



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 Funding in Higher Education 2019

Developing Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Call for Proposals

07 June 2019

This once-off non-competitive call with a total value of €5.57m represents a significant commitment to the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. The directed funding allocation to each institution from this fund is designed to enable the development of a strong foundation for future enhancement of teaching and learning within an institution, in line with local priorities. This fund complements and supports previous investments made in this area under the Higher Education Innovation and Transformation Fund 2018 and the annual Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund since 2014.

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 students, staff and leaders 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 new 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 work of the National Forum informs, and is informed by, a range of national policies, strategies and frameworks including but not limited to the long-term vision set out by the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, the related objectives outlined in the current Action Plans for Education and Higher Education System Performance Frameworks, the HEA Strategic Plan 2018-2022, the Strategy Statement of Quality and Qualifications Ireland 2019-21, the Charter for Irish Universities, the Strategy of the Technological Higher Education Association, the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015–19 and the National Skills Strategy. The National Forum Strategy also takes account of upcoming frameworks and policies, such as the Higher Education Digital Transformation Framework, currently being developed by the HEA.

3. A Strategic Approach for Maximizing Impact

This non-competitive call is designed to form a coherent basis to drive teaching and learning innovation and enhancement across the higher education sector through a single fund, bringing together RFAM investment and the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2019, to support strategic alignment.

As there is no commitment to this level of funding post 2019, institutions should use this call as an opportunity to prioritise their initiatives in line with their teaching and learning strategies.

The funds that are being combined through this call are outlined below.

3.1.RFAM Investment

Recommendation 20 of the recent RFAM review highlights the need to build capacity to develop teaching and learning approaches and facilitate digital transformation of learning delivery across the system.

In response to this recommendation, budget 2019 announced additional funding of €5m for teaching and learning capacity building indicating ‘this investment will provide professional development and training for higher education staff in areas that will enhance wider teaching and learning approaches, from developing pedagogies, enhancing methodologies and incorporating new modes of delivery, including digital technologies’.

The €5m has now been included in the overall 2019 recurrent grant allocation to support the enhancement of teaching and learning in line with recommendation 20. This fund is allocated to institutions based on a percentage share of core grant.

3.2.The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund

The objectives of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund reflect and support the strategic priorities of the National Forum, to ensure a valued and informed teaching and learning culture in Irish higher education. The fund enables strong sectoral collaboration, partnerships with other education providers or external stakeholders, and institutional enhancement. This fifth round of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund has a value of 570K and is being added to the €5m RFAM investment through this aligned call. The 2019 call maintains its focus on collaboration for national impact while also enabling capacity building at a local level.

This once-off non-competitive call with a total value of €5.57m represents a significant commitment to the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. The directed funding allocation to each institution from this fund is designed to enable the development of a strong foundation for future enhancement of teaching and learning within an institution, in line with local priorities. This fund complements and supports previous investments made in this area under the Higher Education Innovation and Transformation Fund 2018 and the annual Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund since 2014.

4. Strategic Focus for this Call

A key strategic priority of the National Forum is to support teaching and learning enhancements based on the particular requirements, disciplinary cultures and contexts of individual academic subject areas.

At a time when Irish higher education institutions are being challenged to evaluate and develop their current systems in a rapidly evolving environment, the Disciplinary Excellence in Learning Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) Framework (see [here](#)) places a strong, integrated focus on teaching and learning enhancement and helps heads and leaders of disciplinary units to capture, articulate and support teaching and learning enhancement plans.

The Framework can be used as a capacity-building and planning tool for forward-looking discipline groups. Further, the Framework enables disciplines to ensure that teaching and learning enhancement can also be effectively linked to other core activities – including professional development, teaching and learning in a digital world incorporating new modes of delivery, and student success – in ways that have clear benefits for learners. It assists disciplines to link teaching and learning developments coherently with key relevant institutional, national and international drivers, while also enabling a discipline- and context-specific approach to teaching and learning enhancement.

