

The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust



December 2024



The Impact of Our Grants

This year we want to showcase the difference we make to the students that successfully receive a grant from the Trust. Our grants make a real tangible difference, here's what a few of our grant awardees have said:

“One aspect I don't believe is mentioned enough is the effect that these grants can have on the applicant's mental health. Getting this grant allowed me to have some breathing room to focus a bit more on my studies and that would not have been possible without it. Financial constraints during postgraduate programmes transform into mental health issues for a lot of students like me, who do not come from a wealthy background or who cannot rely on their families for funding for whatever reason.”

“The rising costs of living played a prominent role in my decision to study and work on a freelance basis. The grant awarded from The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust for the academic year 2023/24, helped me to feel less stressed about our expenses as a family and also to concentrate more on advancing on my studies.”

“I really appreciated the grant money as it enabled me to obtain a car which was absolutely essential to the course which is heavily centred on rural and remote medicine. It allowed me to connect with the communities I was working in and helped me move from one area to the next, and never have to struggle with scarce bus services in places like rural Inverness and Dumfriesshire.”

“I am truly grateful for the grant from the Stapley Trust. It allowed me to focus on my studies and be more present on my placements. I achieved the best grades I have done so during my degree. I was also able to do some research work alongside my studies which will help with my portfolio for later training. Additionally, extra-curriculars have always been important for me and my mental health. The grant meant I could keep these going.”

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An Introduction from Our Co-Chairs

Early last year, we had celebrated a Full Board and stability. However, this was not to be as in November 2024 our Clerk of almost 5 years decided to retire from the Trust and then our Treasurer decided to leave as well.

We would like to thank Colin Nee for his devotion and guidance. He established a five-year Strategy Plan, enabled an online application process and supported all our governance requirements. A genuine hard worker who helped bring the Trust up to modern expectations. He is greatly missed.

David Ford was with us for only a short period but thoroughly examined our finances and wider liabilities. He made several recommendations which we have actioned. He also provided some insight into recent changes in Charity Finances and their implications. We thank him for his guidance.

We are delighted to let you know that after a vigorous interview process, we have employed Amy Couture as our Administrator. She has made a great start by reviewing some of our practices and making sensible adjustments saving time and money. She is working closely with our IT advisors Gallery to ensure this year's application process is as streamlined as possible.

Peter Taaffe is our new Treasurer and brings a wealth of experience in helping charities. He has introduced an investment policy and a reserves policy, both awaiting input from an independent advisor who is examining our finances and investments for future guidance. With Peter's help, we hope to be clearer about our future objectives and financial requirements

to attract more financial support so more post graduate students can follow their dreams. This will help complete the aims and objectives of our first 5-year Plan started in 2022. A Full Board, new Administrator and Treasurer should enable us to progress the Trust further and we look forward to the year ahead.

Our annual survey revealed the increasing number of post graduate students needing our support. We opened our online application process in early January and closed within 48 hours after receiving 497 applications. Work by trustees to clarify eligibility criteria meant fewer applications were ineligible so the first 300 were accepted.

We carefully monitor the application process and constantly strive to make it equitable to ensure the best candidates who are most in need are given every chance to succeed in getting a grant. The wash-up group has worked on improving the clarity of guidance, removing ambiguity of wording and addressing technical glitches. A sample copy of the form is available on our website to allow prior preparation. Our next Strategy Plan is hoping to address this further, so everyone has a fair chance to apply.

Early feedback from this year's survey reports that grantees find our grants ease their financial burden and help significantly towards supporting their education. We thank all those who support us by completing our survey justifying our grant provision and those who give generously enabling us to support more post graduate students. We wish all students a successful year ahead.



**Dr Manali Chitre,
Co-Chair**



**Dr Debbie Marsden,
Co-Chair**



Sharon Godwin's Story, Stapley Trust Alumna (2009-10)

"I received a grant from the Trust to study an MA in English Literature at the University of York in 2009, and I wanted to get in touch to say thank you for your support and tell you a little about the impact it had on me, all these years later. I was the first generation in my family to attend university and wasn't sure if postgraduate study was right for me but I'm so glad I took the plunge and gave it a try: it completely changed my life.

