Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Research

Institiúid Ailse Choláiste na Tríonóide/San Séamas
Trinity St James's Cancer Institute

Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Pilot – Cancer Research

This pilot provides seed funding for new interdisciplinary research, facilitating collaboration and partnership across Trinity's three faculties on the topic of cancer research. Call design draws on the EU-funded SHAPE-ID project's guidance to funders on lowering barriers to inter-disciplinary work.

SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

Looking for collaborators? Contact Dr Maedbh King (maedbh.king@tcd.ie), Dr Patricia Doherty (patricia.doherty@tcd.ie), Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll (lodrisc@tcd.ie) for help with partner searches. Attendance at the 17 September 2026 colloquium is not required.

ELIGIBILITY & TEAM

- Open to all TCD and TSJCI staff and researchers, all career stages. Team members who are PhD or Postdoc researchers should have support from their supervisor before submitting an application.
- Team of at least 2 people from at least 2 different faculties; teams spanning all three (AHSS, STEM, Health Sciences) are encouraged but not required.
- Project must be new, not an extension or top-up of existing funded work.

If you and a collaborator are from two different disciplines within the same faculty, and you believe your project is genuinely interdisciplinary and relevant to this call, please get in touch to clarify eligibility before applying.

FUNDING AVAILABLE — UP TO €7,000

Band	Amount
Band 1	€500
Band 2	€1,500
Band 3	€3,000
Band 4	€5,000
Band 5	€7,000 (or custom, up to €7,000)

Tiered bands let a larger number of smaller projects be funded alongside a few larger ones; applicants select and justify the band that fits their scope.

ELIGIBLE COSTS (NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

- Infrastructure and equipment
- Software licenses
- Publication / open-access fees
- Conference and dissemination travel (for larger awards)
- Catering for project meetings, seminars and workshops
- Participant incentives (for external contributors/participants)
- Research assistance (for larger awards)Transcription, translation or data-collection costs
- Design, production or exhibition costs
- External facilitation, or specialist consultancy
- Consumables, other running costs

OUTPUTS — BROADLY DEFINED

Traditional outputs (a preprint, paper, report) are welcome but not required. In the spirit of interdisciplinary work, other valid outputs could include:

- A prototype or proof-of-concept
- An exhibition, performance or other creative work
- A public engagement event or workshop series
- A policy brief, toolkit or set of guidelines
- An open dataset or resource
- A podcast, documentary or other media piece
- A stakeholder or community report
- A competitive application for larger follow-on funding

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Quality & originality of the interdisciplinary idea (30%)**: potential for the disciplines involved to create something neither could alone
- **Quality of the collaboration plan (25%)**: realistic, thoughtful answers to Questions 4 and 5 in particular
- **Potential impact (20%)**: for the fields involved and/or for patients, carers and the public
- **Feasibility (15%)**: budget, timeline and team capability to deliver within 12 months
- **Patient/public involvement or societal engagement (10%)**

Write for a non-specialist reviewer, and show how your team will work through differences in language and practice. See the working definitions here and the SHAPE-ID toolkit.

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

- Trinity Research: 1 representative each from Strategy and Policy Team and Research Development Office
- 1 representative each from TSJCI and Trinity Long Room Hub
- No panel member may sit on the review of a project they are involved in

SUBMISSION

Apply via the online form by 5pm on December 14th, 2026: Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Pilot - Submission Form – Fill in form. One team member should submit the application and act as the team's contact person.

TIMELINE

Early October 2026	14 December 2026	Early February 2027	February 2027
Call opens	Applications close	Awards announced	Funding disbursed; one-year projects begin

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is this call open to the whole TCD community, not just clinical/health disciplines?

The Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Cancer Research brought together researchers from English literature, education, social work and psychology alongside pharmacy, biology, statistics, genetics and surgery, a wide disciplinary spread engaging with a shared topic. This call exists to give that diverse mix of researchers a concrete route to work in partnership together.

What kinds of projects could this call fund?

These are illustrative only. The strongest proposals will be ones the applicants themselves are genuinely curious about, rather than a fit to any example below.

- *A creative writing researcher, an oncology nurse and a computer scientist co-design a digital storytelling platform for patients, exploring narrative as a tool for processing a cancer diagnosis.*
- *A social worker and a cancer researcher examine how discharge planning could better account for patients' home and family circumstances.*
- *A physiotherapist and an oncology nurse co-design a home-based exercise and symptom-tracking app for patients undergoing chemotherapy.*
- *A public health researcher, a cancer researcher and a social policy researcher examine how community outreach could improve early cancer screening uptake in underserved populations.*
- *A historian, a cancer researcher and a statistician explore how cultural narratives about illness correlate with patients' treatment decisions.*
- *An education researcher, a radiation therapist and a data scientist co-develop interactive training materials that improve how complex treatment information is communicated to patients.*

Why does the application ask “How You'll Work Together” and “Navigating Differences”?

Research on interdisciplinary collaboration finds that whether an interdisciplinary collaboration succeeds is shaped as much by *process* as by the strength of the original idea. Mismatched expectations around language, timelines, and what counts as a legitimate output are among the most common reasons promising interdisciplinary projects stall. While a team may have a compelling idea, it may not succeed if there is no plan for how you will actually collaborate day to day. We will be looking to understand how your team has clearly thought about how you'll bridge different disciplinary languages and working styles.

Why don't outputs have to be a publication?

Some of the most valuable interdisciplinary work doesn't fit a traditional journal-article model. A creative writing workshop, a co-designed piece of patient-facing material, a training toolkit for clinicians, or a new shared framework or vocabulary between two fields are all legitimate outputs.

What is meant by public and patient involvement (PPI) and societal engagement?

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 many 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.

Do we need a track record of working together already?

No. This is precisely the point of a seed award, as the scheme exists to make a first collaboration possible.

What if I have an idea but no collaborator yet?

Some applicants will arrive at this call with an idea but no partner yet. This is okay – please reach out to Dr Maedbh King and Dr Patricia Doherty who will help you to connect with potential collaborators, either from the colloquium network or elsewhere in Trinity or TSJCI.

What if my collaborator is in a different discipline, but the same faculty as me?

The team requirement is cross-faculty (AHSS, STEM, Health Sciences) rather than cross-discipline, since that's the most consistent way to track disciplinary spread across the pilot. That said, we recognise there can be genuinely novel interdisciplinary work between two disciplines within the same faculty. If that describes your project, contact Dr Maedbh King (maedbh.king@tcd.ie) to clarify eligibility before applying, rather than assuming it doesn't qualify.