



THE SIR RICHARD STAPLEY EDUCATIONAL TRUST

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2023

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Dr Manali Chitre and
Dr Debbie Marsden

Mr William Glover
Dr James Jones
Dr John Kirkland OBE
Dr Claire Mera-Nelson
Dr Sarah Other
Mr Hugh Smith
Mr Paul Trimmer

The Sir Richard Stapley
Educational Trust

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Greetings from our Co-Chairs

Dr Manali Chitre and Dr Debbie Marsden

It has been an exciting learning experience over the past year, as we have settled into our new roles as Co-Chairs. There are undoubted benefits to our Trust in having two chairs. While we have each other's counsel and support, we have also been working hard at ensuring clear lines of approach, communication, and accountability.

Trustee Board Changes

Over the past 18 months, we have said goodbye to six of our trustees whose tenure had come to an end or who had to move on due to work and family commitments. Paul Trimmer and Dr John Kirkland OBE joined us in November 2022 as new trustees and have already contributed significantly to this year's work. Sadly, extra non-Trust work commitments meant our Treasurer, Christopher Richard Walker left us in May this year. We thank Christopher sincerely for all his work and advice.



Dr Manali Chitre, Co-Chair

However, we are delighted to announce that we are now back to nine trustees, almost a full Board. We had outstanding applicants for our trustees' positions and were fortunate to recruit Dr Claire Mera-Nelson and Hugh Smith as trustees. You can find out more about our new trustees on page 16. We would like to thank David Ford who joined us briefly, critically reviewed our finances and advised on best practice. There is always room for improvement especially in the light of changes in Charity Commission guidance. We would like to express our gratitude to him for all his hard and thorough work. We will be advertising for a new Treasurer Trustee in early 2024 to complete our Board.

Many aspects of our strategic plan have progressed well this year, and the Board stability for the next four years

Alumni Updates



Nicola Weston, PhD student
researching community theatre
practice

Goldsmiths, University of London

I am halfway through the third year of my PhD at Goldsmiths and looking to complete my thesis in the coming 12-18 months. My research is practice based and focuses on community theatre with young people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

Last year, I ran a series of theatre workshops at Rutherford School in Croydon which caters for children and young people with PMLD which is compounded by a high degree of dependency, sensory impairment and complex medical needs. The sessions were based around the Oscar Wilde story *The Selfish Giant* and were sensory led, meaning that things were made available for the young people to touch, smell, see and hear (taste was not applicable because of choking risk). The sessions and subsequent performance were filmed, and I am now in the process of analysing the data collected.

As a freelance community theatre practitioner I became interested in doing this kind of research when I was engaged by a school for children with PMLD and worked

stands us in good stead for the remainder of our current planning period.

Grant making

We have had yet another successful grant-giving year and our move to an online application process (using the Benefactor system) has been well received. It has resulted in a significant change in the way we receive and assess applications. There were some initial hiccups, but we have been able to ensure an overall smooth transition. The move has been very positive; saving on costs, effort and time while making the grants process better structured.

Unfortunately, the grant application window has been shortening every year as we respond to ever growing demand. We are actively working on various ways to make the application process more inclusive, diverse, and equitable. A sample application form is now available on our website, and we have highlighted areas which cause most glitches and delay to help applicants prepare in advance.

Clarifying our eligibility rules this year will hopefully enable a broader range of students to apply. We encourage applications from all fields of postgraduate study as well as medicine, dentistry and veterinary sciences taken as second degrees. Our strategy also aims to diversify somewhat our income streams and grow our funds, and meanwhile trustees continue to work hard to make every penny count.



Dr Debbie Marsden, Co-
Chair

Impact for students

Our annual survey helps validate our grant provision and show the difference that even our smallest grants can make. We are always grateful to the students who complete the survey and share with us their insights into how the grants have been used as well as their views on various issues such as the impact of COVID on student life and how we might improve our grant making to provide the best help we can to the students who need our support the most. We rely on feedback to justify our strategies.

We remain focussed on helping the most deserving students fulfil their dreams. We appreciate that many students go to great lengths to reach their goals. We are immensely proud of the many achievements our students make. Congratulations to all of you who have studied this year!

Dr Manali Chitre and Dr Debbie Marsden

with the community to produce performance devised by the children. I became aware of a gap in research which positioned this community as creators of theatre and wanted to contribute. I recently presented my work at a Goldsmiths postgraduate conference called 'Power, People and Places: Dialogues across disciplines'.

I continue to work as a freelance theatre practitioner and run arts projects for several theatre companies, working in community settings such as schools (mainstream and SEN) and day centres for learning disabled adults.

The grant from Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust has meant that I have been able to devote a larger portion of time to my research and have been under less financial pressure than I might have been without their generosity. I'd like to thank the Trust wholeheartedly for their very kind support. It has been essential in smoothing the path of my PhD journey and has given me a sense of encouragement during the more challenging times in my studies. Thank you!

