

# Your Crowdfunding Handbook

A guide to running your campaign

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# Introduction

The University of Greenwich is a place for minds to meet and ideas to spark. We believe in an Education Without Boundaries and our community empowers us to bring our vision to life.

As a current student or a member of staff, you can apply to take part in the official crowdfunding platform for the University of Greenwich. Working with the Alumni and Fundraising Team, you can fundraise for projects that incorporate our values of collaboration, inclusivity, and impactful.

Crowdfunding raises small donations from a large group of supporters, often in exchange for a small incentive – this might be a physical item, a shout-out, or an invitation to a live event.

A successful campaign relies on leveraging the power of your networks to reach an even larger audience who might care enough about your project to join others in supporting you.

This short guide is designed to help get you started and to reach a wide, global audience through the Greenwich community of students, staff, alumni, and friends.

## Why crowdfund with us?

Crowdfunding relies on a crowd, and if you collaborate with the Alumni and Fundraising Team, we can help extend your reach to an audience of over 120,000 contactable former students and university friends. The more compelling your campaign, the further it travels as individual members may share it with their own networks.

We will provide a platform to host your crowdfunding campaign, offer guidance, and also process donations on your behalf.

We will send an initial thank you to all your donors and work with you to ensure you can continue to update your donors about your project as it develops.

We also cover all fees and platform costs, so whatever funds you raise will be directly available to you.

For us to offer this service, we need to work with projects that align to the university's values and adhere to our [guidelines](#). Please note that we reserve the right to say no to a project if it is deemed a risk to the university's reputation.

## Ready to get started?

We want to help you succeed, so we have prepared this handbook to provide a guide to running a crowdfunding campaign. If after reading, you decide to go ahead, please [read our guidelines \(terms and conditions\)](#) before you [submit an application](#). If you have any questions, please contact [fundraising@gre.ac.uk](mailto:fundraising@gre.ac.uk).

## The process

- ◆ **Tell us about your idea**
- ◆ **Develop your campaign**
- ◆ **Tell everyone**
- ◆ **Thank your supporters**

# Your idea

It doesn't matter what the project is about – as long as it is beneficial to students, the university, or our wider community. If you haven't done so already, please [read our strategy](#).

Your idea should have a great story. People are not just supporting your project – they support the people and the passion behind your project.

All projects should be suitable for donation-based crowdfunding and may include incentives that are a non-monetary reward. Make sure you set a realistic target to deliver your project and demonstrate the impact to supporters. Your target should be a balance between what you need to make your project happen and what you think people will realistically give.

The University of Greenwich is an exempt charity and broadly, the crowdfunding platform is used to fundraise for the university. We are unable to use the platform to fundraise for other charities, e.g. crowdfunding campaigns cannot be direct donations to or sponsorship of other charities.

Projects that aim to generate financial profits for the funder/project lead or pay staff salary are unsuitable for crowdfunding at the university.

## Develop your campaign

### Define your project

Please consider the following questions to define your project. The answers will help you make an application, plan your campaign, and will be used to create your campaign page.

What is the crowdfunding project?

- ◆ What are you trying to achieve?
- ◆ What makes your project important?
- ◆ Why should people support it?
- ◆ Who are you, and what's your story?

How does your project support the university's values to be collaborative,

impactful, and inclusive?

- ◆ Is it collaborative? Will you be working with others and seeking out new ideas?
- ◆ Is it impactful? Does it make a real contribution to knowledge and society?
- ◆ Is it inclusive? Does it ensure all people are supported and celebrated?

How much do you aim to raise via crowdfunding?

- ◆ How will you use the money you raise?
- ◆ What is your budget and breakdown of cost to make your idea or project successful?
- ◆ If you don't raise the full amount, could you still go ahead with the project?

Who will benefit from the funding?

- ◆ How will you demonstrate the impact of your project?

## Responsibilities

We recommend you work in a small team and take on different roles, including:

- ◆ Project Manager – to make sure everyone is doing their assigned tasks (including those set to themselves!).
- ◆ Creative Lead – to prepare a video and images to help showcase your idea.
- ◆ Wordsmith – to create the key messages to explain your project on the platform and social media.
- ◆ Ideas person – to create a pool of incentives, including events and rewards for different gift levels.

