

# **STFC Guidance for Funding Core Summer Schools in 2026**

The information provided in this guidance document is to assist STFC (Science & Technology Facilities Council) Summer School course organisers with school planning. It gives specific guidance around EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion), programming, content, and administrative information.

STFC summer schools should allocate places to STFC-funded students as a priority, and the application must detail how many of the total number of planned attendees will be STFC-funded students. Students in receipt of other sponsorship will be required to cover the cost of their own attendance through their sponsoring body. Places for self-funded students (these are students who cover their own fees and do not receive a stipend) and CDT-matched funded students (receiving at least 50% funding from STFC) will have their costs covered as part of the course application.

Please note:

STFC will support the following summer schools in 2026. These are:

* Introduction to Astronomy (subject to approval via an Expression of Interest (EOI))
* BUSSTEPP (British Universities Summer School in Theoretical Elementary Particle Physics)
* Nuclear Physics (held biennially)
* Solar and Solar-Terrestrial Physics
* HEP (High Energy Physics)

The schools listed will be expected to submit a high-quality application should they wish to have support in 2026. No other summer school applications will be accepted or supported in 2026.

## **Breadth of Subject and Fit with STFC Objectives**

The summer school must align with the STFC core science programme, which includes:

* Astronomy
* Particle Physics
* Nuclear Physics
* Accelerator Science

Even though we are currently only supporting the core summer schools, it is important that organisers clearly demonstrate how their programme aligns with STFC’s core science remit**.**

The programme should be designed to address key STFC scientific questions and contribute meaningfully to the development of expertise in these areas. To ensure wide accessibility and impact, the content should be broad enough to appeal to a diverse cohort of students across the STFC community, while maintaining scientific depth and relevance.

## **BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION**

Course organisers are required to submit their application using the official format and templates provided by STFC. These can be found at: [Funding for short courses and summer schools](https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/funding-for-short-courses-and-summer-schools-in-2025/) and [UKRI Summer school costs template – UKRI.](https://www.ukri.org/publications/summer-school-costs-template/)

Please note the following financial restrictions within the [summer school template](https://www.ukri.org/publications/summer-school-costs-template/) :

* Lecturer fees: a maximum of £170 per day or £85 per half day, as appropriate
* Conference dinner: a maximum of £50 (£60 in London) per delegate in total for conference dinner or excursion, or both
* Management fees: £500 one off fee
* Contingency costs: 5% of the total cost or £1,500 (whichever is the least)
* Accommodation: not to exceed £170.00 per night including breakfast and VAT within Edinburgh and London or £120.00 per night for all other places.

When applying to host a core summer school, you are strongly encouraged to contact the previous organisers of that school. This helps ensure continuity, share best practices, and support the ongoing development and improvement of the course.

As detailed later in this document, final reports and student feedback from previous years are available and can be requested from the STFC Studentships Team at: studentships@stfc.ukri.org

These resources can be valuable during the planning process to inform content, structure, and delivery.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

## **Tutors, Lecturers, and Guest Speakers**

In addition to ensuring gender balance and the inclusion of individuals from under-represented groups, organisers must ensure that all tutors and lecturers have the appropriate experience to deliver their sessions effectively.

Where early career researchers (ECRs) are involved in delivering content or supervising students, they should receive training or a formal briefing to prepare them for their responsibilities, particularly when placed in positions of authority.

There is an expectation that [Ernest Rutherford Fellows](https://www.ukri.org/publications/current-stfc-ernest-rutherford-fellows/) and [UKRI Future Leaders Fellows](https://www.ukri.org/publications/future-leaders-fellowships-database-of-fellows/) will be invited to participate as lecturers or tutors. When involving Fellows, organisers should consider how to ensure the experience is mutually beneficial, for example by:

* Providing mentoring opportunities
* Offering formal feedback to support their development of lecturing skills
* Helping to enhance their prospects for future academic positions

Host organisations are responsible for making fee payments and covering travel expenses for eligible tutors and lecturers, using the funds awarded for the summer school.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

STFC is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices reflect the diverse needs and experiences of its employees and stakeholders. Organisers of STFC-funded summer schools must ensure that all arrangements comply with [UKRI’s key principles on EDI](https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/guidance-for-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/). In particular:

* There must be no barriers to participation for students from any of the protected groups (e.g. gender, disability, race).
* The selection of lecturers and tutors must be free from discrimination or bias.