I loved my course, loved York, and loved the university so much that I stayed after graduation and now work there as a fundraiser! I mainly fundraise for medical research projects but have also worked on our scholarship programmes and I think my experience of being supported by philanthropy helped me to understand the motivations of donors and the amazing impact scholarships have on individual students.

I self-funded my course through savings and working part time while studying and wouldn't have made it through the year without the grant. But more than just the financial support, the fact that I was chosen for a grant really helped my confidence and kept me going when I doubted whether I was good enough to be here; I remember thinking that if the Trustees believed in me, I could do it.

Thank you again for supporting me at a time when I really needed it and for inspiring me to go on to a career in philanthropy which is incredibly fulfilling and allows me to help others just as the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust helped me."

Sharon





Matthew Phillips West - MComp in Composition for Screen

“A mature student has many advantages. One has more life from which to draw, gone are the social distractions of youth and you already know how to make a decent bolognese. The cost of it all however is no different. Indeed, it is perhaps made more challenging by many excellent funding bodies imposing age limits for applicants. However, thanks to support from organisations like the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust I recently obtained a distinction for my Masters in Composition for Screen, at the Royal College of Music.

The course was a two-year whirlwind where my wonderful colleagues and I scored dozens of films and scenes. I collaborated with directors from the London Film School and London South Bank University, heard lectures in everything from narrative structure to the use of modal harmony (a harmonic method originally from medieval church music) in film scores.

We had guest speakers including Rachel Portman (Chocolat), Dario Marianelli (Atonement) and Daniel Pemberton (Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse). I studied orchestration, recorded my music performed

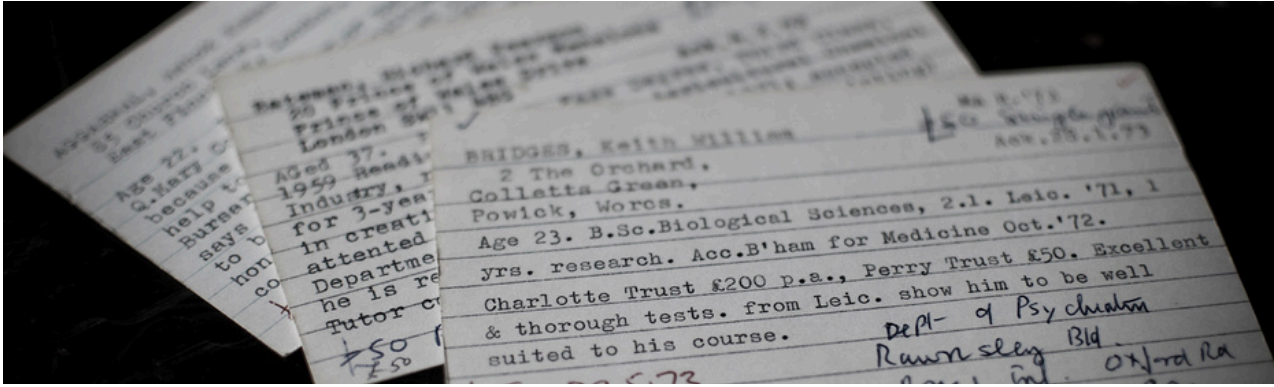
by a full orchestra, conducted and produced numerous recording sessions, delved into the world of electronic music and wrote and implemented video game music (requiring a fascinating but very different approach to composing). And then suddenly that was that, all over, off you go. I was bereft!

And like a 17-year-old who has just passed their driving test, I might know how to drive, but there is still more to learn. So that is my next challenge; to write, to learn, to explore, to grow. I am scoring a documentary for a US based charity and writing a library music album; I am attending conferences and events and meeting with people across the industry; and of course I continue to study.

It was an incredible experience, and I am so grateful. It's not just the money but the confidence you gain from an institution putting their trust in you saying, yep, we think you can do this, so much so, we'll give you money. I mean, who does that!? I am thankful that you do.”

Matt





Consider a Donation or Remember Us in Your Will

Postgraduate study makes an enormous contribution to public life, providing so much of the knowledge and skills on which we all depend.

