



NATIONAL FORUM  
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

HEA | AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS  
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Fund 2020

Transforming Teaching and Learning for Student Success

Call for Proposals

November 2020

This non-competitive call with a total value of €5m represents a significant commitment to the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. The directed funding allocation to each eligible institution from this fund is designed to enable the development of a strong foundation for future enhancement of teaching and learning within each institution in line with local priorities.

## SATLE - A Strategic Approach for Maximizing Impact

This Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding call is designed to form a coherent basis to drive teaching and learning innovation and enhancement across the higher education sector, bringing together teaching and learning expertise, institutional priorities and dedicated funding through the recurrent grant allocation, to support strategic alignment. This fund complements and supports previous investments made in this area under the annual Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2014-18, the Innovation and Transformation Fund 2018, the SATLE Fund 2019 and Pillar 3 of the Human Capital Initiative 2020.

Higher education institutions in receipt of the recurrent grant allocation are eligible for funding under this call, in accordance with the breakdown listed in Appendix 1. Private colleges and other institutions not included in the core grant allocation may participate in this call on the basis that the directed funding is sourced by the institution itself. Any such institutions wanting to participate in this call should contact [Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie](mailto:Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie) to confirm funding and focus.

### 1. About the National Forum

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education is the national body responsible for leading and advising on the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. In partnership with those who learn, teach, and lead in Irish higher education, the National Forum works to develop an inclusive, collaborative and innovative culture that maximises learning impact for the success of all students.

The National Forum Strategy 2019-2021 '[Leading Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning](#)' aims to ensure higher education students can continue to have an excellent teaching and learning experience that is informed by up-to-date research and facilitated by a high-quality learning environment and enhanced teaching approaches.

The strategy builds on the identified strengths of the National Forum, attends to the policy context within which it is embedded and identifies its four key strategic priorities as:

#### **The Professional Development of All Those Who Teach**

Promoting evidence-based, flexible, inclusive professional development for all those who teach, reflecting the contextual needs and drivers within and across higher education institutions

#### **Teaching and Learning in a Digital World**

Supporting those who learn, teach, and support learning to embrace and harness the potential of digital technologies with the goal of enhancing learning, teaching, and overall digital capability

#### **Teaching and Learning Enhancement Within and Across Disciplines**

Recognising that disciplines are a key unit of change in higher education, with a focus on disciplinary excellence in learning, teaching and assessment

## Student Success

Developing a vision of success, in partnership with students, with the aim of providing all students with the opportunity to fulfil their potential and become creators of new knowledge who are community engaged, ethically conscious, professionally competent and equipped to flourish in a global world.

## 2. Policy Context

The current national higher education strategy, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, sets out teaching and learning as the first of three interconnected core roles of higher education. Enhanced teaching and learning is fundamental to the achievement of objectives across key national policies related to employability, internationalisation, innovation, and equality of opportunity. The work of the National Forum informs, and is informed by, a range of national policies, strategies and frameworks including but not limited to Action Plans for Education, Higher Education System Performance Frameworks, HEA Strategic Plans, Strategy Statements of Quality and Qualifications Ireland, the Charter for Irish Universities, the Strategy of the Technological Higher Education Association, the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, and the National Skills Strategy.

## 3. Focus for this Call

The strategic focus of this call is *Transforming Teaching and Learning for Student Success*. Student success, as the outcome of a quality education, is central among the four key strategic priorities of the National Forum. While success has been shown to mean something different to each student, underpinning all aspects of student success are the learning with which students engage and the teaching that supports this learning.

A 2019 review of student perspectives, institutional and national policies, and related literature, supplemented by an extensive consultation process, resulted in Ireland's first national understanding of student success:

*Student success optimises the learning and development opportunities for each student to recognise and fulfil their potential to contribute to, and flourish in, society.*

*To be achieved, this requires a culture in Irish higher education that values inclusivity, equity and meaningful engagement between students, staff, their institutions and the wider community.*

Ireland's National Understanding of Student Success, 2019<sup>1</sup>

We now know that, within Irish higher education, potential enablers of student success include: policies and practices, student partnership and engagement, professional

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<sup>1</sup> See full report here: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/understanding-and-enabling-student-success-in-irish-higher-education/>

development, evidence-based decisions, transition supports, and assessment and feedback approaches.

