

# University philanthropy: The Wolfson Foundation

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## Key findings

Established in 1955, Sir Isaac Wolfson established the Wolfson Trust. It is a strong supporter of science and innovation as well as the arts. It is notable for its funding of infrastructure.

- Our analysis of its giving between 2014-18 shows that the Wolfson Foundation awards around 40% of its total giving annually to universities and higher education institutions, primarily in the UK.
- In the last five reported years it has given £62.7m in grants to 71 universities and higher education institutions. This includes nine OxBridge colleges.
- UK universities are by far the biggest beneficiaries. 64 British universities received 90% of Wolfson Foundation university giving, totalling £56.3m.
- The University of Oxford – and four of its colleges – received the largest sum from the Foundation (£5.0m), followed by University College, London (£4.3m). In third place is Cambridge University – and five constituent colleges – which received £3.3m (\$11.9m).
- The top 10 university beneficiaries are all British, except one. Collectively, they received 46% of Wolfson Foundation giving (£29.1m).
- Israel is the preferred region for international giving. 10% of the Foundation's university giving went to Israel's six principal universities.
- The Weizmann Institute – with which the Wolfson family has a long association – was the the largest international beneficiary receiving £2.5m between 2014-18. It also received the largest single donation to an overseas university - £1.5m - in 2014 for its *Israel National Center for Personalised Medicine*.
- The University of Cape Town has received two donations between 2014-18 amounting to £450k. The largest donation was a contribution to the UCT's Neurosciences Institute.

## About UniversityPhilanthropy.com

*UniversityPhilanthropy.com is the dedicated research arm of The Cape Partnership, the London-based public affairs and policy advisory firm. Our research looks exclusively at trends in UK philanthropy and giving to non-UK universities. Contact: [office@capepartnership.com](mailto:office@capepartnership.com)*

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## Key facts

With assets of £850m and disbursements of £30-35m annually, the Wolfson Foundation is a significant supporter of universities and higher education. It often funds major infrastructure projects.

### Top 5 international beneficiaries of Wolfson Foundation giving

Institution	Country	Total (2014-18)
Weizmann Institute	Israel	£2.5m
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Israel	£912k
Technion	Israel	£882k
Tel Aviv University	Israel	£846k
Ben Gurion University	Israel	£648k



### Top 10 beneficiaries of Wolfson Foundation giving (2014-18)

University	Country	Sum
Oxford	UK	<b>£5.0m</b>
University College, London	UK	<b>£4.3m</b>
Cambridge	UK	<b>£3.3m</b>
Warwick	UK	<b>£3.0m</b>
Imperial	UK	<b>£2.5m</b>
Nottingham	UK	<b>£2.5m</b>
Edinburgh	UK	<b>£2.5m</b>
Weizmann	Israel	<b>£2.5m</b>
Newcastle	UK	<b>£2.0m</b>
Exeter	UK	<b>£2.0m</b>

## Funding

The Wolfson Trust was established by British retailer Sir Isaac Wolfson, his wife and their son. It has a long history of supporting universities, notably infrastructure. An early example was the donation of £250,000 to London University in 1958 to provide a new hall of residence for Commonwealth students.

In the past five years, the Foundation's largest individual donations to universities reflect this:

- University of Exeter (2014) - £2m donation to its Living Systems Institute.
- University of Edinburgh (2016) - £2m donation to its research complex at the School of Biological Sciences.
- University of Warwick (2016) - £2m donation to its Mathematical Sciences building.
- University College, London (2018) - £2m donation to its new building for UCL Neuroscience

### About our research

The purpose of this research was to identify university giving by the Wolfson Foundation. Data over the past five years used to compile this study has been drawn from the Foundation's website and the UK Charity Commission. For more information, contact: [office@capepartnership.com](mailto:office@capepartnership.com)

