Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / 29 July 2026

Club and Society Grant Allocations for 2026/27

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Purpose: To outline the process used to allocate club and society grant for the 2026/27 academic year, and to present a budget for grant allocations to the Board.

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

1. Context

Annual Budgeting took place in accordance with the Student Group Funding Policy (approved by FAR, March 2025) and Club and Society Annual Budgeting Principles (passed at Activities Forum, March 2026).

Primary changes to the Annual Budgeting Principles this year included:

- Funding a fixed amount for accommodation per night rather than a percentage of the total cost
- Allowing the funding of food for culturally significant events
- Changing the Constituent Union funding model from an allocation per member to an allocation per member plus a fixed base allocation to help cover core running costs.

All budgets were reviewed by the Annual Budgeting Committee, comprising:

- Deputy President (Activities)
- Activities Manager (Operations)
- Activities Coordinator (Finance)

For the first time since 2021/22, the block grant designation for student group budget allocations has seen an inflationary increase, from £425k to £446k.

Paper TB/25-26/74 under Item 15 (Activities Development Fund Designation) proposes meeting the £15,000 Harlington coach-transport subsidy from 2025-26 grant underspend rather than from the block grant. The figures in this paper assume the subsidy comes from the block grant; if the recommendations in TB/25-26/74 are approved, that £15,000 is funded from underspend instead, freeing the full £446,000 block grant to be allocated to groups and scaling all allocations upwards.

2. Allocations

The committee completed a first round of allocations, at which point c.£503k was allocated. During this process, the Annual Budgeting Committee made a few decisions, including:

- To allocate £1.00 per member to each Departmental Society, towards community and belonging.
- To allocate £0.50 per member to each Constituent Union, as well as a base allocation of £1,000, towards community and belonging.
- To lower the accommodation funding from £20 per person, per night to £10, due to the substantial amount requested.
- To not allocate funding where a lack of breakdown meant that the committee could not follow the Annual Budgeting Principles (e.g. hourly cost of instructors, number of nights stayed in a hotel).

The allocations deadline unfortunately was pushed back by two weeks. This was due to a combination of systems issues clashing with Annual Leave, as well as the allocation process itself taking longer than expected. The committee felt it was more appropriate to extend the allocation process, rather than rushing through it. As a result, the appeals process, as well as scaling and adjustments, were not ready in time for the June FAR.

As with last year, it's proposed that £15k is ringfenced from the allocation to be used to centrally subsidise the cost of coach travel to Harlington. As with last year, we are requesting that this be designated from the 2025–26 club and society grant underspend, rather than the £446k portion of the Block Grant provided for club and society grants.

Table 1 shows a summary of the allocations from this round and the previous two rounds of annual budgeting. The "after appeals and scaling" amount reflects the funding directly allocated to student groups, and is not inclusive of the £15,000.00 set aside to directly subsidise Harlington transport. We have scaled the allocations such that we remain within the block grant allocation when including the £15,000.00, though if we are able to designate this from 2025–26 club and society grant underspend, we seek to reduce the scaling and increase this figure to £446,000.00. This would correspond to a 0.89x scaling, rather than 0.85x.

Table 1 – Summary of allocations

Year budgeted for	Block grant available	Total requested	Allocated to groups before scaling	Allocated to groups after appeals and scaling *(provisional)*	Funding held for Harlington transport
2026/27	**£446,000.00**	£1,074,371.18	£503,162.37	**£427,936.62**	**£15,000.00**
2025/26	**£425,000.00**	£1,106,438.23	£425,563.28	**£418,509.13**	**£15,000.00**
2024/25	**£425,000.00**	£888,796.10	£596,546.10	**£424,983.90**	**£0.00**

3. Analysis

The ten account codes and subgroups with the highest allocations — after appeals and scaling — are listed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 – Top ten account codes by allocations

Account code	Total	% of all
Instructors (735)	£87,147.03	20.4%
Ground Hire (710)	£77,467.90	18.1%
Travel Expenditure (895)	£45,067.32	10.5%
Entrance Fee Competition (680)	£30,609.26	7.2%
Equipment Purchase (685)	£27,508.39	6.4%
Members Funds (225)[1]	£27,048.92	6.3%
Accommodation (790)	£26,817.55	6.3%
Referees (835)	£16,195.73	3.8%
Affiliation Fees (605)	£15,817.10	3.7%
Consumables (640)	£10,674.02	2.5%

