Laidlaw Scholars

Leadership & Research Programme

Application Guide – 2022 Laidlaw Scholars

OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to help you understand and guide you through the application process for the Laidlaw Scholars Leadership & Research Programme at Trinity. Before starting an application, you should review our Laidlaw Programme webpage: https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/students/awards/laidlaw/

This will give you detailed information on what the programme is, the opportunities it offers, as well as the range of responsibilities required by students who are successfully selected as Laidlaw Scholars. You will also find a learning roadmap which will outline the varied components of the Laidlaw scholarship during the intensive 18-month programme and beyond.

This guide will explain what is expected for each component of the application and useful starting points. These will particularly help you if this is your first time creating something like a research proposal or a leadership statement video. You can find further resources on preparing a professional and effective application here: https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/students/applying/

We recommend to all applicants that they consider completing the Trinity Guided Reflection Tool prior to starting your application. This is not required for the submission; however, it will give you some experience of reflecting on your personal development which may help you express your motivation and goals in your Laidlaw submission. If you have any questions after reviewing our webpage and this application guide, please email the Laidlaw Programme coordinators at employability@tcd.ie.

Widening participation, diversity, and inclusion in the Laidlaw Programme

The Laidlaw Programme recognises that a positive contribution to society requires diversity of experience, and a platform for meaningful inclusion of that diversity at all levels. The Laidlaw community is enriched by the distinct cultural, social, and educational perspectives of each of its members.

We are committed to actively enabling students from all backgrounds to participate and develop - in particular those from demographics which are often under-represented in specialist programmes. This includes but is not limited to students from ethnic minorities in Ireland, students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and students who have participated in alternative admissions routes such as TAP (Trinity Access Programme).

We encourage you to contact us at employability@tcd.ie about any queries, clarifications, accessibility requests, or any other resources which would support you to complete an application.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The 2022 Laidlaw Programme application process is designed to give you the best opportunity to demonstrate why you are the right candidate for the scholarship. This is assessed across a range of criteria which focus on the applicant's commitment, insight, and potential for development as a leader across the range of potential settings they may contribute to in the future.

Application components

The main components of the application process to be completed are:

1. Laidlaw application form
2. Leadership development statement video
3. Research project proposal (Summer 1)
4. Leadership-in-action project proposal (Summer 2)
5. Letter of support from proposed project supervisor(s)

Throughout your application you should focus on making your application personal and reflective of you as an individual while not repeating information included elsewhere in your submission.

The programme is a fully integrated experience focused on the development of significant leadership learning alongside research skills. Applications should be well-rounded and balanced and should not focus solely on either the research or leadership opportunities available.

The Laidlaw Programme will be adaptive to future circumstances informed by the COVID – 19 public health situation. This may require components of the programme to be delivered in a blended or online format. When considering your proposal, you should clearly outline how proposed projects could be adapted to be carried out remotely if necessary.

How to apply

Applications to the 2022 cohort of Laidlaw Scholars will be open from **29th November 2021 – 7th February 2022 (23:59)**. To apply please complete this Application Form and upload the required components.

Please note that you will need to log into Office 365 when prompted with your usual Trinity student log in details in order to submit. Please allow sufficient time to prepare and complete your application.

Application form

To complete the application form, you must include the following:

Application Form: https://bit.ly/laidlaw22

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Trinity Student Number
4. Your accessibility requirements (if any)
5. Name of proposed project supervisor(s)
6. Email address of proposed supervisor(s)
7. Department/Area of proposed supervisor(s)
8. Upload your letter of support from proposed supervisor(s)
9. Upload your completed Laidlaw Proposal document which will include:
   o Your research project proposal
   o Your leadership-in-action experience proposal
10. Upload your leadership development statement video

The key criteria for each of these components is outlined in the sections below.

