

NATIONAL FORUM FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING

**Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund
(Driving Enhancement of Digital Capacity for Impact
in Irish Higher Education)**

Call for Proposals—Phase 2—2015

1. Call for Proposals

The objectives and priorities of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund reflect and support the enhancement and transformation agenda that is being pursued at both a national and a European level. The strength of the Irish higher education system will only be fully realised through collaboration across the sector. The aim will be to ensure that this fund is used strategically to optimise the synergies and scope that can be enabled by strong sectoral collaboration, or through partnerships with other education providers or external stakeholders, for maximum national impact.

Specifically this call for proposals aims to support the advancement of the recommendations of the report *Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for enhancement in a digital world 2015-2017* – which brings together the findings and priorities from the sectoral consultation, research and scoping process for building digital capacity undertaken by the National Forum.

National priorities have now been identified. These can be progressed with the strategic use of this fund while also fostering innovation on the ground in a way that speaks to diversity and our collective commitment to excellence. Embracing digital technology and building digital literacy remain key priorities but it is clear that these must sit within the wider enhancement agenda for teaching and learning.

Phase 2 maintains a focus on collaboration for national impact.

- 1.2 The aim of this phase of the fund is to enhance teaching and learning by driving enhancement capacity in higher education institutions. This call issues in relation to proposals type A and B below. A small number of pre-specified projects as recommended by the roadmap are being supported through direct funding and will be led by the National Forum.

Proposal Type A A sector-wide movement focused on building digital literacy and digital engagement for students and teachers on the ground.

Proposal Type B A focus on enlisting academic disciplines as key units of change—in partnership with students for teaching and learning enhancement. These proposals must be led by Deans/Heads of Department/School/Faculty with a strong focus on discipline specific

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pedagogies for enhancement and impact on student learning within fields of study. This may also include generic skills that have very strong discipline specific elements.

Pre-specified Nationally Coordinated Projects A small number of pre-specified national projects that through the consultation, research and scoping process have been identified as key priorities. These pre-specified projects focus on key actions for the collective enhancement of the sector (Full details of each of these projects can be found in Appendix 1).

2. Context for the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund

- 2.1 The higher education sector is acknowledged as a sector that through its activities in teaching, learning and research, builds confidence and competence among all its learners and fosters the development of effective, ethical, imaginative and innovative citizens who are equipped to play a positive role in society.

The National Forum provides a key system-level infrastructure for the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education, and for the implementation of the recommendations of the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* in this area. The National Forum aims to support institutions to enhance the learning experience of all students in Irish higher education.

Building digital capacity for teaching and learning is a key element of the National Forum's work-plan and is interlinked with its other strategic elements, namely:

- Professional development;
- Identifying, endorsing and awarding excellent teaching;
- Scholarship in teaching and learning;
- Partnership and collaboration with key networks and groups.

- 2.2 A series of cross-sectoral consultations has taken place to inform both the work of the National Forum and in particular the roadmap for building digital capacity in Irish higher education¹. In the extended roadmap report, a strong vision for building digital capacity is articulated, which includes the following four key recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Prioritise the strategic development of digital capacity in institutional and national policy and quality frameworks in a way that supports innovation for impact.

¹ *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education; A roadmap for enhancement in a digital world 2015-2017.*

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Recommendation 2: Strengthen and support collaboration within and between institutions, and with different parts of the higher education sector; develop shared policies and infrastructure that reflect the complexity of an increasingly digital world.

Recommendation 3: Develop a consistent, seamless and coherent digital experience for students in Irish higher education and actively engage with students and teachers to develop their digital skills and knowledge.

Recommendation 4: Develop a strong evidence base for enhanced pedagogy.

These four recommendations and their identified priorities underpin this call and form the strategic foundation for this next phase of investment. However the call also recognises that the human, relational aspects of excellent teaching environments are not necessarily or automatically enhanced by technology and makes provision for this by situating the call within the wider teaching and learning enhancement context.

Some of the priorities identified are already being progressed by project teams funded through the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2014 (Building Digital Capacity).

Areas already being progressed include for example a review of infrastructure across the sector, the development of national digital skills requirements within a national professional development framework. Full details of all proposals funded under the 2014 fund can be viewed at <http://teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/digital-enhancement-fund-2014-2015>. New proposals under phase 2 need to be cognisant of the projects and activities underway that have been funded through the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2014 to ensure coherence and avoid duplication of effort. Additionality will be an important component in the evaluation of all proposals submitted in response to this call.