But too many students have to overcome financial barriers to complete their studies. Many have to pull together a patchwork of part-time earnings, student loans, bank loans, family loans and hardship grants to finance their studies. We hear too many accounts of students experiencing financial anxiety, overburdened with excessive hours of part-time work, and distracted from their studies.



"Hello! I'm Sarah O'Neil, one of the trustees of the Trust.

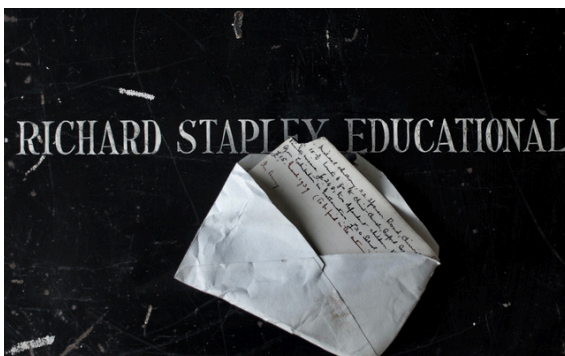
I have remembered the Trust in my Will to repay a debt of gratitude. I would not have been able to achieve my professional successes without my highest qualifications - which the Trust supported financially. Including the Trust in my Will means I can support the Trust but without the anxiety about affording the commitment within my lifetime.

I hope that you too will consider whether to leave a legacy to help support future postgraduates. We can do so much more with your support!"

If you decide to include the Trust in your Will, you can ask your solicitor or professional adviser to do this by giving them the following details:

The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust
Registered charity number: 313812
PO Box 1423, Warrington, WA4 9YH

For more information visit our website. If you have any questions about making a donation or remembering the Trust in your Will, please contact our Administrator at admin@stapleytrust.org



Every donation makes an impact

No matter how much you can afford to give, as a one-off donation or through regular giving, your donation matters. Every donation received adds up and helps the Trust support more students to become doctors, scientists, artists, researchers, planners, engineers and teachers of the future. Whatever you give, we are always grateful for any amount you can part with.

[Click here to make a donation](#)



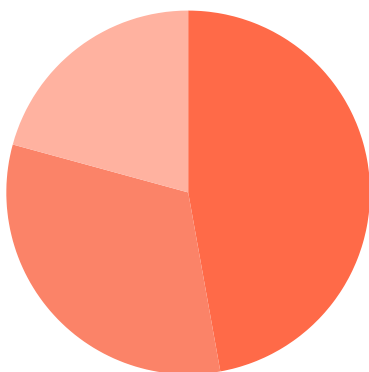
Annual Grant Round 2024-25

The demand for financial support continues to grow, unsurprisingly we were inundated with applications once again.

Grants Awarded

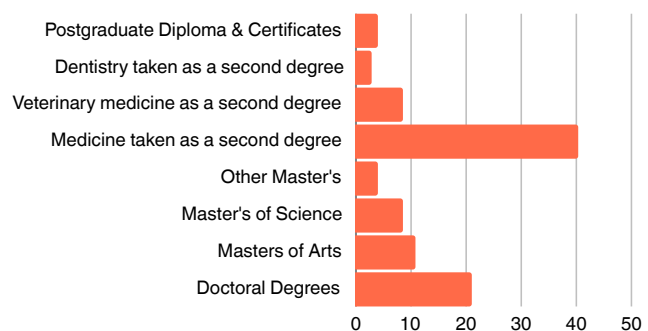
We made grants totaling £165,100 this year. The total number of awards was 176. We are seeing the 'need' of students increase, meaning we are awarding more grants in our A and B categories.

- Category A (£1,250)
- Category B (£850)
- Category C (£550)



Types of Course Supported

This year we saw an even larger proportion of our grants awarded to those studying medicine as a second degree. 21% of successful applicants were studying for a PhD or DPhil. Most of the remainder went to those taking master's degrees. 23% were undertaking a Masters of some kind.



Our next annual grant round, for those studying in academic year 2025-26, is scheduled to open on 6 January 2025. You can read full details of our eligibility criteria on page 11.

Annual Survey Report

For our eighth annual survey, we had a 48% response rate (75/154 students). For the first time, we offered respondents the opportunity to win a £50 Amazon gift voucher. This was intended to help increase the response rate. Sixty-five respondents chose to enter the prize draw by entering their email address into the form.