Supporting the artists and performers of the future

Aspiring to a career in the arts is often a vocation born of passion, not primarily undertaken as a career likely to provide job security or wealth. As Autumn term begins, studios and rehearsal rooms in universities and specialist higher education colleges across the country once again buzz with the chatter of students eager to recommence their studies. Like athletes preparing for a race or scientists preparing for an experiment, students of the arts gather their specialist materials and equipment in preparation for the doors to be opened to new techniques and approaches. But arguably now more than ever before, for many students accessing the right tools as well as the time and resources to develop their skills is a struggle.

This grant has been the difference between being able to further my education and future employment and sacrificing both. Thank you is not a strong enough sentiment!

Musicians, dancers, actors and artists are in an unusual position as students. Their professional training typically commences long before they enter higher education. It is

a cliché to say that becoming a professional musician takes 10,000 hours of practice, but whatever their artistic practice the standards achieved by most aspiring artists on entry to professional vocational study have typically already taken massive personal investment of money as well as time.

Often, arts students' own resources on entry quickly prove inadequate to the expectations of elite training. Playbooks and costume materials, instruments, their accessories and sheet music, the raw materials required for the production of art: these are, to some extent, provided for within a students' training. But, unlike their athletic and scientific peers, not all.

Time commitment

Then there's the time. At music conservatoires students are told that they should undertake a minimum of four hours per day personal practice outside of taught classes. Dance students are expected to enhance their own aerobic fitness by running daily and may need to supplement their taught studio time with time in the Pilates studio to rehabilitate an injury or dance studio to choreograph their peers. For actors, memorising a script does not happen without significant personal preparation, with even more time required to fully embody the physical traits, accent or



Dr. Christine Mushibwe,
Vice Chancellor of Unicaf University,
Zambia

Collecting data for my PhD research proved the most difficult and expensive task given the distance of the locale from England; data had to be collected from Lundazi district in Zambia. Hence, I embarked on looking for sponsorship. I wrote over hundred letters and received only one positive response which was from Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust. I completed my thesis and graduated with a PhD in Education.

The research focused on the effect of cultural traditions on the education of women, a crucial study area given the plight of women in the country and worldwide. While there are several reasons for their underdevelopment, their education remains crucial to their whole wellbeing and that of their families. Without the grant from the Trust, I would not have managed to collect the data and hence wouldn't have completed the studies.

Since returning to Zambia, I have worked in the top private universities such as University of Lusaka. I am currently the Vice Chancellor of Unicaf University, Zambia. I have won the prestigious award of Africa's Most Influential Woman in Business and Government' from CEO Global (in

mannerisms of the character they are to portray. Irrespective of their practice or the project, the work of the aspiring visual artist just takes time: preparation, layering of techniques or materials, honing, crafting, perfecting.

Tuition fees

On top of all this there are the fees. Annual fees for postgraduate training in the arts are often significantly higher than for many disciplines. In many musical disciplines such as orchestral instruments, operatic training and composition, participation in two or more years of postgraduate study is generally an expected norm. All this, despite earning prospects which suggest the ability to repay debt incurred will be a struggle. The recently published Musicians' Census suggests that the average salary for a working age person with a degree making 100% of their income from music is, at £30,000 per annum, 22% less than other UK average working age earners with a degree.

Post-Covid, parental investment in paid teaching and after school clubs – long a great go-to option for artists to enhance their income – has nose-dived, leaving less work to go around for established professionals, far less students. Gallery and studio closures have resulted in a backlog of pent-up demand and a cohort of established artists seeking access, once again limiting access to students. Venue closures, backlogs and an experienced workforce clamouring for work all diminish the opportunities for those on the cusp of professional life both on, and immediately before, graduation.

Earning while learning

Although finding a reasonably paid and flexible job is hard for any student, it's harder still when the pattern of time you need for your artistic practice varies enormously and is defined by the project you are engaged in (including, for performing arts students in particular, typically many evening rehearsals and performances).

Barriers to access

It has long been the case that access to careers in the arts in the UK is far from equal, with too many people encountering barriers to entering the arts and wider creative industries. Though there are many reasons for this, research shows

I would not be where I am now without having attended the RCA. The people I met, progression of my practice, investment in research and the qualification itself have been crucial to my development as an artist and educator. I am incredibly grateful to the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust for choosing to support me, thank you!

the education category), at Regional and Country level: 2017, and 2018/19 respectively, in recognition of my impact in the number of institutions that I have served in. I have also been awarded Global Academics Research Academy's Award of Excellence for Global Leaders (2021). I have received recognition from the Centre for Organization Leadership and Development for my exemplary contribution to the work of the organization.

I am a co-founder of an NGO called Training Teachers for Community Schools in Zambia [teachers4zambia.org] and Lusaka Open Business College. I am currently serving on the advisory body of Campaign for Female Education as Chairperson and I am a Patroness of BeRelevant Africa, an organisation that targets the development of youths in the country. I serve on several boards in and outside Zambia.

