



## Gender Equality Enhancement Fund – Second Call for Applications 2023

### Call for Proposals

Following the first round of funding under the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2023, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are invited to submit proposals for funding under the second call of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2023, in line with the requirements set out in this document.

This Call is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Following a competitive process based on this call for applications from HEIs, the HEA will approve funding to support gender equality initiatives to be implemented nationally.

### Timeframe:

- Call for applications issues to HEIs – **11<sup>th</sup> September 2023**
- Deadline for applications - **12:00pm 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**
- Announcement of outcome – **Q4 2023**

### Background

Diversity is a key strength of Irish higher education. In recent decades our universities, institutes of technology, and colleges have been transformed, from predominantly national institutions catering primarily for school-leavers, to internationally oriented institutions engaged with an increasingly diverse student body, of all ages, backgrounds and gender identities.

Higher education legislation requires institutions to promote gender-balance among students and staff, and for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to promote the attainment of equality of opportunity. The [HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions \(2016\)](#) was an important first step in highlighting the gender inequality that existed at senior academic levels in our HEIs. The HEA Expert Group report outlined a number of recommendations for the HEIs, HEA, research funding agencies and other key stakeholders. However, despite the publication of the HEA Expert Group report, progress remained slow.

In 2017, the Minister of State for Higher Education established the Gender Equality Taskforce to identify significant measures, drawing on the work of the HEA Expert Group Report published in 2016, that could accelerate progress in achieving gender equality in the Irish HEIs. Their [Action Plan](#), which was launched on 12 November 2018, encompasses a suite of initiatives to bring about sustainable organisational change and to empower a culture of gender equality in the HEIs for all staff, academic and professional, as well as management and support staff at all levels.

The Gender Equality Taskforce recognised that, in addition to the organisational and culture change initiatives, the incentivisation of progress on gender equality targets through funding mechanisms was needed. Specifically, the Taskforce recommended the following actions:

- HEA block grant funding shall be linked to an institution's performance in addressing gender inequality through the Strategic Dialogue process and System Performance Framework.
- A new 'Gender Equality Enhancement Funding Call' should be set up to support innovative organisational and cultural change initiatives nationally.

In line with the recommendation of 2016 Report the HEA, along with an external Expert Group, conducted a Second Gender Equality Review of Irish Higher Education Institutions. The Review was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The review was undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders from the higher education sector and relevant civil society organisations, as outlined in the report. The recommendations of the Expert Group were informed by this extensive consultation process. Over the course of June, July and September 2022 the Expert Group met with several stakeholder groups to discuss progress made towards advancing gender equality since the first review in 2016 and to make high level recommendations. The Expert Group findings and recommendations were published in the [Report of the Expert Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions](#) in December 2022.

### **Objective of the Call**

The primary objectives of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund are:

- to encourage innovative approaches to addressing gender inequality across HEIs;
- to facilitate gender equality initiatives that respond to the recommendations of the HEA Expert Group and/or Gender Equality Taskforce's recommended actions;
- to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration as a means to achieve national transformation.

Information on the outcome of previous rounds of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund can be accessed [here](#).

Applications for funding under the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund can be made in three areas and the total funding available for each area is indicated in brackets:

1. Research on or advancing gender equality initiatives in Ireland (€50,000)
2. Training programmes specifically addressing gender equality (€55,000)
3. Athena SWAN capacity-building activities (€50,000)

A **maximum of €50,000** will be awarded to successful applications. Applications previously submitted for the first call of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2023 which were not allocated funding are eligible for submission to the second call.

### **HEI Eligibility**

1. Eligible higher education institutions under this initiative are those listed in Appendix 1.
2. Proposals must be collaborative and involve at least **three** eligible higher education institutions.
3. All proposals must nominate a lead institution for administrative and financial purposes.
4. Eligible institutions can lead or partner in proposals. Eligible institutions may make one submission as lead. Where a lead institution was allocated funding in the first call of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2023, this institution may not apply as the lead applicant in proposals for the second call of the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2023.

5. Sectoral proposals will be accepted from the IUA and THEA or a collaboration of these representative bodies. Each sectoral proposal must include at least **three** eligible HEIs. An eligible institution must act as a lead for the sectoral proposal for administrative and financial purposes.
6. Relevant non-HEI organisations may be included in proposals as partners in addition to the three eligible HEIs.
7. HEIs from outside the Republic of Ireland may be included in proposals as advisory partners in addition to the three eligible HEIs.

### **Application Procedure**

In submitting an application, all partner HEIs will be deemed to have accepted the conditions outlined in this and any subsequent clarifications from the HEA regarding this initiative and to have agreed to be bound by them. Furthermore, signing of the application by the heads of institution (e.g. President, Provost etc.) reflects acceptance of the award and a commitment to provide the necessary support for the programme of activity. All applications must be signed by the heads of the collaborating institutions. Applications should be submitted using the application form by email to [EDI@hea.ie](mailto:EDI@hea.ie) by **12:00pm, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**.

### **Assessment Panel**

The HEA will establish an Assessment Panel to evaluate the applications received. The Assessment Panel will comprise members with expertise in this area. In establishing the Assessment Panel, due regard shall be given to gender balance.

The Assessment Panel will consider the extent to which the applications meet the criteria of the 2023 Call as outlined in this document.

All applications will be assessed solely on the basis of the material provided to the HEA at the time of submission.

The HEA’s decision on the award of funding under this Call is final.

### **Assessment Criteria**

In accordance with the objective of this initiative as outlined above, the following criteria will be used to assess proposals. A minimum threshold will apply in respect of each of the assessment criteria. Only proposals which score 70 marks or over (70%) will be considered for funding. Meeting the minimum threshold is no guarantee of funding.

<b>Assessment Criterion</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Threshold</b>
1. Alignment with recommendations of HEA Expert Group and / or Gender Equality taskforce’s recommended actions	20 marks	10 marks
2. Innovation in specified area of funding (research on or advancing gender equality initiatives in Ireland/ Training programmes specifically addressing gender equality/ Athena SWAN capacity-building activities)	10 marks	5 marks

**Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2023**

3. Benefit to HEI Stakeholders nationally	30 marks	15 marks
4. Funding - value for money and impact of programme	10 marks	5 marks
5. Quality of the Proposal	30 marks	15 marks

**Reporting and monitoring**

Institutions with successful proposals will be required to report to the HEA on progress and the outcomes of funded projects within 12 months of the awarding of funding.

## Appendix 1: Eligible HEIs

Eligible higher education institutions under this initiative are included below:

- Atlantic Technological University
- Carlow College
- Dublin City University
- Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Mary Immaculate College
- Maynooth University
- Munster Technological University
- National College of Art and Design
- National College of Ireland
- National University of Ireland, Galway
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine and Health Sciences
- St. Angela's College, Sligo
- South East Technological University
- Technological University Dublin
- Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- University of Limerick