Respondents' Universities & Courses

Students from 53 universities and higher educational institutions were represented in the survey.

Continuing a trend, fewer respondents were studying for a PhD (29%) than in previous years, although they remained the most common category of respondents, alongside medical students. Nineteen-percent of respondents were studying for an MA or MSc.



Financial Shortfall & How Managed

Financial shortfall figures were broadly similar to previous surveys. Forty-eight percent of respondents had a shortfall of £750 - £2,000, whilst 31% had a shortfall of between £2001 - £5,000. Eighteen percent had a shortfall above £5,000.

This year 96% of respondents said our grants were essential for the completion of the year's study (2023: 83%), perhaps reflecting the cost-of-living pressures felt by many. One respondent said the grant had been "life changing" and many respondents used words such as "vital", "invaluable" and "essential" when describing the grant.

We anticipate that students will use a grant as one element their wider financial plan. Alongside receiving a grant, 73% of students took on paid work to help finance their studies.

Key Benefits

As in previous years, respondents were asked how a grant had helped them. Mirroring previous surveys, the most commonly cited benefits were allowing them to focus more on their studies (90%, compared with 78% last year) and a reduction in financial concerns and, therefore, stress (86%, compared with 75% in 2023).

A grant allowed many to reduce the number of hours they worked part-time or to reduce the amount of money they needed to borrow from elsewhere. Receiving support from the Trust also enabled some to take part in extra-curricular activities or to study full-time. It was pleasing to see that 47 students explained that a grant had given them a motivational boost in their studies, demonstrating that support from the Trust is not limited to the financial impact.

Many respondents detailed how a grant had helped their specific circumstances including: allowing them to travel to placements; lessening the effects of inflation; improving their mental health; maintaining a work-life balance; and pursuing new avenues of research.

Once again, we are immensely grateful to everyone who completed our survey this year. We read every response and the survey's findings are hugely valuable in helping us to refine our grant-giving to ensure that we better support postgraduates from all backgrounds. Finally, we enjoy hearing about the continued successes of our alumni, so please do give us a follow on our Facebook, X and LinkedIn pages. We wish everyone a happy, healthy and successful academic year ahead!

Dr James Jones, Trustee





Introducing our new Administrator, Amy Couture

I was delighted to join the Trust in May 2024 and have really enjoyed my first few months working at the Trust.

I have worked in the voluntary sector for 13 years, most recently as the CEO of a children's disability charity, called Stick 'n' Step which is based in the Northwest of England. In my eight years leading this charity, I managed a staff team of 25 people, so it is quite a shift to be the only member of staff and to be fully working from home.

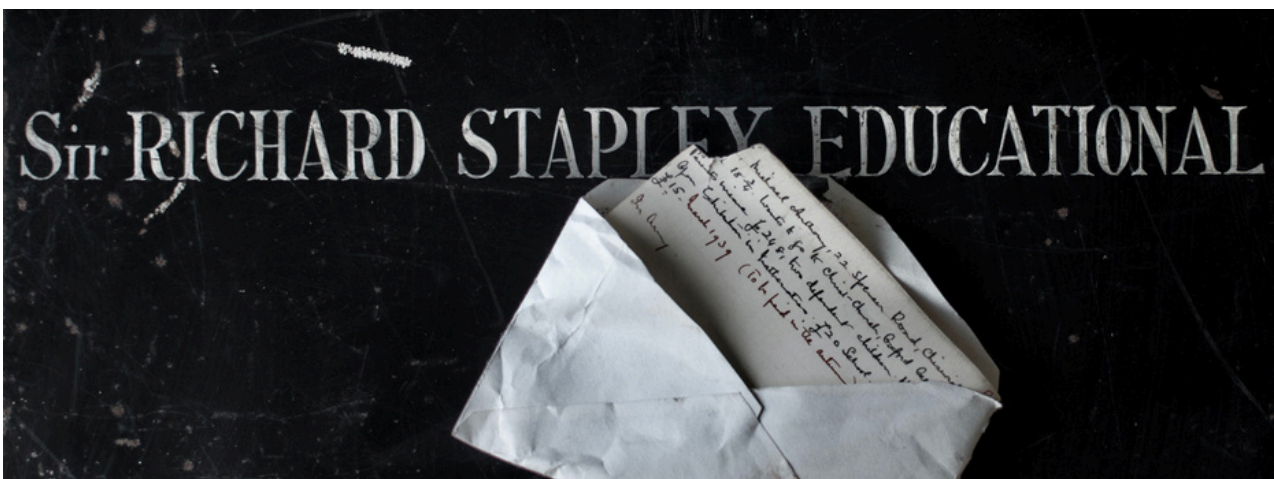
Part of the reason I took this opportunity, is because I have a young family, and I had been looking for a role that would fit in with my busy life as a mum as well as challenging me professionally. As the sole part-time employee of the Trust, I am enjoying the variety the role offers, I am responsible for all operational matters and so no two days are the same! I hope to continue to improve the efficiency of our processes and systems to ensure we can support as many students as possible.

