



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

## **The Faculty of Health Sciences Dean's Research Initiatives Fund 2026-27**

The Dean's Research Initiatives Fund supports new and innovative research that will enhance the Faculty of Health Sciences' ability to compete for large-scale, interdisciplinary, single- and multi-investigator extramural awards. It aims to advance the research priorities of Trinity College, and to raise the national and international profile of the University through increased competitiveness for funding from sources including European Commission, Wellcome Trust, Research Ireland, Health Research Board, as well as other funding sources.

### **Fund Objectives**

The Dean's Research Initiatives Fund will award investigators from Health Sciences with seed funding that provides the foundation or pilot data necessary to secure extramural funding for cutting edge, innovative and transformative research. One of the primary aims of the Dean's Research Initiatives Fund is to support early career researchers from Health Sciences, by providing them with an opportunity to be named PI on a research grant. Therefore, those eligible to apply as PI are:

Research Fellows, Senior Research Fellows, Lecturer Registrars, Research Assistant Professors, Assistant Professors, Clinical Lecturers, Adjunct Assistant Professors.

Please note, if the successful PI holds an honorary title with Trinity, they must designate a Trinity staff member from within their research team (ie someone attached to a Health Sciences cost centre) to manage the award, which will be processed via Trinity's Oracle financial system.

### **Specific objectives are as follows:**

1. To pursue new research opportunities and/or develop preliminary data that leads to the development of a successful grant application from public and private entities, particularly Horizon Europe, European Research Council, the Health Research Board, the Irish Research Council & Science Foundation Ireland (Research Ireland), and Wellcome Trust.
2. To advance novel, innovative research ideas that will have a tangible impact on the respective research discipline and/or body of scholarly work.
3. To have a transformative impact on the career of the PI.
4. To encourage engaged research that has impact and benefit to society.
5. To increase the national and international reputation of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Trinity College and its research portfolio.

### **2026-27 Awards**

Awards are €20,000 and applicants must complete their project within one year of receiving their award.

**Opening Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**Closing Date:** 12pm Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September

**Award Announcement:** October 2026

**Award Ceremony:** 20<sup>th</sup> May '27 (TBC)

## Supports for Applicants

[www.tcd.ie/healthsciences/research/bursaries-supports.php](http://www.tcd.ie/healthsciences/research/bursaries-supports.php)

**Support for writing this application:** The Faculty has called on previous winners of the Dean's Award to be available for some application-writing support, details of which are on the [Faculty website](#). Applicants are asked to make contact with these prospective mentors early in the process in order to prevent undue pressure close to the submission deadline. Mentors have been asked to offer two meetings with applicants, plus one review of the draft application.

**Building a sustainable ecosystem to support colleagues:** winners of the Dean's Award are required to make themselves available for mentoring of future applicants (offering two meetings plus one review of the draft application). Recipients will be asked to join the panel of mentors 2 years after receipt of their award.

**Support for developing PPI in your application:** Applicants are asked to complete "Section 1: Introduction to PPI" of the [Trinity PPI Ignite Introductory Module](#), and to confirm on their application form that they have done so. Additional background information specifically relating to PPI in Health Sciences can be found in the [Faculty Forum slides and video](#). Winners of the Dean's Research Awards will later be linked with staff from the Trinity PPI Ignite Office to explore the PPI aspect of their project in more detail prior to commencement. Building successful PPI from the outset of your Dean's Award will lead to a better chance of success in securing external, larger scale funding, and the PPI Ignite office will guide you on this journey.

**Maximizing opportunities for external funding:** Applicants are strongly advised to contact the Research Development Office (RDO) prior to submitting their application for the Dean's Award – the RDO will advise on the most suitable pathway for future funding. Recipients of the Dean's Award will later be linked with a member of staff in Health Sciences who has prior success in securing funding from their chosen external funder. These mentors will be asked to offer two meetings plus one review of your draft application.

## Evaluation Criteria

Proposals for funding will be reviewed based on the following scoring criteria:

- **Project description - Scientific, Scholarly Merit: 40%**  
Evidence of innovative, transformative research and scholarship. Well planned project with sound rationale and clear plan for execution. Ambitious but achievable goals and milestones. Clear indication of how the proposed research or scholarship will have impact due to the significance of the scholarly work and its broader benefit to society.
- **Potential for Future Extramural Funding: 20%**  
Pathway to impact established which identifies a specific, future funding opportunities that the research team is better primed for, due to this funding. Please note: applicants must provide a detailed pathway for future extramural funding from a government, industry, private, or not-for-profit sponsor. Please indicate clearly if you have engaged with the Research Development Office (RDO) for guidance.
- **Suitability & Interdisciplinarity of the Research Team: 10%**  
How the Principal Investigator and the proposed research team members have the capability and structure to execute this research project will be evaluated, with particular emphasis on the research network this project advances and the interdisciplinary nature of the research team.