Each of these enablers of student success have been impacted by the recent pandemic context. An exploration of insights from across the sector conducted by the National Forum in May 2020<sup>2</sup> provided a useful window into the effects on teaching and learning of the sudden move to online/remote education in the preceding months. How well individual departments and institutions were positioned to support students and staff through this crisis was noted to have been influenced by the investment of time and resources in digital (and non-digital) teaching and learning structures, resources, communities and leaders that had already taken place. While the higher education community faced challenges in 2020, the disruption to perspectives, processes and practices also indicated avenues for future enhancement. During National Forum stakeholder discussions, it was suggested that the higher education community would be well advised to 'return with a sense of questioning' in autumn 2020. This suggestion reflected a feeling that old approaches, structures and conventions could now be usefully viewed through new eyes.

This call represents an opportunity to support the higher education community to consolidate any positive disruptions to process and practice that occurred in 2020, with a view to enhancing efforts towards holistic approaches to enabling student success. The pandemic has taught us how quickly circumstances can change and the need for those who teach and those who learn to be confident in their knowledge and skills and supported in adapting their abilities to a variety of circumstances. Institutions are being prompted to reflect on what they have learned in 2020 and consider what this means for how they can strengthen the key enablers of student success within and across face-to-face, blended, online and remote teaching and learning contexts.

Through this €5m fund, the sector will be empowered to take a strategic and cooperative step forward with respect to enabling the success of all students.

#### **4. Enablers of Student Success**

Depending on local priorities, institutions may choose to focus their SATLE allocation on one or more of the enablers of student success listed below. The decision as to which enabler(s) will be the focus of allocated funding in a given institution will be decided at local level and captured in their response to this call.

##### **Enabling Policies and Practices**

Coupled with the sectoral cultures that contextualise them, policies and practices define the environment in which student success is grounded. The experience of the recent sudden move to online/remote learning left many members of the higher education community

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<sup>2</sup> See full report here: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/reflecting-and-learning-the-move-to-remote-online-teaching-and-learning-in-irish-higher-education/>

feeling that we would do well to retain the openness to change evident across the sector in 2020 and the related flexibility of attitude and process. Embracing student success necessitates a commitment on the part of the institution and its constituent schools and units to review their policies and practices, identify and address incompatibilities and misalignments and prioritise a seamless, coherent student experience. Policies and processes that enable student success are those which are implementable, situated in practice and reflective of the institution's priorities.

This funding call encourages a focus on taking a fresh look at policies and processes that impact upon the teaching and learning dimension of student success. Cognisance should be taken of what the institutional community has learned with respect to these policies and processes through the shift to online/remote teaching and learning and what this means for supporting the success of students into the future.

### Engagement and Student Partnership

Engaging and partnering with students in their learning is key to their success in higher education and beyond. Engagement is fostered through relevant, challenging, enriching curricula, through active, collaborative learning experiences, through interested teachers who are passionate about their subject areas and through institutional cultures that welcome meaningful partnership with their student communities. Partnering with students in their learning increases student motivation, self-efficacy and meta-cognition. Student engagement and partnership can change perspectives, processes and practice for the better.

This funding call encourages a focus on realising the potential of engagement and partnership within institutional contexts. Cognisance should be taken of what the institutional community has learned with respect to engagement and partnership through the shift to online/remote teaching and learning and what this means for supporting the success of students into the future.

### Professional Development and the Centrality of Staff Who Teach

Given the centrality of effective teaching to student success, the increasing need for agile curricula and pedagogical approaches, enhancing teaching capabilities through professional development has become a key focus at both system and institutional levels. Teaching and learning, whether in person or mediated by a device, is always centred on people and pedagogy. The pandemic has taught us how quickly circumstances can change and the need for those who teach and those who learn to be confident in their knowledge and skills and supported in adapting their abilities to a variety of circumstances.

This funding call encourages a focus on the professional development and centrality of staff who teach. Cognisance should be taken of the National Professional Development Framework<sup>3</sup>, what the institutional community has learned with respect to staff professional

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<sup>3</sup> See Framework here: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/national-professional-development-framework-for-all-staff-who-teach-in-higher-education/>

development through the shift to online/remote teaching and learning, and what this means for supporting the success of students into the future.

### Evidence-based Decision-making

There is a broad expanse of evidence on which to base departmental, faculty and institutional decisions related to teaching and learning for student success. This includes a breadth of teaching and learning scholarship nationally and internationally, annual national surveys such as StudentSurvey.ie and the Graduate Outcomes Survey, annual reports and statistics from bodies such as the HEA and QQI and institutional and learner data collected in accordance with local priorities. Staff and student experiences of teaching and learning within the pandemic context have been explored by the National Forum<sup>4</sup>, USI<sup>5</sup> and QQI<sup>6</sup>. And the 2019 Irish National Digital Experience (INDEX) Survey<sup>7</sup> provides a unique evidence base on the pre-pandemic digital engagement, experience and expectations of students and staff who teach across Ireland. While having all this evidence is invaluable, it is how institutions act on the insights available to them that achieves meaningful impact for students and their success.

