

REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE MCR SPORTS AND ARTS FUND

Executive Summary:

The Middle Common Room (MCR) at Regent's Park College seeks to enhance student life and foster personal and professional development among its postgraduate and ministerial community. To further enrich the student experience and promote a vibrant academic and social environment, the MCR is initiating the Sports and Arts Fund. Inspired by a similar project by the college's undergraduate community, the MCR's fund will have a broader scope, aiming to finance sports, arts, academic, and cultural initiatives.

The primary goal of the Sports and Arts Fund is to finance projects that enhance student life for MCR members. These projects include promoting participation in sports and the arts, fostering talent development, enriching cultural life, improving the academic experience, supporting the postgraduate and ministerial community, and promoting inclusivity and diversity within the college.

The Fund is open to full members of Regent's Park College MCR, excluding associate members. It will finance one-off events, club establishment, and regular activities. However, it will not cover individual projects or expenses such as refreshments, air travel, or payments to speakers. Applicants are encouraged to explore alternative funding sources, and regular applicants are prompted to demonstrate how their projects will become self-sustaining.

The Sports and Arts Fund will be managed by the MCR Committee, overseen by the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Social Secretary/ies. Each role will have specific responsibilities related to fund management, including budgeting, application review, and event organization to raise funds for future rounds.

Projects that fulfil the Fund's objectives will receive funding, with priority given to those that impact a greater number of MCR students, demonstrate long-term impact, and promote diversity in activities. If demand exceeds the budget, projects will be partially funded, with no single application receiving more than 75% of the requested amount.

Applications will be accepted during Weeks 1 to 5 of each term, followed by an Allocation Meeting and announcement of funded projects by Week 7. Payments will be made either through reimbursement or upfront, depending on project timelines and funding availability.

Successful applicants must submit project reports, and the Treasurer will compile termly reports summarizing funding allocation and project outcomes. At the end of each academic year, the Vice President will provide an overview of the Fund's activities and propose any necessary updates or changes.

The Fund will ensure long-term sustainability through comprehensive handover documentation, regular review meetings, and potential diversification of funding sources, including alumni donations.

Information about the Fund will be accessible through the MCR website, social media channels, newsletters, and messaging groups to encourage broad participation and awareness.

Introduction:

The Middle Common Room (MCR) is the body for the postgraduate and the ministerial community at Regent's Park College, and it aims to improve student life and promote the personal and professional development of its members. In the last few years, the number of students at Regent's MCR has been growing, bringing with them the possibility of new and exciting initiatives to further enrich the student experience and foster a vibrant academic and social environment.

One of these initiatives is the present Sports and Arts Fund, an entirely MCR-run resource helping students finance their academic and cultural projects. Initially proposed by the 2022-23 MCR Committee, the concept is currently being implemented by the 2023-24 Committee, with the objective of the Fund being fully realized during Trinity Term 2024.

The present Sports and Arts Fund takes inspiration from a similar project by the college's undergraduate community, the JCR, but will have a much broader scope. It will aim to finance sports and arts activities, as well as other academic and cultural initiatives.

Objectives:

The main goal of the Sports and Arts Fund is to finance projects that improve student life for MCR members. These projects could contribute to any of the following:

- Promote participation in sports and the arts.
- Foster talent development and skill enhancement.
- Enrich the cultural life of the college.
- Improve the academic and learning experience of MCR students.
- Support the postgraduate and ministerial community.
- Promote inclusivity and diversity within the college.

The Fund is open to finance any project that will demonstrably advance these goals, as well as any other with the potential to improve the student life of MCR students.

Scope and Focus:

Applications to the Sports and Arts Fund are open to all full members of Regent's Park College MCR, including full-time postgraduates, part-time postgraduates, visiting postgraduates, and ministerial students. Associate members of the college are not allowed to apply to the Fund. Members of the MCR Committee, including executive and non-executive roles, are allowed to apply. However, if, due to their role in the Committee, they would ordinarily be involved in deciding which projects receive funding and how much, they will not be allowed to partake in these decisions for the round they applied to. Any Committee member who has applied to the Fund will be expected to delegate these functions to a Committee member who has not made any applications on that round. In the case that no such Committee members are available, an Ordinary member (who has not applied to the Fund on that round) will be appointed to make the relevant decisions in their place, without this impacting their status as an Ordinary member to all other intents and purposes.

The Sports and Arts Fund will finance any project or idea that enhances the student life of the Regent's MCR community following the Fund's goals (see Objectives). Resources will be available for one-off events as well as for the establishment and funding of Regent's-based clubs and societies or otherwise regular activities. In the case of kit and supplies purchases, applicants will be required to show that they have checked and/or asked whether similar equipment is not already available at the college.