The funding allocation identified for each institution is given in Appendix 1. This funding will be released to each institution once the proposals submitted meet the criteria outlined in this call.

5. Summary of Teaching and Learning Initiatives

5.1. T&L Initiative Type 001/19

Focus on Supporting and Highlighting the Value of Teaching and Learning Enhancement within Higher Education Institutions

This T&L Initiative funding stream responds to identified needs of higher education institutions, specifically from those with responsibility for driving teaching and learning enhancement at a local level. The aim of this T&L Initiative funding stream is to stimulate small-scale local enhancement initiatives, providing an opportunity for those who have had limited engagement to date.

The funding will be used to seed fund a number of learning enhancement projects (LEPs) to support engagement with teaching and learning enhancement by individuals or small teams within an institution.

Essential Criteria for the Proposal

Those making proposals must commit to:

- 1 Selecting initiatives that are clearly aligned to one of the four strategic priorities of the National Forum
- 2 Promoting the availability of funding to support engagement with teaching and learning enhancement initiatives, particularly among those staff/students who are new to such engagement
- 3 Encouraging student/student, student/staff, staff/staff partnerships, or learning community development, as appropriate
- 4 Supporting and connecting staff and students who are involved in learning enhancement projects across the institution
- 5 Including a showcase of initiatives, either within the institution or in collaboration with other institutions, to disseminate the range of approaches taken and the key outcomes and learning
- 6 Sharing, through the international panel review process, how LEPs are identified and supported and how the sustainability of their impact is supported
- 7 Sharing insights on how engagement with teaching and learning enhancement was promoted and supported and how impact was achieved, which can be disseminated through the National Forum

Features of this type of T&L Initiative

	Description	Requirement
Collaboration	Collaboration with other institutions	Not required but institutions may want to collaborate on showcasing LEPs that have been completed and sharing good practice
Budget Guideline	A minimum €25K. Institutions can allocate additional funding for this type of T&L Initiative if they wish.	Spend managed by T&L Initiative lead and reported to NF
Duration	To end December 2020	

5.2. T&L Initiative Type 002/19

Focus on Teaching and Learning Enhancement within Disciplines

This T&L Initiative funding stream will enable discipline groups to engage with the Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) Framework (see [here](#)) and support them in taking a structured, coherent approach to enhancement within their discipline. The discipline group can focus generally on all elements of the DELTA Framework or on a particular element that responds to a priority need at this time.

This funding stream may also support the efforts of disciplinary groups/programme teams towards a national DELTA award (see [here](#)).

Essential Criteria for the Proposal

Those making proposals must commit to:

- 1 Using the DELTA Framework as a structure to take stock of their current strengths and areas for development for teaching and learning enhancement
- 2 Meaningful engagement with students in identifying teaching and learning enhancement priorities
- 3 Ensuring a collaborative team-based approach, with authentic inputs from all members of the discipline group/programme team
- 4 Demonstrating meaningful engagement with, and support from, senior management

- 5 Ensuring that the impact on those who teach and learn is captured and communicated in a way that allows those outside the T&L Initiative team to gain deeper insights for the benefit of their own teaching and learning enhancement
- 6 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 within the discipline

Features of this type of T&L Initiative

	Description	Requirement
Collaboration	Inter-institutional	Not required, but encouraged if appropriate
Collaboration	Intra-institutional	Required
Budget Guideline	100-150K (Discipline Group) 20-50K (Programme Team)	Spend managed by T&L Initiative lead and reported to NF
Duration	To end December 2020	

5.3. T&L Initiative Type 003/19

Focus on Teaching and Learning Enhancement across Disciplines

This T&L Initiative funding stream will enable an inter-disciplinary approach to teaching and learning enhancement. The sharing of good practice and key lessons between discipline groups/multidisciplinary programme teams is a central focus, with a view to disciplines, and those who learn and teach within them, gaining from the collective knowledge and expertise that exists across disciplines.

