# UCD Gender Equality and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Accelerator Fund

1. **Introduction**

A UCD Gender Equality and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Accelerator Fund has been established to support UCD Schools which have successfully achieved an Athena SWAN accreditation to pilot innovative actions from their respective gender equality action plans in partnership with other UCD Schools. In addition to gender equality, an EDI dimension is now included in the new Athena SWAN Ireland Charter Framework launched in November 2021.

UCD Schools are implementing ambitious action plans, progressing to renewing their bronze level award, demonstrating progress, and applying for a silver accreditation which requires schools to demonstrate the impact of implementing gender equality action plans.

This central UCD Gender Equality and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Accelerator Fund recognises and supports Athena SWAN accredited Schools in UCD which have demonstrated considerable commitment to the Athena SWAN process, resources, and leadership in producing, and implementing an evidence-based gender equality action plan.

Funding innovative projects that evaluate impact will accelerate gender equality and diversity and inclusion best practice, more broadly, in Schools and Colleges and both support the implementation of University level initiatives and facilitate the adoption of successful School level initiatives University-wide where appropriate. This will support the University’s ambition to foster greater alignment with the UCD Gender Equality Action Plan and EDI Strategy.

# Background

UCD Athena SWAN Schools programme has matured and expanded since its launch in November 2017. 25 UCD Schools are accredited and implementing gender equality action plans. A key recommendation from a recent strategic review of the UCD Athena SWAN Schools programme was to establish an accelerator fund to meet the requirements of objective four of the review and demonstrate the University’s ongoing commitment to supporting Schools achieve gender equality and inclusion in their environments.

This fund complements the Higher Education Authority (HEA) sectoral approach to promote the attainment of equality of opportunity via the *Gender Equality Enhancement Fund*1 which recognises that, in addition to the organisational and culture change initiatives, the incentivisation of progress on gender equality targets through funding mechanisms is needed. The Fund also compliments the existing *UCD Research Seed Funding, Diversity Strand2* which focuses on funding research related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.



1 Further information available on the HEA’s Gender Equality Enhancement Fund webpage.

2 Further information available on UCD Research’s webpage:

# Objectives

The primary objectives of the UCD Gender Equality EDI Accelerator Fund are to:

* Encourage innovative approaches to addressing gender inequality;
* Facilitate gender equality initiatives and innovative solutions that respond to the challenges and barriers identified to achieving gender equality which emerged during School/College Athena SWAN submissions;
* Encourage cross-school collaboration as a means to achieve University-wide transformation in gender equality and inclusion;
* Support alignment with the UCD Gender Equality Action Plan and EDI Strategy;
* Facilitate the funding of broader EDI activities aligned to both the UCD EDI policy and strategy and gender equality action plans and the EDI dimension that is now included in the new Athena SWAN Ireland Charter 2021;
* Support the achievement of future Athena SWAN applications - renewals, silver and gold level applications which require schools/units to demonstrate progress, impact, beacon and flagship initiatives.

# Details

This Fund is for innovative actions from School/College Gender Equality Action Plans. This fund would make awards across the areas:

* Gender Equality and Diversity and Inclusion capacity-building activities.
* Seed projects for development of proposals for the HEA’s Gender Equality Enhancement

Funds.

* Transforming gender and EDI research outputs into practice.

Applications for funding under the UCD Gender Equality and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Accelerator Fund can be made in three areas. A total fund of €15,000 is available and up to €5,000 funding is available for each area is indicated in brackets:

1. Gender Equality, and Diversity and Inclusion capacity-building activities
2. UCD Seed projects for development with a view to achieving HEA’s Gender Equality

Enhancement Funding.

1. Athena SWAN capacity-building activities

*C****olleges are encouraged to match successful fund applications of up to a maximum of €5,000 for***

***any one College.***

# Requirements

* Proposals should be collaborative and where feasible involve at least **two** UCD schools.
* The lead school must hold an Athena Swan accreditation.
* Schools may make one submission as lead.
* Schools/Units which have not yet achieved an Athena Swan accreditation may be named as a partner in the proposals in addition to the leads.
* All proposals must nominate a lead school for administrative and financial purposes.
* Relevant non-HEI organisations such as representative bodies or community partners may be included in proposals in addition at least two eligible schools.
* Proposals must include information on matching funding made available at College-level to support the project.
* Colleges are encouraged to match successful fund applications of up to a maximum of €5,000 for any one College.
* Applications must be signed by the College Principal and all collaborating Heads of Schools, indicating acceptance of any award and a commitment to provide the necessary support for the programme of activity.
* If an applicant has applied for funding/ has been awarded funding from another funding body for the same project, the applicant must make UCD EDI Unit aware of this.
* The funds can only be used for the project and purpose specified in the application.
* If the funding is not used within 12 months, please let us know whether an extension is required. Alternatively, funds not used should be returned to the UCD EDI Unit.
* A mid-year check-in between EDI and the award recipient will be scheduled.
* Outputs of the project are to be presented in 12 months at a Gender Equality Action Group meeting and at the Athena Swan Chairs Network.

# UCD Process

The lead Schools chair/co-chairs of the School/College EDI/Gender Equality Implementation

Committee must submit the application and cc’ relevant stakeholders.

All applications should be submitted to [edi@ucd.ie](mailto:edi@ucd.ie) to include the following:

Funding decisions will be made based on the following criteria by a panel chaired by Professor, Vice-President for EDI, Chair of the GEAG, Strategic EDI Manager, EDI Project Officer and a nominee.

| **Assessment Criterion** | **Score** | **Min**  **Required** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Alignment with School/College level Gender Equality  Action Plan | 10 marks | 5 marks |
| 2. Alignment with the UCD Gender Equality Action Plan  – and EDI Strategy | 10 marks | 5 marks |
| 3. Innovation in specified area of funding (advancing gender equality initiatives in UCD/ Athena SWAN capacity-building activities/ transforming gender and EDI research outputs  into practice) | 25marks | 10 marks |
| 4. Benefits to UCD | 25 marks | 10 marks |
| 5. Funding - value for money and impact of programme | 10 marks | 5 marks |
| 6. Quality of the Proposal | 1. marks | 15 marks |

Successful candidates will be invited to present the outputs of their pilot twelve months from the outcome announced by UCD EDI at the Athena Swan Chairs Network and to present to the Gender Equality Action Group on progress and outputs of the project.

Applications must be signed by the College Principal and all collaborating Heads of Schools, indicating acceptance of any award and a commitment to provide the necessary support for the programme of activity.

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