In order to meet the diverse needs of the higher education sector, the 2015 call incorporates a variety of proposal types to address national, regional or local issues.

Proposal Type A Building digital literacy and engagement for students and teachers across all regions in Higher Education (Regional TEL Weeks –Regionally Co-ordinated Technology enhanced learning weeks)

Proposals are invited from existing regional clusters or other inter institutional collaborations to stimulate regional collaboration and innovation in teaching in learning with a focus on building digital skills of both students and teachers, while also giving rise to real time enhancements within and beyond the classroom. **Proposals should outline an integrated plan for developing digital literacy with teachers and students as part of innovative and digitally enhanced programme provision that will culminate in a week-long focus on technology enhancement teaching and learning across the regional collaboration.** During a scheduled week (to be specified in the proposals), new digitally enhanced teaching and learning innovations, activities, resources, ideas, experiences will be integrated into existing curricula and provided and showcased during that week. This is with a view to providing a stimulus for a longer term national approach to integrating digital capacity in teaching and learning. The Technology Enhanced Learning weeks will be promoted and supported at a regional and national level by the National Forum.

The integrated plan that must be submitted should include clear statements relating to:

- How the expertise of staff and students will be developed in advance of the week e.g., professional development opportunities.
- The range and type new or existing learning objects, technologies that might be harnessed to enhance teaching and learning activities.
- The involvement of and initiatives from different skills sets within the cluster – technological, pedagogical, discipline specific, scholarly learner support, library.
- How initiatives from individual teachers and discipline groups will be encouraged and promoted. (Institutions might for example support initiatives such as local innovation projects or discipline specific actions).
- The range and type of initiatives and the extent to which digital enhancements will have a demonstrated impact on learning, learner support. Learner experiences and learner performance.
- The strength and coherence of inter- and intra- institutional collaboration.
- The commitment to ensuring that organised TEL activities act as a stimulus for longer term sustainable impact.
- An evaluation plan, a way of capturing input and sharing nationally.

Key Dates Proposal Type A

Proposal Submission Date	September 9th 2015
Initial Feedback and guidance from International Panel	September 23rd 2015
Open Forum Presentation	November 11th and 12th 2015
Regional TEL week	Between Mid Feb. – End March 2016
Project Completion (including eval.)	June 2016
Budget Limit Guideline	75-150K

The funding allocation process will take account of the size of the institutions and the number of institutions in a particular collaboration. The minimum number of institutions in any collaboration will be three. The funding allocated will typically range between 75-150K

Allocation of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund: Principles and Processes as they relate to Proposal Type A

Proposal Type A Sector wide movement focused on building digital literacy for students and teachers

It is envisaged that proposals of this type will be submitted by each regional cluster² or other collaboration.

Funded projects must meet the following criteria:

- a. A clear and coherent plan for the preparation for and subsequent implementation of TEL week is articulated including the rationale for the collaboration.
- b. There is evidence of a coherent partnership approach across the regional cluster or collaboration along with good intra-institutional collaboration.
- c. Evidence of additionality, new activity and innovation for impact are clear within the proposal and clear evidence of fostering innovation and creativity of staff and students.
- d. A process of evaluation of impact is incorporated.
- e. The proposal is of a sufficient standard as judged by the International review panel.
- f. The proposal represents value for money.
- g. The minimum number of institutions in any collaboration will be three.

Management of process Proposals Type A

This section sets out the process for evaluation of proposals, including the marking system, the composition of the Assessment Panel and other requirements as appropriate.

All proposals will be completed using the National Forum online application facility. This facility will be available from June 2nd 2015 and can be accessed through the National Forum website www.teachingandlearning.ie

The process for applying for funding for Proposal Type 2 has two stages:

Stage 1 Written online submission

² (as outlined on pp.20–21 of the HEA report at http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/report_to_minister_-_system_configuration_2_0.pdf)

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All proposals should provide a clear outline of the project including timing of TEL week, activities and innovations to be incorporated, communication plan and outline budget.

