

PGR TUITION FEE DIFFERENTIAL

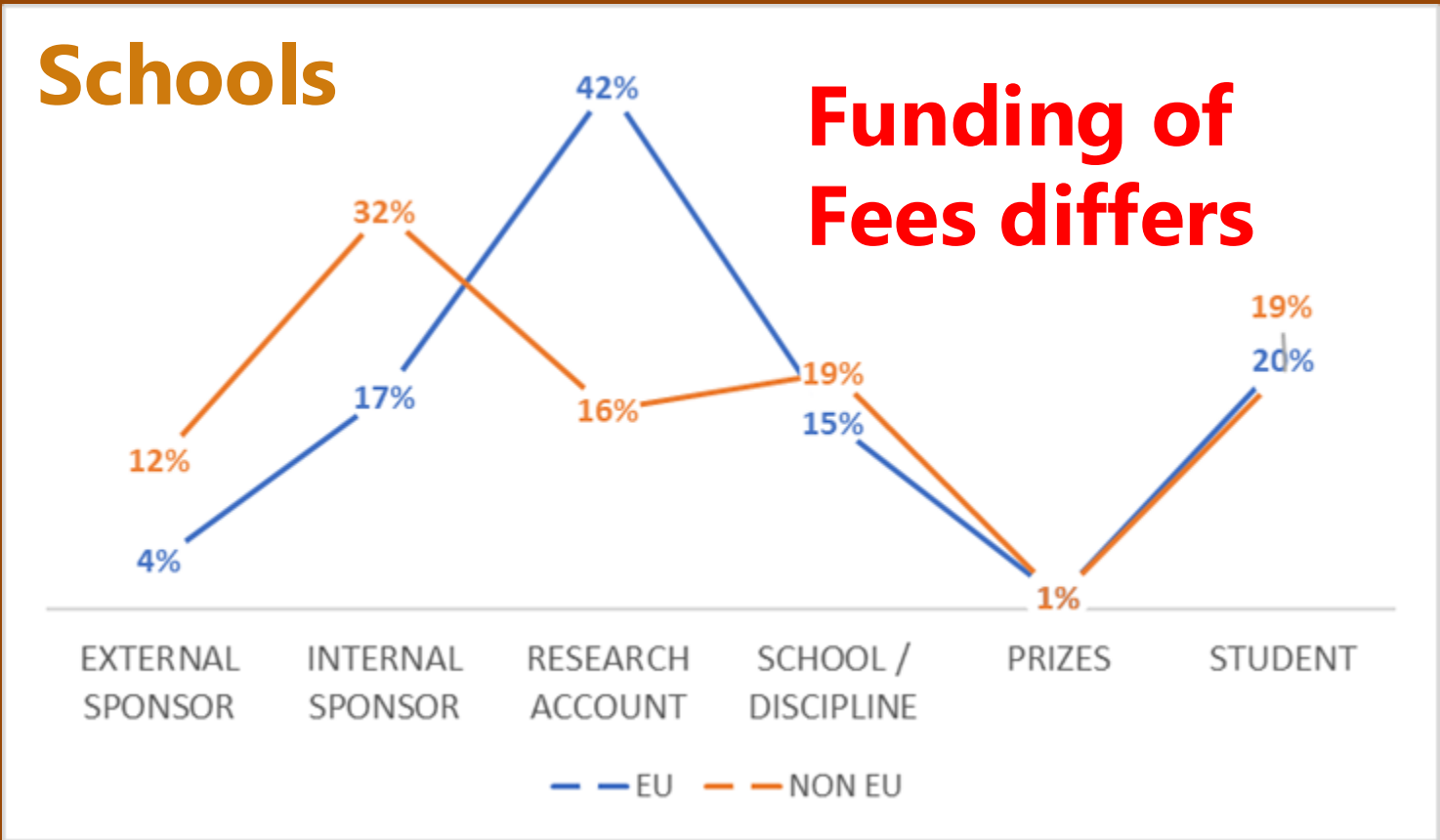
Increase Trinity’s ability to be competitive in attracting the best PGR students



What you said (voice of the community):

- Significant and negative impact of some Irish State funding agencies capping funding allocated to tuition fees.
- Affecting Trinity’s ability to
 - recruit the best students,
 - reduces competitive standing, and
 - creates significant financial challenge for Schools (approx. €2m in 2021-22).
- Consequences
 - Difficult choice of selecting students based on affordability not excellence.
 - Disadvantages Early Career Researchers seeking to build their research activities.
 - Places Trinity at a competitive disadvantage relative to other institutions.

