SCHOLARSHIP AND STUDENT BURSARY WORKING GROUP

FURTHER STUDIES GRANTS

Preamble

Some funds from the Home Mission appeal are allocated for Further Studies grants. These are administered by the above group. Both the availability and amount of the grants are at the discretion of the group acting on behalf of the Baptist Union.

The Purpose of the Grants

Grants from this fund are made to assist accredited Baptist ministers in a qualifying office to meet the costs incurred in studying for a higher degree or other approved qualification.

Applicants

- Applicants must be accredited Baptist ministers serving in a qualifying office as defined for the Ministerial Recognition Rules.
- Applicants must be commended as suitable for the course by two referees, including their Regional Minister, and submit evidence that a place on the proposed course has been awarded to them.

Restrictions on applicants

- Normally grants will not be available for those taking second degrees at the same level as they already hold. (Degrees in different disciplines from previous careers are not taken into account.)
- If a minister who has completed a qualification with the support of the fund wishes to undertake further study at a higher level, the group will not normally consider a new application until three years have elapsed since the last award.
- Newly accredited ministers should ensure that any further study is approved by their college as part of their learning contract.

Appropriate courses

Grants can be made towards the costs of degrees in theology and other approved courses. These must, in the opinion of the Group, advance the minister's level of academic attainment and/or competence in some aspect of ministry. The duration of the course must normally exceed one academic year and be followed while ministry continues in the qualifying office.

Preference will be given to courses offered by colleges affiliated to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and applicants who opt for courses at other institutions shall be required to indicate the reason for their choice.

Grants

Grants awarded shall be determined as follows:

- for a largely taught qualification (such as taught Masters or specialist Diplomas) a flat rate grant to be determined by the Group will be awarded. In 2023 this was £600.
- for a research degree undertaken at an affiliated College, a grant awarded will be a proportion of fees and expenses directly incurred in following the course. The percentage will be determined by the Group and depend on the number of applicants and the amount of money in the fund after the flat rate payments have been made.

- for a research degree undertaken at any other institution, a grant awarded will be the same proportion as above, but applied only to fees.
- in exceptional circumstances, where a taught degree is undertaken as a deliberate or required step towards undertaking doctoral research, the Group may at its discretion award a proportional grant rather than a flat rate payment. It is expected that an affiliated college would (a) identify to the Group that the applicant is on this track and (b) agree to match fund any grant made by the Group, to indicate their commitment to supporting the applicant's academic development.

Grants for taught degrees will be available for up to three years. Grants for research degrees will be available for the planned duration of the programme (excluding writing-up time) – this will often be for five or six years, but will vary according to the individual arrangement with the university. These need not be consecutive years.

Applications

Initial applications must be made on the form supplied by the Ministries Team. This is available on request from ministries@baptist.org.uk. Subsequent applications for the same course must also be made in writing, but will require only a simpler Grant Renewal Application form rather than the full details supplied at the start of the course. Renewal applications must be supported by a report from a tutor or supervisor. Applications should reach the office by 31 May before the commencement of the academic year for which the grant is requested.

Dissertations/Theses

In order to build up a body of Baptist thinking and research, recipients of support from this fund whose degree work includes the writing of a dissertation or thesis are asked to supply a copy to the Angus Library at Regent's Park College (the denominational archive) and to send an electronic copy to the Ministries Team. In order to avoid additional expense, the hard copy can be an "examination copy" in which any required minor amendments and typographical corrections have been made by hand, rather than needing an extra copy of the final version to be printed and bound.