

SUN FUNDING GUIDANCE

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-22

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out guidance for the use of funding provided to schools within Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight by the Southern Universities Network as part of the Uni Connect programme, funded by the Office for Students (OfS). To find out more, click [here](#).

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Each school is assigned a SUN contact who will support both the school and Single Point of Contact (SPoC). The SUN contact will meet with the school SPoC regularly throughout the year to provide advice and guidance about the use of SUN funding and the reporting requirements. If you're unsure of who your SUN contact is, or how to get in touch, please email sun@soton.ac.uk.

ABOUT THE SUN AND THE UNI CONNECT PROGRAMME

The [Southern Universities Network](#) (SUN) has been established to support the Government's ambitions to make faster progress nationally to widen access to Higher Education through the [Uni Connect Programme](#).



The SUN partnership comprises higher education institutions, further education colleges, schools and local authorities within Hampshire, Dorset, and the Isle of Wight.

Uni Connect is currently focused on providing targeted higher education outreach to young people in years 9 to 14 living in particular geographic areas where higher education participation is lower than might be expected given the GCSE results of the young people who live there. These students are referred to as 'Uni Connect students'.

Uni Connect aims to:

- Contribute to reducing the gap in higher education participation between the most and least represented groups.
- Equip young and adult learners from underrepresented groups to make an informed choice about their options in relation to the full range of routes into and through higher education and to minimise the barriers they may face when choosing the option that will unlock their potential.
- Support a strategic local infrastructure of universities, colleges and other partners that can cut through competitive barriers, offer an efficient and low-burden route for schools and colleges to engage, and address outreach 'cold spots' for underrepresented groups.
- Contribute to a stronger evidence base around 'what works' in higher education outreach and strengthen evaluation practice across the sector.

FUNDING FOR YOUR SCHOOL



The SUN provides funding to schools and colleges to meet the aims and objectives of Uni Connect.

Please read the [School Funding Methodology 2021-22](#) for details on how we allocate funding.

In the academic year 2021-22 all identified schools will be allocated into one of the following funding levels:

- Small Project Fund: Up to £1500 (by application)
- Level 1: Up to £1500
- Level 2: Up to £3000
- Level 3: Up to £6000
- Level 4: Up to £9000
- Level 5: Up to £12,000

There may also be additional funding available to schools with Sixth Forms as follows:

- 1-50 Uni Connect Students: Up to £500
- 51 + Uni Connect Students: Up to £1000

PLEASE NOTE

- Funding is subject to the successful submission and approval of a **Finance Action Plan** by 15 November 2021 detailing your activity plans for the use of SUN funding throughout the academic year 2021-22.
- Funding is subject to the submission of required data requested by SUN for funding in current and previous years.
- The SUN may choose to fund only a part of your allocation if you are unable to complete a **Finance Action Plan** that details how you plan to spend ALL your funding effectively and in line with the programme aims.
- Your funding will only be released once your **Finance Action Plan** has been approved by your SUN contact and the SUN managers.
- Funding should be targeted at Uni Connect students. See the section on '[How to Target Activity](#)' for more information.

FUNDING FOR SPOC ROLE



Funding for SPoC Role

To enable young people in schools to engage with the Southern Universities Network (SUN) during the Uni Connect programme, schools have the option to allocate a proportion of the SUN funding to nominate a member of staff to act as the SUN 'Single Point of Contact (SPoC)'.

The SUN funding may be used to release staff from their regular duties to act as their institution's SPoC. The SPoC requirements are provided below. Additionally, SPoC funding can be used to release other staff who may provide additional support to the SPoC.

Any staff costs should be reported within the **SPoC Finance Report**. A maximum of 20% of your funding allocation or £1,200 may be directed to the role of SPoC (whichever is lower). The final amount allocated to the role of SPoC must be agreed with your SUN contact.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPOC



Point of Contact

- To act as the Single Point of Contact for all SUN activity for Uni Connect students and their parent(s)/carer(s); school staff; Careers Advisers; and SUN staff.
- To meet with a designated member of the SUN team at least twice per academic year and maintain regular contact.
- To attend relevant SPoC networking events, meetings and the SPoC Conference as requested by the SUN.
- To liaise with the school finance team and SLT to ensure that invoices are raised, and funding award letters signed, in a timely manner as directed by the SUN.