I have also been a Trustee for a national disability charity and hope to use this experience to support the Trustees to fulfil their responsibilities with the charity.

As we come to the end of 2024, I look forward to opening our application window on Monday 6th January 2025. My first job will be to read all the applications and assess those that are eligible, before sourcing references for all these applicants. The next stage is to support Trustees in scoring and ultimately deciding which students receive grants.

It is a great privilege to be the person at the centre of this fantastic charity, to hear how our support boosts student's confidence and enables them to achieve their academic potential. I look forward to 2025 where we will continue to make this happen.

Amy Couture, Administrator





Introducing our new Treasurer – Peter Taaffe, appointed May 2024

I am a retired Chartered Accountant, having been the Managing Partner of an audit firm based in Liverpool but with clients both local and national. Besides the normal range of clients you would reasonably anticipate, we acted as auditors and independent examiners to around 120 charities of all shapes and sizes! I was privileged to advise the trustees of those charities on a range of issues and concerns, commercial and governance.

I was appointed for three years to the Charities Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, giving talks to my colleagues on charity matters.

I have also acted as Treasurer/Trustee to several other medium-sized charities during my career.

I joined the Board of Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust in part because post-graduation, I benefited from a grant allowing me to pursue a Masters' degree at Lancaster University and see the Trust as a contributor to those similarly seeking to advance their own academic knowledge and careers, whilst contributing to the UK's intellectual property development.

As Trustee and Treasurer, I see my main contribution being to assist the Charity in the delivery of its objects being through helping the Trustees demonstrate effective governance in the financial management of the Charity generally, and in the management and development of the Trust's investment portfolio.

Peter Taaffe, Treasurer



Join the Stapley Trust community on Facebook, X and LinkedIn

Connect with other grant receivers and find out the latest Stapley Trust news on our social media pages. Click the buttons below to join.





Dr Ray Bull - Alumnas Update

It is with pleasure that I provide this alumnus update, having benefited from support from the Trust way back in the academic year 1970/71.

In the early summer of 1970, I graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Exeter, as did my future wife (we married later that summer). She was offered a funded PhD scholarship at that same university and I one at a university (far away) in London. 'Love conquers all' (as they say) and I could not face being so far away from her – so I commenced a non-funded PhD at the same university. This is why I applied (successfully) for a small amount of financial support from the Trust (of £50).