## Identify your crowd

In addition to your immediate network of friends, family, and colleagues, consider who else might be interested in your cause and how they could use their following to extend the reach of your campaign. For example, consider current or previous education institutions, governing bodies, local businesses, or relevant charities.

Read this [blog post](#) with ideas for mapping your crowd.

Utilise the weeks leading up to your campaign launch to make connections through social media, networking events, or writing a blog about your campaign.

The Alumni and Fundraising Team can provide you with a template email that

you can personalise to showcase your idea.

Remember, you are asking these contacts to help as they have influence. They may also decide to contribute, but this should be a secondary consideration. They are likely to have their funding priorities.

To help you manage your supporters, we recommend keeping track of those who have offered to share your campaign. See example:

People/organisations of influence	Who will they reach	Status
Local newspaper	Twitter audience of 5,000	Need to chase
St Charles VI Form College	Staff newsletter circa 100	Complete
Coffee shop	Flyers circa 50-75	Dropping off on Friday

## Promotion

The Alumni and Fundraising Team will provide support to plan and reach an audience beyond your networks. However, you will be expected to take the lead on promotional activity and prepare your content before your campaign launches. [See the next section, Tell everyone \(in stages\), for more information.](#)

## Rewards and incentives

Develop personal and unique rewards for different donation levels. These should not have a significant monetary value and should relate to your project – for example, invitations to a rehearsal performance of a show, an art print, or a special mention in promotional materials. In need of inspiration? [Here are 96 reward ideas!](#)

# Timings

You can run your crowdfunding campaign for anything up to five weeks. However, we recommend you ensure you have time to monitor your campaign.

Once you launch, your network is likely to offer support, but you may find that donations slow down after the first few days. For this reason, you might prefer to run a shorter campaign.

The Alumni and Fundraising Team will help you reach a wider audience through our community of alumni and friends. Still, you can also plan some activities to build momentum.

We've prepared a timeline to give you a sense of what happens when.



# Crowdfunding Timeline

## Research - at least 3 weeks

You have a great idea and crowdfunding could make it possible. Read the guidance and prepare your application.

## Kick-off meeting

If your project is approved, the Alumni and Fundraising Team may request a meeting to run through your project and agree timings/deliverables.

## Quiet Launch - 1 to 5 days

Before you launch far and wide, launch to your network and ask influencers to help you raise awareness of your project.

## Wrap things up

Try to maintain momentum during the full life of your campaign. Announce your results and thank all supporters.

## Updates and rewards

Distribute any rewards and update your supporters until your project is complete. Projects should be completed within three months.

## Assessment - at least 3 weeks

The Alumni and Fundraising Team will review your application and get back to you with feedback within three weeks.

## Prepare - 4 weeks

Start developing your materials, including images and a video, to help explain your project. Begin talking to your own network and planning who else to contact.

## Tell everyone - up to 5 weeks

Launch your fundraiser to everyone, perhaps via a launch event? Your campaign will be shared with the wider Greenwich community, including alumni and friends.

## Receive your funding

The Alumni and Fundraising Team will organise for you to receive your funding. This may take up to three weeks.

**Tell everyone (in stages)**

## Launching your campaign

Initially, your family and friends will support you, then alumni and the university community will boost your efforts, and finally successful campaigns will benefit from those connected to their cause.

## Include a quiet launch

Get off to a good start by asking your friends and family for support before your campaign launches. Then, as soon as your crowdfunding is live, you can ask them to fulfil their pledge in the first few days.

To keep track, we recommend you keep a list of the people you have asked. This will also help you establish a realistic target:

People I will ask to contribute	Pledge amount	Status
Mum	£20	Complete
Sam	£5	On Saturday
Zainab	£10	Complete

## Emails

Announce the launch of the project, strategic updates, and the conclusion. You'll want to build urgency towards the end of your campaign without getting 'spammy'.

Always include a link to your crowdfunding page.

## Make it easy for your network

Let your close network know when and where to show their support. Provide template social media posts so they can help raise awareness of your project.

If you would like them to email or text their contacts, and they are willing to do so, provide them with text and let them know a good time to send these requests on to their network. For example, you might ask them to do this during

the middle of your campaign where you may expect a decline in interest.

## Video and images

Campaigns with videos get a lot more attention than those without.

Videos don't have to be professionally made but they should be specific, honest, personal, and short (less than three minutes long).