A helpful guide to planning inclusive events is available on the [UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpage.](https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/guidance-for-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/)

### **Key EDI Considerations for Summer School Planning**

* Speaker Diversity:

Aim for gender balance and representation from underrepresented groups in the speaker programme.

*Note: Individuals from underrepresented groups may receive more invitations and be more likely to decline, so consider approaching them early to increase the likelihood of participation.*

Keep statistics on speaker and participant demographics and include them in the final report.

* Community Building:

Recognise the summer school as an opportunity to foster a positive and inclusive cohort culture. Consider including sessions on:

* + EDI awareness
	+ Confidence and imposter phenomenon
	+ Mental health and wellbeing
	+ Tips for PhD success
* Accessibility:
Invite participants to notify organisers of any accessibility requirements or special needs as early as possible.

Be mindful of GDPR and the handling of sensitive personal data.

* Code of Conduct:
A code of conduct should be developed and shared with all participants, including tutors and lecturers. Agreement to the code should be a condition of participation.

## **Reasonable Adjustment**

Applications may include costs for reasonable adjustments. Where an application includes such costs, UKRI will ensure they are eligible, and these should be accepted without comment. Further information on disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants during the application and assessment process can be found on the [UKRI Disability and Accessibility Support webpage](https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/disability-and-accessibility-support-for-ukri-applicants-and-grant-holders/).

## **Quality Of Subject Matter**

Applications should include well-defined objectives and content, clearly outlining what the course aims to deliver and how it aligns with the STFC core science programme. This ensures the training is relevant, impactful, and supports the development of STFC-funded students.

## **School Programming**

When planning the school programme, organisers should carefully consider the delivery format to ensure accessibility and engagement. For residential courses, it is important to assess whether the programme can also accommodate non-residential attendees or be recorded for wider access. Online courses should be hosted on platforms that are accessible to all STFC-funded students.

The application should clearly distinguish between:

* Stand-alone materials – such as pre-recorded lectures or reading lists
* Facilitated learning – including live tutorials, workshops, or Q&A sessions
* Networking opportunities – both formal and informal, to support community building

The programme should avoid overscheduling. Lectures should be appropriately timed and not overloaded with content, allowing participants time to:

* Reflect and consolidate their knowledge
* Network informally
* Enjoy some downtime

Tutorials and workshops should be designed with:

* Clear goals and learning outcomes
* Content tailored to the academic level of the students attending

For residential schools, organisers should ensure:

* Variety in refreshments and accommodation of dietary requirements
* Accommodation is offered when the course spans multiple days
* A meal programme is included as part of the course

### **Skills Building**

Summer schools should incorporate opportunities for students to develop a broad range of transferable skills that support both academic and non-academic career pathways.

* Public Engagement:
Include elements ofpublic engagement within the programme to help students build confidence in communicating science to wider audiences. For content advice or support, please contact: STFCpublicengagement@stfc.ukri.org.
* Career Development:
Career advice sessions should explore roles in both academic and non-academic sectors.

Invite speakers from industry, national laboratories, or other relevant sectors to provide insight and facilitate networking opportunities.

* Communication Skills:
Encourage students to develop their communication skills through:
	+ Poster presentations
	+ Oral presentation sessions
	+ Peer feedback and discussion

These activities help students articulate their research, build confidence, and prepare for future professional opportunities.

## **Risk Management**

Organisers must submit a detailed risk management plan outlining any potential risks to the delivery of the programme, along with corresponding mitigation strategies. The plan should also include contingency arrangements for delivering the programme remotely in the event that a residential school cannot take place.

Where excursions or off-site activities are planned as part of the summer school programme, a separate risk assessment and management plan should be provided to address the specific risks associated with those activities.

## **Value For Money**

Organisers should aim to keep the cost per student below £150 per day. However, consideration may be given to reasonable overheads that result in costs exceeding this threshold, provided that clear and specific justifications are submitted.

Please be aware that if the costs outlined in the [summer school template](https://www.ukri.org/publications/summer-school-costs-template/) are exceeded, any additional expenses must be covered by the organiser. These excess costs cannot be claimed from the funding body.