Stage 2 Open Forum Presentation

Collaborative proposals must meet a sufficient quality requirement agreed by the international panel for progression to stage 2. Value for money is regarded as implicit in all proposals at all stages. Stage 2 will require the proposal, development and implementation team to present their initiative to a plenary group led by an independent chair and panel and to which all other proposers will be invited. Representatives from all partner institutions should attend. This Open Forum will provide opportunities to share ideas and identify synergies across different clusters and collaborations.

Following the Open Forum presentation, the international panel may make recommendations that they consider will enhance the implementation of the proposal. Proposal teams may be required to adopt these recommendations as a condition of receiving funding. The final project plan incorporating any changes after stage 2 must be submitted to the National Forum before funding is allocated.

Please note: Each institution can only be part of one submission under this category of funding.

Proposal Type B A focus on teaching and learning enhancement with the academic department as the unit of change in partnership with students

The extended roadmap emphasises the importance of the role of the discipline department/school/faculty as key drivers of change within an institution and the need for institutions to provide opportunities for disciplines and departments to work together to ensure sharing of ideas and the realisation of opportunities for innovation in partnership with students for teaching and learning enhancement. These proposals must be led by Deans/Heads of Department/School/Faculty with a strong focus on discipline-specific pedagogies for enhancement and impact on student learning within fields of study. Only one proposal per disciplinary area will be funded. This may also include generic academic skills that have very strong discipline-specific elements. We envisage that some disciplines might best be supported through one national-level pedagogical development plan, while others might be better supported at regional level. The minimum number of institutions in any collaboration will be three.

Proposals are sought from discipline groups/departments/schools/faculty across a regional cluster or other collaborative network outlining a coherent plan for pedagogical development within a discipline that incorporates actions that aim to address some/or all of the identified learning related priorities of students as outlined in Figure 3 (p.21 of the extended roadmap). In addition the proposal should outline how the planned change process:

- Investigates and identifies the potential of different technologies within a discipline.
- Shows how the innovation can add value to the learning challenges within a particular discipline.
- Complements institutional and regional efforts and increases overall impact with a better use of the limited resources available.
- Develops a shared understanding and competence in using technology that provides the discipline group/department/school/faculty a solid foundation to support further development and innovation.
- Facilitates staff and student peer-to-peer learning and collegiality.
- Works in collaboration with information and computing technology (ICT), learning technology support, library staff, students and other stakeholders.
- Provides opportunities for disciplines and departments to work together beyond their disciplines' 'signature pedagogies' to ensure sharing of ideas and the realisation of opportunities for innovation.
- Shares the learning of implementing and managing a change process within a discipline group/department/school/faculty across a cluster/collaboration for national impact.

Key Dates Proposal Type B

Brief Outline of Proposal	September 9th 2015
Stage 2 Announcements with guidance for proposal development	September 23rd 2015
Full Proposal Submission Date	November 4th 2015
Open Forum Presentation	November 11th 2015
Project Start	January 2016
Project Completion	June 2017
Budget Guideline	100-200K

Allocation of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund: Principles and Processes as they relate to Proposal Type B

Proposal Type B A focus on teaching and learning enhancement with the academic discipline as the unit of change in partnership with students

Proposals are sought from discipline groups/departments/schools/faculty across a regional cluster or other collaborative network outlining a **coherent plan for pedagogical development within a discipline** that incorporates actions that aim to address some/or all of the identified learning-related priorities of students as outlined in Figure 3 (p.21 of the extended roadmap): The proposal must involve those in leadership roles at institutional or departmental level.

Proposals will be judged on the following criteria:

- **Strength of coherence and collaboration for this particular initiative**
- **Strength of the rationale for the key pedagogical initiatives that will be implemented**
- **Strength of the change management strategy as judged by its potential to implement long term sustainable impact on student learning and engagement by discipline leaders**
- **Evidence of a whole departmental/discipline/school approach across the collaboration**
- **The strength of student partnership and input**
- **Level of proposed participation by all stakeholders, (e.g., Management, Teachers, IT, Library, Learning Support, other disciplines as appropriate)**

Please note that only one project per discipline area will be funded. The minimum number of institutions in any collaboration will be three.

Management of process Proposals Type B

5.1 This section sets out the process for evaluation of proposals, including the marking system, the composition of the Assessment Panel and other requirements as appropriate.