Essential Criteria for the Proposal

Those making proposals must commit to:

- 1 Identifying and maximising the value of opportunities for discipline/programme teams to share good practice or effective approaches to teaching and learning enhancement, with particular regard to the context and key characteristics of the selected disciplines
- 2 Meaningful engagement with students in identifying teaching and learning enhancement priorities
- 3 Ensuring a collaborative team-based approach, with authentic inputs from all members of the discipline groups/programme teams
- 4 Demonstrating meaningful engagement with, and support from, senior management
- 5 Ensuring that the impact on those who teach and learn is captured and communicated in a way that allows those outside the T&L Initiative team and

disciplines to gain deeper insights for the benefit of their own teaching and learning enhancement

- 6 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 sharing of good practice and exemplary approaches to teaching and learning enhancement between disciplines/programme teams

Features of this type of T&L Initiative

	Description	Requirement
Collaboration	Inter-institutional	Not required, but encouraged if appropriate
Collaboration	Intra-institutional	Required
Budget Guideline	100-150K (Discipline Group) 20-50K (Programme Team)	Spend managed by T&L Initiative lead and reported to NF
Duration	To end December 2020	

5.4. T&L Initiative Type 004/19

Focus on Teaching and Learning Enhancement in Collaboration with Professional Bodies and/or Industry Partners

Enhancing collaborative links with professional bodies and/or industry partners has been highlighted by students and staff across the sector as valuable for ensuring alignment between programme content and the needs of students beyond graduation. In response, this T&L Initiative funding stream welcomes proposals from discipline groups and programme teams who have identified ways in which collaboration with professional bodies and/or industry partners has the potential to enhance teaching and learning content and practices and the success of students beyond higher education.

Essential Criteria for the Proposal

Those making proposals must commit to:

- 1 Engaging with the appropriate professional bodies/industry partners in a meaningful way to inform and be informed by each other's expectations and understandings
- 2 Meaningful engagement with students/alumni in identifying key areas to be negotiated and addressed
- 3 Demonstrating meaningful engagement with and support from senior management
- 4 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

- 5 Providing evidence of how engagement with professional bodies/industry partners was developed, which can be shared openly by the National Forum

Features of this type of T&L Initiative

	Description	Requirement
Collaboration	Inter-institutional	Not required, but encouraged if appropriate especially where institutions are located in the same region
Collaboration	Intra-institutional	Required
Budget Guideline	100-150K (Discipline Group) 20-50K (Programme Team)	Spend managed by T&L Initiative lead and reported to NF
Duration	To end December 2020	

6. Application Process and T&L Initiative Support

6.1 Identifying an institutional lead

Each institution should identify one key contact for this fund within their institution. The contact details of this institutional co-ordinator must be emailed to fund2019@teachingandlearning.ie no later than 8 July 2019.

6.2 Opportunity to identify partners

Any T&L Initiative team that would like to work collaboratively with other institutions in responding to this call is encouraged to submit a short description of the T&L Initiative proposed, the kind of partner you would like to work with and your contact details within a web interface that is [available here](#). You can submit a short video, podcast or written summary.

6.3 Support for those developing and implementing enhancement initiatives

The National Forum will provide the following support to those developing and implementing proposals:

- i. For the consideration of those developing proposals, lessons learnt from previously funded projects have been synthesised and are outlined in Appendix 2.
- ii. The National Forum will host a webinar that will provide an overview of the different types of T&L Initiatives outlined in the call and will answer any queries potential applicants may have.

The Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education Webinar will be held on:

Day 13 June 2019

Time 12:30-13:30

- iii. The National Forum will identify a dedicated teaching and learning enhancement coordinator who will be available to answer any queries and provide support for those developing T&L Initiative proposals. The coordinator will also provide support to T&L Initiative teams as they implement their T&L Initiatives during 2020. Queries regarding this call should be submitted **by email only** to Fund2019@teachingandlearning.ie.

