

A study of non-UK university UK charitable trusts 2014-19

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Key findings

Our second annual survey into the scope and scale of UK charitable trusts set up by non-UK universities shows that:

- Between 2014-19 charitable trusts established by international universities have received over £342.5m (\$460m) from UK based philanthropic giving.
- According to our study there are now 84 universities which have active charitable trusts for fundraising purposes in the UK.
- 2019 was the most successful year yet for non-UK university charitable trusts, collectively reporting 37% growth over 2018 income. Collectively 73 universities raised £78.6m in 2019 compared to £57.5m in 2018.
- Charitable trusts appear to be established primarily with the view of fostering giving among alumni and major donors based in the UK.
- The evidence suggests that charitable trusts are long term investments, and do not afford a quick return.
- 76% of university charities were established over 10 years ago.
- Universities in Israel, South Africa and the US are the most successful at income generation via dedicated charitable trusts.
- US universities are the chief beneficiaries by volume of donations. 25 US institutions raised £162.4m between 2014-19. US universities raised £39.8m in 2019 compared to £18.6m in 2018, a rise of 114% year on year.
- Israeli universities raised £150.9m from 2014-19, and £30.6m in 2019, an 82% rise since 2014.
- Commonwealth universities comprise 42% of non-UK charitable trusts identified in the research.
- The cohort of New Zealand university charitable trusts were the biggest Commonwealth winners in 2019. Five universities received £1.44m, 60% of which was donated to Massey University.

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

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Key facts

Establishing a charitable trust in the UK by an overseas university is not new. In 1950, Israel's Weizmann Institute created a UK-based foundation. Wits University in South Africa followed in 1955. Such trusts play a significant role in raising funds. Below shows the five largest university trusts by income from 2014-2019:



University	Country	Est.	Total
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Israel	2007	£45.8m
University of Pennsylvania	US	2002	£43.8m
Weizmann Institute	Israel	1950	£38.5m
Tel Aviv University	Israel	1969	£35.1m
Princeton	US	2008	£17.7m

Top 10 university charitable trusts income in 2019

University	Country	Income
University of Pennsylvania	US	£18.1m
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Israel	£10.0m
Weizmann Institute	Israel	£8.6m
Ben Gurion University	Israel	£5.2m
Princeton University	US	£3.9m
Tel Aviv University	Israel	£3.8m
Stanford University	US	£2.8m
University of Chicago	US	£2.7m
Brown University	US	£2.0m
= University of Haifa / Harvard University	Israel / US	£1.7m

Analysis: A charitable trust requires a patient approach

There has been a long tradition of establishing charitable trusts for non-UK universities in Britain. According to our survey, the Weizmann Institute was set up 70 years ago. Today, it is one of the most successful in generating funds.

The biggest funds by income are often those which were established many years ago, reflecting the long-term investment and lead-times required in alumni development and major donor giving. It should not be a surprise that the top 40 university trusts by income were all operating before 2010. University charitable trusts can be highly effective as part of the fundraising toolkit, but they rarely deliver quick returns.

About our research

The purpose of this research was to identify those non-UK universities which have set up UK charitable trusts for fundraising purposes. Information sourced to compile this study of 84 university charities (please note Wits University has two UK-based trusts) is available at the Charity Commission. Financial data reported does not reflect all outbound UK giving to non-UK universities. For more information, please contact: office@capepartnership.com