## **Administrative Guidance and Information**

STFC will correspond with Course Organisers at the appropriate times to progress the administrative elements of running the schools. The following outlines the key requirements:

### Contracts

STFC will prepare a draft agreement and send it to the course organiser for review. The organiser should check the draft carefully and confirm that all details are accurate. Once the draft is agreed:

1. The course organiser signs the draft agreement.
2. STFC raises a Purchase Order and adds the agreement number to the document.
3. STFC signs the agreement, finalising the contract.
4. A copy of the final signed agreement will be sent to the course organiser for their records.

### **Summer School Website**

Please send a link to your summer school website to studentships@stfc.ukri.org so it can be publicised on the [STFC Summer School webpage](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/stfc/training/types-of-training/short-courses-and-summer-schools/).

In addition, we can help promote your Summer School through the following co-managed mailing lists:

* Astrocommunity
* UK Planetary Forum
* MIST (Magnetosphere, Ionosphere and Solar-Terrestrial)
* Nuclear Physics UK
* UK Solar Physics
* Particle Astrophysics

If you would like your school advertised via these channels, please indicate this when submitting your website link.

### **Student Feedback Survey**

Course organisers are required to survey students upon completion of the course. STFC will provide:

* A link to the STFC Summer School survey in advance of the course.
* A survey template to guide the feedback process.

Organisers are welcome to include additional questions for their own evaluation purposes. However, only responses to the standard STFC questions should be submitted for reporting to the UKRI STFC Education, Training and Careers Committee (ETCC). Any additional feedback collected can be used in the organiser’s final report.

If organisers prefer not to create a custom survey, they may use the STFC online feedback survey. A link will be provided for the 2026 schools. STFC will collate the responses and share the results with organisers for reporting purposes.

STFC is also happy for organisers to continue collecting their own feedback independently, but the online survey option is available for convenience.

## **Student Expense Claims**

### Travel and Expenses

### Claiming Travel Costs

STFC-funded (fully funded by STFC), self-supporting (not receiving a stipend, and are paying their own fees, but their research is within the STFC science remit), and match-funded CDT students (students receiving at least 50% funding from STFC) attending the summer school may claim travel expenses directly from STFC, if required. A **claim form** will be provided to the Course Organiser before the course begins for distribution to eligible students.

If you would like a copy earlier for inclusion on your website, please contact studentships@stfc.ukri.org. Full guidance on how to claim will also be provided.

**Note:** Claims can only be submitted after attendance has been confirmed by the Course Organiser.

Refer to the [UKRI Travel and Subsistence Policy](https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-travel-subsistence-and-expenses-policy/ukri-business-expense-claims-business-travel-and-subsistence-policy/) for full details.

### International Students

International students who will begin their PhD within three months of the summer school and wish to attend a relevant course may claim travel expenses, up to a maximum of £500.

* Visa and travel insurance costs are not reimbursable.
* The same travel and subsistence rules apply as for UK-based students.
* International students must use the Non-UK Bank Account Non-Employee Expenses Claim Form, available from the Course Organiser or by contacting studentships@stfc.ukri.org .

### Attendee Lists

Course organisers will be asked to submit a list of students who attended the school to studentships@stfc.ukri.org. This list should include the following details for each attendee:

* Full name
* Research organisation or institution of study
* Funding status, specifying one of the following:
	+ STFC-funded
	+ CDT match-funded
	+ Self-funded
	+ Other funded

This information is essential for cross-referencing with travel expense claims.

Please note: claims cannot be processed without this information.

### Final Report

It is the responsibility of all Summer School Organisers to submit a final report to STFC upon completion of the course. STFC will present the report at the next meeting of the UKRI STFC Education, Training and Careers Committee (ETCC).

* A standardised report template will be provided.
* Reports must be submitted by mid-October, in preparation for the November ETCC meeting.
* The report should be a maximum of three sides of A4, using Arial (or equivalent) font, size 11.

The report must include:

* A summary of student feedback
* Information on the gender balance of student participants

Please note: reports may be shared with future summer school hosts to support planning and continuous improvement.

### Invoicing

Once the summer school has concluded, course organisers should arrange for an invoice to be submitted to STFC, ensuring the Purchase Order number from the agreement is included to enable prompt payment.

### How to Submit Your Invoice

Due to UKRI transitioning to a new payment platform, the i-Supplier portal is currently unavailable. Please send your invoice via email to the STFC Studentships Team at:
studentships@stfc.ukri.org

Important: All invoices must be received by 31st January 2027.

## Contact Us

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the STFC Studentships team at studentships@stfc.ukri.org.

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