This funding call encourages a focus on ensuring decisions related to teaching and learning take account of the evidence of research and the evidence of the experiences of those who learn, teach and lead in higher education. Cognisance should be taken of what the institutional community has learned with respect to evidence-based decision making through the shift to online/remote teaching and learning and what this means for supporting the success of students into the future.

### Supporting Transitions and Cultivating Belonging

The ability of learners to make successful transitions at key points in their education is crucial for their development and for enabling their success in and through higher education. There are many important transitions that learners navigate, such as the transition from post-primary to higher education, or from undergraduate education to employment or to postgraduate research and learning. The National Forum facilitated a national focus on teaching for transitions during 2013-15, involving focused research projects, consultations, and sharing of good practice, from which much was learned<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> See report here: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/reflecting-and-learning-the-move-to-remote-online-teaching-and-learning-in-irish-higher-education/>

<sup>5</sup> See report here: [https://usi.ie/campaigns/usi-publishes-student-priorities-for-new-government-covid-19-research-report/attachment/covid\\_research\\_final/](https://usi.ie/campaigns/usi-publishes-student-priorities-for-new-government-covid-19-research-report/attachment/covid_research_final/)

<sup>6</sup> See report here: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/The%20Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20Modifications%20to%20Teaching%2c%20Learning%20and%20Assessment%20in%20Irish%20Further%20Education.pdf> For other related resources, see here: <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/COVID-19---Updates-from-QQI.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> See report and further information here: [www.teachingandlearning.ie/index](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/index)

<sup>8</sup> Ten overarching lessons were learned from this work which may now be helpful to consider again in the context of the transformed teaching and learning experiences that currently characterise Irish higher education. See here: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/our-priorities/student-success/teaching-for-transitions/>

This funding call encourages a focus on teaching and learning enhancements that can support transitions and cultivate belonging. Cognisance should be taken of what the institutional community has learned with respect to transitions and belonging through the shift to online/remote teaching and learning and what this means for supporting the success of students into the future.

### Assessment and Feedback

Student learning and success are at the heart of enhanced assessment and feedback approaches. A national focus on assessment of/for/as learning was facilitated by the National Forum in 2016-18, involved gathering evidence, building capacity and sharing good practice across the sector. The principles, understanding and associated resources developed through this enhancement theme are available to support innovative, engaging, collaborative, learner-oriented and integrated approaches to assessment and feedback that take account of the complex dynamics and requirements of higher education.

This funding call encourages a focus on the promotion of enhanced assessment and feedback approaches and strategies to support student success. Cognisance should be taken of what the institutional community has learned with respect to assessment and feedback through the shift to online/remote teaching and learning and what this means for supporting the success of students into the future.

## 5. Application Process

Each institution should identify one key contact for this fund within their institution. The contact details of this institutional lead must be emailed to [Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie](mailto:Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie) by the Registrar/Vice-President for Teaching & Learning, or equivalent, of the institution no later than 12 noon on 16 November 2020.

There are two phases in the application process for this call:

### Application Phase 1: General Outline of How Allocated Funding Will be Optimised

The purpose of this phase of the application process is to allow institutions to provide an outline of their intended approach to optimising use of allocated funding, in line with the strategic focus and funding criteria outlined in this call.

One outline proposal should be submitted per institution. Submission of a proposal will involve the completion of an online submission form and participation in an online discussion about the proposal:

- The online outline proposal form will request a general overview of how it is intended that funding allocated under this call will be optimised within the institution. The proposal form will be submitted through a dedicated interface on the National Forum website (link to be circulated to institutional leads with a submission deadline of 25 November). The outline proposal form will require the following:

- A brief description of the intended key areas on which the institutional funding allocation will focus in line with this call
  - A brief explanation of why these areas are important areas of focus for the institution at this time
  - A brief high-level description of the institutional approaches to identifying initiatives that will support the development of the key areas identified
  - Confirmation of acceptance of conditions of funding outlined in this call
  - Confirmation of commitment to participate in Phase 2 of the application process, described below, due to take place in March/April 2021
- Each institutional lead (along with any accompanying institutional representatives) will be invited to attend an online meeting with the National Forum to discuss their submitted outline proposal for the use of allocated funding. This discussion is expected to last no longer than 30 minutes and will be scheduled during the week beginning 30 November 2020. The online discussion meeting will be recorded and subsequently reviewed, along with the submitted proposal form, to ensure funding criteria have been met before funding can be released to the institution by 31 December 2020.