### Structuring your video

- ◆ Introduction: Your project in one sentence.
- ◆ Why are you raising funds: Explain why you are raising funds and what it means to you personally.
- ◆ Impact: Demonstrate the difference it will make and showcase examples of impact of similar projects if feasible.
- ◆ Call to action: Tell your audience what they need to do to support your campaign.

### Keep it personal

By introducing yourself you are creating a personal connection with your audience that can last well beyond the campaign.

To incorporate your video on your crowdfunding campaign page, post it to YouTube or Vimeo and share the link with [fundraising@gre.ac.uk](mailto:fundraising@gre.ac.uk).

### Images

You should use images across all channels. We will provide you with a range of images, but we also suggest you use your own and obtain a photo release form, if necessary (we can provide you with a template).

You can also utilise images from online photo libraries depending on their copyright status.

## Social media

Think about the social media platforms your supporter base might use and the kind of content that works well on those pages. Start building your social presence in advance of the launch by following relevant accounts and continuing to be your authentic self!

If there's a specific person or organisation that you would like to retweet you, it's

best that you tweet at them (mention their twitter handle in a tweet) and write something that their followers would find interesting.

Asking for retweets explicitly has a low success rate and could become annoying!

## **Press**

Is your project newsworthy? The Alumni and Fundraising Team can work with you to develop a press release before the launch of your project to ensure it is distributed in time to kick it off and generate a buzz.

# Get organised

Consider all the ways you can share your campaign and what the key message is for that channel. Then decide who in your team will handle this message and what messages need to be posted by the Alumni and Fundraising Team.

Channels	Key Messages (not an exhaustive list!)	Responsible?
Personal emails	What I am doing and how you can help...	Project Team
Facebook	This is my goal, and this is why I am doing this	Project Team/Alumni Team
Twitter	Utilise relevant hashtags to share project	Project Team/Alumni Team
Instagram	Follow my project on Stories	Project Team/Alumni Team
TikTok	Explain the cause in a few short sentences	Project Team
LinkedIn	Could you share this on your page?	Project Team/Alumni Team
University website	Overview of project and how you can help spread the word	Alumni Team
Crowdfunding platform	This is the impact my project will make	Project Team/Alumni Team
Ask Alumni	Introduce yourself and your cause on newsfeed – can alumni share your campaign with their network	Project Team/Alumni Team
Blog	About my cause	Project Team
Alumni newsletter	Find out why we are fundraising	Alumni Team
Text/WhatsApp	Reminder to support	Project Team
Events	Find out more/support me at the launch	Project Team
Champions/Friends social	Could you contribute at the start?	Project Team
External contacts/partners	Could you share my campaign – here's why it matters to your organisation	Project Team

**Reward your supporters**

## **Recognising your supporters**

Your supporters will receive an automatic 'thank you' message from the Alumni and Fundraising Team but they really want to hear from the people they are helping.

We will ask that you draft a personal message, which may encourage them to offer support again, either to your project or another one. Your supporters believe in you and so they care about the impact of their gift.

The Alumni and Fundraising Team will work with you to let your supporters know how they made a difference when your project goes ahead and will gather impact to ensure your donors receive timely updates.

## **Delivering rewards**

Your rewards or incentives may be delivered straight away or they may depend on an activity taking place, such as a play. We will agree timings and responsibilities before the campaign is launched and will be in touch to ensure everything happens on time.



# Resources

The Alumni and Fundraising Team will provide you with a toolkit featuring images, banners, and templates for social media and emails.

In addition, you may find the following online resources useful. They are free to use but they are not supported by the University of Greenwich and are suggestions only.

### [Animoto](#)

Animoto is a cloud-based video creation service that produces video from photos, video clips, and music into video slideshows, and customised web-based presentations.

### [Canva](#)

Create visual content for social media and marketing materials with Canva. It has thousands of templates, which make creating appealing graphics quick and easy.

### [Fundraising Copy Editor](#)

This online editor reviews your copy and provides a score, along with some tips to ensure your message is readable and supporter focused.

### [Unsplash](#)

Unsplash is a website dedicated to sharing stock photography under the Unsplash license, which is free to use.

## **Questions?**

Get in touch! Email [fundraising@gre.ac.uk](mailto:fundraising@gre.ac.uk).