7. Number and Type of Proposals that can be Submitted

All institutions are invited to submit T&L Initiative proposals as detailed below. Institutions should choose T&L Initiatives that align with their teaching and learning strategies and local priorities.

7.1 Required

All institutions should submit a proposal under Type 01/19.

Of the fund allocated to each institution, a minimum of 25K must be allocated to the institutional Teaching and Learning Centre/those with responsibility for teaching and learning enhancement to support learning enhancement through T&L Initiative Proposal Type 01/19.

7.2 Required

Each institution should submit proposals for any of the three types of T&L Initiatives (**T&L Initiative Type 02/19** (Working towards DELTA); **T&L Initiative Type 03/19** (Working Across Disciplines); **T&L Initiative Type 04/19** (Working with professional bodies/industry)) in any combination that supports their institutional context and priorities.

The number of proposals submitted should ensure that all the funding to be allocated is committed to T&L Initiatives in 2020. A budget guide for each T&L Initiative type is given below.

Budget Guidelines

Type of T&L Initiative	Budget Guideline
T&L Initiative Proposal Type 01/19 (required for all institutions)	A minimum €25K. Institutions can allocate additional funding for this type of T&L Initiative if they wish.
T&L Initiative Proposal Type 02/19	Discipline Group €100k - €150k Programme Team €20k - €50k
T&L Initiative Proposal Type 03/19	Discipline Group €100k - €150k Programme Team €20k - €50k
T&L Initiative Proposal Type 04/19	Discipline Group €100k - €150k Programme Team €20k - €50k

8. Submitting a Proposal

All proposal submissions must be submitted through a dedicated interface on the National Forum website (link will be circulated to institutional contacts on 8 July 2019).

Proposals have two parts

- 1 The completion of an online form will provide the opportunity to identify the T&L initiative team and to provide context to the proposal along with a brief description and approach of the initiative planned. This information will be hosted on the National Forum website. The online form also requires the T&L Initiative team to confirm their acceptance of the conditions of funding. In addition, the form asks T&L Initiative teams to commit to the review process described below.
- 2 T&L Initiative teams must also provide a video/recorded presentation (not more than 12 minutes) that clearly outlines:
 - Title of T&L Initiative
 - T&L Initiative team members and institution/s
 - Overview of the proposed Initiative
 - Context – Why is this project important?
 - Key deliverables anticipated (include what change will result from this project)

The presentation should be mindful of the criteria that have been outlined for the given T&L Initiative Type, as detailed in this call.

All proposals will be reviewed by an international panel who will provide constructive feedback to T&L Initiative teams and, if appropriate, make recommendations to be considered by T&L Initiative teams as they subsequently develop and implement their workplan. 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.

9. The Review Process

- 9.1 All T&L Initiatives will be reviewed at least once during 2020. 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 and the committed and projected spend of the T&L Initiative must be submitted.
- 9.2 In December 2020, 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 must be provided.

10. 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 the teaching and learning initiatives. Once proposals have been submitted, they will be reviewed and feedback on each proposal will be provided, including recommendations for implementation to be considered, as appropriate. Once all proposals from an institution meet the criteria outlined in this call the institutional funding allocation will be released.
- 3 Funding is allocated to each individual institution based on their percentage share of core grant and an equal share of the T&L Enhancement Fund 2019 (Appendix 1).
- 4 Institutions must submit proposals equal to the total fund allocation for the institution detailed in Appendix 1.
- 5 All funding allocated must be used to support T&L Initiatives in line with the priority areas outlined in this call and reflecting institutional priorities.
- 6 Funding will be released to institutions in November 2019, providing all proposals for T&L Initiatives from an institution meet the criteria outlined in this call. All funding will be allocated through the HEA and T&L Initiatives will be supported by the National Forum.
- 7 All funding must be spent by December 2020.
- 8 No duplicate funding for T&L Initiatives funded under other enhancement funding initiatives is permitted. If T&L Initiatives build on current/past T&L Initiatives, proposals should clearly identify the additional benefit to the sector (impact and sustainability) in funding any extension.