Data, Tracking, Evaluation & Reporting

- To provide names and postcode data for all students in Y9 – Y14 (where applicable) using the SPoC Activity Report provided by SUN by **Monday 15 November 2021**.
- To undertake collection, monitoring and tracking of all Y9 – Y14 students in accordance with requirements set out by the Office for Students, including the completion of HEAT forms. The SUN will provide the relevant documentation for these activities.
- To complete a **SPoC Finance Action Plan** and submit to your SUN contact for approval by **Monday 15 November 2021**.
- To complete and submit accurate **SPoC Finance** and **SPoC Activity Reports** as per the deadlines on the following page.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPOC



School Reporting Requirements

- **Finance Action Plan and updated SPoC Activity Report** (names and postcode data only): submitted to your SUN contact by **15 November 2021, 5pm**.
- **Soft Reporting Deadlines:** Schools should update their **Finance and Activity Reports** on a half-termly basis via Glasscubes. All relevant reports will be on Glasscubes and templates will be provided by the SUN.
- **Hard Reporting Deadlines:** Schools should ensure all reports are ready to be sent to OfS for data collection on the following dates: **Friday 11 February 2022, 5pm and Friday 8 July 2022, 5pm**.

If a school fails to complete and submit reports by the deadlines above, the SUN reserve the right to 'claw back' funding.



Facilitate Activity

- To promote relevant SUN outreach activities to Uni Connect students.
- To promote relevant SUN outreach activities to the parent(s)/carer(s) of eligible students.
- To promote teacher CPD to staff in schools and make recommendations to the SUN about additional CPD opportunities.
- To facilitate and organise activities/interventions which meet the overall aims and objectives of Uni Connect for Uni Connect students, their key influencers, and/or school staff (see '[How can schools spend SUN funding](#)' below for further guidance).
- To ensure the SUN funding allocated to the institution is spent in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement and the guidance provided in this document. This includes the production of the **Finance Action Plan** within the **SPoC Finance Report** at the start of the academic year to demonstrate how the institution plans to utilise the SUN funding, as well as an update of confirmed expenditure at required intervals in line with SPoC reporting deadlines. Your SUN contact will support you with this.
- To ensure accurate records and evidence of expenditure for auditing purposes.
- To proactively seek advice or support from your designated SUN contact regarding questions or concerns over how to spend the allocated funds.

HOW TO TARGET ACTIVITY

Uni Connect students

Uni Connect students are the primary target for SUN funded activity. A 'Uni Connect student' is a term used to refer to a young person in year 9 – 14 of their education, domiciled in target wards defined by the OfS. You can identify Uni Connect students via your SPoC Activity Report once you have inputted student names and postcodes. Speak to your SUN contact for further guidance.

The guidelines below should be followed:

1. Any activity or intervention needs to be targeted at a minimum of 80% of the available Uni Connect student population for that cohort (e.g. if within a class of 30 students, 10 are 'Uni Connect students', at least 8 Uni Connect students must take part).
2. If it is less than 80% of the Uni Connect student population for that cohort, then funding can be spent proportionally.
3. High intensity / high cost interventions (such as mentoring) should be solely targeted at Uni Connect students.
4. All activity should be linked to the [SUN Progression Framework](#).
5. High cost/high intensity activity should be evaluated using the SUN Evaluation Framework. The SUN will provide advice and support to schools to ensure evaluation is conducted as per the guidance offered by the Office for Students. Please speak to your SUN contact if you plan to deliver high cost / high intensity activity.

HOW CAN SCHOOLS SPEND SUN FUNDING?



