



Student Fund

Impact Report 2024





My name is Ali and with thanks to our donors, I am the first in my family to go to university. I feel so fortunate and proud to call myself a student at Newcastle University and to have a safety net of support.

I grew up with my parents and three sisters in Bradford. My Mum and Dad always encouraged me to “stick in” at school from an early age, as they hadn't had the same access to schooling as I did. I was aware that there was a world of opportunities that I wanted to explore and be part of.

A degree in Mechanical Engineering felt so exciting to me. I've always loved maths and the School of Engineering at Newcastle University is second to none, so it felt like the perfect fit.

With the current economic climate, managing your finances at university is a challenge for many students like me. Student loans no longer cover living costs for 58% of students and basic outgoings have increased by 17% since 2022.

You are ensuring that many more students, regardless of their background, can have equal access to a university education and a fulfilling student experience. You are positively changing the trajectory of people's lives. Giving students, like me, a chance to learn, build friendships and communities, develop skills and confidence, and maximise our outlook for a bright future.

I hope when you read the following few pages, you too feel proud of everything that the Newcastle University Student

Fund has achieved over the past year - opening doors to opportunities, breaking down inequalities and allowing students to fully realise their potential. This has only been possible thanks to you and the generous support of our donors.

It's exciting thinking about my future career path and although I'm not completely clear on my next steps yet, I am certain that because of your commitment, I will reach my full potential and truly thrive.

Thank you, from every student whose life you have transformed.

Ali, Mechanical Engineering student *(pictured below)*





Helping students to alleviate financial pressures

At Newcastle University, we are committed to ensuring every student has the chance to succeed and thrive, regardless of their background. We have a long-standing commitment to widening participation and equality of opportunity, something we are incredibly proud of.

This academic year 32% of our new intake of home students were from socio-economically challenged backgrounds, our highest percentage ever. However, this means that our students may need additional financial support to alleviate some of the pressures connected with studying for a degree.



Affordable Meals Scheme

The rising cost of living is resulting in more students skipping meals to save money. Providing discounted meals is extremely important to maintain the health and wellbeing of our students so that they don't go hungry and are able to concentrate on their learning.

Our Affordable Meals Scheme was launched in December 2022, offering students £1 breakfasts and lunches at various locations across campus.

Thanks to the Student Fund, we have been able to extend the current Affordable Meals Scheme to continue to offer our students subsidised meal options on campus.

Since December 2022 when the scheme was launched, **over 23,000** £1 meals have been sold.



Period Poverty

In 2019, an initiative led by the Students' Union President sought to **provide free period products for students across campus, to help combat period poverty.** The scheme saw 8 vending machines placed at various locations across the main campus. The demand from students using the products has far exceeded expectations.

The ability to access period products when in need cannot be underestimated. Period products are not a luxury item and should be available to everyone who needs them. Having free access to period products could be the difference between a student being able to attend classes or participate in sporting and social activities.

With your support, the Student Fund has allowed us to expand the scheme, to increase the provision and accessibility of free period products at more locations across our university campus sites. We are also able to provide 7 different products to cater for a variety of needs.

Thank you for helping our students to access free period products, maintain their dignity and be free from worry to get on with their day.



Sanitary products are now available at **72 locations,** in 36 buildings across campus.



To date, we have distributed **74,412 items.**



Helping students to make the most of their university experience

With cost of living challenges, extracurricular and social activities are among the first things that students must give up. Extracurricular activities enhance students' confidence in social interactions, expand their social circles, and equip them with new skills and abilities. Most importantly, these activities provide a vital space for enjoyment and relaxation, offering a break from the stresses of university life.



Newcastle Student Radio Reboot

This year the Student Fund has provided support to Newcastle Student Radio (NSR) to update their outdated equipment.

NSR is a student volunteer-run radio station at Newcastle University Students' Union, running since 1997 and hosting more than 50 shows a week from over 200 students.

Students can access facilities for both podcasting and live radio, which enables students to learn valuable skills such as hosting, recording, and streaming their shows. It also greatly improves confidence and gives students a platform to have their voices heard, whether that's news, mental health awareness, sports, and more.

Your support has helped NSR buy a new sound desk and a fresh selection of music to enhance their library, with plans to buy new headphones and soundproofing materials soon. This new equipment will enable the studio to run more smoothly, creating a future-proof and well-equipped environment for hundreds (if not thousands!) of future NSR volunteers.



Enhancing Student Sports Clubs and Societies

With 22,000 memberships across a wide range of sports teams and societies, students can enrich their social lives, personal growth, and overall well-being, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Support from the Student Fund has focused on four main areas:

Equipment Fund: This fund addresses the core running costs of teams and societies. Groups have been able to purchase new safety equipment and brand-new compliant competition equipment.

Varsity Fund: Supporting the annual Varsity competition, aiming to involve more students (both players and spectators) and fostering pride in our university community.

Earn Your Stripes/Stars Fund: Sports teams and societies are encouraged to complete initiatives and can apply for funding for their group to help create a more inclusive environment for all students.