Additional notes

- You will be able to upload your required files through the linked application form – please ensure your files are labelled correctly using the format e.g., "LL_22_Your_Name_(Video)"
- Written documents should be submitted in PDF format where possible
- Documents do not need to be emailed to us directly
- When your application form is submitted you will see a confirmation screen which you can take as proof of receipt
- We will contact all applicants within a few days of the closing date to confirm receipt of application
- All communication will be through your @tcd.ie student email address

Application declaration

Applicants to the programme will be asked at point of submission to confirm that they have read and understood the following terms and conditions:

- I have read, understood, and acknowledge the terms outlined in the Laidlaw Data Protection Statement for the purposes of applying to the Laidlaw Programme
- I have read and understood the eligibility criteria
- I understand that I must satisfy these criteria in order to qualify for consideration by the University for award of this scholarship
- As of this date the information provided is, to the best of my knowledge, both accurate and complete
- I understand that should the information provided:
    - indicate that I am ineligible to be considered for award of this Scholarship
    - be incomplete to the extent that it is inadequate to prove eligibility to be considered for award of this Scholarship
    - on further investigation by the University, proves to be inaccurate or misleading

    the University reserves the right to reject my application without further justification
- I understand that the University reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the scholarship in full or in part for non – completion of the programme requirements by the Laidlaw Scholar
- I understand that the University has sole discretion in awarding this scholarship and that the University reserves the right not to award this scholarship, or to suspend or withdraw this scholarship in full or in part for any reason at any time prior to the student's final certification in the programme, including non – completion of the programme requirements by the Laidlaw Scholar

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Self-defined Research project proposal (Summer 1)

(1000 words max.)

The research proposal should be no more than 1,000 words and should be written to be read and understood easily by someone who is not a specialist in your field of study. You must include the key information outlined below somewhere in your proposal – you can personalize how you present this and add any additional information as necessary.

The purpose of the research proposal is to demonstrate your interest in the research topic and your rationale for selecting this project topic. You must show your planning in terms of timeline, methods, resources, and the potential outcomes and positive impact of the research. Your proposal is not expected to prove your hypothesis now, nor present your project as foolproof – you should be realistic about potential challenges or uncertainty and plan for how you would deal with them.

Research proposals of an interdisciplinary nature, and/or with an international focus are strongly encouraged.

Key areas of the research proposal are:

- Does the project have merit as a topic and is it feasible in the timeframe?
- Does the proposal show sufficient planning including potential obstacles, costs, and delaying factors such as ethical approvals/Garda vetting if required?
- Does the proposal have clearly defined objectives and outputs?
- Does the proposal consider the impact of the project beyond the student?

Below are the key sections to include and questions you should answer in your research proposal. There are further detailed guidelines on how to write your proposed research methodology in Appendix 1.

Additional notes for applicants to pre-defined central Laidlaw projects

In addition to the self-defined project proposals, there are opportunities available to apply to pre-defined research projects available via the Laidlaw Foundation in collaboration with their external partner organizations. For more information on these and the differences in their application process please see here: https://laidlawscholars.network/rooms/prospective-scholars-undergraduate

If you are applying to a pre-defined central Laidlaw project you will need to complete the selection process for that project prior to submitting your application to Trinity. You can only apply for one pre-defined central Laidlaw project at a time. You can only submit one application to the Trinity Laidlaw application process, i.e., either a self-defined project OR a pre-defined project.

For pre-defined projects, your research project proposal should outline the initial plans you have made with the central project provider for Summer 1, the research and leadership skills you are intending to develop, the role you will take within the project, and any expected impacts and outcomes.

Introduction

- Research question – state the topic and goal of your proposed project concisely
- Why did you choose this research question?
- What are the specific objectives and intended outcome of the project?
- What do you hope will be the impact of the project?

These goals and objectives don't have to be world-changing, or a revolutionary answer to your research question (although if they are, that will be a positive!). Your goals and objectives do have to be achievable, specific, measurable, and justify how the work will make a positive contribution to the field on a scale appropriate for your level of experience.

Methodology (see [Appendix 1](#))

- What is the methodology you plan to use in your research? Outline a project plan and timeline for how you will complete the project in 6 weeks
- What is your specific role in the project? The work must be led by you with clear responsibilities and opportunities to develop new skills and experience. This should include both research experience and leadership development. If your project is connected to work being undertaken by your research supervisor, your proposal should make clear how your project is a distinct piece of work that is able to stand alone as a self-contained output
- Does your proposal include methodology for how you could achieve your aims in a blended/entirely online delivery if necessary due to COVID-19?
- If travel is possible, funding can be applied for through the programme for research-related trips. Would there be potential for travel in your research? If so, where, and how would it benefit?

