



# Technological Universities Transformation Fund

Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines

## Technological Universities Transformation Fund Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines

### 1. Technological Universities Transformation Fund (TUTF)

The TUTF is a €90 million fund (over 3 years) from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, to be allocated by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), to assist the development and progression of technological universities. The TUTF supersedes and builds on *Landscape Funding* as provided by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and DES in recent years, towards reform of the higher education landscape, including the establishment of Technological Universities.

The key objectives of the new fund are to ensure that by 2023:

- Based on current configurations and subject to viable applications, there will be in the region of 5 TUs established in the State.
- These established TUs will be enabled in terms of sustainability and self-sufficiency, with a focus on quality and excellence and capacity building including evidence of:
  - the highest quality of teaching and research;
  - increased national and international student numbers;
  - a consistently high-quality student experience in terms of facilities, resources and the TU environment;
  - retention and recruitment of the highest calibre staff to drive research and teaching agendas;
  - competitiveness to attract national and international research funding;
  - durable collaborations with industry, employers and other partners.

### 2. Eligible expenditure

- Funding support is provided in respect of the costs arising from technological university development and progression, as part of the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education and recommendations of the TURN Report.
- **TU Transformation funding may only be used for the project as set out in the Project Submission of August 2020, and the revised project plan and budget approved by the HEA in January 2023.**

- HEIs must ensure that all expenditure is eligible. In particular, please note that capital costs are **not** eligible under the TUTF.
- Expenditure must be incurred within the official start and end dates of the TUTF, as follows:
  - Year 1: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021
  - Year 2: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022
  - Year 3: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

Activities/Costs that will be considered for funding at consortia level include:

<b>Programme and change management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Programme office and team</li> <li>– Executive leadership</li> <li>– Preparation and submission of application for TU designation</li> <li>– Change management</li> </ul>
<b>Governance and management structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Joint governing body steering group</li> <li>– Senior executive team</li> <li>– Planning for first President/first Governing Body</li> <li>– Mission and Vision</li> <li>– Audits</li> <li>– Commissioned reports</li> <li>– Organisational design</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Affairs &amp; Quality Assurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Academic workload model</li> <li>– Academic programme/curriculum development</li> <li>– TU partner collaborative projects in academic sphere</li> <li>– Review and development of academic policies</li> </ul>
<b>Research capacity building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Funding for initiatives to support and grow research activity, increasing grant applications, competitive research funding, publications output etc</li> <li>– Research /supervision training</li> <li>– Research centres growth</li> <li>– Research collaboration and consortium building</li> <li>– Postgraduate development and support structures</li> <li>– Researcher career development framework</li> <li>– Academic staff professional development, towards meeting eligibility criteria in Section 28 (1) (d) of the TU Act (2018)</li> <li>– Research student costs, towards meeting eligibility criteria in Section 28 (1) (a) and (b) of the TU Act (2018).</li> </ul>
<b>Communications and stakeholder engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Working group representation</li> <li>– Staff union representation</li> <li>– Student representation</li> <li>– Marketing / PR</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identity signage</li> <li>– Web design / development</li> <li>– Outward facing engagement with regional enterprises, communities and other stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Affairs / Operational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review and development of regulations, policies and procedures e.g. Finance, HR</li> <li>– Competency based frameworks</li> </ul>
<b>Digitalisation / IT Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– IT Staff support for systems integration</li> <li>– IT consultancy</li> <li>– ICT/Digital Plan</li> <li>– Digital infrastructure for students/staff e.g. Virtual learning environments, video-conferencing, virtual networks, learning analytics.</li> </ul>
<b>Student administration and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Student services</li> </ul>

The following activities/cost are **ineligible** for TUTF project support:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Core funding<sup>1</sup></b></li> <li>– <b>Research scholarships will not be funded other than those already entered into by the end of TUTF Year 2 (31 August 2022).</b></li> <li>– <b>Purchases of land or buildings</b></li> <li>– <b>Retrospective Expenditure</b> (i.e. costs incurred prior to the grant start date)</li> <li>– <b>Indirect costs<sup>2</sup></b> are not eligible for direct funding but may form part of consortia co-funding.</li> </ul>
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Additionally, institutions are expected to comply with the Statement of Principles for Grantees (Appendix 2 of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014) relating to: Clarity; Governance; Value for money; and Fairness.

The HEA reserves the right to recoup expenditure deemed ineligible.

### 3. Project modifications:

Cognisant of the evolving contexts in which HEIs are operating and the necessity to be responsive and adapt, modifications to planned deliverables, timelines and budgets are permitted. However, to enable the HEA to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to accountable and transparent fund

<sup>1</sup> The TUTF is designed to provide project funding, not institutional core support.

<sup>2</sup> Indirect costs are costs in support of project objectives but not necessarily incurred for the project and as such cannot be readily associated with the project.

management, significant variations to the agreed project objectives and/or implementation plan and/or budget should be made with the prior agreement and authorisation by the HEA.

