Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / 29 July 2026

Activities Development Fund Designation for 2026/27

Author(s): Tom Gordon (Deputy President: Activities)

Purpose: To outline a case for designating funding towards the Activities Development Fund for the 2026/27 academic year.

Decision(s): To **approve**.

1. Context

This paper sets out the balance of unused club and society grant and ADF allocations to date, and a case for funding the Activities Development Fund (ADF) for the 2026/27 academic year.

Student groups are allocated an annual grant for the following financial year as part of the annual budget. For the upcoming year, £446,000 is available for this purpose from our block grant — an inflationary uplift from £425,000 in previous years. Any underspends have historically been allocated to ADF, which is a "Designated Fund" (unrestricted, with no legal restriction on usage but earmarked at trustees' discretion). The intended purpose of the fund has been to support new student group activities and unexpected success but has occasionally been used for new equipment because of loss or damage.

Designated funds form part of "Unrestricted Funds", and can be reversed or amended at trustees' discretion, with balances presented separately in the statutory year-end accounts. Any designation requires Trustee approval.

Funding allocations from ADF are the responsibility of the Activities Forum (formerly CSPB) — a sub-committee of Union Council.

This academic year, ADF allocations have been substantially higher than 2024/25 (£53,754.98 versus £21,235.65). We believe this is due to:

- An increased awareness of the fund amongst student groups, particularly amongst new clubs and societies and cultural groups.
- A higher quality of applications from student groups.
- A loosening of the policy, which now allows:
    - Food or drink, if it strictly constitutes a core activity (e.g. societies focussed on food or nutrition, and certain cultural groups).
    - A £100 allocation made to every newly approved club or society (circa £4k this year).

Principles for the ADF were previously established (June 2022 Finance & Risk Committee) as follows:

- ADF is an important source of funding for clubs and societies.
- All increases to the ADF will be subject to the explicit approval of Trustees but will in principle be increased by the total net underspend of club and society grants each year.
- ADF should be utilised in line with the ADF Policy owned by CSPB (now Activities Forum), unless otherwise determined by Trustees.
- ADF should be used as a risk management tool to fund unexpected group losses before the Union's general reserve is accessed.

- The Clubs and Societies Project Board (now Activities Forum), which has delegated responsibility for allocation of these funds, should aim to maintain a minimum balance of ADF of £30k to fund shocks and group losses.
- To ensure that the ADF does not restrict too significant an amount of Union funds, it will be capped at £100k.

Last year, the Board opted to supplement the club and society annual grant by £9,141.53. This was to facilitate the ringfencing of £15,000.00 to be used to centrally subsidise the cost of coach transport to and from Harlington Sports Ground.

2. Balances and Designation Proposal for 2026/27

The current balance of ADF is c.£165k, which is above the £100k cap noted above. Table 1 presents proposals to designate the excess funds to top up the club and society grant allocation and to launch a Health, Safety and Compliance Fund for 2026/27.

Table 1 - Current ADF balance and proposed breakdown

	Proposal for 2026/27
Opening Balance	**100,000.00**
ADF allocations in year	(53,754.98)
Club and society 2025/26 grant underspend[1]	116,621.02
Estimated closing balance	**162,866.04**
Proposed top-up to club and society grant allocation for 2026/27	(15,000.00)
Health, Safety and Compliance Fund	(15,000.00)
Returned to ICU general funds / SIF[2]	(32,866.04)
Balance to designate	**100,000.00**
Opening Balance (proposed)	**100,000.00**
Balance for contingency / future years	(30,000.00)
Available funds for ADF 26/27	**70,000.00**

2.1 Proposed Top-Up to Club and Society Grant Allocation

As with last year, no Annual Budgeting grant allocations were directly made to societies to cover transport to or from the Harlington Sports Ground. Instead, £15,000 is ringfenced to reduce the cost per seat of

[1] Any grant allocated for the current academic year, which remains unspent at the end of the academic year. This includes ADF allocated in 2025/26.
[2] Any funds over the £100k cap are normally returned to ICU general funds or the Strategic Investment Fund ("SIF").

coach travel centrally, to ensure equitability across all sports clubs. The Board is asked to consider using 2025-26 club and society underspend to cover this cost, as it relates to the original purpose of the funding.

If this designation is approved, the grant allocation scaling factor in TB/25-26/75. CSP Grant Allocations for 2026/27 will be changed from 0.85x to 0.89x.

2.2 Health, Safety and Compliance Fund

In the 2026-27 club and society budgeting cycle, a total of £22,815.52 was requested by students for purposes relating to Health and Safety. Of this, £7,193.40 was granted. Without the training and equipment mentioned as part of this annual budgeting round, many clubs and societies cannot safely run their core activity; however, many of the requests go against the principles of annual budgeting (for example, disproportionately benefitting individuals rather than the whole membership). Due to many of these being relatively specialised, they are usually expensive, meaning they cannot feasibly be funded via the annual budgeting pot.

The Board is asked to consider designating £15,000.00 to help meet the £15,622.12 unfunded demand and set up a Health, Safety and Compliance Fund for the academic year 2026-27, with an application window each term. As part of this, £3,000.00 would be ringfenced for first aid training to be delivered in stages throughout the year.

3. Recommendation

The Board of Trustees is asked to **approve**:

- The designation of £70,000.00 for ADF,
- The carrying-over of £30,000.00 for contingency,
- The designation of £15,000.00 to top up the club and society annual grant,
- The designation of £15,000.00 to launch a Health, Safety and Compliance Fund, and
- The return of £32,866.04 to ICU general funds / SIF.