Interdisciplinary and/or international focus of your research

The Laidlaw Programme strongly encourages project proposals which have a focus on interdisciplinary work and or/international collaboration. This can involve research which involves multiple departments at Trinity, or in partnership with another university or organization abroad.

Please detail how your research proposal might include these priorities.

Research supervisor

Outline the role your research supervisor will have in your research project.

Collaboration

Outline any other organizations, departments, or participants who would be involved in your research.

Outcomes

What do you anticipate being the goal/key achievement of your research? What will the tangible outputs be?

Pre-clearance requirements (e.g., ethics approval and Garda Vetting)

If your proposal potentially could require an ethics approval, Garda vetting, or other pre-clearance requirement you should discuss this in detail with your research supervisor. Clearances can take significant time – you should factor this into your planning for Summer 1. Outline how this is achievable within the timeframe of the project and how it can be managed with your supervisor. What alternatives would be possible if delays arise?

Leadership-in-action experience proposal (Summer 2)

(500 words max.)

Laidlaw Scholars undertake a Leadership-in-action (LiA) experience in the second summer of the programme. Your LIA will be different from your research project experience and your proposal should focus on applying your leadership skills in a challenging, unfamiliar setting beyond Trinity.

The LiA experience enables the Scholar to be:

- Developing and demonstrating the Laidlaw leadership skills, attributes, and values
- Doing something which makes the world a (sustainably) better place
- Putting leadership learning into practice in a new and personally challenging environment
- Working with communities in need and making a positive impact in society

Applicants are not expected to have fully confirmed arrangements for Summer 2 at this stage – successful Scholars will refine these plans over the course of their first year in the programme.

Applicants are asked to make provisional plans for the LiA they would intend to undertake if selected, giving particular consideration to how their LiA experience would progress from their Summer 1 learning and apply the skills they've developed to make a positive impact for society.

Your proposal should clearly identify which of the three options is preferred:

Category A: Central Laidlaw Foundation Project

Category B: Leadership Placement

Category C: In-field application of research

You can find more detail on each of these on our application website.

All LiA experiences will include the following criteria:

- Based on clearly defined objectives and deliverables owned by the Scholar
- Working with communities in need towards a measurably positive outcome
- Learning through service internationally/overseas
- Will have a local supervisor or mentor who will liaise with the Laidlaw Team at Trinity

Examples of previous Leadership-in-action projects as well as opportunities for 2022 Scholars are available here: https://laidlawscholars.network/rooms/prospective-scholars-undergraduate and https://laidlawscholars.network/posts/central-leadership-in-action-projects-2022-aa9922d7-c1fb-4b3b-b291-f57d9a9dc9a3

Leadership Development Statement Video

(3 minutes max.)

This video will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of, motivation, and suitability for the leadership development component of the Laidlaw Programme.

Your video should address both parts of this prompt:

A. "Based on your experiences to date, how has your understanding of leadership evolved?"
B. "What kind of leader do you want to become through participation in this programme?"

Your video should include you in person – i.e., it should not be just a voiceover of a PowerPoint or text on the screen. It can be recorded on your phone, with a webcam, or another platform if convenient. It can be edited but this isn't required. You're not expected to produce a highly professional, performative, or overly polished "public speaking" style video – this is an opportunity to talk informally and honestly about what you really want to gain from taking part in the Laidlaw programme.

Your statement should show that you have researched the variety of leadership activities provided in the Programme and show how you're interested in developing as a leader. You are not expected to show that you already have impressive leadership skills and a long list of achievements with no weaknesses. You should identify what genuinely motivates you about leadership and what your version of a leader would be. Avoid cliched quotes from John F. Kennedy or Nelson Mandela – use this opportunity to share what you genuinely believe and understand about leadership.

Application notes

- Your video should be saved in a common file format and a reasonable size (e.g. .MP4/.AVI and approx. 500 MB)
- Please say your name at the start of the video and ensure the quality and presentation of the video is of a standard that is accessible to the viewer i.e., avoid low resolution, poorly lit, or shaky/cropped recordings

Project Supervisor letter of support

Each applicant is responsible for selecting their own research project topic and contacting a relevant academic staff member to ask them to act as their research supervisor for their Laidlaw research project proposal. This can be a lecturer or academic staff member you already know, or you can reach out to someone unknown to you whose area of research overlaps with your project. You can point potential research supervisors you approach to our Laidlaw Staff Information page to give more detail on what would be involved for them.