What we learned (analysis):



- Differ in career stage + access to overhead funds
- Loss of nonEU students
- Loss of research competitiveness



- Differ in ability to pay

Horizon 1: Value we delivered - PGR Tuition Fee Write-down Pilot

- Pilot write-down of tuition fee differential for PGR new entrant students funded by an Irish state funding agency that do not pay full tuition fees (2023-24; 2024-25).
- Retention of current Tuition Fee Bands / Rates

Registered PGRs across all years funded by Irish State Agencies (where tuition fee cap applied)		Registered PGRs funded by Irish State Agencies (where tuition fee cap applied)					
2022-23		2023-24			2024-25		
EU	NonEU	EU	NonEU	Total	EU	NonEU	Total
83%	17%	54%	46%	84	60%	40%	146

* As at October 2024

Horizon 2: Evaluation and Approved Recommendations

1. Extend pilot for a further two academic years (2025-26, 2026-27) to
 - a) ensure Trinity remains competitive in the recruitment of doctoral researchers and
 - b) increase the data pool to enable data-informed decision-making.
2. Extend write-down of fee-differential to include all PGR students newly approved for research funding from an Irish state agency, to encourage continuing students to apply for external funding.
3. Continue to monitor and report annually to the university on the impact of the fee differential write-down.
4. Continue to promote sectoral advocacy for funding agencies to review the proportion of research budget that can be allocated against PGR tuition fees.

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

- Monitor, evaluate and report on full year 2024-25.
- Develop a transition plan to move oversight and reporting out of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme.
- Transition ownership of governance and reporting.

Impact ... to date:

- Enabled Schools to reinstate recruitment of nonEU students.
- Increased diversity and quality of students admitted.
- Enabled Schools for the first time in years to recruit truly the best candidates to the PhD register.
- Enabled a wider and fairer spread of qualified PhD students across supervisors at all career stages.
- Avoided the need to cancel funded research projects and the resultant loss of research income to the College.
- Supported new PIs in making application to funding agencies (eg, IRC), who previously have been reluctant to apply due to the issue with the fee differential.
- Significantly decreased advertising-to-onboarding time
- Helped some Schools increase their PhD student numbers
- Reduced the financial burden on Schools resulting in budget being redirected to other activities.
- Uneven across Schools to date reflecting geographic regions from which Schools recruit and previously restricted to new entrants only.

PhD Awards centrally funded by College

Change the funding landscape for PhD researchers in Trinity to include a living stipend



What you said (voice of the community):

- Centrally funded PhD awards (Postgraduate Research Studentship (1252), Ussher Award, Provost PhD award) differed:
 - All stipends paid below living wage.
 - Annual stipends unequal in value (€6.5k to €17.5k)
 - Funding differed in duration (3 or 4 years)
 - Differing processes for determining allocation.
- Leading to significant and negative impact affecting Trinity's ability to recruit the best students.

Value we delivered - Trinity Research Doctorate Award (TRDA):

Driven by the principle of equity for all and aligned to the Provost's ambitions

- Introduced the **Trinity Research Doctorate Award (TRDA)** with a stipend of €25,000 p.a. for four years (full-time), and tuition fees (EU / nonEU) consolidating the three legacy awards.
- Funding a total of **208** annually across 4 years (**52 new awards p.a.**) costing **€5.2m annually** with effect from 2023-24
- Uplifting the value of the stipend to €25,000 p.a. for continuing students on the legacy awards with effect from 2023-24.

Trinity Research Doctorate Awards – in numbers

- Currently, the Postgraduate Renewal Programme is carrying direct responsibility for managing and administering the Trinity Research Doctorate Awards including its associated annual budget of circa €5.5m.
- To date, there has been two cycles of TRDAs allocated - 2023-24 and 2024-25 as follows:

TRDA Category	2023-24	2024-25	
Funded	Central	Central	Other
School-based (one distributed to each School to allocate)	24	24	
PI-based (targeted early career researchers since Setpember 2020)	12	12	10 (see Note 1)
Group Based (allocated to 3 interdisciplinary research projects each funding 4 PhD students)	12	12	1 (see Note 2)
Student of Sanctuary	1	1	
Provost	1	1	
Vice-Provost	1	1	
Dean of Graduate Studies	1	1	
TRDAs allocated	52	52	11
TRDA Stipends	€1.3m	€1.3m	€300,000
Note 1: 8 awards funded by the Faculty Dean (6 AHSS; 1 STEM; 1 HS), 2x funded by Philanthropy			
Note 2: Funded by Dean of AHSS			

Legacy Awards	2023-24	2024-25
Registered continuing students	163	85
Stipends uplifted to €25,000 p.a.	€3.584m	€2.125m

TRDAs for 2025-26 are currently being administered.

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

- Complete 2025-26 allocation cycle, and oversee setup of stipend payment process.
- Manage annual budget for 2024/25 financial year.
- Complete work to ensure that all future newly established College PGR awards, funded internally and/or with external donors/sponsors, align to the features of the TRDA ie, duration, tuition fee and stipend.
- Develop a transition plan to move management of TRDAs including financial oversight and reporting out of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme.
- Transition ownership of governance, administration and reporting.

Post December 2025

- Continue commitment to increase TRDAs funded by philanthropy through engagement with TDA.
- Monitor the effectiveness of enhanced governance and management of PGR internal awards.

Benefits ... to date:

- Addresses previous inequity of stipends paid and reputational risk.
- Enhances Trinity's competitiveness to attract PGR students.
- Showcases Trinity's commitment to acceptable funding for PhD researchers.
- Provides pipeline of early career researchers for research activity.
- Provides pipeline of support for teaching and learning.