I am an author of the highly acclaimed books titled The Effect of Cultural Traditions on the Education of Women (2010) and Followers as a Key Variable in Organization Success (2020). Besides lecturing several PhD/DBA courses, I supervised doctoral students and examined theses. I am an international keynote speaker, mentor and corporate trainer with Eastern and South African Management Institute (ESAMI), and I remain a great advocate of the education of women.

I attribute all such achievements and many others to the Trust. Thank you!

that if your family does not have the means to support your commitment to your art this may well prove an obstacle to joining the artistic workforce.

Although offering only small grants, our Trust can play an important part in enabling access for those who might otherwise see postgraduate study, so essential as a gateway to the profession in many artistic disciplines, as an impossibility. Coming at a critical time, the financial resource to enable access – even the purchase of dance equipment, 3D printing credits, oboe reeds or materials to support character development – can meaningfully relieve pressure on an aspiring artist, making that artistic career more of a possibility.

Support from a grant giving body such as Sir Richard Stapley Trust isn't all about the money. Sometimes the knowledge that someone, particularly an organisation beyond your immediate environment believes that your studies have real merit is all it takes: nothing can diminish the very real costs of training as an artist, but feeling believed in, and believing in yourself, may be key to future success.

Dr Claire Mera-Nelson, Trustee



Louis De Nil, PhD Candidate in Musicology and Performance Science

Royal College of Music

I am completing the final year of my PhD studies under supervisors Professor Natasha Loges, Dr George Waddell and Dr Joe Davies.

My thesis examines historical and contemporary dramatic performance practices utilised by singers in art-song through a case study of Franz Schubert's Erlkönig D328. I have given presentations at numerous conferences over the last few years, including several at the Royal Musical Association Research Students' Conference (2019, 2022) and the First Schubert Workshop with the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Vienna (2022).

Recently, I conducted an experiment on reception to dramatic practices by singers in Erlkönig by audiences with the Centre for Performance at the RCM. I presented this research at the International Symposium on Performance Science in Warsaw in August 2023, and plan to submit the paper for publications later this year. I was honoured to have been selected to present my research on song performance in the Vormärz period in Vienna at the Third Schubert Research Centre Conference with the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (ÖAW) in

Our 2023/24 annual grant round

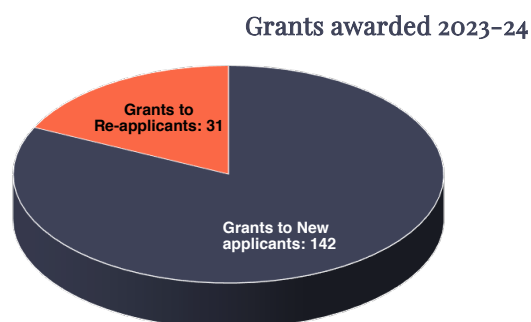
Cost of living and studying pressures mean that demand for our support is high. The volume of applications and the speed at which they come in increases each year. This year's annual grant round for those studying in academic year 2023-24 opened on the first working day of 2023. Over 500 students had submitted applications by the time we closed later in the same week. We are able to consider only the first 300 eligible applications received.

This was our first year using an online application form, and after some initial technical teething problems the new system coped well.

Applications are assessed by three trustees scoring independently of each other, which meant that each trustee scored well over 100 applications this year. A full Trustee Board meeting in May made the final decision on grants to be awarded.

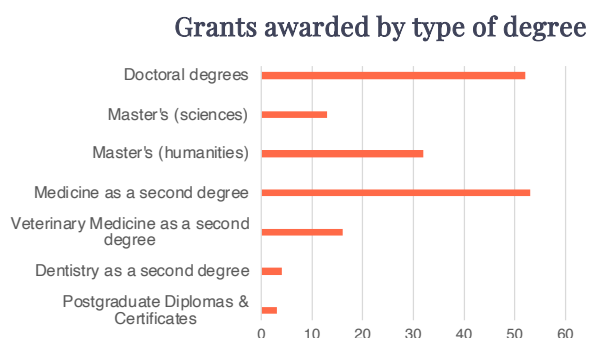
Grants awarded

We made grants totaling £158,650 this year. The number of awards was 173, of which 142 went to new applicants and 31 to 're-applicants', that is, those who had had a grant from us in the past.



Types of course supported

About a third of our grants for 2023-24 went to those taking doctoral degrees, and a similar proportion went to those studying medicine as a second degree. Most of the remainder went to those taking master's degrees.



October 2023.