The Sports and Arts Fund will not cover any of the following:

1. Individual projects. To be considered, all applications to the Fund must prove their intent to benefit the student body. For example, art supplies will be covered, but only if they are open to use by all MCR members; the Fund might cover a group ticket for a museum exhibit, but not a ticket for a single person.
2. Refreshments (including alcohol) and food in general.
3. Air travel.
4. Payment or gifts to invited speakers.

There is no minimum amount for applications to be considered; however, no individual application may ask for or be awarded more than one-third of the total budget for the round at a maximum. The Fund is also keen for applicants to explore alternative sources of funding, and the application form explicitly asks for information on whether these options have been considered. Regular applicants to the Sports and Arts Fund will be encouraged to show how their project will become self-sustaining.

Structure and Governance:

The Sports and Arts Fund will be based at the Regent's Park College MCR Committee. Its governance and functioning will be overseen by the President, Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and at least one Social Secretary. Each of these roles will take responsibility for the following:

- President.
 - o Tracking the responses to the complaints and concerns form (see Risk Management) and acting on those concerns as they deem necessary.
- Vice President.
 - o Attending and voting on the Allocation Meeting for each round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - o Writing the yearly report on the functioning of the Fund (see Monitoring and Evaluation).
- Secretary.
 - o Advertising the application period for the Fund.
 - o Organising, attending and voting on the Allocation Meeting for each round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - o Ensuring that the Fund's page on the MCR website is updated and contains all the reports produced by the Treasurer and Vice President.
- Treasurer.
 - o Writing the termly budget for the Fund.
 - o Attending and voting on the Allocation Meeting for each round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - o Making the payments to applicants.
 - o Writing a report per term to monitor the destination for the money (see Monitoring and Evaluation).
- Social Secretary/ies.
 - o Organising a ticketed event per team to provide funding for the next round (see Funding Sources).

Funding Sources:

As of the academic year 2023-2024, the Sports and Arts Fund employs the following funding sources:

1. MCR Budget. Following the design of the JCR Fund, the MCR will allocate around a sixth of its budget towards the Sports and Arts Fund. For the initial round of applications (Trinity Term 2024), this amount will be 250 pounds.
2. Ticketed Events. As outlined above, the Social Secretaries will organise at least one ticketed event per term to add to the Sports and Arts Fund budget of the following term. For the initial round of applications (Trinity Term 2024), this amount will be the money raised from the BOP being organised for Hilary Term 2024.
3. Surplus funds from previous rounds. As applications were not open for Hilary Term 2024, the amount raised as ticketed event money on Michaelmas Term 2023 (447.04 pounds) will be rolled over into the Trinity 2024 Fund budget. In the following rounds of the Fund, any money not spent on the term it was initially allocated for will be rolled over into the next term.

Allocation Criteria:

The Sports and Arts Fund is committed to supporting as many initiatives as possible. For this reason, all projects that fulfil the criteria (see Scope and Focus) will receive funding.

In the case that the total solicited amount from all the applications can be covered by the Fund's budget, projects will be funded in full, respecting the maximum limits per individual application (see Scope and Focus).

In the case that the total solicited amount surpasses the Fund's budget, all projects will be at least partially funded, with no project receiving more than 75% of the solicited amount.

In the scenario that funding all projects at 75% of their initial claim still surpasses the Fund's budget, the Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer will work together to determine how to allocate the money. The following ranking criteria will be used:

1. Scope. Priority will be given to projects that aim to enhance the student life of a greater number of MCR students.
2. Impact. Priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate a commitment to long-term impact on the MCR community.
3. Equity. The Fund is committed to covering all forms of academic, cultural and athletic activities. For this reason, priority will be given to financing different types of projects.

In this third scenario, all projects will still be partially funded, and no single application will receive more than 75% of the initial claimed amount.

Application and Selection Process:

The Sports and Arts Fund will follow the timeline described below:

1. Application period. Applications will be open from Week 1 to Week 5 of the relevant term. Applications will be due on Friday of Week 5.
 - a. The application form is available as an appendix on this proposal. It will be made public on the MCR website as an online form for easy access, and circulated among MCR members between Weeks 1 and 5.
2. Allocation Meeting. The MCR Secretary will call for an Allocation Meeting with the Vice President and Treasurer on either Week 6 or Week 7.
3. Announcement. The MCR Secretary will circulate the list of projects that have been approved for funding, as well as the amount greenlighted for each of them, by Friday of Week 7 at the latest.
4. Payment. If a new Treasurer is elected between the announcement and payment, the payment process will be arranged with any remaining committee members and the Dean. The Fund will operate on two forms of payment:

- a. Reimbursement. If the applicant can cover the cost of the project upfront, payment will be made on Week 8 of the relevant term. All reimbursable expenses will need to have happened between Week 0 and Week 8 of the relevant term, and proof of payments will be necessary to reimburse the applicant (even after the project has been greenlighted).
- b. Upfront payment. If the applicant cannot cover the costs of the project upfront, or if the project is scheduled to happen or begin in the next term, payment will be made on Week 0 of the following term.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Sports and Arts Fund

As part of our commitment to ensuring accountability and assessing the impact of the Sports and Arts Fund, several methods for monitoring the progress and effectiveness of funded projects will be employed.