SPoC Role

A proportion of the SUN funding may be used to facilitate the SUN 'Single Point of Contact (SPoC)' role at your schools, as per the guidance on page 4.



Activities & Interventions

The SUN funding should be used to organise or facilitate activities and interventions that enhance existing careers programmes whilst meeting the overall aims and objectives of the Uni Connect Programme (examples provided on p 7 – 8) for eligible students, their key influencers, and/or school staff.

HOW CAN SCHOOLS SPEND SUN FUNDING?

- **Workshops & Activities** – Schools may use SUN funding to facilitate interventions covering subject specific topics, study skills, careers and aspiration realising activities designed to support students with attainment and/or educational progression to target students’ parents/carers, and school staff. These could be delivered by third party organisations. You can find some ideas on our Provider Directory.
- **Inspirational or Motivational Speakers / Alumni or Employer visits** – Schools may use funding to purchase inspirational or motivational talks from professional speakers. Schools may use SUN funding to arrange visits from alumni, local employers, or training/apprenticeship providers. Funds may be used for school staff time to coordinate visits and any expenses incurred by alumni or employers.
- **Student Resilience & Wellbeing** – Schools may use SUN funding to engage students in activity or projects that seek to support student resilience and wellbeing.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Opportunities** – Any school staff interventions (e.g. training or CPD) should directly result in enhancing the aforementioned student activity or directly result in delivery of activity for Uni Connect students that can be reported via school SPoC reports. Please speak to your SUN contact if you plan to use funds to host or attend CPD opportunities.
- **Travel to events** – SUN funding can be used to fund the transport costs associated to attendance at progression-related events or activities such as regional careers or subject specific fairs and/or activities. The OfS has stipulated that Uni Connect funding cannot be used to fund transport to university outreach events outside of the Uni Connect programme. If you are unsure, please talk to your SUN contact.
- **Staff Cover** – SUN funding can be used to fund staff cover for off-site SUN-related activity. Schools must be able to provide evidence and or a receipt that an additional member of staff was required to support the activity.
- **Resources and Subscriptions** - Resources and service subscriptions may only be purchased after consultation with a member of the SUN team.
- **Mentoring Projects (Personal and Social Development)** – Schools may use funding to develop mentoring projects in-house or access mentoring projects delivered by third parties.
- **Careers Related Activity (1:1s, Small Group Activity, Mentoring)** – SUN funding can be used to fund careers related activities that meet one of the following criteria:
 - 1) the activity must be delivered as part of a new programme and/or
 - 2) the activity must be delivered in addition to the current school offer of careers related activities. SPoCs will need to demonstrate to SUN how this is an additional activity. Schools must gain approval from their SUN contact before using any SUN funds towards careers related activity. We are unable to fund activity that already forms your existing careers programme and/or is part of the statutory requirements.



➤ **Workshops & Activities (delivered by third parties)** - In previous years', schools and colleges have used SUN funding to purchase workshops and activities from the following providers:

Click on any of the providers above to be directed to their website

In addition, the SUN have created a [Provider Directory](#) where you can browse some of the opportunities currently available to schools.



FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- SUN funding cannot be spent on activity linked to fulfilling statutory requirements placed upon the school, or activity linked to the school's pre-existing support offer for students. However, SUN funding may be used to **enhance** a school's offer.
- Institutions may only use the SUN funding to cover the cost of subscriptions or resources with prior agreement from the SUN.
- Institutions may only use the SUN funding to cover the cost of equipment or hardware with prior agreement from the SUN. Equipment such as laptops or tablets cannot be purchased for the use of individual students.
- The SUN funding cannot be used to cover the costs of activity for solely non-Uni Connect students.
- The SUN funding cannot be used to cover the costs of activity where funding is obtained by a third party (duplicate funding). In some cases, there may be an opportunity for SUN funding to be used as match funding. However, due to the terms and conditions associated to the SUN funding, schools must agree this with their SUN contact.
- The SUN funding cannot be used for travel or staff cover to/ from university activity outside of the Uni Connect programme.