Table 3 – Top ten sub-groups by allocation

Subgroup	Total	% of all
Exploration	£76,876.21	18.0%

[1] This line represents the "Community Funding" allocated to Departmental Societies and Constituent Unions

Team Court	£64,232.13	15.0%
ICSMSU Groups	£58,990.75	13.8%
Individual Sport	£52,795.65	12.3%
Team Field	£41,125.59	9.6%
Martial Arts	£22,644.42	5.3%
CGCU Groups	£20,564.55	4.8%
Music	£17,670.65	4.1%
Dance	£17,548.37	4.1%
Games & Hobbies	£9,260.04	2.2%

Of the 417 clubs, societies, Constituent Unions and Management Groups that were included in the budgeting round, only 191 drew any central allocation at all. Many of these are some of our largest clubs by membership target, such as Investment (2,150), Consultancy (1,318), Algorithmic Trading and Finance (1,000 each). These, for the most part, are self-sustaining, and the money instead flows to activities which are physically expensive to run, which may be why Instructors and Ground Hire had substantial allocations at nearly 39% in total.

Of the 226 clubs and societies receiving no central allocation, 73 did put in a funding request. Overall, these requests largely did not meet the criteria set out by the Annual Budgeting Principles — some requested food for conferences and events, for example, and many submitted requests without any breakdown or justification of costs. Some, such as RSM Football, provided detailed justifications but were rejected for not meeting the membership threshold — all ICU clubs and societies must maintain at least 20 members.

Amongst the funded clubs, the typical allocation was modest — a median of £16 per head — but the mean (£30) sits well above it, suggesting a small number of high-cost activities pulling the average up. The high-cost end is dominated by Exploration groups, which are generally transport, accommodation, training and equipment-heavy. At the upper end, Underwater Club / SCUBA was allocated £242 per head across their 50 members. Within SCUBA's own budget, the largest single line at £2,108 was for equipment servicing, which includes breathing regulator services, cylinder servicing, and drysuit maintenance. Other substantial allocations here were £1,478 for the rolling replacement of that equipment, as well as £1,438 (40% + scaling of the cost) towards the mooring of their boat.

The lowest allocations per head included Mahjong (11p) and Climate Entrepreneurs (13p). These are large, cheap-to-run societies which still deserve Union support. Similar groups with similar activities, on the whole, were allocated around the same per head.

Taken together, these figures describe an allocation round where I believe, for the most part, central funding is directed where it is genuinely needed — towards lines which activity-heavy clubs cannot reasonably meet alone. Where support is given, it tracks the real cost of the activity rather than the size or profile of the club, and groups engaged in comparable pursuits are funded at comparable levels.

4. Appeals

All groups were provided the opportunity to appeal their allocations if they believed their allocation was subject to unjust process or administrative error. A total of 34 appeals were submitted, which is lower than last year’s total of 67 appeals. Out of these, seven were fully or partially upheld, and a further £3,015.52 was allocated.

Preliminary comments on appeals came from the Activities Manager (Operations), who sat on the Annual Budgeting Committee that made the original allocations (committee membership listed above). The final

judgement being made independently by the Activities Manager (Events) mitigates this, but worth noting the preliminary-stage overlap for the Board's awareness.

5. Next Steps

Uniform scaling was applied to all budgets, bringing the total allocation to £427,936.62. With the further ringfenced amount for transport — £15,000.00 — the total allocation is £442,936.62, which is just shy of the £446,000.00 available. If paper TB/25-26/74 under Item 15 (Activities Development Fund Designation) is approved and the £15,000.00 Harlington subsidy is instead met from 2025-26 underspend, the full £446,000.00 block grant can be allocated to groups and the allocations scaled upwards accordingly.

6. Recommendation

The Board is asked to **approve** the allocations attached overleaf.

If paper TB/25-26/74's proposal to fund the £15,000 Harlington subsidy from 2025-26 underspend is approved, the Annual Budgeting Committee requests permission to allocate the £446,000 block grant directly to groups — scaling allocations upwards accordingly — with the £15,000 Harlington coach-transport subsidy met from the underspend.