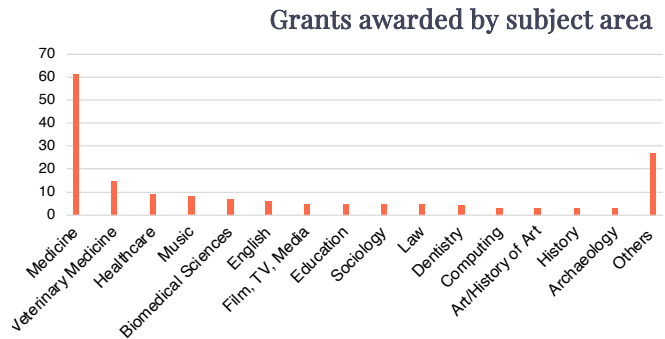
I specialise in German art-song, and have also sung in operatic, musical theatre and jazz productions. My favourite musical work is Schubert's song cycle Winterreise, which I have performed several times. In April this year, I sang German song in connection with my research at the first RCM Artistic Insights Concert. I have worked as vocal teacher with RCM Teaching Service for the last five years, working with students in London, North America, and Asia.

Currently working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at the RCM, I have taught music history, music writing, lecture recital projects and digital creation classes to undergraduate and masters students. I have also served as the RCM Doctoral Student Representative in student government.

I would like to thank the Trust for their invaluable support to me and my research. Their dedication to aiding postgraduate students in the UK provides vital assistance to both domestic and international students and has greatly aided my studies and research.

Study areas supported

Over a third of our grants went to those studying medicine, with a diverse range of 58 other subject areas also supported.



Grant round 2024-25

Our next annual grant round, for those studying in academic year 2024-25, is scheduled to open on 2 January 2024. You can read more about the next grant round on page 11.

Colin Nee, Clerk to the Trustees



Tomos Owen Jones, MMus
Composer-Performer Graduate

Coleg Brenhinol Cerdd a Drama
Cymru / Royal Welsh College of Music
& Drama

I am a tenor, composer and conductor from the Bannau Brycheiniog in Wales, and I have just graduated with a distinction from the MMus Composer-Performer course at the RWCMD. This was an intensive two-year master's course studying both music composition and performance full-time, and I am the first person to do so as a composer and classical singer.

Over the past two years, I have been able to compose a large number of pieces for a wide variety of performance opportunities. These have included my first chamber opera, premiered at Atmospheres Festival Cardiff, my first song cycle (written about the cost of living for a fundraising concert for Cardiff Foodbank), and chamber works performed at Leeds Lieder Festival, and The National Eisteddfod, Gwynedd. I have had compositions premiered by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and members of the Welsh National Opera Orchestra, and workshopped by members of Sinfonia Cymru, the London Sinfonietta and The Hermes Experiment. Alongside this, I have formed and musically directed a small-scale opera company at

Learning from our users

Report on our annual survey 2023

For our seventh annual survey, we had a 50% response rate from recipients of grants for the 2022/23 study period.

Respondents' universities and courses

Students from 41 higher educational institutions completed the survey. Thirty-five percent were studying for a PhD, 26% were medical students and the same percentage were studying for an MA or MSc. Other courses included Artist Diploma, Master of Performance, Master of Music, and Postgraduate Diplomas.

While courses in medicine and music were well represented, so too were other sciences and humanities including philosophy, history of art, engineering, education, and psychology.

Reversing a trend from last year's survey where the majority of responses came from later years of study, responses this year were most often from those in their first and second years.

Financial shortfall and how managed

Financial shortfall figures were similar to last year's survey. Seventy-four percent of students reported a shortfall of between £750 and £5,000 for the academic year, and 13% had had shortfalls over £10,000.

A large majority of respondents (83%) said our grants had been essential for the completion of the year's study. Many students highlighted how receiving a grant had enabled them to focus more on their studies, reducing the need for extra part-time employment which could cause burnout. Others noted the psychological benefit of receiving a grant, which had helped to relieve financial pressures which were worrying them.

Even students who had received our smallest grant (£550) reported that it had helped to reduce their levels of stress and the need to take on more paid work. As in previous years, this confirms that even our smaller grants make a difference.

In general, we do not expect our grants to totally cover a student's shortfall. Students usually use the grant as one element in a wider plan to finance their studies. Seventy-five percent took on extra paid work to help cover their expenses; 62% applied to other grant-makers of whom 81% were successful. Roughly a third had received a loan from friends or family, and a small number had taken out a commercial loan. Nearly half of the students said they had reduced their living expenses in an attempt to cover their shortfall.

college, and recently conducted our own one-hour arrangement of Humperdink's opera Hansel and Gretel.

Additionally, I have gained a large amount of singing experience, performing roles including L'Aumonier in Poulanc's Dialogues of the Carmelites, Monsieur Vogelsang in Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor, and covering Eisenstein in Strauss' Die Fledermaus, alongside a number of concert and opera scenes performances. Outside of college, I sang the role of Semyon Semyonovitch in the Welsh National Opera Young Company's production of Shostakovitch's Cherry Town, Moscow, and in the chorus of Random Opera's La Sonnambula.

