

Mercian Collaboration Delegate Travel Bursary scheme

Mercian 2025: Resilience, Relevance, and Reach: Libraries Making an Impact!

(#Mercian25)

Wednesday, September 10th 2025, at the Techno Centre, Coventry University Technology Park.

We are excited to announce our new Mercian Collaboration Delegate Travel Bursary scheme!

The annual Mercian Collaboration Conference is funded by sponsorship and is free to attend for staff at Mercian member institutions, however we recognise that there are other barriers to attendance, i.e. financial, logistical, or personal issues. We are launching a new Delegate Travel Bursary scheme to support potential delegates and member institutions as follows:

- Gaining individual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) experience by attending and participating in the annual conference.
- Recognising and mitigating barriers to attendance, such as additional costs incurred due to using accessible transportation.
- Providing CPD opportunities and mitigating training and development costs.

The Delegate Travel Bursary Scheme will also enhance the Conference by enabling representatives from all Mercian member institutions to attend where possible.

Who is eligible?

Members of Mercian Collaboration can apply for a Delegate Travel Bursary. Applications will be assessed on the following eligibility criteria:

- Where a Mercian member institution is unable to fund travel to the conference from normal training/staff development budgets, i.e. due to funding and budgetary constraints.
- Priority will be given to first-time Mercian conference attendees.
- Due to limited funding, where an institution is already supporting a delegate to attend, the Delegate Travel Bursary should not be used to support an additional place.
- An applicant who has received funding for a Delegate Travel Bursary will be ineligible to apply again for 2 years (e.g. a member who attends in this way in 2025, would not be eligible to apply again until 2027).

How to apply

- Applications are submitted via options on the delegate booking form.
- The application process enables prospective delegates to self-declare any additional requirements or considerations (i.e. personal or mobility), plus estimated costs, to be considered as part of their application.

Awarding Delegate Travel Bursaries

The Chair and Vice Chair will review all eligible applications, with successful applicants receiving a final decision after delegate bookings close on **Wednesday 6th August / five weeks** prior to the conference. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified.

- We will prioritise based on the eligibility criteria.
- Where all applicants meet eligibility criteria, we will award one place for each applying Mercian Member institution on a randomised basis (i.e. 'out of a hat').
- Multiple delegates can apply from Mercian Member institutions, however only one application will be granted a Delegate Travel Bursary per institution in the first instance*.
- Where the full number of available bursaries isn't met, we will consider a second Delegate Travel Bursary application from a Mercian Member institution.
- *Where there are several applicants from a Mercian Member institution, a decision will be made based on eligibility criteria. Where several applicants meet eligibility criteria, a decision will be made at random 'out of a hat'.
- Delegate Travel Bursary applications and decisions are confidential to the Mercian Collaboration Conference Group; successful applicants do not need to declare that they have received a Delegate Travel Bursary.

Payment / Repayment

No repayment is expected but should training funds be made available by an institution after a sponsored place is granted the member concerned should ask their institution if they can reimburse Mercian Conference wholly or in part for the Delegate Travel Bursary costs.

Claiming travel expenses

If approved, claiming and reimbursing travel expenses is as per SCONUL guidance:

"The following expenses will be reimbursed on production of the relevant receipts or tickets (please note that collection receipts are not acceptable):

- Public transport should be used wherever possible. Only the cost of standard class travel will be reimbursed unless it can be demonstrated that another class is cheaper. It is expected that travel arrangements will be made as early as possible to ensure that the fare is the most economical available. Travel by taxi to complete a journey will be reimbursed if public transport is not practical.
- Travel by private vehicle will be reimbursed if it is more economical or practical than using public transport. If a car is used SCONUL will reimburse at the rate of 45p per

mile (for a personal car) or the cost of hiring a car from a shared or similar scheme. Car parking and Congestion Charge fees will be reimbursed if appropriate."

Delegates who are awarded travel bursaries are required to complete a SCONUL expense claim form and a BACS payment form.

Expense claims and BACS forms must be forwarded to SCONUL after the conference with appropriate authorisation Steering Group (Vice Chair & Sponsor Conference Group or Treasurer) for travel expenses to be reimbursed.

Documentation required

Copies of the applicant's request to their institution for funding and the subsequent institutional response should be forwarded to the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Officer.