

## The LASER Education Foundation: Grant Giving Policy (Updated)

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how The LASER Education Foundation administers and distributes grants in support of its mission: to improve access to education and life opportunities for children, young people, and adults from underserved communities in London and the South East of England.

### Grant-Making Principles

The Foundation's grant-making is guided by the following principles:

- **Equity and Inclusion:** We prioritise applicants from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Impact:** Grants must support work that delivers measurable benefits in education, personal development, or employment readiness.
- **Transparency:** All decisions will be fair, evidence-based, and clearly documented.
- **Accountability:** Grantees must meet agreed reporting requirements and demonstrate responsible use of funds.

### Eligibility Criteria

Grants may be awarded to:

- London South East Colleges & London South East Academies Trust
- Grassroots groups working with children, young people, or adults in need
- Projects or individuals (in limited cases) that align directly with LASER's goals

Applicants must:

- Operate within London and/or the South East
- Demonstrate a clear need for support
- Illustrate alignment to relevant research or evidence to support and demonstrate the need for the proposed intervention
- Show a track record (or potential) of delivering positive educational or developmental outcomes

### Types of Grants

The LASER Foundation may offer:

- **Project Grants** – For specific, time-limited education or development projects
- **Capacity-Building Grants** – To strengthen the operational or organisational capability of grantees
- **Small Grants** – Small-scale funding (e.g. £500–£2,000) for pilot initiatives or urgent needs
- **Bursary / Scholarship Grants** – To help individuals access education

### Application and Approval Process

#### *Call for Applications*

Published on the Foundation's website and College/Trust News.

## ***Themed Funding.***

The Foundation may announce themed funding rounds each academic term, focusing on specific priority areas (e.g. digital inclusion, mental health, employability). These themes will be clearly outlined in each funding call.

## ***Staged Approval Process***

To enhance transparency, planning, and accountability, all grant applications will follow a structured four-stage approval process:

- **Stage 1: Initial Concept**  
Applicants submit a brief concept note or expression of interest (EOI), outlining the problem, proposed approach, intended beneficiaries, and expected outcomes.
- **Stage 2: Detailed Project Proposal**  
Selected applicants from Stage 1 are invited to submit a full proposal with a detailed budget, timeline, theory of change, risk assessment, and monitoring plan. Supporting documents are not required at this stage.
- **Stage 3: Grant Committee Review & Final Approval**  
Proposals are reviewed and assessed against criteria by LASER staff and/or the grant committee. Final approval is granted by the Foundation's Panel based on merit, alignment to priorities, and availability of funds.
- **Stage 4: Implementation**  
Upon approval, successful applicants receive written grant agreements and may commence activities. Foundation staff may provide guidance during implementation. Progress is tracked through required reporting and site visits where appropriate.

## ***Levels of Grant Approval***

- Grants below £5,000 will be approved by the panel
- Grants above £5,000 will be approved by the LASER Board

## ***Notification***

Applicants are informed of the outcome at each stage. Feedback may be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Grantees are required to submit progress and final reports, including:

- Use of funds
- Outputs and outcomes achieved
- Challenges faced and lessons learned

Project visits or evaluation meetings may be conducted for larger grants.

## **Exclusions**

The LASER Foundation will not fund:

- Activities not aligned with its mission
- Political campaigns or lobbying
- Organisations that discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, or any protected characteristic
- Retrospective costs (i.e. funding for activities already completed)

## **Conflicts of Interest**

All individuals involved in grant decision-making must declare any conflict of interest and withdraw from discussions where appropriate.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and updated as needed to reflect strategic changes, legal requirements, or learning from past grant rounds.