The course has been hugely exciting and inspiring but also incredibly demanding, which has made acquiring regular work to finance the course difficult. Thanks to the support of The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, I have been able to make the most of a huge number of really exciting professional opportunities during my time on the course. I hope to create a freelance career as a singer, composer and conductor, and this course has been invaluable in gaining a huge amount of experience ready to start my professional career.

Key benefits

Respondents highlighted the specific areas in which a grant had helped them. As in previous years, the two key benefits were being able to focus more on their studies (78%) and a reduction in stress levels/financial worries (75%).

Almost half said that our grant had reduced the need for extra jobs, and 35% reported a reduction in the need to borrow. Several explained that the grant had enabled them to purchase books and equipment for their course.

Reflecting the non-financial benefits of receiving a grant, 58% of students reported that the grant had given them a motivational boost. Similar to previous years, a third of students noted that a grant had allowed them to participate more in extra-curricular activities.

Achievements and challenges

It is always a pleasure to read about students' achievements in the survey. Sixty-seven percent gained exam/qualification success, and several explained how their academic success was in part due to the financial support of a grant enabling them to focus on their studies.

Some students had joined research committees, completed substantial sections of their thesis, won awards at film festivals, achieved top marks in their cohort or been accepted onto a doctoral programme. Sharing their knowledge with others, 45% of respondents had undertaken some teaching and 52% had had their work published, exhibited or performed.

The grant's importance in the context of the rising cost of living was noted in several responses.

Feedback on other issues

In response to concerns about the rising cost of living, we added a question this year to explore respondents' views about the scale and size of our grant-giving. We asked students if they thought it would be more helpful if the Trust: supported more students but with smaller grants; supported fewer students but with higher value grants; or kept things as they currently are. Seventy-eight percent thought we should keep things as they are, supporting the same number of students with the same range of grants. Those in favour of awarding smaller grants to more people (15%) outweighed those who thought we should support fewer students but with larger sums (7%).

Many said that our current approach struck a good balance in supporting as many people as possible with sums of money which would have a material impact on their circumstances. Some cautioned that - in a postgraduate



Dr Kristina Gruzdeva, Research Facilitator in the Higher Education sector.

My background originally was in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Russian (BA), followed by an MA in International Studies in Education, and then a PhD in Education, which I was awarded earlier this year.

My PhD research centred around higher education choices, with the focus on young people's understanding of student finance and their beliefs around the financial implications of studying for a degree. The key findings were that young people expect graduate salaries that are higher than the norm for actual graduate salaries, with male students being more optimistic than their female peers in their expectations. Female students remain more modest in their salary expectations even when their degree choice is factored in. These differences in graduate salary expectations stand in the way of closing the gender pay gap when these young people join the labour market.

Following my PhD, I have remained in the higher education sector as a Research Facilitator, which means I do not conduct my own research but rather provide hands-on support to academics from across the University of Birmingham in the delivery of their

funding landscape which presented few opportunities for certain groups of students - a move to supporting fewer students would be damaging. Others noted that a grant award no matter how small was a real help.

We also asked respondents if we should move to distributing the same level of grant to all successful applicants or keep a range tailored to an individual's need: 90% believed we should keep a range of grant levels.

We always enjoy staying connected to our past grant recipients, and would welcome new followers to our Facebook, Twitter (X) and LinkedIn pages. It's a great way to hear more about the Trust and to network with fellow alumni.

A big thank you to everyone who completed our survey this year! It is gratifying to read how our grants have helped people as they pursue their academic ambitions. The survey's findings are also instrumental in allowing us to better support postgraduate education for people from all backgrounds who have a financial need. We wish all students a happy and successful year ahead!

Dr James Jones, Trustee

research projects.

My PhD equipped me with transferable skills that I use in my current job: project management, problem solving, data analysis and the ability to effectively communicate complex information to a given audience. For instance, I help academics understand research funder requirements to give their research proposals the best chance of success.

Our next annual grant round - for 2024/25

Our next annual grant round, for those studying in academic year 2024/25, is scheduled to open in the morning of 2 January 2024. Only online applications will be accepted, and the online application form will be available on our website on that date. A mock-up of the application form is available on our website now.

Who may apply?

To be eligible to apply, applicants need to be:

- graduates with a First Class or Upper-Second Class honours degree (2:1), or a master's or doctoral degree, or final year undergraduate students expected to achieve a 1st or 2.1;
- accepted on to or applying for a course of study at a UK university or similar UK educational body in 2024/25 (not including overseas branches of UK universities or accessing the course remotely from outside the UK);

The course of study will need to be for

- a higher degree (master's, PhD, or their equivalent) in any subject
- or a postgraduate certificate or postgraduate diploma in any subject
- or medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine taken as a second degree

and the forthcoming 2024/25 academic year must officially begin on a date between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024 and be officially scheduled to last for at least 8 months;



- planning to remain living in the UK throughout the academic year applied for, unless required as a condition of taking the course to be living overseas for some or all of



Anne-Marie Greenaway, PhD
Biomedical Engineering student

University of Reading

After seeing a dementia friendly poster in my local area, I wanted to learn more about dementia. I undertook an MSc in Clinical Language Sciences (neuroscience stream) and focussed my thesis on dementia. Following this I worked with Andover Mind as a dementia advisor. We were emailed a video clip of Alive Inside whereby MP3 players were given to residents of a care home, and I was utterly amazed at the physiological and cognitive responses to the music. This was the impetus to examine the effects of music on mood and attention in people living with dementia via eye tracking, and to develop an intervention for depression and anxiety for people living with dementia within a PhD project.