Your research supervisor should write the letter of support and give it to you to include in your application. It should be on official Trinity letterhead and include their signature. We will assess whether the components below are addressed however it is at the supervisor's discretion how they would like to present their letter.

Depending on the format of your research project, or your provisional plans for the LiA in Summer 2, you may have additional letters of support from a co-supervisor, external mentor in another organization, or similar. These can be included alongside your research supervisor's letter.

If you are applying to a central Laidlaw Foundation project you are not required to submit a supervisor letter of support. Please submit a PDF copy of the confirmation of your acceptance in lieu of a letter.

Recommended letter of support components

- Approximately 1 A4 page and includes signature (or signatures if the proposal has joint supervisors)
- Shows their understanding of your project, their interest and availability to supervise the project
- Shows their endorsement that the project has merit: does it address something important or novel in the field? Does it have potential international/interdisciplinary impact?
- Shows their endorsement that the project is feasible: can it be completed in the 6-week timeframe?

- Shows that they will be able to provide/facilitate the resources required

- States that any pre-approval considerations (ethics approval/Garda Vetting, etc.) will be handled appropriately and that they can be completed in a timeframe necessary for the project to succeed

- Details any relevant supervisory arrangements (i.e., if there are multiple supervisors, if the applicant will be included in a research group, if the supervisor will be unavailable for a period)

- Acknowledges that they will agree to the responsibilities of a Laidlaw supervisor if the proposal is accepted including regular meetings with you, support for any project developments or administrative requirements, and occasional requirements of the programme e.g., providing feedback on your progress

Academic transcript

Your academic transcript is included as a component of your application. You do not need to provide this as it will be accessed from your student record for the purpose of this application process.

Your transcript is considered as one part of an overall impression of you as an applicant, and it is not the most important determining factor. We do not expect applicants to have consistently flawless grades to date. Your transcript can help show your work ethic and capacity to participate in an intensive cocurricular opportunity such as the Laidlaw Programme.

Additional Information

If there's anything you haven't included elsewhere in your application that you think would be relevant for us to know, please include it at the end of your submission e.g., are you intending to apply for Erasmus or an exchange programme which could impact your availability for in-person activities? Is there a conference or event happening in the future you're hoping to apply to?

What happens after you submit your application and what is the selection process?

We will provide an initial acknowledgement of your application within a few days of the closing date.

All applications will be reviewed by the Laidlaw Selection Panel which includes:

- **Prof. David Shepherd** - Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Chair)

- **Ms Orla Bannon** – Director of Careers

- **Mr Joel McKeever** – Student Employability Officer (Laidlaw Programme coordinator)

- Faculty Academic Representatives

- Leadership Development Advisor

The Panel will assess applications against the criteria outlined in each section above, with equal weighting given to the leadership and research components, following which they will agree a shortlist of applicants to be invited for interview.

After each stage of the selection process, unsuccessful applicants can request feedback on their application.

The final stage of the selection process will involve a short interview to discuss aspects of your application in more detail. It is expected this will take place over video call – further guidance will be provided beforehand.

Final selection of the 2022 Laidlaw Scholars will take place by April 2022.

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APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND METHODOLOGY GUIDELINES

What is a research proposal?

The main purpose of a research proposal is to specify the following:

- Why the research problem warrants investigation;
- That the proposed methodology is appropriate and feasible within the timeframe;
- That the results make an original contribution to the research field and indicates reason for further research

The research proposal provides an outline of the premise of what you are proposing to research. However, it is subject to adaptation as the research proceeds. It serves as a starting point for development with the assistance of your research supervisor.

Typically, the research proposal will include:

- Aims and objectives
- Statement of hypothesis or research 'problem'
- Literature review of previous research in the area and justification for further research
- Proposed methodology
- Expected results and contribution to body of knowledge
- Requirements for equipment, materials, field trips, and funding (if applicable)
- Approximate time by which each stage will be completed

Your research proposal should be concise. It only needs to be as long as necessary to explain the core of your proposal in sufficient detail for the application stage and should be in simple terms which can be understood by a non-expert. Show your research proposal to someone who doesn't study your subject – if they can't begin to understand it, you should streamline it further.

