



UCD Sustainability

Seed Funding for Sustainability Initiatives

Call details & how to apply

Overview

Universities have a critical role to play in advancing the sustainability agenda at local, national and global scales. As living, dynamic environments in some ways akin to small towns, university campuses provide a unique setting to conceive and test ideas, innovations and solutions that can be rolled out more widely.

Through the Seed Funding for Sustainability Initiatives scheme, UCD seeks to bring the university community together to unlock the campus' potential as a living lab for sustainability solutions. Through integrating the universities' operations with our educational, research and community engagement missions, the scheme aims to enable UCD students, faculty and staff to work together and with external stakeholders to develop new sustainability solutions or trial novel externally-developed solutions by rolling them out on an experimental basis, monitoring their success, adapting and modifying them as necessary and communicating about them more widely.

The 'Seed Funding for Sustainability Initiatives' scheme is supported by Performance Funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The scheme will support initiatives that are innovative, replicable and scalable and which arise from any part of the university community. While projects will focus on UCD, they should also respond to sustainability challenges aligned to national and global sustainability initiatives, for example the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Applicants should also demonstrate alignment with UCD's [sustainability mission, vision and objectives](#) and more broadly with UCD's Strategy to 2030 '[Breaking Boundaries](#)'.

This is the second of two calls in this strand. The overall budget for both calls was €42,000, of which €20,000 remains for this call. Multiple awards of up to €3,000 will be made through this scheme.

Full details of the scheme, including eligibility, evaluation and the application process can be found below. We are happy to discuss proposed projects in advance of submission and advise on suitability. If you have any questions, please contact ypsustainability@ucd.ie.

What does the Scheme fund?

There is considerable flexibility in what this scheme will fund. However, proposals should:

- Draw on knowledge, experience and expertise from across the university community, with students and academic, technical and administrative/professional staff all eligible to participate
- Demonstrate or pilot a new approach to a real-world sustainability challenge that is scalable, replicable and transferable to other environments
- Improve or benefit the sustainability and functionality of the university or campus community
- Seek to expand impacts beyond UCD through wider communication, engagement and roll-out

And, where appropriate:

- Drive experiential learning, encourage participation and deliver outreach and engagement through co-creation and co-implementation
- Involve the practical application of knowledge for the purposes of demonstrating feasibility for research or demonstrating knowledge in action for students
- Advance research or contribute new insights into a body of knowledge
- Be delivered in partnership with external stakeholders for mutual benefit, to increase impact and to enhance shared knowledge and action

Eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- Implementation of a pilot or demonstration project or initiative
- Testing solution prototypes
- Demonstration for teaching purposes
- Activities to support practical implementation of emerging outputs from research
- Initial data collection to inform development of sustainability solutions
- Collaboration with external partner organisations
- Societal engagement and outreach activities

Ineligible activities include:

- Organisation costs for conferences or travel to conferences; these can be applied for through the Sustainability Spark scheme as outlined on [our website](#)
- Substantial works on campus that would fall under the remit of UCD Estates

Application Eligibility

- Each proposal must include a lead applicant and at least one other co-applicant from UCD; there is no upper limit on the number of co-applicants. Members of other academic institutions are also eligible to participate.
- The lead applicant and co-applicants can be UCD faculty, professional or technical staff or postdoctoral staff with an employment contract that runs until at least the end date of the proposed project. Postgraduate and undergraduate students are also eligible and encouraged to participate.
- Each proposal must include applicants from at least two different UCD Units/Schools.
- Applicants are encouraged to engage with or involve external stakeholders, such as , government departments, state agencies, industry, non-governmental organisations, charities or community groups.
- Project work should be completed in 9-12 months. However, funding must be spent by the end of December 2025.

Eligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Costs for targeted events, workshops and other engagement, collaboration, dissemination or outreach activities
- Costs associated with the implementation of a pilot/demonstration project or the testing of a solution prototype, e.g. consumables, travel costs, etc.
- Costs associated with data collection and analysis
- Equipment (to a maximum of €500)
- Short-term appointments to assist in activity or administration

Please include an itemised budget breakdown as well as the total amount requested. Total budget maximum request is €3000.

Evaluation process & criteria

All eligible proposals will be reviewed by an assessment committee comprising:

- Vice-President for Sustainability
- UCD Sustainability Manager
- A member of the UCD Sustainability Working Group on Research, Innovation and Impact
- A member of the UCD Sustainability Working Group on Operational Integration

The committee will evaluate the proposals on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the application to the scope of the Seed Funding for Sustainability Initiatives Scheme (Answer Yes or No for this criterion only. If No, no further scoring is required).

2. The proposed initiative is timely and has potential for value in addressing a stated sustainability challenge or challenges and its potential scalability, replicability and transferability to other environments. The alignment of the proposed initiative to current national and global sustainability challenges and national and global initiatives such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, EU directives, strategies and policies is also relevant (Weighting 20%).
3. The application clearly outlines the rationale, objectives, expected outputs, methodology and deliverables of the proposed initiative (Weighting 25%).
4. The application clearly demonstrates the anticipated impacts and future plans of the initiative including: how it will improve or benefit the institutional sustainability and functionality of the university or campus community, how it will seek to expand impacts beyond UCD through external partnership and collaboration and, as appropriate, how it will drive experiential learning through co-creation and co-implementation, advance research or contribute new insight into a body of knowledge (Weighting 25%).
5. The project team is well-founded, ideally with a mixture of disciplines, perspectives and career stages and a diversity of staffing roles, students and external stakeholders, and is aligned with UCD's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Weighting 15%).
6. The application clearly demonstrates a feasible time frame, value for money and a clear budget justification for the proposed project/activity (Weighting 15%).

How to apply

- The application form (available [here](#)) must be completed and submitted by 17:00 on Wednesday 30 April 2025.
- The form asks for concise information on the team involved, background & rationale, objectives, deliverables, pathway impact, plus a short work plan and budget (maximum request €3000).
- Applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application by mid May.
- Successful applicants will be required to submit a short report detailing the outputs and impact of the project within 1 month of project completion.