**Guidance for Applying to the Graduation Support Funds**

**What are the LSESU Graduation Support Funds?**

The LSESU administer both the Graduation Gown Support Fund (GGSF) and the Graduation Photography Support Fund (GPSF). Students may apply for one or both funds.

* The GGSF is a fund designed to cover the graduation cap and gown hire costs for students unable to afford them.
* The GPSF is a fund designed to cover the cost of a photography session with a digital copy of a single graduate image that must be ordered on the day for students unable to afford them.

The funds are administered by the LSESU Advice Service and successful applicants will be able to attend their ceremony and have their gown hire and/or graduation photographs taken free of charge.

Please note, successful applicants will **not** receive the money as this will go directly to the supplier directly.

**Who is eligible for the funds?**

All students scheduled to graduate in the next upcoming graduation ceremony are eligible to apply for the GGSF and/or GPSF.

In order for an application to be successful, applicants will need to demonstrate that they are currently unable to afford the gown hire and/or photography costs.

**How can I apply?**

You can apply by completing an application form and submitting this, along with the required evidence, to LSESU Advice Service via email (su.advice@lse.ac.uk).

**What should I include in the application form?**

The form has been designed to request minimal information however we do need to know why you will be unable to afford to cover the cost of your cap and gown and/or photographs yourself. You may find it helpful to consider the following:

● If you currently have sufficient funds in your bank account, why can these not be used to cover your gown hire and/or photographs?

● What is your usual income source (e.g. student loan, part time work etc.)?

● Are you expecting any additional income before the end of the academic year (e.g. payment from part time work or contributions from friends/family)? If yes, why is this not sufficient to cover your gown hire and/or photographs?

If you have any questions about the form please contact the Advice Service at su.advice@lse.ac.uk.

**What evidence is required?**

You will need to provide **up-to-date bank statements for the last month for all accounts you hold (this includes overseas and savings accounts).**You may also require evidence in relation to your supporting statement – for example, if you have money in your bank account that can’t be used for your gown hire and/or photographs due to upcoming expenses, it would be helpful to evidence these expenses.

**Please include your evidence as email attachments.**

**How are applications processed?**

Your application will be read by one of our Advisers, who will make an initial decision. This will then be checked by either the Advice Manager or Head of Student Voice (in order to ensure consistency). The names and student ID numbers of successful applicants will be sent to the School, who will communicate this list with the relevant supplier/s. The application process will not require a face-to-face meeting however there may be occasions when an adviser needs to contact an applicant for further information (or to seek clarification on an aspect of their form).

**When is the deadline to apply?**

The application dates will appear on the LSESU Graduation Support Funds page once confirmed. It is advisable to submit your application as soon as possible as awards are limited and applications will be closed when the limit is reached.

**When and how do I book my gown or order my photos?**

**Gowns:** If your funding application is successful, you will receive a confirmation email from the LSESU and later a QR code (from supplier/LSE) allowing you to book your gown ahead of the ceremony. Please do not book your gown before you have received confirmation of a successful funding application and your QR code. LSE/the supplier aim to send QR codes by Monday 20 May which would allow you a few weeks to book your academic dress (the deadline to book academic dress is 24 June).

**Photographs:** Students are not required to book photography in advance, instead, the photographers offer a walk-in service. As such, you will need to speak with the photography reception staff on the day, provide you name and show proof that you are a recipient of the GPSF. **Your email from us confirming your approval to access the fund will act as the confirmation, please ensure you have this with you on the day. On your application form, you should use an email address that you will have access to on the day of your graduation ceremony.**

**When will I find out if I have been successful?**

We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible. Please be patient as application numbers may be high. Please email us requesting an update on your application if you have not heard in 10 working days (su.advice@lse.ac.uk).

**What happens if I am unsuccessful?**

Unsuccessful applicants are welcome to submit an updated application should their situation change (or if there is information/evidence they left out) provided applications are still open.

If you wish to appeal the Advice Service’s decision then you can email the LSESU Head of Student Voice, Ricardo Visinho (r.m.visinho@lse.ac.uk), outlining your reasons for doing so.

**Who will see my application?**

Your application will be treated confidentially by the LSESU Advice Service. If your application is successful, we will share your name and student ID with the School and supplier.

**What happens if I am approved for GSF but do not complete my degree and therefore am no longer eligible to attend graduation?**

Attendance at graduation is subject to successful completion of your degree. If you are no longer eligible to attend graduation, your eligibility for graduation gown/photography support will also become void. Students will be required to show their graduation tickets at both academic dress collection and the photography studios to prove their graduation attendance/eligibility. If you are approved for GSF but subsequently do not complete your degree, you are welcome to apply again for the fund when you are next invited to graduation.