections 3.1 and 4.3 of this policy.

2.9 Any grant cheques that remain undeposited six months after the date on which funds were approved will be considered stale dated and be declared null and void.

2.10 The Vice President Internal shall keep a record of all grant allotments issued in a given academic year, including a copy of each grant application.

3. Society Grants

3.1 A society may receive up to \$500 per semester in grant funds, to a maximum of \$1000 per fiscal year. In exceptional circumstances only, and where there is a demonstrated need, the Committee may make exception to the per semester limit on a case-by-case basis. Regardless of such exceptions, no society shall receive in excess of \$1000 in society grants over the course of a given fiscal year.

3.2 Applications for society grants must be submitted prior to the date of event for which funding is being requested.

3.3 As per the Union's objective of conducting business through an anti-oppressive framework, grant applications that meet the following criteria will be prioritized:

3.3.1 Initiatives run by and/or for marginalized groups including, but not limited to, racialized, Indigenous, queer, gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit, disabled, and/or neurodivergent groups. In particular, the Committee will prioritize initiatives that provide these groups with spaces, resources, and platforms to advocate for justice and social change, to educate their own members or members of the broader community in issues of social or environmental justice, and to gain skills needed to further said advocacy and education work;

3.3.2 Initiatives focused on educating or engaging members in issues of social or environmental justice, particularly those issues reflected in the Issues Policy;

3.3.3 Initiatives that demonstrate understanding and employment of an anti-oppressive framework;

3.3.4 Initiatives accessible to members of any financial circumstance, i.e. events that are free or of low cost to attend;

3.3.5 Initiatives proposed by societies without access, or with limited access, to other funding streams including, but not limited to, society disbursements; and/or

3.3.6 Initiatives that provide a clear and sustained benefit to the Dalhousie community at the Halifax or Truro campuses. Should grant funds be requested for travel, the grant application must clearly lay out the benefits of this funding to members not participating in the travel portion of the initiative;

3.4 The Committee may establish additional guidelines for assessment at the outset of a given academic year or semester, provided that such guidelines comply with all other provisions in this policy.

3.5 The following information must be included on all society grant applications:

3.5.1 A detailed budget relating to the items the society is requesting funding for.

3.5.2 A list of all other solicited sources of revenue, including pending sources of revenue with an expected date of when the society will receive a response.

3.5.3 A copy of the society budget with an explanation of the reasons why the society seeks further funding from the Union.

3.5.4 An explanation of how Dalhousie students will benefit if the grant is awarded.

3.5.5 If the request is for a service that the Union also provides, an explanation of why funding is needed to acquire these services outside of the Union.

3.5.6 The size of the society and how long it has been in operation.

4. Member Grants

4.1 Member grants may be requested by individual members of the Union and are intended to assist in defraying the cost of the member's participation in a particular conference, competition, or event.

4.2 Incomplete applications for member grants will not be considered. The Committee is not obligated to follow up with members who submit incomplete applications.

4.3 Grant funding for each conference, competition, or event shall not exceed \$100 per member, per year.

4.4 Applications should be completed, in their entirety, by the individual applying for the member grant. The following information must be included for all individual grant applications:

4.4.1 A cover letter explaining the rationale behind the member grant request, including a brief description of the event and an explanation of how the individual will benefit from the funding.

4.4.2 A detailed budget relating to the member grant request.

4.4.3 A list of all other solicited sources of revenue, such as faculty and society support, bursaries, and scholarships. This list shall also include pending sources of revenue with an expected date of a response.

4.4.4 If applicable, a detailed travel itinerary with a confirmation of the conference, competition, or event registration.

4.5 Member grants may be awarded on a retroactive basis, provided the member grant application is submitted within the same semester as the event for which funding is being requested and within the thirty (30) days following the final day of the event.

4.6 Membership in a society does not preclude an individual member from applying for a member grant. Society grant applications shall be evaluated separately from member grant applications and shall have no bearing on the allocation of member grants.

4.7 The Committee may limit the number of grants awarded to individuals for a single conference, competition, or event.

4.9 The Committee may prioritize applications from members who self-identify as racialized, Indigenous, queer, gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit, disabled, and/or neurodivergent.

5. Accommodation Grants

5.1 Accommodation Grants are intended to cover or defray the costs associated with a specific service that will improve the accessibility of an event or activity of a society. Such services include, but are not limited to, accessible transportation for an event; American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation; child care subsidies for attendees; translation of materials into languages other than English; increased costs related to securing a physically accessible venue; and increased expenses related to meeting dietary needs.

5.2 Accommodation grants may be awarded on a retroactive basis, provided the accommodation grant application is submitted within the same semester as the event for which funding is being requested and within the thirty (30) days following the final day of the event.

5.3 Each accommodation grant applications must include a detailed budget relating to the item(s) for which the society or individual is requesting funding for. Societies applying for Accommodation Grants must also include:

5.3.1 A list of all other solicited sources of revenue, including pending sources of revenue with an expected date of when the society will receive a response.

5.3.2 An explanation of how the grant will improve accessibility of the event or will allow a specific member or group of members to access the event.

5.4 Accommodation Grants applications ~~are offered~~ shall be evaluated separately from Society and Individual Member Grants applications and ~~will~~ shall not prevent societies or members from receiving funding through other such grants.

5.5 The Grants Committee shall have the discretion to limit the amount a society or individual can receive through Accommodation Grants in a given year.

7. Disclaimers

7.1 Allocation and/or distribution of grants through the procedures laid out in this policy does not constitute the Union's endorsement of any event, meeting, partner group, or outside organization funded through such grants.

7.2 Any risk or liability resulting from travel is the traveller's responsibility.