

Imperial College Union Finance & Risk Subcommittee

Clubs, Societies & Projects: Grant Reallocation

- Author(s): Ross Unwin (Deputy President Clubs & Societies)
- Purpose: To update Trustees on a CSP grant reallocation proposal and highlight the need for a repurposing of previously allocated funds.
- Decision: To approve the reallocation of CSP 'general grant' into a designated fund to support previously unbudgeted activities in the third term.

1. CSP Budgeting

CSP Annual Budgeting is an annual process overseen by the Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) that works to allocate grant funding to CSPs. The principles and process used can be seen in the CSP Annual Budgeting Policy 19/20. It is done on the assumption that the block grant allocated to CSPs remains the same as previous years with an inflationary uplift - c£425k allocated to CSPs for academic year 2020/21.

The Union budget and block grant request is historically decided and presented to College after the CSP grant allocation. At the end of 2019/20, the Union budget assumed an organic underspend by CSPs of c£100k. At the time, this was within the risk appetite of the Union, and so c£328k was agreed for CSP grant.

2. COVID-19 Implications

Given the financial position of the Union in September 2020, it was deemed too risky to rely on a predicted underspend and the DPCS underwent an adjustment of grant process with a working group formed of senior volunteers from CSPB.

Grant allocated during the budgeting process in 19/20 was intrinsically linked to the running of in-person events. New laws, College guidelines and the Union's appetite for risk all limit the amount of in-person activity that will take place in 2020/21. Many CSPs have creatively adapted to building communities online and organising safe remote activities. However, no grant has been allocated to these CSPs to run their activities virtually.

Further to this required guaranteed underspend, the Activities Development Fund (ADF) needed to be reduced. The purpose of this fund in a year unaffected by COVID is to provide a route for CSPs to cover the cost of new or growing activities throughout the year. This allows a current committee of a group to seek funding for new or growing events, teams, competitions and so on. This would have been pivotal in enabling CSPs to offer different activities to their members remotely.

At the end of the 19/20 year, the DPCS wanted to create a Safe Activity & Community Building (SACB) Fund because the COVID-19 pandemic was creating difficulties for CSPs to stay connected and organise remote activities. A draft policy was created and ratified by CSPB over the summer break of 2020 that would reallocate a portion (c£20k) ADF pot to:

- a. Provide a route for CSPs to supplement the cost of COVID-19 related changes to in-person activities.
- b. Provide additional funding for CSPs to deliver online community building activity.

Due to the financial position of the Union, the ADF pot was reduced from c£65k to c£10k, and no SACB fund was created. This has prevented CSPs from building communities online and from creating new activities at an affordable price for students.

3. Re-allocation of grant funding

A re-allocation of CSP 'general grant' into a designated fund will support previously unbudgeted activities in the remainder of this academic year.

The working group that made adjustments to the grant allocations made in the 19/20 process identified a total of £241,000 that had been allocated to: events in term 1 or term 2, and to large events that would clearly be unable to happen in the 20/21 academic year under various lockdowns and tier restrictions; CSPs that had substantial SGI reserves and therefore reduced need for grant funding; CSPs that had no committee, and who couldn't utilise the grant allocated to them.

This figure is substantially larger than the required c£100k reduction in grant allocated to CSPs.

There is a need to set aside a pot for appeals to this adjustment process and for CSPs that may be able to run their activities should national/local lockdown restrictions enable some activities to resume earlier than predicted and where grant was removed (suggested c£21k).

There is a need to create the Safe Activity & Community Building fund. Interest from CSPs was high in September, and a number of CSPs starting writing propositions and applications before the DPCS had to inform them this pot was unable to be created. From the limited number of CSPs that had heard about the possibility of such a pot being created, Management Group Chairs and Treasurers estimated that the original proposed amount would not be sufficient to meet demand. The SACB fund should be created (suggested c£20k).

There is a need to increase the size of the ADF pot to enable CSPs to deliver new activities to our students for which no funding has been allocated already. In the first term, applications were made for c£40,000 worth of funding. The ADF committee felt unable to allocate more than one third of the current pot (c£11k), and the majority of CSPs had to be turned down due to a complete lack of funding. There is a large demand for the ADF pot, and funds should be allocated here (suggested c£50k).

A summation of the proposed re-allocation is shown in Table 1. It highlights that the proposed re-allocation allows the continued funding of our CSPs during a pandemic, whilst enabling them to do more with the available funds, and to deliver further savings to the Union.

Table 1: Summation of key figures, highlighting that a re-allocation process enables us to fund additional CSP activities whilst delivering cost savings to the Union. (All figures rounded to nearest £'000)

Provisional grant allocated to CSPs in 19/20 CSP annual budgeting process	£425,000
Proposed re-allocation of grant to CSPs:	£184,000
Re-allocation to:	
- an appeals pot	£21,000
- SACB Fund	£20,000
- ADF	£50,000
Sum of re-allocated figures	£275,000
Reduction beyond £328k allocated to CSPs in the Union's budget for 20/21	£53,000