



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Trinity Research Doctorate Award (TRDA): Group-Based Interdisciplinary Scheme

Information Session: November 5, 2025



Broad outline

- TRDA Scheme: in its 4th year
- Building on experience of previous schemes:
TRDA (2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26); Kinsella; Prendergast Challenge-Based Awards
- Group-based initiatives
 - Complex questions and challenges
 - Require multi- or interdisciplinary solutions
- 3 x awards available, each to provide tuition fee and stipend for group of 4 PhD students
- Overall aim – to fund projects that will commence in September 2026

Broad outline

- Calls are invited under one of the following four themes:

1. Culture, Identity and Inclusive Societies
2. Lifecourse wellbeing
3. Sustainable practices and land use
4. Living better with AI?

NOTE: A total of **3 awards** will be selected for funding. Awards will not be possible under each theme and may be distributed unevenly across themes.

- Excellent, innovative cross-disciplinary/interdisciplinary projects
- Projects that tackle local, national and global challenges of significance

<https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/awards/trda-group/group-winners-2025-2026/>

Funding objectives ... to

- Support multi- and interdisciplinary teams and build capacity
- Position teams to apply for future funding
- Support excellence in PhD development: for students and for staff
- Develop networks of PhD students to support multi- and interdisciplinary working but also transversal skills development
- Enhance our understanding of the unique challenges and benefits of multi- and interdisciplinary working for students and for staff
- Communicate the impact of multi- and interdisciplinary work internally and externally

