



# Alumni Community Engagement Fund 2024-25

## Terms and Conditions

The CSC's [Alumni Community Engagement Fund \(ACEF\)](#) is an annual fund which seeks to support Commonwealth Alumni in raising awareness of key development issues at the community level through the organisation of an engagement activity.

## Small Changes for Big Impact

Small changes implemented at the community level can lead to big impact over time. ACEF supports Commonwealth Alumni in delivering engaging activities designed to raise awareness and support individuals in implementing small changes at the community level with the aim of achieving long-term positive impact.

Each year, the CSC selects one or more themes which activities must address. Alumni are expected to draw on their knowledge and skills in areas related to one of the themes to develop and deliver a community engagement activity.

## Objectives

ACEF aims to:

- Support Commonwealth Alumni in promoting and raising awareness of key development issues at the local community level.
- Demonstrate ways in which Commonwealth Alumni create positive change within their communities.
- Promote opportunities for Commonwealth Alumni to work together and build connections and networks.

## Guidance for applicants and organisers

Before submitting your application, please read through this guidance document which provides information on how applications are assessed, examples of the types of activities to deliver, funding guidance, and roles and responsibilities of successful applicants. If you have any questions about this information, please email [alumni@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:alumni@cscuk.org.uk)

## Gender and Sexuality ACEF for Professional Fellows

In May 2024 Gender and Sexuality Professional Fellows will have the opportunity to deliver an ACEF activity for the theme, **Gender and Sexuality**.

You can find full details about this theme and how to apply for ACEF on the [CSC website](#).

In their application, Fellows applying for the fund should:

- Demonstrate their professional knowledge and background in Gender and Sexuality in their proposed activity
- Highlight how this is linked to what they learned on their Professional Fellowship
- Outline how their proposed activity is linked to the work of their host organisation

Fellows may apply as individuals, or as a small group of 2023 Professional Fellows from the same or another host organisation. Cross country delivery may be proposed in activity delivery.

## Activity delivery

Successful applicants will have until **31 March 2025** to deliver their activity. By end of 2024, your activity should either be approved for delivery or at least 70% complete.

Successful applicants will receive information and resources to support their activity planning and will be assigned a dedicated member of the CSC Alumni Team to provide guidance and support. You are expected to attend an information session which will provide general information on this year's ACEF.

Applicants will be asked to outline a contingency plan and top-level risk assessment as part of their application. Please see the section on 'Risk assessment and contingency planning' in this

## Examples of activities

The following list provides examples of the types of activities you may wish to deliver as part of ACEF. The list is not exhaustive and is there to support your thinking and ideas pre-application.

You can deliver virtual and/or in-person activities.

You may also wish to view previous activities delivered by Commonwealth Alumni on the [CSC's ACEF webpages](#).

- Skills based training activities
- Virtual or in-person lectures, seminars, or workshops which address and raise awareness of key issues
- Civic engagement projects which develop and promote solutions to key challenges, for example developing a campaign to spread awareness about gender inequality and inequity, and encourage community engagement
- Virtual or in-person events which provide a forum for discussion or debate

Applications which seek funding to support existing work, projects, or activities will **not** be considered.

## Essential criteria for your activity

In your application, you should ensure you address the following criteria:

- **Activity design:** includes clear and achievable outputs which meet the activity and ACEF objectives and is relevant to the identified community audience
- **Viability of the activity:** the activity is realistic to its objectives and can be implemented by the alumni organiser(s)

- **Value for money:** the activity is supported by a detailed and reasonable budget breakdown (original and converted GBP costs) which follows funding guidance provided
- **Evidence of alumni expertise:** alumni will be involved in the activity development and delivery at all stages and will draw on their expertise and knowledge to support effective and impactful delivery
- **Risk assessment and management:** identified risks associated with the activity and how they will be managed are outlined in the application
- **Stakeholder engagement:** an outline on how to engage and manage activity stakeholders is provided to ensure effective and impactful delivery
- **Key outputs:** outline how the activity will have longer-term impact on attendees/participants/stakeholders, beyond the activity itself. You should consider how this will be evaluated when developing your activity

## Roles and responsibilities

The primary role of the alumni organiser, or lead alumni organiser where an application has been made on behalf of a group of alumni, is to plan and develop the proposed activity and liaise with fellow organisers and key stakeholders to ensure successful and impactful delivery.

You will be responsible for organising the activity, including assigning roles amongst fellow alumni organisers, liaising with key stakeholders and the CSC Alumni Team to share activity details, updates on progress, and activity reports and evaluation.