Aims and objectives

State the purpose of this piece of research. Then provide a detailed list of objectives, for example:

- Statement of hypothesis or research question (what the question is you're trying to answer)

- Description of literature review – have you checked whether there is a lot of previous research on this specific topic already?

You should identify the context of your research and which key existing academic texts and researchers you will be developing from, and your rationale for doing so. Then you should identify which sources you are going to consult in which fields / areas and why. You should demonstrate why the investigation and examination of selected research studies will contribute to your research.

Methodology

Why, Who, What, How and Where

The Methodology section can vary in length and content, depending upon the research topic and approach to investigation. This section should include a detailed explanation of the sample population, procedures, timelines, objectives, research limitations, type of data collection, ethical considerations, and method of analysis.

Why: restate research problem or hypothesis

Before describing the methodology, it is a good idea to re-state the research problem before describing how this is to be researched.

Who: sample population?

Define and describe the sample population and associated demographics if applicable (who are you investigating and where are they from?), Is there likely to be any bias or difficulties from the point of view of gender, age, race, sexuality, religious beliefs, political affiliation, educational level, etc. You must demonstrate that a sufficient number of subjects have been investigated so that there is a solid basis for your findings and claims. If your research is not related to a specific population group, then you should specify who the research will benefit – will it add to a body of knowledge in your field? Who could use your work in future to inform their own?

Where: research environment

Will the research take place within a specified location, institution, range of institutions, or work-related environment.

What and How?

You should include a statement of what kind of methodology you'll be using and why. For example, is the methodology is qualitative or quantitative or a combination, and why was this approach suitable for the research? If you're working with data, include a detailed explanation of data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and case studies. If you are applying critical theory to the proposal, you should demonstrate that you have considered the advantages and limitations of these methods and their relevance to your specific goals.

Timeframe

Identify the timeframe for each stage of your research. You should break this down into week by week goals for your 6-week project. These can change however you should be thorough and realistic – the most common pitfall of a research proposal is planning to do too much in the time allowed and then encountering issues when delays come from a broken piece of lab equipment, an expanding literature review, or a global pandemic.

Resources

Outline / describe the resources you will require to complete your research in terms of materials, equipment, costs, access to facilities.

APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION CHECKLIST

When you feel you are ready to submit your application you can use the below checklist as a reminder to ensure you've included everything necessary for a valid submission.

Preparation	Have you reviewed the Laidlaw Programme website to learn about the learning outcomes and goals of the scholarship?	
	Have you reviewed the Laidlaw Scholars Network site to get an idea of the kind of projects and activities Laidlaw scholars are involved in internationally?	
	Have you reviewed the timeline for the Programme on the Components of the Laidlaw Programme webpage and made sure you can commit to all the activities and dates required?	
Research Project Proposal	Have you reviewed previous projects by Laidlaw Scholars at Trinity and in the Laidlaw Network to consider the kind of project you'd like to undertake?	
	Could someone who is not familiar with your field of study understand your research proposal?	
	Have you discussed your proposal and any logistics with your research supervisor?	
	Are they aware of the role requirement for research supervisors detailed on the Laidlaw staff webpage?	
	If your proposal could require an ethics approval, Garda Vetting, or other pre-clearance requirement, have you discussed this with your research supervisor?	
	Have you received a Letter of Support from your supervisor to include with your application?	
Leadership-in-action Proposal	Have you included your plan for the Leadership-in-Action experience in Summer 2 including what leadership learning will be involved?	
Leadership Development Statement Video	Have you reviewed the Laidlaw Leader Attributes available on the website?	
	Have you stated your name clearly in the beginning of the recording?	
	Have you addressed both sections of the below prompt in your video? "Based on your experiences to date, how has your understanding of leadership evolved?" **and** "What kind of leader do you want to become through participation in this programme?"	
	Have you made sure that the quality of the video is of a reasonably good standard and meets the technical specifications outlined?	
Application Submission	Have you submitted your application and all required components to the Application Form?	