Qualifications Fund: Students can apply for funding to gain accredited qualifications, enhancing experience within team sports (e.g. more reputable referees) and contributing to personal growth.

Continual and Exceptional Hardship Bursary

The Exceptional Hardship Bursary Scheme and the Living Cost Bursary Scheme were established in September 2021 as part of the University's commitment as a University of Sanctuary. Both are designed to help students who are asylum seekers and refugees, as well as students whose financial security is being impacted by political crises, conflict, and natural disasters in their home country.

These bursaries provide fast access to financial assistance for students who may struggle to gather documentation or access resources due to unexpected situations. **We have been able to support a total of 74 students in the 2023-2024 academic year.** To date, the two bursary schemes have given over £100,000 in support to students when they need it most.



Bowsden Community Allotment

The Bowsden Court Community Allotment Project has allowed students to grow their own food and strengthen community spirit. In addition to the significant wellbeing advantages associated with gardening, this initiative provides a space for students and families to home-grow some of their own healthy, organic food. Funding has allowed the project to purchase necessary equipment, tools and other essential supplies that have contributed to the project's thriving outcome.

We've turned recycled materials into planters, sowed seeds together, and nurtured our plants as a community. The excitement and involvement from residents, many of whom had never participated in ResLife activities before, has been heartwarming.

Hai Anh Nguyen, ResLife Student Assistant and volunteer at the Bowsden Community Allotment





Helping the next generation of graduates to succeed after university

In a crowded job market, employers are increasingly looking for ways to distinguish between candidates. Our students must have real-world experiences to boost their CV and help them get ahead in the graduate job market or to pursue their dreams of further study.



Make it Happen Fund

Our 'Make it Happen Fund' supports Newcastle University students and recent graduates to take the next steps in their career development.

With your support, our students can explore their career options and take their first steps in acquiring a graduate job role - without worrying about the financial implications which might have held them back. This academic year, **82 students** have received funding to support with costs for:



Interviews and work experience

Students can apply for funding to support travel, accommodation, and clothing costs associated with attending interviews, assessment centres or work experience.



Attending a conference

Funding is available to support students with travel and accommodation costs.



Developing a student-led project or initiative

Projects help to enhance the overall student experience, build skills and knowledge related to a student's field of study or career interest, or may have a positive impact on the wider community. This might be an extracurricular art project, organising an exhibition, event or conference, carrying out a research trip, or launching a community project.



I applied for the Make it Happen Fund to be able to facilitate an art exhibition I wanted to create. As a Fine Art student at Newcastle University, I saw this as a chance to gain practical experience in event management and exhibition planning.

With the support of the fund, I aimed to create an exhibition that not only showcased my artwork but also taught me valuable lessons about navigating the art world.

'In the Gap' was a one-night exhibition. The funding covered essential expenses such as a venue for the exhibition and acquiring necessary resources and materials.

Overall, it has provided me with learning experiences in the roles of management, communication, and curatorial skills. These are extremely valuable in my artistic journey.

Evie, Fine Art student



Student Internships

The Careers Service organises a range of occupational internships, both on campus and with local businesses across the North East, which are available to students throughout the year. All current undergraduate and postgraduate students are eligible to apply, and internships are available in a range of occupational areas, offering our students the chance to develop their CV, whilst getting paid, and working flexibly around their studies.

These internships are helping our students to gain practical, hands-on experience and develop industry knowledge, decide where their future career interests lie, network and make contacts within the sector, and, in some cases, secure graduate jobs with their internship providers. In a competitive job market, valuable employability skills and work experience is vital to our students in helping them to lay the foundations for success in their future careers when they graduate.



This academic year, **49 students** have undertaken donor-funded NCL Internships with a local business or within the University.



My internship allowed me to learn about the workplace and gain valuable experience which enhanced my ability to successfully complete interviews for jobs post-graduation and secure a graduate job. It taught me communication and accountability, making me feel a valued member of NUSU.

Emily, Newcastle University Students' Union (NUSU) Intern

Supporting Care-Experienced Students

Students in the final year of an undergraduate course must ensure that the last instalment of their student loan stretches until they receive their first pay cheque from a graduate job, which leads to additional budgeting constraints. This forces a financial disparity between students with parental support and those students who are estranged from their parents, or with no family contact or financial support.

Providing a one-off bursary to support our estranged and care-experienced students who are coming to the end of their final year of undergraduate studies, recognises the additional financial concerns and challenges in the areas of mental health and wellbeing, finance and accommodation, that they are more likely to face than their peers who have a parental support network.

Going to university and graduating without the emotional or financial support of a family network can be isolating, and we're committed to supporting our students.



The Transitional Support Bursary

helps to alleviate some of their financial worries and provides a springboard as they look to find a job or move onto further postgraduate study.



The Transitional Support Bursary was actually such a lifesaver for me! I had to delay starting my job in a hospital which meant that I had to wait an extra 3 months before getting a salaried wage. I was also moving house and paying a higher amount for rent so the bursary covered these additional costs.



