

## Aspire Awards – Frequently Asked Questions

### “What are the three different funds available?”

**Your Degree** – a grant is available to support one customer or service user per annum who is aspiring to start or complete an undergraduate degree. Applicants must provide evidence of acceptance onto their chosen course along with evidence of obtained or predicted A level grades. Applications are usually reviewed in July/August each year. Please note that we currently don't fund postgraduate degrees.

**Your Career** – a grant is available to help residents and service users who want to complete training to help get into employment, improve their career prospects or start a small business but are unable to do so due to lack of money. Grants will only be considered where there is no other source of funding available.

**Your Talent** – this funding is available for customers with a proven talent in art, sports or music to cover costs of training or equipment.

### “Who is eligible for an Aspire Award?”

To apply for an Aspire Award you must be living in a Guinness property or have been using Guinness services for at least six months. You must be named on the Tenancy or Lease Agreement or be the child of the tenant/leaseholder/shared owner and living at the property at the time of submitting your application and receiving your award.

### “What is the deadline for getting my application form in and what if I can't get all the information in time?”

We judge applications two times a year. The deadline is 5pm on the published date (this can be found on our website or contact [aspire.awards@guinness.org.uk](mailto:aspire.awards@guinness.org.uk) for details). If you can't get all the information in time, then your application will be held until the next round of judging.

### “Who could I ask to provide me with a reference?”

Your reference must be by someone who has known you for at least two years. You could ask a schoolteacher, family friend or someone you currently work or volunteer with.

### “What qualifies as proof of fees?”

We will need you to provide us with evidence of how much the course/training/equipment will cost. You could send us a link to the course/training provider's website if they have the fees listed on there or a copy of the prospectus or booking form if that shows the fees.

If your application is for books or equipment then you can email us a wish list from the website we can buy it from, or take a screen shot of the website with the prices, or if you have a brochure you could highlight the items you need and send that to us.

**“Could you recommend a course for me?”**

We are unable to recommend a course for you. You must have already selected the course you wish to study before you submit an application form.

**“Can a member of Guinness staff help me fill in my application form?”**

Yes, however the information on the form must be accurate to you. “I’m part way through my course and the Aspire Awards have supported me previously, will I be able to apply again?”

You can apply more than once for an Aspire award but we will only award grants to individuals once in a financial year (April to March) and a maximum of twice in the lifetime of the awards.

**“Can I change or add to my application if it’s successful”**

If your application is approved the grant is applicable only for the course, equipment or items specified in the original application and subsequent additions will not be considered.

**“When will I receive the funding?”**

If your application is successful, the Aspire Award team will send you an email stating the next steps shortly after the judging has taken place. If your award is for course fees then you will need to book your place on the course and ask the training provider to send an invoice to you or the Aspire Awards team. If your award is for books or equipment then the Aspire Awards team will make arrangements for these to be sent to you within 6 weeks of you being informed that you have received an award (subject to availability).

**“How does the funding get paid?”**

We will pay course fees directly to the training provider and purchase equipment on your behalf.

**“Can I apply for a grant to fund travel or training/education abroad?”**

No grants are not available for travel or training abroad or for purchases outside of the United Kingdom.

**“Who do I contact with questions I may have?”**

The Aspire Awards team on [aspire.awards@guinness.org.uk](mailto:aspire.awards@guinness.org.uk).

## Your Career

**“I need a laptop to be able to complete assignments as part of my course and can't afford to buy one, does this qualify as an exceptional circumstance?”**

No, we wouldn't be able to accept that as an exceptional circumstance. Exceptions for requesting a laptop are for courses where the laptop and software are completely bespoke such as Graphic Design. You could have a look to see if there are alternative funding options available to you. This is a helpful website when looking for other grant funds:

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

**“What qualifications can I apply for under Your Career funding”**

We will consider applications for vocational qualifications up to and including level 5 in the National qualification framework as set by the government: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>. We do not offer funding for undergraduate or post graduate degrees or qualifications level 6 upwards.

**“I want to start a new business – what information do I need to provide?”**

As well as completing an application form, providing proof of costs and a character reference you will also need to send us a business plan. If you're planning on running a business from home, you must have been granted permission via your customer liaison team prior to applying for an Aspire award and provide evidence of the permission.

Please note that we do not fund premises costs or staff salaries.

## Your Talent

**“Can I use this to cover travel for my coach or parents too?”**

No, travel is only for the person who applied for the grant.

**“What is the application process?”**

Step One Decide which funding you would like to apply for. Please note that only one type of funding per application form will be considered and if you're applying for a training course you must find the course before applying.

Step Two Find out the costs of the training, equipment or funding you require. You will need to provide proof of this with your application. (Please refer to the terms and conditions for full details of what grants can be used for)

Step Three Fill in the form telling us why you should receive an Aspire Award; please provide as much detail as possible.

Step Four Get a reference, this must be by someone who has known you for at least two years. You could ask a school teacher, family friend or someone you currently work or volunteer with.



Step Five Send your completed form to us. Applications will be considered two times per year, please see our website for the latest submission deadlines:

- Email it to [Aspire.awards@guinness.org.uk](mailto:Aspire.awards@guinness.org.uk)

Remember to include your reference and proof of costs. Please note that incomplete applications or applications without the supporting documents will not be considered.