While my PhD findings show that music can modulate mood and attention, the wider research field shows that it can do much more (for example, affecting awareness of pain, taste and emotional perception). I hope to continue examining the use of music as a therapeutic intervention for people living with dementia.

Although COVID-19 derailed many research projects, it opened up an opportunity to examine

the academic year for the purposes of study or research;

- facing a financial shortfall in the academic year 2024/25.

Assuming they meet our basic eligibility criteria, the attributes listed below will be used to gauge whether applicants fit the desired profile. They will not be required to meet each one separately; rather the whole 'package' will be assessed overall:

- the student is undertaking a course to better achieve their ambition regarding career path or personal development
- has the potential to make a contribution to wider society
- may have had to overcome - or be facing - particular challenges such as disability or family, social or economic barriers
- demonstrates real passion and commitment to the chosen area of study
- is in real financial need but has a strategy for addressing this and has made an effort to access other sources of funding
- has shown evidence of academic ability, taking into account their background when assessing past performance
- has the support of an informed and competent referee.

The application window will close as soon as we have received 300 eligible applications. We reached that maximum number within a small number of days in our last annual grant round.

Colin Nee, Clerk to the Trustees

webcam-based eye tracking with people living with and without Alzheimer's from their homes during restrictions. We hope that this work prompts new studies involving older adults and encourages older adults to engage in eye-tracking studies as eye movement may offer insights into cognitive and emotional status.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07317115.2023.2240783>

<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3441852.3476565>

Aside from presenting my work at several conferences (for example, for the Physiological Society, and ASSETs 2021), I have had voluntary opportunities to work with NIHR funded initiatives, Dementia Researcher, and the Join Dementia Research platform to raise awareness of the platform as without research volunteers there would be no research.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1W-uH3eru8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Crl8WxagGU4>

I am currently assisting with a Royal Berkshire Hospital elderly-care ward music project.

Support from the Trust significantly eased my financial worries and enabled me to continue on my course for which I am eternally grateful.

Please support our work!

Consider a donation or remember us in your Will

Postgraduate study makes an enormous contribution to public life, providing so much of the knowledge and skills on which we all depend.

But too many students have to overcome financial barriers to complete their studies. Many have to pull together a patchwork of part-time earnings, student loans, bank loans, family loans and hardship grants to finance their studies. We hear too many accounts of students experiencing financial anxiety, overburdened with excessive hours of part-time work, and distracted from their studies.

Over the last hundred years, our Trust has helped thousands of students to fulfil their lifelong ambitions. With your support we could do so much more, helping more students become the doctors, scientists, artists, researchers, planners, engineers and teachers of the future.

How to make a one-off or regular donation

Our sincere thanks to our regular and occasional donors! Your contributions make all the difference to the postgraduates we support. You are enabling them to focus more on their studies and less on financial worries.

If you have not yet donated we hope you will consider supporting our Trust. We keep our administrative costs as low as we possibly can (only one part-time administrator, our trustees give up their time for free and we have no office or building costs). This means we make every penny donated count.

[Please click here to make a donation.](#) This will take you to our online payment facility through CAF Donate. Donations can be made either by credit or debit card, or via PayPal. There are options to make either one-off donations to the Trust or to set up a monthly donation, depending on your preference.

How to remember the Trust in your Will

Please consider leaving a legacy to our Trust to help us support future postgraduates. We can do so much more with your support!

If you decide to include the Trust in your Will, you can ask your solicitor or professional adviser to do this by giving them the following details:



Peter Cousins

MA graduate in Conflict Resolution from the University of Bradford,

now a PhD candidate in Peace History at the University of Granada, Spain

I received a grant from Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust in 2007 when I was beginning my master's course in Conflict Resolution at Bradford. Aside from a fresh educational challenge, I was hoping to see if that introduction to a new field would tempt me sufficiently to build a career within it.

I am pleased to say it most certainly did! Alongside my MA, I trained as a community mediator with Community Accord in Bradford, which some years later proved valuable when I was invited to work professionally for the service, a job I held for about 3.5 years.

An entirely different part of my professional life has played out in Colombia. I spent a number of years working amid, and in the context of, the armed conflict, both academically and with NGOs in Colombia, particularly with victims and grass-roots social leaders. While there, I met my future spouse. I am a co-founder of Rodeemos el Diálogo, a transnational network supporting the peace processes from civil society.

The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust
Registered charity number: 313812
PO Box 76132, London E8 9HE

What to leave?