1. Upon approval of funding, all successful applicants will be required to submit a concise report (200-300 words) detailing the impact of the fund on their idea and including an update on their project. This report will provide valuable insights into the outcomes achieved and the overall effectiveness of the funding provided.
 - a. For projects funded via reimbursements, this report will be due on Week 9 of the relevant term.
 - b. For projects funded via up-front payments, this report will be due on Week 8 of the term where the money was received.
2. At the end of each term, the Treasurer will compile a brief report summarizing key statistics such as the number of applications received, the projects funded, the amounts they received, and any notable achievements.
3. At the end of each academic year, the Vice President will write a report offering an overview of the fund's activities throughout the year. This report will summarise the Treasurer's termly reports, as well as include excerpts from project reports, showcasing the tangible outcomes achieved by funded projects, as well as highlighting noteworthy initiatives supported by the fund. It will also include a section on possible changes and updates to the Fund decided on by the Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.
 - a. Any changes to the working of the Fund will need to be approved by the MCR Committee and by the General Business Meeting, following the procedures outlined in the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Regent's Park College MCR.

Sustainability Plan:

The Sports and Arts Fund will ensure its long-term sustainability in several ways. To facilitate the transfer of responsibilities from one academic year to the next, the Committee members involved in the Fund functioning will write a specific handover document to explain their role in the working of the Fund. They will also hold a short meeting at the end of Trinity Term to go over the Vice President's yearly report and determine whether the Fund's priorities and strategies should be changed or updated.

In the future, the Fund should also seek to diversify its funding sources. One of the proposed ways to do so would be to engage the Development Office and seek alumni donations. It is important to acknowledge that the 2023-24 Committee attempted this approach in the initial planning stages of the Fund without success. However, our case could be strengthened in the

future if we can demonstrate our ability to make an impact on the MCR community as well as members' sustained interest in the Sports and Arts Fund. It would be worth revisiting this funding avenue in future academic years, once we have established a measure of independent success.

Communication and Outreach:

The Sports and Arts Fund has its own page on the MCR website, where the current proposal, as well as application forms, termly and yearly reports and complaints form (see Risk Assessment), can be found. The Application period will be publicised on the MCR Instagram, weekly newsletter, and WhatsApp group.

Risk Management:

The Sports and Arts Fund has proactive measures in place to address the possible risks that its work entails. The most important identified risks, as well as the Fund's contingency plans, are explained below:

1. Embezzlement and misuse from fund applicants. Embezzlement refers to the fraudulent appropriation of funds or assets by individuals entrusted with their management. Misuse involves the improper or unauthorized use of funds for personal gain or purposes unrelated to the intended project.
 - a. Due diligence will be followed to prevent these risks. In the case of reimbursements, proof of payment (receipts) will be required to send the money. For both up-front payments and reimbursements, applicants will need to send a report outlining the uses of the money (see Monitoring and Evaluation).
 - b. If any cases of embezzlement or misuse are identified, the applicant will be barred from applying to the Fund again. The MCR Committee reserves the right to take disciplinary action against the individual involved, up to and including involving college officials and pursuing legal consequences as deemed necessary.
2. Ethical conduct and project integrity. This risk encompasses instances where funded projects engage in activities that compromise ethical standards, integrity, or the reputation of the Sports and Arts Fund, or the Regent's Park College MCR.
 - a. The Fund will proactively work to avoid these instances. The Allocation Committee will assess the level of risk in each application and will be entitled to reject funding a project on ethical or reputational grounds.
 - b. A monitoring system will be in place with the creation of an anonymous form to ensure that complaints and concerns can be shared with the MCR Committee. The form will be accessible on the Fund's page on the MCR website, and the MCR President will be the only person allowed to see the submissions to this form. The MCR President has full authority to act on those complaints as they deem necessary, or otherwise to raise and act on concerns themselves.
3. Fairness in allocation decisions. This risk relates to ensuring fairness and integrity in the allocation of funds, particularly regarding potential biases or conflicts of interest among Committee members.
 - a. As mentioned in previous sections (see Scope and Focus), all Committee members are allowed to apply to the Sports and Arts Fund. However, if the Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer are applying, they will be required to delegate their presence and voting rights on the Allocation Meeting to a

Committee member who has not made any applications on the relevant term, or an Ordinary MCR member should no Committee member fulfil the criteria.