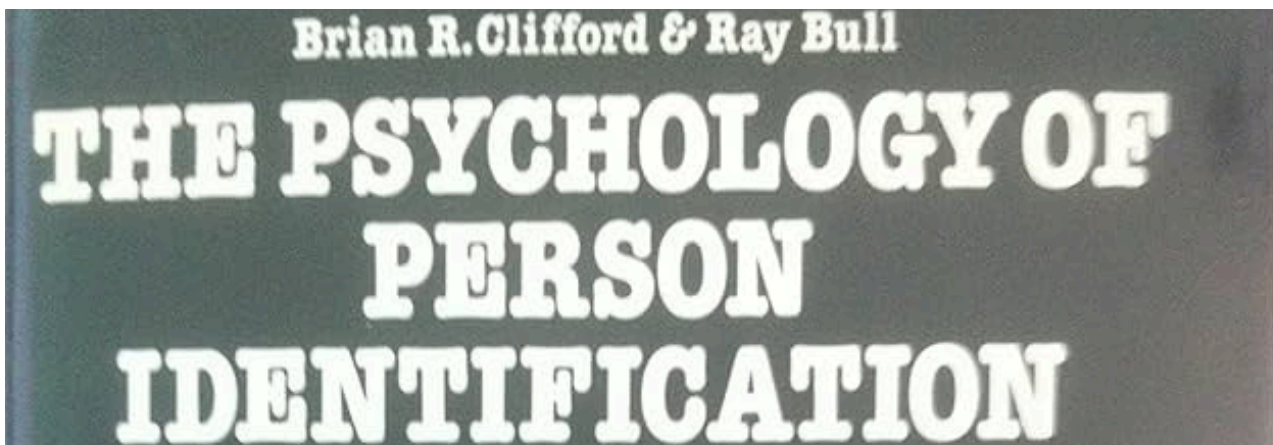
At the end of my first postgraduate year (during which I conducted a number of research studies that were later published), the Head of Department kindly invited me to take up a two-year salaried post as his Research Assistant working on a project with the police regarding how best to provide information daily to patrol officers (some of which was allowed to be published). After this, I took up a lectureship in London.

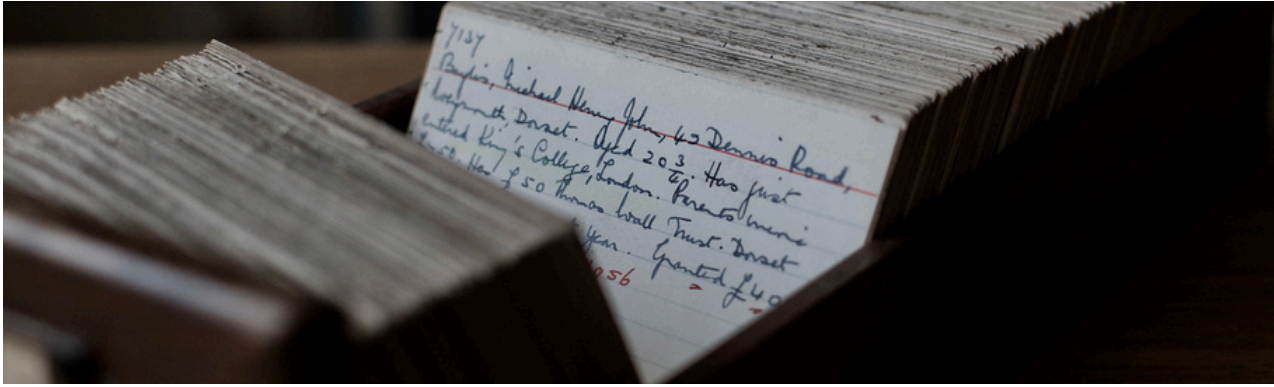
During the latter half of the 1970s I became increasingly interested in the possible contribution of

psychology to policing and to law and in 1978 had published with a colleague (Brian Clifford) a book entitled 'The Psychology of Person Identification' that focussed on issues relating to the efficiency of eyewitness memory. During the 1980s I received a number of job promotions and was encouraged by my mentors to apply for a full professorship in Scotland, where I moved to in 1987. There, with Dr Rhona Flin, we conducted a government-funded project on children giving evidence in criminal courts, that led to a number of developments, including the government in England updating relevant laws and procedures, including my being asked to draft the first 'official' (1992) guidance on how children should be interviewed by police/social workers.

In the ensuing 30 years, my career has continued to be eventful (more details can be found at www.raybullassociates.co.uk) but I have never forgotten the importance of the Trust's support. In fact, I recently donated to the Trust, in the hope that I can in some way help to kick-start the career of another student in the coming years.

Ray





Our next annual grant round for 2025/26

Our next annual grant round, for those studying in academic year 2025/26, is scheduled to open in the morning of 6 January 2025. Only online applications will be accepted, and the online application form will be available on our website on that date. A mock-up of the application form is available on our website now.

Who may apply?