You could choose to leave the Trust a specific cash sum or alternatively a percentage of your estate.

What to tell us?

It is entirely up to you whether you tell us that you are remembering the Trust in your Will. We will never ask you to share information about the value or type of gift you have chosen to leave to the Trust. That is a private matter for you. You simply have to tell your solicitor or professional adviser how much, or alternatively what percentage of your estate, you would like to leave to the Trust.

Your Gift, Our Promise

We recognise that when you prepare your Will, your family and close ones must come first. We know that personal circumstances change and there might be a time when you decide you need to take the Trust out of your Will.

Finally, if you do choose to remember the Trust with a gift in your Will: thank you - we will use it wisely!

Any queries?

If you have any questions about making a donation or remembering the Trust in your Will, please contact our Clerk at admin@stapleytrust.org

These days I am based mainly in Spain, where I have been pursuing a PhD in peace history at Granada University. I have about 18 months to go before I finish. I also served for five years, until the end of last year, as a Vice-President of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, a 100-year-old pacifist entity dedicated to the spread of nonviolence around the world. This organisation is the particular focus of my PhD.

None of this has afforded much other than a hand-to-mouth existence, but it has been enriching in many, many other ways. I should like to take this opportunity to thank you – for the support you offered in helping to kick-start the career I have since proceeded to build.

With thanks and best wishes from Granada!

We have updated the Stapley Trust guide

Grants from other charitable funders

Much as we would love to help every student in financial need, our Trust's funds are very limited so sometimes we can't help or can't help enough. Our short guide, Charitable Grants for Postgraduate Study in the UK, aims to offer some alternatives to UK-based students seeking charitable grants to finance further or higher degrees.

With help from colleagues in other grant-making charities, we revised and updated the guide in 2023.

Part 1 provides information and links to print and online searchable directories of UK grant makers. Part 2 provides links to some specific UK grant makers that we know have helped students seeking support.

According to our latest annual survey, 78% of the students who have used the guide found it useful.

We encourage you to share the guide with friends!

You can find it [here](#).





Gaia Ardizzone, DPhil student in Medical Anthropology

University of Oxford

I have been passionate about Medical Anthropology since my days as an undergraduate student. I have always been fascinated by medicine and the body and advancing research on the relationship between gender and experiences of medicine, social justice and gendered violence.

I have always been a self-funded student, and throughout my academic career I often struggled financially as I had to worry about covering fees, rent and daily costs of living. I often juggled several jobs along with the standard coursework and deadlines of university life. I received a grant from the Trust at a time when I was struggling so much with money that I thought I might have to leave my master's halfway through. With support from the Trust, I went on to complete my 2-year master's with a Distinction, submitting a thesis on negative experiences of hospital births in the UK, and receiving an award from my University for the use of the research material I had collected.

I am now going into the second year of my DPhil, where I am conducting independent research on home birthing in the UK while

Meet our newest trustees

Dr John Kirkland OBE, appointed November 2022



Dr John Kirkland OBE, trustee

I have an extensive background in international scholarships. I was responsible for overseeing the three main UK government scholarship schemes - Commonwealth, Marshall and Chevening Scholarships - during my period as Deputy Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

I also worked in senior roles at Brunel University, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and Wellcome Trust. I am the Chair of a new charity, Diversity in Development, which aims to make international development more accessible to those from lower socioeconomic groups. A firm believer of the transformative role that scholarships and higher education can play, I hope to use my role as a trustee to make the benefits of higher education available to those who could not otherwise afford them.

Paul Trimmer, appointed November 2022

I am currently a Director at the Royal Society of Biology (RSB), with direct responsibility for Degree Accreditation, Professional Register and Training. A key area of work for me over the last 10 years has been developing the RSB's degree accreditation programme, which launched in 2012; this programme now covers 60%+ of UK universities ranging from Foundation Degrees through to Doctoral Training Programmes. Working with senior academics and industry representatives on the Accreditation Committee, assessor panels and at individual institutions, I have become familiar with the higher education sector (more specifically in the Biosciences). This includes the challenges and opportunities faced by students, institutions and employers, and the differing rules for the devolved nations.



Paul Trimmer, trustee

Financial barriers should not stop the best and the brightest students, regardless of background, from

working as a teaching assistant across different colleges and departments, and as a research assistant on two separate research projects. As a DPhil student, I am exposed to a great deal of knowledge and networks of like-minded, curious and fascinating people, and I am thrilled to continue my academic journey.

Saying that receiving a grant from the Trust was life changing would be an understatement! It has given me the invaluable opportunity to continue my academic career, a goal that I have been working towards for 8 years now. I am very excited to continue to build on my skills as a young researcher and an academic, and I wish to thank the Trust for enabling me to do so.

accessing higher education programmes and the fact that Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust is working to help address this was a significant reason in motivating me to apply to be a trustee. At a time when the cost of living has risen at an unprecedented rate, grants such as those delivered by the Trust will become ever more important in ensuring that students can access the degrees and postgraduate opportunities that the UK is renowned for delivering. I am looking forward to my time as a trustee and working with my new Board colleagues in ensuring the Trust meets its charitable objectives.