- b. The form posted on the Fund's page of the MCR website is the channel through which concerns about this risk can be raised. The MCR President will have full authority to act on those concerns and take actions as they deem necessary. If the MCR President were to be involved in the relevant accusations, or if they otherwise consider themselves to have a conflict of interest, they will be required to delegate their role as pertains the Fund to another Committee member who is not included in the accusations. If necessary, the MCR Committee reserves the right to involve college officials in the handling of these affairs.

Timeline:

What follows is the proposed timeline for the establishment and implementation of the Sports and Arts Fund:

- Academic year 2023-24.
 - o Hilary Term (January-March 2024).
 - Finalising proposal and approving it at MCR Committee and General Business Meeting.
 - Organising of ticketed event to cover the Trinity Term budget.
 - o Trinity Term (April-June 2024).
 - First application round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - Organising of ticketed event to cover the Michaelmas Term budget.
 - Payment of reimbursements on Week 8
 - Reports from reimbursed applicants on Week 9.
 - Termly report from Treasurer on the Trinity 2024 round.
- Academic year 2024-25
 - o Michaelmas Term (October-December 2024).
 - Payment of up-front money from Trinity Term on Week 0
 - Second application round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - Organising of ticketed event to cover the Hilary Term budget.
 - Payment of reimbursements on Week 8.
 - Reports from up-front applicants on Week 8 and reimbursed applicants on Week 9.
 - Termly report from Treasurer on the Michaelmas 2024 round.
 - o Hilary Term (January-March 2025).
 - Payment of up-front money from Michaelmas Term on Week 0
 - Third application round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - Organising of ticketed event to cover the Trinity Term budget.
 - Payment of reimbursements on Week 8.
 - Reports from up-front applicants on Week 8 and reimbursed applicants on Week 9.
 - Termly report from Treasurer on the Hilary 2025 round.
 - o Trinity Term (April-June 2025)
 - Payment of up-front money from Hilary Term on Week 0
 - Fourth application round (see Application and Selection Process).
 - Organising of ticketed event to cover the Michaelmas Term budget.
 - Payment of reimbursements on Week 8.

- Reports from up-front applicants on Week 8 and reimbursed applicants on Week 9.
- Termly report from Treasurer on the Trinity 2025 round.
- Yearly report from Vice President on the work of the Fund in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Appendix: Application Form (next page)



Sports and Arts Fund Application Form

Prior to completing the form, please consult the Sports and Arts Fund guidelines (available at the Regent's Park College MCR website)

The Fund will only cover applications that fall within the criteria.

Please submit the completed form by the end of FRIDAY WEEK 5.

Form submitted by: <i>(Preferred Name, Surname)</i>	
Contact details: <i>(Email)</i>	
Course and matriculation year:	
Funding request declaration:	<input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that my application is in line with the Regent's Park College MCR's Sports and Arts Fund guidelines, and does not involve any of the following areas that are not supported by the Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refreshments (including alcohol). - Food. - Airplane travel. - An individual project (as opposed to one for the benefit of the current student body of Regent's Park College as a whole).
Reason for application: <i>Please detail (in no more than 300 words) the following:</i>	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The impact that the project will have and the way it will enhance social and academic life at Regent's.</i> 2. <i>The number of college members participating in the project.</i> 3. <i>Whom will this activity benefit in the College community.</i> 	
<p>Proposed timetable: <i>(Including start and completion date)</i></p>	
<p>Costs Breakdown:</p> <p><i>Please detail the breakdown of the costs of the proposed project:</i></p> <p>1) <i>Total cost of the project;</i></p> <p>2) <i>Total amount requested from the Sports and Arts Fund.</i></p> <p><i>If necessary, please include a detailed breakdown of costs on a separate spreadsheet.</i></p>	<p>£</p>

<p>Payment Method:</p> <p><i>Please select which payment method you require.</i></p> <p><i>If you select “reimbursement”, you will receive your payment on Week 8 of the term of your application. You will be required to present receipts as proof of payment to receive the allocated money.</i></p> <p><i>If you select “up-front payment”, you will receive your payment on Week 0 of the term following your application.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Up-front payment</p>
<p>Funding from other sources:</p> <p><i>Give details of the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Funding you have applied for from other sources (e.g. Department/Faculty, external organisations);</i> <i>2. Other funding that you have applied / will be applying for.</i> <i>3. Please include the amount requested and the outcome of the application (or date that outcome will be published).</i> 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Project report confirmation:</p> <p><i>At the end of your project, a report should be submitted by you, of between 200 and 300 words.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am happy to complete a report.</p>

If you will be paid via reimbursement, your project report will be due on Week 9 of the term you were reimbursed on.

If you will be paid up-front next term, your project report will be due on Week 8 of the term you received the money on.

Please confirm that you understand that any resources from the Sports and Arts Fund is conditional on your agreement to fulfil this requirement.