To be eligible to apply, applicants need to be: graduates with a First Class or Upper-Second Class honours degree (2:1), or a master's or doctoral degree, or final year undergraduate students expected to achieve a 1st or 2.1;

1. Accepted on to or applying for a course of study at a UK university or similar UK educational body in 2025/26 (not including overseas branches of UK universities or accessing the course remotely from outside the UK);

2. The course of study will need to be for

- A higher degree (master's, PhD, or their equivalent) in any subject
- Or a postgraduate certificate or postgraduate diploma in any subject
- A second qualification at the same level. For example, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Architecture or Engineering **are commonly taken as a second undergraduate degree.**

3. A UK citizen, or currently living in the UK, and planning to remain living in the UK throughout the academic year applied for (with the exception of any periods spent overseas as a recognised element of my course of study)

4. Facing a financial shortfall in the academic year 2025/26.

The official start date of your 2025/26 academic year must fall on a date between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025

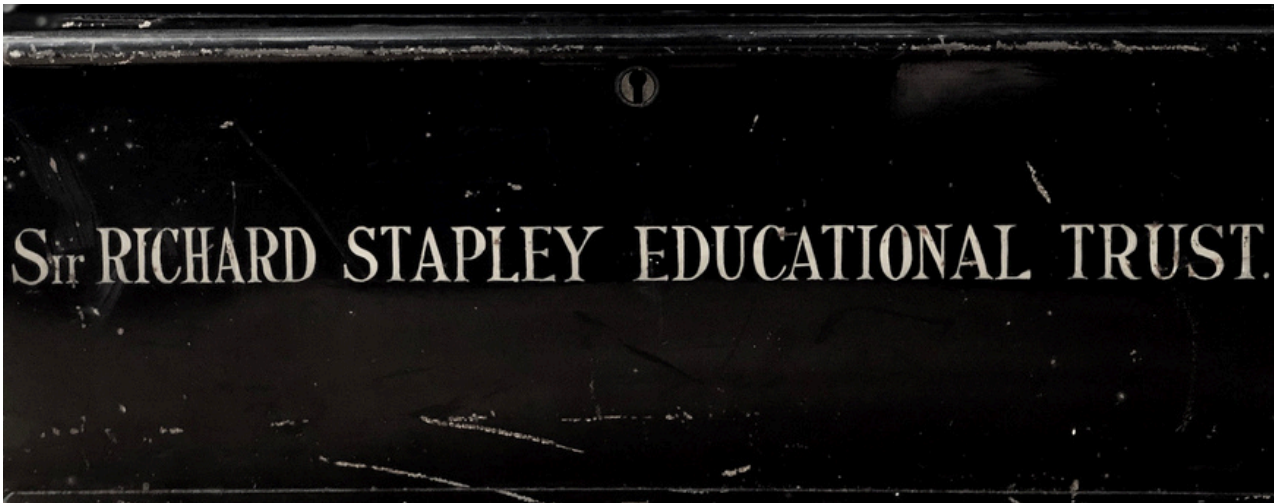
Assuming they meet our basic eligibility criteria, the attributes listed below will be used to gauge whether an applicant fit the desired profile. They will not be required to meet each one separately; rather the whole 'package' will be assessed overall:

- The student is undertaking a course to better achieve their ambition regarding career path or personal development
- Has the potential to make a contribution to wider society
- May have had to overcome - or be facing - particular challenges such as disability or family, social or economic barriers
- Demonstrates real passion and commitment to the chosen area of study
- Is in real financial need but has a strategy for addressing this and has made an effort to access other sources of funding
- Has shown evidence of academic ability, taking into account their background when assessing past performance
- Has the support of an informed and competent referee.

The application window will close as soon as we have received 300 eligible applications. We reached that maximum number within a small number of days in our last annual grant round.

Good luck to all those applying!

Amy Couture
Administrator



What we do

Founded in 1919 by the businessman and philanthropist Sir Richard Stapley (1843-1920), the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust supports the work of students of proven academic achievement, and in financial need, who are pursuing certain postgraduate qualifications or further degrees at an educational institution in the UK.

Contact us

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www.stapleytrust.org

admin@stapleytrust.org

PO Box 1432, Warrington, WA4 9YH



Our Trustees

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Dr Debbie Marsden

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