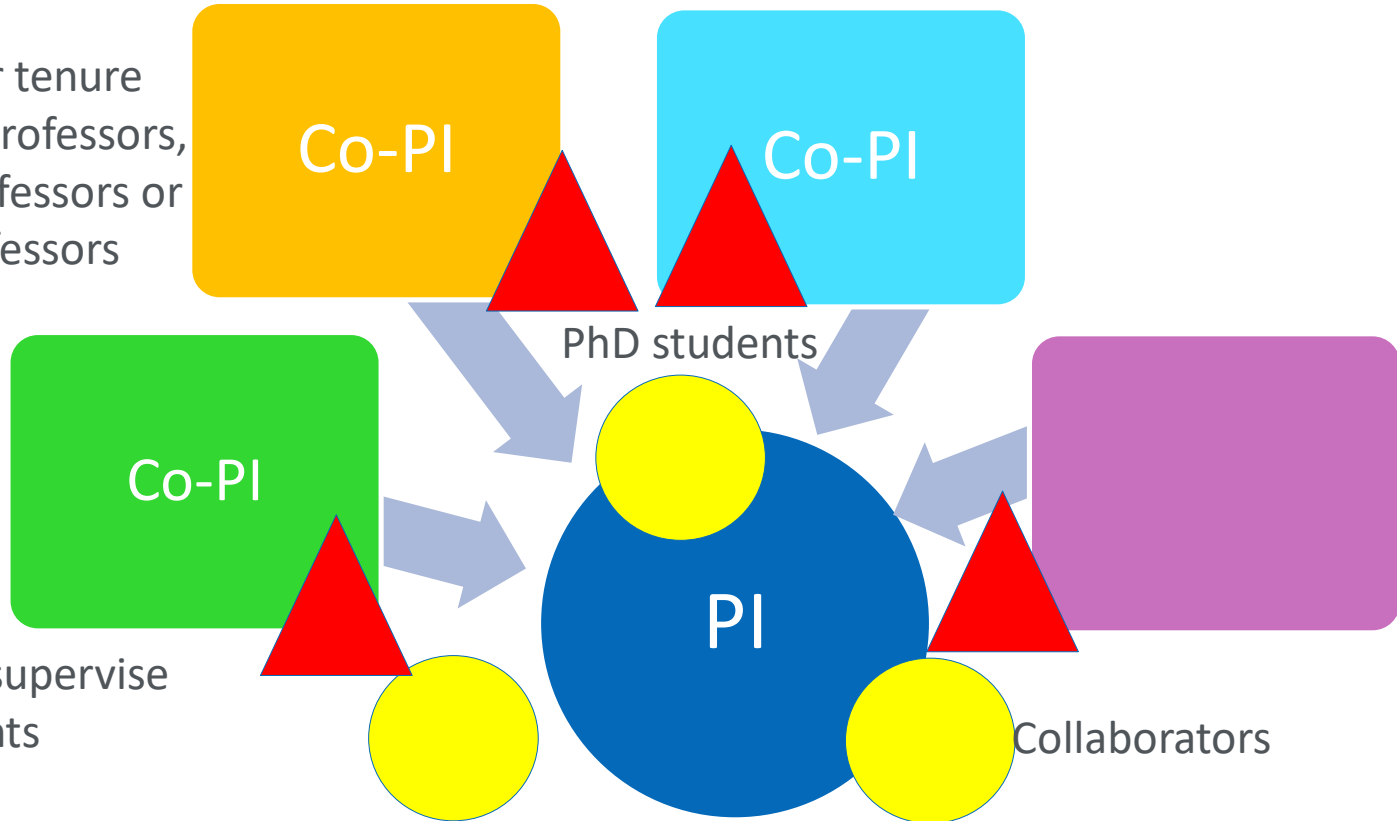
Call Details

- pgrenewal@tcd.ie
- 3 awards (each supporting 4 PhD students) will be made
- Start in September 2026 – i.e., students to register in September 2026 (to be completed by September 2031)
 - a) **Declaration of intent**: Monday, November 17, 2025. **ESSENTIAL**
 - b) **Full proposal**: Monday, January 12, 2026 (**via online application form**)
 - c) **Shortlisted Applications confirmed**: March 2026
 - d) **Award notification**: April 2026
- <https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/awards/trda-group>

Team

Permanent or tenure track Trinity Professors, Associate Professors or Assistant Professors

Eligible to supervise PhD students



Team: critical elements

- At least **3 Schools**, ideally from at least **2 Faculties** (1 PI, 3 Co-PIs)
- **Evaluation Panel will be attentive to proposed spread of student registrations across Schools.**
- **Lead PI:** can only be named as Lead PI on one application. Evidence of track record of experience leading a multi-/interdisciplinary team.
- Balance in career stage and gender within the team.
- Career stage: Assistant Professor with limited experience of PhD supervision.
- Cohesive team: www.shapeidtoolkit.eu



Top Ten Tips for writing inter- and transdisciplinary research proposals **from SHAPE-ID partner, [Dr Isabel Fletcher](#)**

1

Remember your proposal will be read by a range of people, not just those within your research area: don't assume knowledge of your discipline – describe (concisely) why your research is important, innovative, impactful etc.

2

Don't just describe your proposal as interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary. Explain why an inter- or transdisciplinary approach is necessary to achieve the intended research outcomes.

3

Inter- and trans-disciplinary proposals may be evaluated by those with expertise in collaborative research rather than your discipline. Write clearly for a general reader – use the minimum of technical language and abbreviations and define specialist terms briefly when they are first used.

4

Collaboration and integration take many forms and work to achieve. Outline what kind(s) of collaboration/integration you envisage (theoretical, methodological, etc.) and the specific ways in which you hope to achieve this.

Other factors for consideration

- Understanding the challenges and opportunities of working in multi- and interdisciplinary teams, with particular emphasis on the PhD student experience
- <https://www.leru.org/publications/implementing-interdisciplinarity-in-research-intensive-universities-good-practices-and-challenges>
- Conditions of Award
 - [Research supervisor-student agreement](#)
 - Engagement in TRDA interdisciplinary development programme
 - Research supervision development programme
 - Annual reporting on research
 - Engagement with TD&A to support future funding initiatives

Financial considerations

- Funding envelope: €25k stipend for 4 years, tuition fee (EU/nonEU) write-down
- 4 PhD students for 4 years of full-time study
- Research Team may implement co-funding initiatives (stipend capped at €25k p.a. per student)
- No overhead and no additional bench costs or other costs can be supported through this scheme

Evaluation criteria

- Research design, method and feasibility (30)
- Research significance, impact, innovation and engagement (30)
- Interdisciplinary team: including expertise, diversity, balance, contribution of each discipline, *and* plans to build capacity and interdisciplinarity (20)
- PhD student experience: including capacity building as a multi/interdisciplinary group, supervision innovation (20)

Review Process

1. External review

- i. Proposed reviewers - *balanced span of expertise relevant to the research proposal* (February)
- ii. Shortlisting (March)

2. Evaluation (selection) Panel

- i. Final selection and notification (April)



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Making Waves: Joining forces for better doctoral education in water research

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
New professional

ABSTRACT

We argue that doctoral education in water needs to be revised from towards educating more diverse and innovative researchers who can drive innovation and change towards more sustainable futures across academic and non-academic settings.