### Main responsibilities

- 1. Act as the primary contact for the development and delivery of the activity. You will:**
  - Attend all requested meetings and submit all required documentation to the CSC Alumni Team within agreed timeframes
  - Provide regular updates on progress and development of the activity to the CSC Alumni Team
  - Establish any required contacts within your chosen community to engage your audience and seek support in the organisation of your activity
- 2. Develop and deliver the activity, working with others where required. You will:**
  - Draw on your and other's expertise to develop your activity and submit updated plans and information as required/requested by the CSC Alumni Team
  - Ensure your plans and activity will address the activity and ACEF objectives
  - Consider your audience when developing the content to ensure information is delivered at the appropriate level and is engaging
  - Identify and engage any required speakers and external stakeholders and manage their involvement and outline their role in your activity documents as required
  - Complete any and all due diligence and safeguarding requirements with those involved in your activity, such as organisations, vendors, and stakeholders
  - Identify and liaise with appropriate vendors to arrange event details
  - Complete and submit an Organiser workplan and budget spreadsheet, Activity Risk Assessment, and programme/activity overview in advance of the activity, to be agreed with the CSC Alumni Team
  - Submit all financial documentation, such as quotes and invoices in a timely manner, following the processes outlined
- 3. Provide a post-activity report and feedback. You will:**

- Submit a post-activity report which will be used to create an article or story for publication on the CSC website. This includes any photographs or assets from your activity which can be used as part of this publication.
- Complete the ACEF final feedback survey

## General conditions

Commonwealth Alumni are expected to adhere to the [CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni](#). Any complaints received or issues in relation to the behaviour of ACEF organisers will be taken very seriously and any behaviour which does not adhere to the expectations and values expected of Commonwealth Alumni as outlined in CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni will be investigated. Engagement in ACEF and other Commonwealth Scholarship activities may be terminated at any time in relation to unsatisfactory conduct.

If you wish to withdraw from ACEF, you must notify your ACEF contact immediately and in advance of any payments being made. Where you are acting as a lead organiser, you must inform your ACEF contact who will be taking on this lead role instead.

The CSC reserves the right to withdraw funding from any ACEF organisers where they are in breach of the Terms & Conditions outlined in this document and in any other communications and guidance provided by the CSC Alumni Team.

Activities developed cannot be part of an existing activity or project. Support for your activity will be withdrawn if this is the case.

## ACEF contact

All successful applicants will be supported by a member CSC Alumni Team. Your ACEF contact will:

- Hold an initial meeting with you to understand more about your activity, planning and delivery proposal, and offer any early guidance.
- Schedule at least 1-2 additional meetings throughout the delivery period to check-in on your progress and share guidance. You may also request meetings if you need support from your ACEF contact and should outline what you wish to discuss in advance.
- Communicate with you on a monthly basis to check-in on your progress and highlight any ACEF resources to support your activity delivery.
- Check and approve your activity risk assessment, workplan, budget overview, and financial documentation.
- Attend, where possible and appropriate, your ACEF activity.
- Receive your activity report post-delivery and produce an article or story for publication on the CSC website, in consultation with you.

Your ACEF contact will not manage any aspects of your activity development or delivery or liaise with vendors and other stakeholders on your behalf.

Note: due to holidays in the UK, the CSC Alumni Team will only be able to provide limited support for your activity in December.

## Funding guidance

Successful applicants will be awarded a **£1,200** equivalent grant to support their activity delivery.

Successful applicants have until **31 March 2025** to deliver their activity following their attendance of an online ACEF information session. By the end of 2024, your activity should either be approved for delivery or at least 70% complete. If the CSC is not satisfied with the progress of the activity, the fund may be withdrawn.

All financial documentation must be submitted to the CSC Alumni Team by **3 March 2025**. You **must** notify the team if your activity will not be delivered or if you will not use the funding by this deadline.

Payment information **not** submitted by 3 March 2025 without notice will **not be reimbursed** and **support will be withdrawn** from the planned activity.

### Budgeting

All costs associated with your activity should be outlined in the 'Budget' tab of the **ACEF organiser workplan and budget spreadsheet**. Miscellaneous costs will not be reimbursed. All cost items must be individually outlined in the 'Budget' tab.

All costs and financial documentation (e.g. receipts, invoices, quotes) **must** be approved by the CSC Alumni Team in advance of any agreements or payments made. Where receipts or invoices are not written in English, you must provide a translation of the items referenced. Without this documentation, you will not receive reimbursement.

Where financial documentation cannot be gathered in advance of the activity, you must discuss alternative options with your ACEF contact. The CSC Alumni Team can provide financial claim templates where needed.

### Evidence of goods paid

You **must** submit evidence of receipt of goods funded by ACEF. This can be in the form of delivery notes, receipts of payments made, and photographs of the items.

### Additional costs

Any additional cost(s) incurred during the activity which were not approved in advance should be reported immediately along with evidence of the additional cost(s). Additional costs could include extending venue hire due to unexpected circumstances.

### Remittance guidance

You are expected to confirm when you have received the funding for the costs claimed. In some cases, you may receive funding higher than the amount requested and approved. This could be due to exchange rates at the time of payments being made. You may also need to unexpectedly reduce the number of attendees at your activity, which could result in reduced catering and/or venue requirements.