**Proposals that do not meet the criteria of this call at this time may be required to submit a revised proposal before funding is released.**

### Application Phase 2: Developmental Discussion and Feedback on Detailed Proposal

During Phase 2 of the Application Process (March/April 2021), institutional leads will submit details on T&L Initiatives (and Initiative teams) within the institution that are funded through this call.

An international panel will be asked to consider and provide constructive feedback on a detailed breakdown of the proposed use of funding within institutions and, if appropriate, make recommendations to be considered as teams subsequently develop and implement their workplans.

To facilitate this process, institutional leads will be required to provide, by 31 March 2021, a more detailed description of how funding is being allocated. The detailed proposal will include information such as a description of any T&L Initiative receiving  $\geq$ €5000 of funding, detail on the teams/units involved, an explanation of how the strategic focus of the call is being responded to within/across these T&L Initiatives, a budget breakdown, and the anticipated impact of the funded T&L Initiatives. Any institutional approach to seed funding small-scale enhancement projects through this call should also be included<sup>9</sup>. More information on this phase will be forwarded to institutional leads in early 2021.

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<sup>9</sup> Please note: Seed funding of small-scale enhancement projects is one possible approach to allocating funding. In this case the overall approach to seed-funding should be detailed rather than each seed funded

## 6. Commitment to Review of Funded T&L Initiatives

All identified institutional T&L Initiatives will be reviewed at least once during the funding period. T&L Initiative teams will be invited to present their work to an international panel in keeping with the current National Forum review process. Prior to this review, a detailed workplan and summary of the overall budget, including the committed and projected spend of the T&L Initiative, must be submitted.

On completion of the T&L Initiative, the team will be required to provide a video/recorded presentation/case study. Details regarding the format of this final submission will be agreed with T&L Initiative teams in advance. In addition, the full details of the budget spend signed off by the institutional financial office and initiative lead must be provided.

## 7. Essential Criteria for Proposals

Those submitting proposals must commit to:

- 1 Utilising funding in a way that clearly aligns to one or more of the enablers of students success, as outlined in this call
- 2 Ensuring alignment with whole-of-institution approaches to student success
- 3 Ensuring a collaborative team-based approach, with authentic inputs from across the institutional community
- 4 Demonstrating meaningful engagement with students in prioritising and implementing teaching and learning enhancement initiatives supported under this call
- 5 Demonstrating meaningful engagement with, and support from, senior management in prioritising and implementing teaching and learning enhancement initiatives supported under this call
- 6 Encouraging student/student, student/staff, staff/staff partnerships, or learning community development, as appropriate
- 7 Ensuring that the impact on those who teach and learn is captured and communicated in a way that allows those within and beyond the institutional community to gain deeper insights for the benefit of their own teaching and learning enhancement
- 8 Sharing, through the international panel review process, the ways in which the approach taken is inclusive of all stakeholders, evidence-based and appropriate to the development of a structured approach to teaching and learning enhancement for student success

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project. For any individual initiative that is allocated €5000 or more, the initiative team will be invited to participate in a mid-term review.

## 8. Support and Guidance

On 17 November 2020 at 12-1pm, the National Forum will host a webinar that will provide an overview of the detail of this funding call and answer any queries potential applicants may have.

The National Forum has a dedicated SATLE Fund coordinator who will be available to answer any queries and provide support for those developing SATLE proposals. Queries regarding this call should be submitted **by email only** to [Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie](mailto:Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie).

A new student success team has been put in place within the National Forum to support institutions across the country in the development and implementation of strategies for student success. The student success team will link in with institutions regarding enhancement work arising from this call.

## 9. Summary of Important Information on Funding Allocation

- 1 This is a non-competitive call.
- 2 The National Forum will be responsible for coordinating the review of submitted proposals in two phases. In the first phase (Nov/Dec 2020), once outline proposals have been submitted and subsequent online discussions recorded, they will be reviewed to ensure the criteria outlined in this call have been met and, if/when this is the case, the institutional funding allocation will be released. In the second phase, when detailed proposals are submitted (March/April 2021), the National Forum will facilitate review by an international panel. At this stage, constructive expert feedback on each proposal will be provided, including recommendations for implementation to be considered, as appropriate.
- 3 There must be a clear link between the allocated funding amount and the workload/resources required to achieve the impact outlined in submitted proposals.
- 4 Funding is allocated to each eligible individual institution based on their percentage share of core grant (Appendix 1). Private colleges and other HEIs not in receipt of core grant may participate in this call on the basis that the directed funding is sourced by the institution itself. Institutions wanting to participate in this call should contact [Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie](mailto:Fund2020@teachingandlearning.ie) to confirm funding and focus.
- 5 Institutions must submit proposals equal to the total fund allocation for the institution detailed in Appendix 1.
- 6 All funding allocated must be used to support teaching and learning enhancement in line with the priority areas outlined in this call and reflecting institutional priorities.
- 7 Funding will be released to each institution in December 2020, providing the outline institutional proposal meets the criteria outlined in this call. All funding will be allocated through the HEA and institutions will be supported by the National Forum.

