Important
Please read before filling in your Crowther Fund application form and keep for future reference.

The Crowther Fund General information and guidance notes
Academic Year 2024/25

All applications for Crowther funding for study between 1 May 2024 and 30 April 2025 must be completed in full by both new and continuing applicants.

PLEASE NOTE THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 29 FEBRUARY 2024.

Purpose
The Crowther Fund was established as a tribute to the late Lord Crowther, the University’s first Chancellor. Grants are awarded by the Crowther Fund Awards Advisory Board and are limited to Open University honours degree graduates only.

The objective of the Crowther Fund is to assist Open University honours graduates in building upon the work already undertaken for their Open University honours degree. This is likely to be through formal study or research, or by a general broadening of experience, for example through a period of voluntary work. The Board is willing to consider applications for grants towards any activity, which could be inspired by, or an extension of, work already undertaken towards an Open University honours degree.

How much support is available?
Awards from the Crowther Fund are intended primarily to assist in meeting expenses such as tuition and travel costs. Once an award has been made for a specific purpose e.g. fees, the Board will not normally approve re-allocation because of changed circumstances.

Awards are considered up to a maximum of £1,000 but most awards are for between £500 – £750 due to the limited amount of funds available. Applications for large sums of money to support full-time study are less likely to be successful than applications for more moderate sums to support part-time study.

The demand on the Crowther Fund considerably exceeds the resources available each year. Therefore, if you cannot demonstrate that you meet the funds criteria, your application is unlikely to be successful.

What you need to know
Applications are invited for grants to assist with:

• study or further education
• formal supervised research proposals
• projects which are either concerned with the community or an extension of studies already undertaken as an Open University student, or activities which are being undertaken or in which the graduate has been invited to participate because of his/her Open University studies
• other activities such as study tours, special tuition, ‘master’ classes, and personal lines of study.

The Board gives priority to those who have obtained a good honours degree without having received credit transfer (first class or upper second class honours degree), and in particular, those from a deprived educational background are prioritised. Applications from previous recipients of Crowther Fund Awards are also looked upon favourably but the Board cannot guarantee funding from one year to the next.
In assessing applications, the Board looks for a plausible progression in a student’s study and a feasible study plan. Proposals that relate to a change of career are encouraged.

The Board consider the following aspects within applications to the Fund:

• the level of honours degree held (taking credit transfer into account)
• the overall quality of the application
• the apparent need for funding
• the goals/progression that the student would achieve.

Applications are judged solely on their merits: the Crowther Fund is not a fund to relieve financial hardship or help towards the cost of living or childcare costs. Applications are regarded as confidential, and no publication is made of the sums awarded without the permission of the recipient.

Awards are not made to assist applicants towards the cost of Open University undergraduate study, unless such courses form part of a postgraduate or professional diploma for which the applicant is registered.

Applications for the 2024/25 year can be made for study or projects that commence from 1 May 2024. Awards are not made to reimburse expenses already incurred, however retrospective claims for course fees will be considered for courses that started after 1 January 2024. The fund cannot be used for fees of courses that begin before 1 January 2024.

Please note that awards are made for one year at a time and the Board cannot guarantee continued support.

Applications for further awards must be made each year. You should also note that the Board only makes awards for equipment in very exceptional circumstances.

The decision of the Board is final.

Completing the application

All applicants

Applications are available by accessing the webpage http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/fees-and-funding/ou-funding

You will need to complete the Application Form and submit with any required supporting evidence via email to the address included on the top of the application form no later than 29 February 2024.

Continuing applications

If you have previously received funding from the Crowther Fund for the qualification/course of study/project or other activity you will also need to supply a progress report from your supervisor, tutor or other person acquainted with your work. Applicants who are studying towards a PhD, MPhil, MLit or BPhil must attach a report from their current supervisor to their application. These documents should be submitted electronically to us at the same time as your application form.

What happens after I have applied?

The Award Board meeting will normally take place in April and applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application as soon after the meeting as possible.

Recipients of awards must be prepared to submit a report on the conduct of their work if the Board directs. Failure to do so may involve the cancellation or suspension of an award. Continuing applicants must supply the report in order to be considered for further funding.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

The Crowther Fund team can be contacted by emailing OU-Crowther-fund@open.ac.uk or by calling 01908 653411 (09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Thursday, 09:00 – 16:30 Friday).