- **Public Patient Involvement and/or Societal Engagement: 15%**  
Research is considered 'engaged' when it is developed in collaboration *with* patients, community members, civic society and partnering organisations rather than *for* or *about* them. *Similarly, Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) denotes collaboration between academic researchers and members of the public or patients with lived experience of the research topic.* Such Public and Patient Involvement improves the relevancy of the research question, the quality of the approach, and the likelihood that what is discovered through the research can and will be used. Societal engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of the proposed research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.
- **Justification for funding to be Transformative at Career Stage: 15%**  
The application should clearly indicate how this funding will be transformative for the applicant at their current career stage and justify why this is the most appropriate source of funding for this project.

## Proposal Format

Completed application packages must be submitted electronically to Lena Doherty [ldohert@tcd.ie](mailto:ldohert@tcd.ie) by 12pm **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2026**. The seven (7) required sections listed below must be included in the application package. All sections **must** be 1.5 spaced, with one-inch margins, and 11-point Calibri font.

### I. **Cover Page: 1 page maximum**

- Project Title
- Principal Investigator(s) / Research Team names, titles and organisations
- Funding Amount Requested
- Project Abstract: 200 words or fewer

### II. **Project Description demonstrating scientific, scholarly merit: 4 page maximum – 40%**

Evidence of innovative, transformative research and scholarship. Well planned project with sound rationale and clear plan for execution. Ambitious but achievable goals and milestones. Clear indication of how the proposed research or scholarship will have impact due to the significance of the scholarly work and its broader benefit to society.

### III. **Potential for Future Extramural Funding: 1 page maximum - 20%**

Pathway to impact established which identifies a specific, future funding opportunities that the research team is better primed for, due to this funding. Please note: applicants must provide a detailed pathway for future extramural funding from a government, industry, private, or not-for-profit sponsor. Please indicate clearly if you have engaged with the Research Development Office (RDO) for guidance.

### IV. **Suitability & Interdisciplinarity of the Research Team: Half page maximum, plus bio-sketches (half page each) – 10%**

How the Principal Investigator and the proposed research team members have the capability and structure to execute this research project will be evaluated, with particular emphasis on the research network this project advances and the interdisciplinary nature of the research team.

- Describe how the skills, experience and track record of this team will be able to deliver the project, and how the combination of disciplines will enhance the research
- Provide bio-sketches for the Principal Investigator, co-Principal Investigators, and other members of the research team (as applicable). **Half a page maximum per researcher.**

#### **V. Public Patient Involvement and/or Societal Engagement: 1 page maximum 15%**

Research is considered 'engaged' when it is developed in collaboration *with* patients, community members and partnering organisations rather than *for* or *about* them. Such public and patient involvement improves the relevancy of the research question, the quality of the approach, and the likelihood that what is discovered through the research can and will be used. Societal engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of the proposed research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

#### **VI. Personal Statement: Justification for funding to be Transformative at Career Stage: 1 page maximum - 15%**

The application should clearly indicate how this funding will benefit the career progression of the PI, indicate if this would be the first grant held in the PI's name, how the grant would be transformative for the applicant at their current career stage, and justify why this is the most appropriate source of funding for this project.

#### **VII. Budget & Budget Justification: 1 page maximum**

- The budget may include salaries for students, post-doctoral associates, supplies, travel, and equipment.
- Include any co-funding or payments-in-kind that will apply to the project
- Faculty academic year salaries will not be funded
- While collaborations with non-Trinity researchers are encouraged, funding to non-Trinity researchers is not permitted.
- Programme funding is one-time. Funding is not available for multiple-year awards.
- Funding should be expended over a maximum of 12-months, beginning when the awards are made.
- The budget justification should include a narrative explaining how the costs were estimated, along with a justification of the planned spending and any matched funding available.

**Application Deadline: 12pm Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

### **Selection Panel and Awards**

- Proposals will be reviewed by a selection panel.
- The selection panel may include senior staff from the Faculty of Health Sciences, across the University, and external reviewers as selected by the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- The selection panel members will be required to disclose potential conflicts of interest.
- Awards for winning proposals will be based on the recommendations of the selection panel with the final decisions by the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.


### **Awards Announcement**

Awards will be announced in October. Recipients of the awards, and their research team, will be invited to a celebratory event in May, where all Dean's Awards from 2026-27 will be recognised.

### **Queries**

Should you have any queries, please contact the Faculty Administrator, Lena Doherty, at [ldohert@tcd.ie](mailto:ldohert@tcd.ie).

## Application Checklist

Item	Details	
	1.5 spaced, one inch margins, at 11 point Calibri font	
Cover Page	1 page maximum	
Project Description demonstrating scientific, scholarly merit	4 page maximum	
Potential for Future Extramural Funding	1 page maximum	
Suitability & Interdisciplinarity of the Research Team	Half page maximum, plus bio-sketches (half page each)	
Public Patient Involvement and/or Societal Engagement	1 page maximum	
Personal Statement: Justification for funding to be Transformative at Career Stage	1 page maximum	
Budget & Budget Justification	1 page maximum	
Completed Application	Must be submitted by email to Lena Doherty, Faculty Administrator <a href="mailto:ldohert@tcd.ie">ldohert@tcd.ie</a>  Subject Line: Dean's Research Initiatives Fund  <b>Deadline: 12pm Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2026</b>	