- 8 Institutions are encouraged to incur as much spend as possible by 31 December 2021, but there will be some flexibility up to 31 May 2022.
- 9 No duplicate funding for enhancement initiatives funded under other calls is permitted. If the proposed use of funding builds on current/past funded initiatives, proposals should clearly identify the additional benefit to the sector (impact and sustainability) in funding any extension.
- 10 In cases where institutions would like to collaborate on a T&L Initiative, each collaborating institution should include the given collaborative T&L Initiative in their detailed proposal, submitted in March 2021, identifying clearly the amount of their particular institutional funding to be allocated to the given initiative. The detailed proposal of each institution should indicate that this T&L Initiative is a collaborative initiative and who the partner institutions are.
- 11 Funding is for recurrent purposes only and cannot be used to buy equipment or infrastructure over the value of 15K.
- 12 All funded T&L Initiative teams will be required to take part in an online review process at least once during the implementation of the T&L Initiative (these reviews will be coordinated by the National Forum). The review will require the T&L Initiative team to pre-record a presentation on the progress of their T&L Initiative, discuss this with an international panel during the online review conversation, and provide a summary of the budget of the T&L Initiative and interim spend for the T&L Initiative.
- 13 Institutional leads and T&L Initiative team leads will be required to engage constructively with members of the National Forum team to assist in ensuring the impact of initiatives is optimised and sustained.
- 14 All resources generated by initiatives arising from this call must be made available under a Creative Commons licence. Please refer to our short guides for support in this area: 'National Forum Open Licensing Toolkit' and 'How to Choose an Open License' (guides available at [www.teachingandlearning.ie/open](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/open)).
- 15 T&L Initiative summaries, including final videos/case studies, may be hosted on the National Forum website.

## Key Dates

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|---|---|
| <b>Institutional leads identified</b>                           | 16 November 2020  |
| <b>Information webinar</b>                                      | 17 November 2020 (12-1pm)   |
| <b>Submission deadline for outline proposal</b>                 | 25 November 2020  |
| <b>Online discussion of outline proposal</b>                    | Week beginning 30 November 2020   |
| <b>Funding allocation</b>                                       | By 31 December 2020 (or once the outline institutional proposal meets the criteria outlined in this call) |
| <b>Submission deadline for detailed proposal</b>                | 31 March 2021   |
| <b>Discussion with international panel on detailed proposal</b> | April 2021  |
| <b>Mid-term review</b>  | To be scheduled   |
| <b>Completion of work outlined in proposals</b>                 | 31 December 2021 <sup>10</sup>  |

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<sup>10</sup> Institutions are encouraged to incur as much spend as possible by 31 December 2021, but there will be some flexibility up to 31 May 2022.

## Appendix 1

Funding to be allocated to each institution once the outline proposals submitted meet the criteria outlined in this call

|                      |                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Universities         | UCD             | €575,000          |
|                      | UCC             | €458,000          |
|                      | NUI Galway      | €407,000          |
|                      | MU              | €255,000          |
|                      | TCD             | €438,000          |
|                      | UL              | €309,000          |
|                      | DCU             | €274,000          |
|                      | DCU <i>spd</i>  | €77,000           |
|                      | DCU <i>mdei</i> | €16,000           |
|                      |                 |                   |
| Colleges             | NCAD            | €68,000           |
|                      | MIC             | €99,000           |
|                      | STAC            | €24,000           |
|                      |                 |                   |
| Technological sector | AIT             | €110,000          |
|                      | ITC             | €121,000          |
|                      | CIT             | €269,000          |
|                      | DKIT            | €96,000           |
|                      | IADT            | €59,000           |
|                      | GMIT            | €157,000          |
|                      | LIT             | €158,000          |
|                      | LYIT            | €83,000           |
|                      | ITS             | €123,000          |
|                      | ITTRA           | €74,000           |
|                      | WIT             | €175,000          |
|                      |                 |                   |
|                      | TU Dublin       | €575,000          |
|                      |                 |                   |
| <b>Sector Total</b>  |                 | <b>€5,000,000</b> |