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Hydrology and
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Strengthening interdisciplinary water research – learnings from sports team management

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Interdisciplinary doctoral research networks: enhancers and inhibitors of social capital development

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ABSTRACT

Interdisciplinary research networks are increasing, with professionals encouraged to undertake research across disciplines to increase innovation, creativity and knowledge. More recently, this interdisciplinary focus is being mirrored by the establishment of interdisciplinary doctoral research networks. But do these networks work? And if so, how and why? We employ social capital theory to (a) understand the lived experiences of students in interdisciplinary doctoral programmes and (b) build programme design theory to support the development of social capital within such programmes. We present the results of 28 semi-structured interviews conducted with doctoral students from three European Union funded interdisciplinary research training networks to understand how they perceive the enhancers, inhibitors and manifestations of social capital within their networks. Key themes revolve around 'extracting value from the interdisciplinary process', 'motivating students throughout the interdisciplinary programme journey', and 'relating to others both within and external to the programme'. We propose a framework for interdisciplinary programme design.

KEYWORDS

Interdisciplinarity; doctoral education; social capital; Interdisciplinary; study program; healthcare education and training

Student socialization in interdisciplinary doctoral education

Daniel Boden · Maura Borrego · Lynita K. Newswander

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Abstract Interdisciplinary approaches are often seen as necessary for attacking the most critical challenges facing the world today, and doctoral students and their training programs are recognized as central to increasing interdisciplinary research capacity. However, the traditional culture and organization of higher education are ill-equipped to facilitate interdisciplinary work. This study employs a lens of socialization to study the process through which students learn the norms, values, and culture of both traditional disciplines and integrated knowledge production. It concludes that many of the processes of socialization are similar, but that special attention should be paid to overcoming organizational barriers to interdisciplinarity related to policies, space, engagement with future employers, and open discussion of the politics of interdisciplinarity.

Keywords Interdisciplinary · Doctoral education · Graduate education · Socialization

Mountford et al., 2020

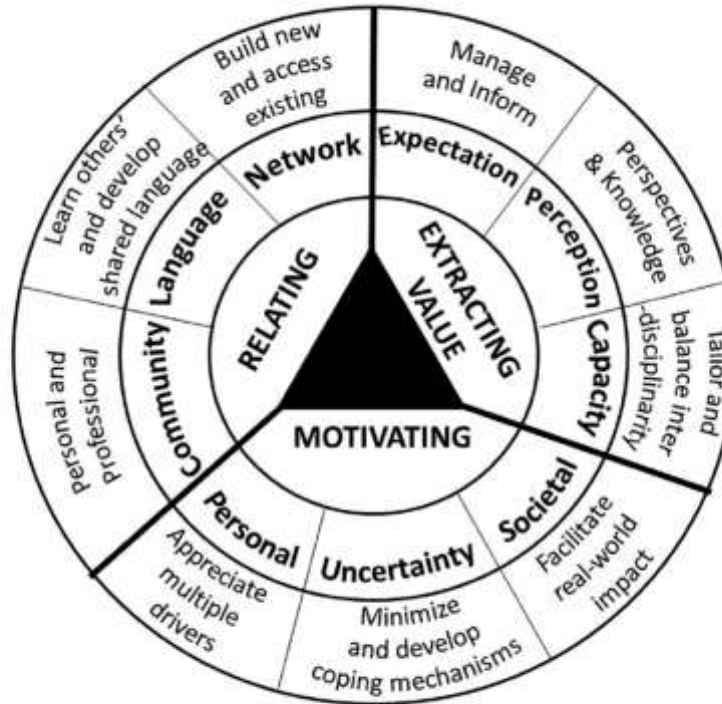


Figure 2. A framework for maximising social capital development in an interdisciplinary fourth level programme.

What we have learned...

1. Organizing talks or discussion seminars among the PIs to build improved understanding.
2. Different disciplines have different approaches and requirements for research, and it is necessary to be open.
3. Perspective on a research problem may change and may assume a different dimension influenced by the interaction.
4. It is important to provide an initial crystallization phase in these types of collaboration which is crucial for future development.

Other TRDA schemes ...

PI Based Awards

- 12 awards
- Start in September 2026 – i.e., students to register in academic year 2026/27
- 2 categories
 - a) **PI-Led:** Proposals related to a particular research project which the PI in question is undertaking or proposes to undertake. Targeting Early Career Researchers appointed during or after 2020-21.
 - b) **Joint Student:PI** proposals by the applicant doctoral student with the supervisor.
- Faculty evaluation process (3 awards allocated to each Faculty; top 3 thereafter)
- Full proposal: **Monday, January 26, 2026 (via online application form)**
- Award notification: **March 2026**
- Queries to pgrenewal@tcd.ie .



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Questions?

