



The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs

Applicant Guide 2017

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1 - The Selection Process

Thank you for your interest in The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs. Below you will find all the information you need to know about our application and selection process.

Before you apply:

- (i) Read all about The Academy*

The Academy involves a certain time commitment from participants. Please read this document and review our website to ensure that you know all about it before applying.

- (ii) Find out what we're looking for*

You can read all about the type of people we're looking to support through The Academy below and on our website [here](#). Please ensure that your application meets the relevant criteria and descriptions provided.

- (iii) Take time to complete your application*

Be sure to allow as much time as possible to complete your application form. The online system will allow you to save your application and return to it at a later date, so you don't have to complete the form in just one sitting. Make sure you save your work regularly to avoid the online form timing out and losing your work. We would also strongly recommend that you get feedback on your application before you submit it.

2 - What We Are Looking For

The Academy will provide guidance and support to people with early-stage ideas to solve societal problems, sparking a new generation of social entrepreneurs. We are seeking to identify individuals with an entrepreneurial drive and aptitude, and passion for social change.

The Academy has been designed to equip participants with the skills to transform an idea for social change into a solution. While our Awards Programme works with social entrepreneurs whose projects that are already up and running, The Academy caters for those who are in the idea or conceptual stages of creating a solution.

What that means in more detail:

We're looking to support potential social entrepreneurs...

The Academy is for ambitious, driven individuals, who are interested in tackling a social or environmental problem. They should act in an entrepreneurial manner and be open to learning and developing themselves through The Academy. We are accepting applications from individuals and two person partnerships.

A societal challenge...

There are a lot of problems and issues to be addressed in Ireland so we're looking for people who can clearly demonstrate why the issue they want to address is of particular importance. The challenge that their project is addressing can be social or environmental.

An idea....

Applicants should have an idea with the potential to solve a social problem. As social entrepreneurs don't replicate what is already being provided, but instead seek to approach issues from a different angle, the idea should be new or better than what is already done to solve this problem in Ireland.

3 - Application Process Eligibility Criteria

Before filling out the application form for The Academy, please make sure that you fulfil the following criteria:

- You are aged 18 years or over at the time of applying for the programme.
- You are the person leading on this idea - the main driver and decision maker.
- The primary focus of your idea is on benefiting people in Ireland.
- You have identified a social or environmental issue and have a new or better idea to solve it.
- You are available to commit to full attendance for all Academy events, to take place on 30th May, 29th June, 4th September (subject to slight change).

Note: *Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is not in a position to support research projects, party-political projects, or projects with an explicit religious or faith-based agenda - as opposed to projects that are driven by a personal belief system but are open to all the community.*

4 - The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs

As a participant of The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs, you will be supported to develop and progress your idea for social change, to build your skills and accelerate your learning in core areas of importance for social entrepreneurs, and to more clearly articulate your idea, and to move from exploration to action.

This is a five day programme, over the course of five months from May to September 2017. In addition to training, networking events and coaching sessions, participants are expected to take part in learning group sessions with their fellow participants. These sessions are designed for participants to further their thinking and work on tasks set out at the training days.

15 Ideas

We look for 15 high potential social entrepreneurs with an idea for social change, and work with them for over a 5 month period.

Training & Support

Academy participants will receive skills training & development to help further their thinking and build their capacity as an entrepreneur. Over the course of the Academy, students will attend three full day workshops. These will focus on areas such as project design, leadership, business modelling, branding, and planning for the future. Participants will also receive mentoring and coaching to support them, and will gain access to inspiring talks and engaging events. Social Entrepreneurs Ireland will support you to gain clarity on the next steps in your journey as a social entrepreneur following the programme, and will give you the opportunity to compete for a cash prize and support to help you take these next steps.

A Powerful Network

All participants will receive one year membership to the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Alumni Network. Alumni Network workshops and events are an opportunity for Alumni to come together to network and learn from each other, receive expert advice from other social entrepreneurs and hear selected guest speakers on both personal and professional topics. Through this network, you will receive peer support from experienced social entrepreneurs and expand your network significantly, connecting with the largest community of social entrepreneurs in Ireland.

5 - What We Expect from Participants

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland invests significant time and resource to provide a range of opportunities to participants of The Academy. In return we expect:

- Full participation on core programme support elements, to take place on 30th May, 29th June, 4th September (subject to slight change);
- Open-minded and honest engagement;
- Willingness to participate in group events and share knowledge;
- Active involvement with the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Alumni Network.

6 - Selection Process Timeline

(i) Open Applications (22nd of February – 5pm 29th of March)

You can apply to The Academy by filling in a short online application form.