- 9 Funding is for recurrent purposes only and cannot be used to buy equipment or infrastructure over the value of 15K.
- 10 All proposals will be required to report in a face-to-face 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 present on the progress of their T&L Initiative and provide a summary of the budget of the T&L Initiative and interim spend for the T&L Initiative.
- 11 All resources generated by T&L Initiatives must be made available under creative commons licence.
- 12 T&L Initiative summaries, including videos, may be hosted on the National Forum website.

Key Dates

Call issued	07 June 2019
Information webinar	13 June 2019
Institutional leads identified	08 July 2019
Proposal submission deadline	08 October 2019
Feedback on proposals	Recommendations from international review panel 31 October 2019
Funding allocation	November 2019 (or once all proposals from the institution meet the criteria outlined in this call)
Completion of T&L Initiatives	31 December 2020

Please Note: As this is a non-competitive call with substantial funding, all institutions are encouraged to use the proposed teaching and learning initiative development phase (June-October 2019) to plan the T&L initiatives and how they will be implemented, including any staff recruitment, to ensure that each T&L Initiative can commence immediately once funding is released to the institution.

All queries relating to this call should be forwarded to fund2019@teachingandlearning.ie. Please allow 48 hours for a response.

Appendix 1

Funding to be allocated to each institution once the proposals for T&L Initiatives submitted meet the criteria outlined in this call

Universities	UCD	€600,000
	UCC	€483,000
	NUI Galway	€432,000
	MU	€280,000
	TCD	€463,000
	UL	€334,000
	DCU	€299,000
	<i>sub-total universities</i>	
	DCU <i>spd</i>	€102,000
	DCU <i>mdei</i>	€24,000
Colleges	NCAD	€93,000
	MIC	€124,000
	STAC	€36,000
Technological sector	AIT	€134,000
	ITC	€143,000
	CIT	€294,000
	DKIT	€123,000
	IADT	€84,000
	GMIT	€180,000
	LIT	€186,000
	LYIT	€110,000
	ITS	€146,000
	ITTRA	€99,000
	WIT	€199,000
	TU Dublin	€602,000
Sector Total	€5,570,000	

The experience of previous project teams suggest that projects are most likely to reach their potential if...

...the project is responding to an authentic need for which an achievable solution has been identified and the timing is right.

...the value of the project is clearly understood and articulated by the project team.

...the project team consults key participants, students, senior managers, discipline leaders and/ or external partners at every stage and creates a sense of shared ownership and investment in the project.

...the project team takes time to explore and understand what knowledge/skills/interest key project participants have, rather than making assumptions, e.g. digital skills, knowledge of teaching and learning, etc.

...the sustainability of the outcomes of the project has been considered from the beginning, at planning stage: What enhancement is the project striving to embed in practice and how? How will the content and availability of any developed resources be future-proofed? What actions will be needed beyond the project timeframe to ensure sustainability?

...impact is seen as an ongoing process which does not end with the project; there is an understanding of the nature of the impact aimed for and a plan in place for how this will be captured and communicated in the short, medium and long term.

...the various knowledge / skills / experience needed to reach the project goals have been considered and accounted for, either within the project team or through the buying in of external expertise – such knowledge / skills / experience may relate to, for example, project management, research, technology, discipline context, communications, etc.

...the project budget and workplan accurately consider and reflect the hours and resources involved in each element of the project, as well as the processes that will need to be navigated, such as those related to human resources, research ethics, finances, etc.

...there is a willingness and capacity to adapt the project to needs as they arise, without veering beyond the project scope.

...contingency plans have been considered for unexpected events, such as people changing roles, delays in processes, etc.

...all project partners have collaboratively agreed expectations, roles and timelines at an early stage.

...the project aligns with and contributes to relevant policies, strategies and processes at local, institutional and/or national levels.