Dr Claire Mera-Nelson, appointed July 2023

I am Director, Music at Arts Council England where I am responsible for the development of national strategy and policy for music in England. My work has included a major research study into Fairness and Inclusion in Classical Music, introduction of a new funding programme for the grassroots music sector and – in response to the Covid-19 pandemic – overseeing elements of the UK Government’s Culture Recovery Funds.

Originally a Baroque violinist working with many internationally renowned ensembles, for almost 10 years I was Director of Music at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Today I continue to advise and support students and colleagues in specialist institutions in the UK and beyond in a range of capacities. Known internationally as a passionate advocate for innovation and inclusion in the arts, my lifelong focus is enabling young people from all backgrounds to access and thrive in the music and wider arts industries.



Dr Claire Mera-Nelson, trustee

Hugh Smith, appointed July 2023



Hugh Smith, trustee

Some years back, I undertook a Master’s degree in business at McGill University, Montreal. Without the benefit of a Commonwealth Scholarship, I would not have been able to undertake those studies. I hope that my involvement with the Trust will allow me, in turn, to play a part in facilitating a similar benefit for others.

My principal expertise is in the



Emily Rooke, Recent MPerf (Voice) Graduate,

Royal College of Music

Photograph Olivia Da Costa

I first became interested in music when I was offered violin lessons aged 8. I began singing at high school and studied a range of genres including choral music and musical theatre before studying classical music and opera at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

This summer, I graduated from the Royal College of Music with distinction. The course allowed me to explore myself as a musician and gave me the space and encouragement to take risks. Throughout my time there, I performed as a soloist and chorus member in cantatas, opera scenes and full-scale operas - I even became a puppeteer for one opera production! I particularly enjoyed working with the Historical Performance Department where I had the opportunity to learn Baroque Dance.

As well as performing, I co-curated a digital exhibition focusing on composer and suffragette Dame Ethel Smyth with the RCM Museum. I also worked in outreach and operated the surtitles for some college operas.

human resources and general management fields. After a 25-year corporate career, I ran my own small HR consultancy business dealing typically with recruitment, training and development, staff relations and sometimes redundancies. Clients ranged from financial services to manufacturing to education.

I have recently retired from most of this work but continue to serve as an Employment Tribunal lay-member. This is interesting work which allows me to bring my perspective to the judgment of a range of challenging employment issues and disputes.

I have held trustee and non-executive director roles at the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. I have been a school governor, and now hold trusteeship with the Heart of Kent Hospice.

Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust is seeking a part-time Administrator

Do you want to help improv access to post-graduate education?

After almost 5 years in post, our Clerk to the Trustees, Colin Nee, will be leaving us in May 2024. We wish him all the best for the future!

We are now seeking an exceptional, motivated individual to take over from Colin as our part-time Administrator. The Administrator will be our sole employee and will work from home.

Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust helps academically gifted students overcome financial and other barriers to postgraduate education in the UK. We are a registered charity working across the UK.

The role

- Promoting and administering from end to end our annual grant rounds
- Servicing the Trustee Board, committees and trustee groups
- Ensuring that the Trust fulfils all regulatory and reporting requirements

During my time at RCM, I was fortunate to partake in external projects including performing on the main stage at the Wales Millennium Centre for Welsh National Youth Opera's production of Cherry Town, Moscow (Cheryomushki) by Shostakovich. I also worked with the London College of Fashion for a project in the beautiful setting of the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The aim of the project was to inspire audiences to create costume designs for characters from Hansel and Gretel.

My final recital at the RCM was a special one. I chose pieces which I love to perform and also reflected my interest in folk music and Celtic languages. It included music in English, German, French, Welsh, Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic.

Click [here](#) to view a recent recording.

Not long ago, I launched my new website: www.emilyrooke.com with details of upcoming events, recent recordings, photography and more.

The grants I received from the Trust made such a difference to my life as a student. They gave me the chance to focus completely on my studies and helped to alleviate any financial worries and concerns. Thank you!

- Drafting organisational budgets and financial reports, maintaining all financial records and assisting with annual accounts
- Coordinating and contributing to the development of organisational policies and procedures and long-term planning.

The person we're looking for

- A minimum of 3 years' experience in a senior administrative role in a charity
- Knowledge and experience of supporting charity trustees
- Experience of lead responsibility for maintaining an organisation's financial records
- High-level IT skills; fully competent regarding the Ms365 suite
- Exceptional organisational and prioritisation skills; self-motivating and self-disciplined
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Please visit our website to view the job description, person specification and details of how to apply: www.stapleytrust.org

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Monday 8 January 2024.

We expect to invite shortlisted applicants to an interview on 18th January 2024.

