EQUALITY FUND Terms of Reference

The creation of an Equality Fund was proposed by the Equality Committee and approved by Executive Officers and Board in 2007 (EQUAL/O6-07/26). The sum of €10,000 was made available annually to the Equality Committee for this purpose. The current terms of reference have been reviewed and approved by the Equality Committee (Eqal/07-08/21; Eqal/09-10/08 Eqal/10-11/06 and Eqal/12-13/10), last updated October 2016. The terms of reference are reviewed by the Equality Fund Sub-Committee on an annual basis, and any recommended amendments are forwarded to the Equality Committee for approval.

Purpose

The Equality Fund will be made available to staff and students on a competitive basis for a variety of equality projects within the university. The Equality Fund aims to facilitate equality initiatives and to promote and celebrate diversity in all areas of Trinity life. Initiatives will be considered relating to 9 grounds of discrimination (gender, age, civil status, family status, race/ethnicity, membership of the traveller community, disability, sexual orientation and religion/belief), and for other diversity groups which may be of particular relevance, with priority given to particular themes outlined in each round of funding.

The Fund is specially designed to facilitate innovative equality projects that might otherwise not receive funding. Proposals from individual staff members, individual students, university departments (academic, professional etc.) and student groups (societies, unions etc.) will be considered eligible. Proposals may be made by individual people / groups or by two or more people / groups in collaboration. Joint staff and student initiatives are particularly valued. Overall, a balance will be sought in the allocation of funds to student initiatives and staff initiatives, and between a variety of diversity groups, where possible.

Limitations

The Fund will not be allocated to projects that should otherwise be centrally funded by Trinity, the Students’ Unions or the Central Societies’ Committee (CSC). The Equality Fund will not normally fund usual academic activities such as conferences, course development or student assignments.

Costs associated with catering and refreshments will only be funded if they are essential to the project and only up to a pre-agreed limit determined by the Equality Fund Sub-Committee. Projects must comply with the Hospitality and Entertainment Policy and the Alcohol Policy of the university.
Management
The Equality Fund will be managed by a sub-committee appointed by the Equality Committee.

Equality Fund Sub-Committee Composition:
The Equality Committee Chair (chair)
A staff member of the Equality Committee
A staff or student member of the Equality Committee
A student member of the Equality Committee
A nominee from the Financial Services Division
The Equality Officer (secretary)

The Sub-Committee will consider the applications received by the published deadline, and award, subject to the Equality Committee’s approval, funds to selected proposals following the selection process outlined below. The Sub-Committee will report to the Equality Committee on the management of the Fund. The Sub-Committee is also responsible for monitoring the correct use of funding awarded.

Each project proposal must name a “project organiser” who will liaise with the Equality Officer in all matters relating to the project. The project organiser is responsible for:

- monitoring the project’s budget and requesting reimbursements from the Equality Office
- implementing the project
- ensuring that the project is completed in accordance with the Equality Fund Terms of Reference and relevant university policies
- reporting regularly to the Equality Officer on project progress

In case of any query or difficulty arising with a project, the project organiser must contact the Equality Officer immediately. The Equality Officer will assist project organisers with:

- processing reimbursements of project expenses
- publicising projects on Equality Office social media channels
- general advice and guidance

Selection
The Fund will be awarded as several small awards across a variety of initiatives, based on the information provided in the application form (the form will be available on the Equality Office website and publicised to all staff and students by email on the application opening date). Applications which are late, incomplete or do not display sufficient planning / attention to detail may be rejected.
A series of equality-related themes will be selected for each funding round and applications will be prioritised in relation to their relevance to said themes. These themes will ordinarily be based on Trinity’s strategic goals for equality, as articulated in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Strategic Plan. The Sub-Committee may also propose themes based on their own judgment of topical equality matters in the university.

Proposals will be judged according to the following criteria:

1. Relevance to priority theme(s) / equality grounds (20%)
2. Expected benefit (impact) for Trinity (30%)
3. Expected benefit (impact) for wider society (10%)
4. Originality and creative approach (20%)
5. Value for money (20%)

The Equality Fund Sub-Committee will reserve the right only to award funds to those proposals which achieve an overall score of 70 or higher, noting that this could result in the full fund not being awarded at any particular time. Depending on the number and quality of the received proposals, not all projects scoring 70 or higher may receive funding, and the Sub-Committee reserves the right to award any particular project an amount of funding which is lower than the sum requested.

Administration of Funds

All payments from allocations under the Equality Fund must comply with the university’s Procurement, Payroll, Invoice and Reimbursement guidelines; the statutory legal requirements governing public bodies as prescribed by the Revenue Commissioners; and any additional conditions specified by the Equality Fund Sub-Committee.

Details on invoice payment and reimbursement procedures can be found on the Equality Office website: [http://www.tcd.ie/equality/projects/equality-fund/project-organiser/](http://www.tcd.ie/equality/projects/equality-fund/project-organiser/). Administration of Equality Funding is by reimbursement, except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Equality Officer. Project organisers should be aware that processing each reimbursement may take some time.

€10,000 will be awarded annually, during Michaelmas term. Projects must be completed by 30th June of the same academic year, except in exceptional circumstances where an extension has been granted by the Equality Fund Sub-Committee. Where an annual allocation is not fully spent it may carry forward and be allocated in the next year in addition to the €10,000 budget for that year.

Successful project recipients are required to sign an acceptance letter outlining the conditions for use of Equality Fund monies and to sign their agreement to these Terms of Reference. All recipients must complete the Feedback Form provided upon completion of the project and submit it, together with any other specified
documentation, to the Equality Officer. Project organisers will also be requested to provide updates on their project’s progress from time to time.

Failure to fulfil any of these requirements may entail the loss of the funding award. The Equality Fund also reserves the right to re-claim the funding should the project proposed not take place as described in the application form.