### **Modifying deliverables and timeframes:**

In instances where TUTF recipients wish to **alter, add or remove deliverables, or revise timeframes by more than 3 months from approved due dates**, the following steps should be followed:

1. Revise the work packages document, ensuring to use the approved version and to highlight changes made.
2. Request and complete the TUTF Project Modifications template summarising the changes made and rationale for each.
3. Submit to [systemperformance@hea.ie](mailto:systemperformance@hea.ie).
4. The HEA will review the changes and revert.
5. Once approved, the updated work packages document will replace the previous version and will be used for the purposes of monitoring and reporting.

### **Budget modifications:**

Any changes that amount to greater than **+/- 10% of the total approved budget for each work package** in your approved TUTF budget must be agreed in advance with the HEA. In such instances the following steps should be followed:

1. Request and complete the TUTF Budget Modifications template in Excel. Ensure to copy across the relevant information from your approved annual budget.
2. Submit to [systemperformance@hea.ie](mailto:systemperformance@hea.ie).
3. The HEA will review the changes and revert.
4. Once approved, the revised and approved version of the budget will replace the previous version and will be used for the purposes of monitoring and reporting.

## **4. Purpose of Monitoring and Reporting**

- Substantial public funding has been allocated towards the TU project and it is imperative that robust, evidence-based monitoring and evaluation arrangements are put in place by funded institutions to ensure that this investment is achieving its intended strategic objectives as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms are not only key to ensuring accountability and transparency, but also to enable the efficient and effective delivery of TU projects. Areas of high performance and good practice can be showcased, and emerging issues and delays identified and addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Funded institutions are expected to ensure that specific TUTF project expenditure is clearly identifiable and verifiable in accounting systems. All TUTF project-related transactions should be systematically recorded and closely monitored against the approved project

budget. Additionally, monitoring arrangements should incorporate checks to ensure that relevant institutional and national policies and procedures are being adhered to.

- As per original guidance provided to applicants, the fund is not expected to cover all costs arising, but to make a contribution to these costs. TUTF recipients should monitor and record the investment by the institutions involved (level of time and resources) in the project as it is implemented<sup>2</sup>.
- The HEA is committed to ensuring value for money and accountability in all its investments. Funding may be removed or redistributed at the discretion of the HEA, where circumstances change or where sufficient progress on projects is not being made.

## 5. TUTF reporting requirements

- Each institution will provide written and financial reports on progress towards expected results bi-annually. Additionally, progress meetings will be held with the HEA on a quarterly basis. Please see the schedule and guidance below.
- TUTF reports should detail and evidence progress towards the objectives outlined in the original submission documents which informed funding award allocations, and against the final approved versions of work packages and budgets.
- Reports should incorporate learning which can be shared across the sector to improve practice and to inform future policy and funding decisions.
- Institutions may be subject to field monitoring visits by representatives of the HEA or external consultants contracted to assist with monitoring and verifying financial expenditure, progress and results.

### Annual Reporting Schedule:

	Quarters	Quarterly progress meetings	Narrative and financial reports
<b>Q1</b>	01 September - 30 November	December / January	n/a
<b>Q2</b>	01 December - 28 February	March	Interim report due by 31st March
<b>Q3</b>	01 March - 31 May	June	n/a
<b>Q4</b>	01 June - 31 August	October	Final Report due by 30th September

### Quarterly progress meetings:

- The HEA will meet with Institutions on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and any issues arising. These meetings should be attended by the Presidents and TU Project Leads.
- Written updates are not required to be submitted in advance of these meetings. However, institutions should be prepared to provide verbal updates on progress and expenditure.

### Interim reports (every 6 months):

- In Year 1, this report will be submitted concurrently with Year 2 revised plans and budgets, as per templates provided. In Year 2, this report will be submitted concurrently with Year 3 revised plans and budgets.

- Both reports and submissions will be reviewed concurrently by the HEA and will inform annual funding allocation decisions.

#### Annual reports:

- Each report will capture progress made during the preceding 6-month period, in addition to reflecting cumulative, overall progress towards objectives and expenditure to date.
- In Year 3, the annual report will be replaced by the Final TUTF Report, which will capture progress and expenditure made throughout the entire project.

#### Tips for reporting:

In compiling reports, please ensure:

- To report against the final, approved versions of the work packages description (Table 2) and budget.
- To only include progress and data related to the specific reporting period.
- To adhere to the specified word count.
- Alignment of narrative and financial reports.
- That all expenditure reported is eligible.
- To provide evidence of reported progress towards targets, including quantitative and qualitative data where relevant.
- To indicate and justify any changes to the original project plans, in particular areas where anticipated progress has not been achieved.
- To include useful information on learning and collaboration to support best practice and inform future support to the sector.

## 6. Learning from the Review of Landscape Funding

A review of the Landscape Funding awarded between 2017-2019 to support IoTs progress towards TU status was published in 2022. The report (*Review of Landscape Funded Projects awarded funding on a competitive basis in the period 2017 – 2019*) developed by BDO detailed a number of lessons learned and areas for improvement for both the HEA and funded Institutions / Consortia in particular with regard to Financial Management, Project Management, Reporting on Outcomes/Impact. A copy of that report is available [here](#) on the HEA website.

It is expected that action is taken where relevant to address and improve on the issues raised in this report during implementation of the TUTF projects. The HEA will closely monitor progress in these areas.