All proposals will be completed using the National Forum online application facility. This facility will be available from June 5th 2015 and can be accessed through the National Forum website www.teachingandlearning.ie

The process for applying for funding for all proposal types has two stages: Stage 1 requires proposers to develop a brief outline of the project. This will ensure that the

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resource and time requirements for stage 1 are kept to a minimum. Based on the outline submission (as judged against the criteria outlined above) the international panel will identify the projects they consider have the potential to develop sustainable change at discipline/department/school/faculty and will invite them to further develop their project proposal and to present their detailed plans at an open forum presentation (Stage 2) in November 2015. The open forum will provide the international panel and other members of the sector the opportunity to contribute to the final project specification.

Stage 1 Written online submission (providing a brief outline of the proposed project)

All proposals should provide a clear outline of the project proposed under each of the criteria outlined above.

Stage 2 Detailed plan for the project completion to be presented by the project team identified from stage 1 followed by an open discussion to take contributions from the international panel and other stakeholders from the higher education sector. The final project plan incorporating any changes after stage 2 must be submitted to the National Forum before funding is allocated.

Further Guidance for all Proposal types

3. **Scope of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2015 (Driving Enhancement of Digital Capacity for Impact in Irish Higher Education)**
 - 3.1 A thoroughly consultative and collaborative approach has already been adopted in order to develop and articulate the emerging digital roadmap. The resulting approach to funding allocation (outlined below) will aim to ensure that the proposal and allocation process is as collaborative, appropriate, transparent and inclusive as possible. The aim will be to ensure that funded projects optimise the synergies and scope that can be enabled by strong inter- and intra-institutional collaboration, for maximum national impact.
 - 3.2 The Fund will not be allocated to the creation of physical capacity or to proposals that could reasonably be expected to be funded from other public funding sources, e.g. research funding agencies, core grant funding. It will fund new initiatives and also activities that clearly build on or develop existing initiatives. All proposals must clearly show how they enhance or transform learning experiences for students.
 - 3.3 Institutions may only propose projects for completion within the timeframe and within the budget guideline indicated for each individual proposal type.
 - 3.4 Proposals should have regard for their lasting impact beyond the time frame of the initiative. Proposals should aim to give rise to real, beneficial & long-term change.
 - 3.5 Proposers are advised to read the comments from the international panel on the proposals submitted in response to the Teaching and Learning Enhancement call 2014 (Building Digital Capacity) available at <http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/?p=16508>
4.
 - 4.1 ***Budget Guidelines and Upper Limits for proposals.***

Proposals must adhere to the indicative budget guideline and upper limit for each proposal type.

Assessment Panel and Process

All Proposals of Type A and B funding must be of excellent quality and will be assessed by an independent panel of international experts. Institutions should have regard to this international dimension of the process, and should seek to use best international practice and theory to inform their proposals.

For all proposal types the panel will have the right to recommend amendments to all proposals submitted for greater national impact and value for money.

5.6 *Monitoring*

The National Forum will monitor the allocation of the enhancement fund on an ongoing basis. Institutions receiving funding will report regularly to the National Forum on:

- a) Activities undertaken; and
- b) Objectives attained, as defined in each initiative's implementation plan.

For all proposals an interim financial report, must be submitted dates to be confirmed. The National Forum may also put in place independent reviews of the projects funded.

The release of funds will be dependent upon the submission of satisfactory financial reports. A portion of the allocation will be retained pending completion of the project and a satisfactory final report including an evaluation of the proposal in terms of the agreed targets and performance indicators.

- 5.7** Failure on the part of an institution to provide adequate and timely information and/or failure to achieve objectives will be taken into account in any future calls and will result in the exclusion of the institution(s) concerned. Significant departure from the objectives of the proposal may result in the funding awarded being suspended or revoked.

Any deviation from the agreed activities, objectives and time lines will impact upon the release of the funding to the institution.