(ii) Roadshows (28th February – 7th March)

The SEI team will hold Roadshow events around Ireland to provide further information to interested applicants, give social entrepreneurs the opportunity to connect with others in their locality and hear the inspiring stories of previous SEI Award winners, along with providing relevant training to attendees.

(iii) Review of Applications (April)

A review of all applications will be carried out. 15 applicants will be selected and invited to take part in The Academy in early May.

(iv) The Academy (May-September 2017)

Following selection, Academy participants will take part in the programme.

(v) Graduation Event (September 2017)

In September 2017, Academy students will attend a Graduation Event to celebrate completion of the course.

(vi) Awards Ceremony (4th October 2017)

Participants will be invited to attend the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards Ceremony.

7 – Application Form Questions

Q1. Your Idea

The Academy seeks to support people with an idea to create positive social change in Ireland. This section is your opportunity to present the idea that you have to solve a pressing social/environmental problem in Ireland.

- a. What is the social problem that you wish to address? Please include in your response how this problem impacts society and affects the lives of those experiencing it.**
- b. Please tell us about your idea for tackling this problem.**
- c. How is your idea different from the work of other organisations trying to solve this problem?**

Q2. About You

The Academy is for ambitious, driven and entrepreneurial individuals, who have the potential to become social entrepreneurs who make a significant impact in the future. In this section, we would like to get to know you better.

- a. What is your connection to this social problem? Please tell us why you are passionate about addressing it.**
- b. Why are you the right person to lead this change? Please include examples of any of your previous relevant experience and particular skill sets, if appropriate.**
- c. What difference do you want to make in the world?**

Q3. The Academy

The Academy provides guidance and support to people with early stage ideas to solve social problems, seeking to spark a new generation of social entrepreneurs. In this section, we would like to know more about why you would like to participate in the programme.

- a. What do you hope to get out of participating in The Academy?**
- b. What challenges do you think you might face if participating in The Academy?**

c. Please tell us why you feel it is the right time for you to take part in this programme.

Q4. Anything Additional to Add

In case we have missed something important about you and/or your idea, this section gives you the opportunity to add any further information that you would like us to know.

*(NOTE: Section 4 is entirely optional for applicants, and there is no requirement to provide links to additional material. Entries that do not include a link will **not** be marked down in any way.)*

- a. Is there a question you wished we had asked?**
- b. What would your response have been?**
- c. Link to a video/media coverage/other documentation**

8 – The Academy FAQs

I'm interested in applying for The Academy - how do I apply?

All applications must be submitted online using our online application form. You can find all the details you need to enter the application process [here](#).

What is the closing date for applications?

Applications must be submitted before 5pm Wednesday 29th of March 2017.

Can I submit a paper version of the application form, or e-mail you a copy of my form?

No. All applications must be submitted directly online using the online application form.

I've started my application form, how do I log back in to edit it?

You'll find a page on the SEI website called Apply Now under our Awards section. From there you can click through to login to edit your application.

What will happen if I forget to include something in my application form?

All required questions in the application form are marked with an asterisk*. Once you have submitted your application you will not be able to amend it. Please be sure to review your work carefully before you submit it.

If I am selected, how much time must I commit to The Academy?

Over the course of the 5 month programme, there will be 5 days of trainings and events, with core programme elements to take place on 30th May, 29th June, 4th September (subject to slight change). In addition, participants will be expected to take part in several learning group sessions with their fellow participants.

How many applicants will be selected to participate in The Academy in 2017?

15 applicants will be selected.

What sectors or project areas do you support?

We are not limited to any specific sector or area to support, and are open to supporting projects in any sector, once the potential for societal change can be demonstrated. In the past we have supported projects in a wide range of areas including education and learning, children and young people, older people, mental health, people with disabilities, the environment, community development and new communities.

Can I apply to the Academy and the Awards programme?

No. You can only apply to the programme that is most relevant to your project's stage of development. Click [here](#) for more information on the eligibility criteria for each programme.

My project is up and running – which SEI programme is for me?

If you have started to run activities and meet the remaining criteria for the Awards Programme, then it is for you. If you are in the very early stages and do not meet all criteria for the Awards Programme, The Academy may be more appropriate for your stage of development.

I have submitted my Academy application. When will I know whether I have been successful?

We will let you know whether you have been successful by early May 2017.

Can I meet with somebody in SEI to discuss my application?

For obvious reasons we unfortunately can't help people when it comes to filling in their applications - although we're happy to clarify anything about the process if it's unclear. What we would recommend however, if you are looking for feedback on your individual application, is to share it with some friends, colleagues and board members, to get their insights into the quality of your answers.

If my application is successful, when will The Academy begin?

The programme will begin in May 2017, and run until September 2017.

How is Social Entrepreneurs Ireland funded?

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is funded by a range of private foundations, corporate partners and individuals. For more information, please visit our [Partners page](#).