Providing access to global opportunities

Newcastle University prides itself on being a globally inclusive institution. There is an increased demand from students to gain a global education as part of their degree programme and stand out in an ever-competitive job market. The Student Fund also supports projects at our international campuses in both Malaysia and Singapore.



Widening Access to Global Education at Newcastle University

The Student Fund has helped to remove some of the financial barriers to accessing international study, internships, volunteering and work placements at a time of financial difficulty for many students, by offering funding support via our **Go Global Scholarships Scheme**.

The scheme is helping to increase participation from underrepresented groups across the University. Students undertaking international mobility perform better academically, develop improved self-confidence, gain beneficial inter-cultural skills and are more likely to have a job and earn more six months after graduating - and those benefits are amplified for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Support from the Student Fund has allowed the University to offer more students the chance to undertake a wide variety of global opportunities in a broad range of global placement locations. Some of these opportunities include:



Embassy internships in Geneva

Our students gain first-hand experience of life as a diplomat, see trade policy in action, and get to witness the work of international civil servants, policy makers and academics working on real world global challenges.



Internships with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)

With over 350 member sites across more than 65 countries, the ICSC network is preserving memory, championing human rights, and social and environment justice. The internships provide a unique opportunity for our students to gain invaluable work experience and develop skills, insight and understanding that will last a lifetime.



In order to solve global challenges, international networking and partnerships are essential. This experience was a dream that came to reality.

Neil, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Internships, Constitution Hill, South Africa

Maths teaching internships in Cyprus

This internship opportunity provides prospective teachers of Mathematics or Physics with a unique opportunity to gain experience working as a teacher in an international classroom; offering a fantastic addition to CVs and future PGCE applications, students develop their communication, interpersonal, and organisational skills.

Our 29,000 strong student community is drawn from 145 different countries and we teach students at two international campuses: Newcastle University in Singapore (NUIs) and Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed Malaysia).

NUMed Malaysia Career Events

At NUMed Malaysia, donations are supporting employability initiatives for our medical students. One of these initiatives included a Biomedical Industry Career event, where experts from CytoMed Therapeutics Malaysia engaged with **75 students**.

Your funding also allowed students at NUMed to travel to Kuala Lumpur to attend the 33rd Intervarsity Biochemistry Seminar in December 2023, exposing students to the latest research advancements and developments in the field, as well as facilitating networking opportunities with other university students.

This Seminar has given us a better understanding of what is to be expected and improved on in the coming future in our academic journey. The success of this trip would not have been possible without your support, and on behalf of the group, I would like to say that we are incredibly appreciative of your contributions.

Loke Su-Jinn, President of the NUMed Bioscience Society



NUIs Postgraduate Opportunities

NUIs supported postgraduate research students to apply for grants to help them with the costs of attending international conferences and collaborating with international researchers or institutions.

In total, **7 students** benefited from this funding opportunity and were able to travel from Singapore to attend regional and international conferences. Funding has also been allocated to support **4 students** to attend a 6-week research internship camp in Newcastle in 2024.

The conference offered invaluable opportunities to connect with new friends and learn about their diverse research projects. It was truly inspiring to hear about the cutting-edge work being done across various fields. Overall, the three days were filled with learning and meaningful connections. I am very thankful for this experience.

Loh Tick Boon, PhD Student at NUIs and attendee at the SAgE PGR Conference 2024 in Newcastle





Celebrating the remarkable contributions of our legacy supporters

Students' experience at Newcastle University has been significantly enhanced through the kindness of donations left in wills.

Legacy donations have supported a multitude of causes: from funding studentships, prizes and bursaries, to supporting cutting-edge research projects and campaigns.

I attended Newcastle with a full grant and had to make my own way without parental support. I did occasional jobs to make ends meet and worked during the vacations. It was tough at times and there were lots that I missed out on. I appreciate the struggles that many students face today and I want to help others, in some small way.

Malcolm Caporn (pictured above)
Legacy pledger and Newcastle University graduate (Class of 1966)



If like Malcolm, and many other alumni and supporters, you would like to establish a powerful legacy that will make a lasting and meaningful difference for generations to come, please get in touch.

Thank You



Every day I see how student's lives are enhanced all thanks to your generosity. You are creating a more inclusive, healthy, accessible, and positively fulfilling University experience for all.

Your impact doesn't end when students graduate, your impact is lifelong. Because of you all students, regardless of their background, can realise their full potential and secure a bright future. **Thank you.**

Naomi Oosman-Watts

Director of Student Success,
Newcastle University



Get in touch with us

If you would like to find out more about the Newcastle University Student Fund, or to make further donations to this valuable cause, please get in touch with **Sarah Johnson (Head of Fundraising Programmes)**.

Email: advancement@newcastle.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0) 191 208 7250

Address:

Newcastle University Advancement
Newcastle University
King's Gate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU
United Kingdom

ncl.ac.uk/alumni/support