If you receive a payment higher than the total required to deliver your activity, you must inform your ACEF contact and propose alternative ways in which this funding can be used to support your activity.

Please refer to the lists below on what can and cannot be funded. If you are unsure as to what constitutes reasonable costs, you should contact the CSC Alumni Team.

### Funded items:

- Reasonable travel expenses necessary to deliver the activity. This may include travel expenses to visit and follow-up with activity participants, but organisers should consider the cost vs value of these visits and expenses.
- Reasonable speaker expenses, preferably local speakers
- Meals and refreshments that are a required part of the activity
- Reasonable costs of materials and communications to publicise the activity. Please ensure where possible you use free mediums of publicity.

### Not funded items:

- Research projects
- Excessive budgets that cannot be justified against the objectives, outputs, and country context, including budgets where a large and disproportionate sum of money will be spent on catering, refreshments, or entertainment.
- Existing activities delivered by the CSC Secretariat, British Council, or CSC Alumni Associations, where activities and/or funding has already been approved.
- Payment of staff salaries, office space, or overheads
- Activities that support a political campaign
- Activities that deliver direct services, for example vaccinations, health checks
- Creation of new websites or databases
- Phone calls or internet costs associated with the organisation of the activity. Where these costs may be critical to the delivery of your activity and will result in an additional cost to any standard airtime/internet plans you may have, you should liaise with your ACEF contact.
- Payments towards the ACEF organiser(s) for their time/contributions

### **Payment methods**

Activity costs will be paid to the organiser on receipt of all necessary documentation. Payments will be made via **International Bank Transfer**.

Please note, it can take several weeks for funds to be received once processed. You should consider this when submitting your documentation and ensure you submit this **at least 6 weeks in advance of payment deadlines and the delivery of your activity**.

In some cases, banks may charge for international payments. You are advised to enquire with your bank if you will be charged for receiving international payments and include the cost you will be charged in your overall budget and payment request.

For payment requests to a UK bank account, you should notify your ACEF contact for further guidance.

## Activity risk assessment and contingency planning

As part of your application, you are asked to outline identified key risks associated with your activity and how these will be managed. Successful applicants will be expected to complete a detailed risk assessment as part of their activity delivery and will receive guidance on how to complete this.

### Example risk assessment in the application form

| Key risks                                                            | Likelihood<br>Low<br>Medium<br>High | Impact<br>Low<br>Medium<br>High | Control measure(s)<br>List the control measures you will put in place to reduce and control the risk identified                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Further actions<br>What will you do if the control measures identified do not reduce the risk sufficiently?             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Low uptake from community to attend the activity                     | L                                   | H                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Early activity promotion amongst key audience</li> <li>- Review sign-up at XX and XX intervals</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review scale of the activity (e.g., smaller group for activity)</li> </ul>     |
| COVID-19 lockdown enforced preventing in-person workshop to go ahead | M                                   | H                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACEF contact and any fellow organisers are informed immediately, and government guidance shared</li> <li>- Contingency plan kept up to date alongside general activity planning</li> <li>- Those signing up are informed how the workshop will be delivered if a lockdown comes into place</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACEF contact informed, and a meeting held to discuss further action</li> </ul> |

Organisers of in-person events must also develop a contingency plan which outlines how their activity could be delivered by alternative means, such as virtual engagement, should circumstances change. You are asked to give a brief outline of a possible contingency plan as part of your application form.

For successful applicants, should you need to change your activity unexpectedly to follow your contingency plan, you must notify the CSC Alumni Team immediately. Where funds have been spent to support in-person delivery, funds **may** be replaced but this **is not guaranteed** and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

We advise any change to delivery to be decided at least four-weeks in advance of the activity delivery, where possible.

## What happens at the end of the activity?

At the end of the activity, you must submit an activity report and complete an online feedback survey. The activity report will be used to create an article or story on your ACEF activity for publication on the CSC website and other CSC social media channels. Where appropriate, you are asked to submit photographs of your activity as part of the report, and any quotations or comments from participants on the impact and engagement generated by your activity.

You will also be requested to complete a post 4-month feedback survey, designed to understand any ongoing impact or engagement because of your activity.

## Timeline

The timeline outlines key dates and deadlines for ACEF 2024-25. Individual delivery timelines should be developed with your ACEF contact for your activity.

| <b>Date start</b> | <b>Action</b>                                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 May            | Applications open                                     |
| 30 May            | Applications close                                    |
| Mid June          | Selections and applicants informed of outcomes        |
| 21 June           | Online information session #1 for selected applicants |
| 25 June           | Online information session #2 for selected applicants |
| 3 March           | Payment information deadline                          |
| 31 March          | All activities complete                               |
| 13 April          | Post-event report and ACEF feedback survey            |
| August            | Post-4 month feedback survey                          |