5.8 **Queries and clarifications**

The National Forum will take queries from all institutions up to the date of the presentation. All queries and responses will be dealt with via a dedicated publicly accessible National Forum website page.³

³ Queries should be addressed through www.teachingandlearning.ie

Pre-specified National Level Actions

These projects, led by the National Forum, will be scoped in partnership with the sector, the IUA, IOTI and HECA and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

- **National Project 1 National Policy Development (Digital)**
- **National Project 2 Open Access Agenda and Developing OER Capacity**
- **National Project 3 Data Analytics for Analysis of Learning Impact**

National Project 1 National digital policy development: guidelines, templates and frameworks

This action addresses Recommendation 2, Priority 1 of the extended roadmap.
Higher education institutions should work collaboratively to develop processes and policies that enable innovation and development in an increasingly digital environment.

In particular this project will

- *Support the provision of guidelines and frameworks for digital policy and partnership development based on key policies that can be customised to adapt to local cluster/institution/partnership requirements.*

Building digital capacity in higher education brings with it the need to develop additional policies to protect students, teachers and institutions, while also promoting innovation and engagement with new modes of learning. Rather than each institution developing its own individual policies, this project aims to identify the range of policies required and to develop national digital policy guidelines, frameworks and templates of that can be adapted for institutional or cluster needs.

National Project 2 Open Access Agenda and developing OER Capacity

This action addresses Recommendation 3 Priority 5 of the extended roadmap
Develop and implement open education principles and practices for Irish education that are aligned with EU policy and emerging international practice.

In particular this action will

- *Support the development or adoption of agreed metadata structures to enable teaching and learning objects to be curated into and accessed through institutional and shared repositories (in partnership with key stakeholders)*
- *Promote the adoption of open education principles (including the production and re-use of OERs) across the sector and facilitate uptake through collation of relevant research, international case studies and policy documents*

The Irish higher education sector has now developed a network of institutional and shared repositories. To date these repositories are, in the main, used for research output. This project aims to investigate and to develop a national metadata agreement for how existing teaching and learning objects can be curated and accessed through

these repositories. The project will develop a peer reviewed process for OERs that will ensure quality teaching and learning exemplars are available and usable throughout the sector.

National Project 3 Data Analytics for Analysis of Learning Impact

This action addresses Recommendation 4 Priority 3 of the extended roadmap **Foster and develop an informed approach across the sector, towards the potential of data analytics to inform pedagogic enhancements whilst giving due regard to the importance of process integrity for gathering and analysing such information**

In particular this action will

- *Complete a large-scale, collaborative learning analytics project linked to improving teaching, learning and learner supports in higher education*

Data analytics have been described as ‘ the use of data, statistical analysis and explanatory and predictive models to gain insights and act on complex issues.’⁴ This action using the analytics process will address the strategic question ‘how can analytics be used to improve teaching, learning and learner supports in higher education? It is envisaged that the analytics process⁵ will (a) find or collect the appropriate data to answer that question, (b) analyse the data in order to identify key avenues for prediction and insight, (c) feedback into the process of addressing strategic questions at an institutional, cluster and national level to inform decision making and planning.

ANALYTICS			
STRATEGIC QUESTION	DATA ANALYSIS AND PREDICTION	INSIGHT AND ACTION	FEEDBACK FOR NATIONAL IMPACT

⁴ Bichsel, J, (2012) Analytics in Higher Education, Benefits, Barriers, Progress and Recommendations (Research Report) Louisville, CO: EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research, August 2012, available from <http://www.educause.edu/ecar>.

⁵ The process outlined is adapted from the above report

APPENDIX 2

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

- Dublin City University
 - National University of Ireland Galway
 - Maynooth University
 - University College Cork
 - University College Dublin
 - University of Dublin, Trinity College
 - University of Limerick
-
- Athlone Institute of Technology
 - Cork Institute of Technology
 - Dublin Institute of Technology
 - Dundalk Institute of Technology
 - Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology
 - Galway–Mayo Institute of Technology
 - Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
 - Institute of Technology, Carlow
 - Institute of Technology, Sligo
 - Institute of Technology, Tallaght
 - Institute of Technology, Tralee
 - Letterkenny Institute of Technology
 - Limerick Institute of Technology
 - Waterford Institute of Technology

COLLEGES

- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- National College of Art and Design
- St. Patrick's College Drumcondra
- Mater Dei Institute of Education
- St Angela's College

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES (also eligible as partners for both project types)

- IOTI
- IUA

PLEASE NOTE:

Other colleges including independent colleges are eligible to participate in consortia as partners but are not eligible to receive funding and cannot lead consortia.