



The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs

Applicant Guide 2018

Table of Contents

1 - The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs	2
2 - What We Are Looking For	3
3 - The Selection Process	4
4 – The Academy Timeline	5
5 - What We Expect from Participants	5
6 – Application Form Questions	6
7 – The Academy FAQs	7

1 – The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs

Do you have an innovative idea to solve a social problem? Are you ambitious, entrepreneurial, and passionate about social change? This 5-day programme, over the course of 5 months from June to October 2018, will provide up to 15 high potential social entrepreneurs with the support and direction they need to help you to kick-start your idea and take the next steps to start solving the problem.

The Academy is taking place in both Dublin and Galway in 2018 and is worth in excess of €5000 for each project. The participants of the programme will be supported to develop and progress their idea for social change, to build skills and accelerate learning in core areas of importance for social entrepreneurs, to more clearly articulate their idea, and to move from exploration to action. You can learn about the 2017 Academy for Social Entrepreneurs [here](#).

Together with a small group of fellow innovators, you will receive:

Training & Support

Academy participants will receive skills training and development to help further their thinking and build their capacity as an entrepreneur. Over the course of the Academy, students will attend four full day workshops. These will focus on the areas such as solution design, customer discovery, storytelling, leadership and personal resilience. Participants will also receive mentoring from leading business experts and social entrepreneurs to support them.

A Powerful Community

All participants who have successfully completed the programme 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. Participants also take part in learning group sessions with their fellow Academy participants. These sessions are designed for participants to further their thinking and work on tasks set out at the training days.

Seed Funding

As part of the programme, you will have the opportunity to apply to pitch for funding as a way to progress your idea to its next phase of development.

2 – What We Are Looking For

The Academy will provide guidance and support to people with ideas to solve societal problems, sparking a new generation of social entrepreneurs. We are seeking to identify individuals with an entrepreneurial drive and aptitude, a passion for social change, a strong understanding of the problem they are addressing, and a great idea to solve it.

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 and why they're passionate about it. 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. While our Awards Programme works with social entrepreneurs whose projects are already up and running, The Academy caters for those who are in the idea or conceptual stages of creating a solution.

Eligibility 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, outlined below.

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.*

3 – The Selection Process

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 fully 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. 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. Once you sign up and save your application the first time, it will from then on save any changes automatically. We would also strongly advise that you get feedback on your application before you submit it.

- (iv) *Take note of and ensure you can attend all mandatory Selection Process and Academy Programme dates outlined below*

Open Applications: 14th February – 5pm 23rd March 2018

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

Review of Applications: March – April

A review of all applications will be carried out. Up to 60 applicants, i.e. up to 30 per Bootcamp, will be selected and invited to take part in The Academy Bootcamp by the end of April.

The Academy Bootcamps: 1st May – Dublin, 3rd May – Galway

Two half-day Academy Bootcamps will take place in May in both Dublin and Galway. Depending on your geographical location in Ireland, if selected, you will be invited to take part in either Dublin or Galway Bootcamp. Here you will be invited to pitch your idea to a panel of judges and engage in networking and training event to help you no matter the outcome of the day.

Participant Selection

All participants will be informed as to whether they have been selected by the 14th May.

4 – The Academy Timeline

(i) Launch Event, 31st May 2018 – Dublin

Here you will have the opportunity to meet with and get to know all of your fellow participants, the SEI team, programme mentors, facilitators, and selected SEI Alumni. You will get an introduction to the programme so you know what to expect and get the chance to ask any questions you might have before we kick start the programme.

(ii) Workshop 1: 12th June 2018 – Dublin, 14th June 2018 - Galway

(iii) Workshop 2: 26th June 2018 – Dublin, 28th June 2018 - Galway

(iv) Learning groups, mentorship, and individual work – July and August

Over the summer months you will be expected to take the learning you have had so far and apply it to further progress your project. During this time, mentorship and learning groups will continue to take place.

(v) Workshop 3: 28th August – Dublin, 29th August – Galway

(vi) Workshop 4: 4th September 2018 – Dublin, 6th September 2018 – Galway

(vii) Pitching Sessions & Celebration Event – 20th September 2018 (held in Dublin)

Selected participants who have applied will be invited to pitch their project to a panel of judges in order to be in with the chance of securing seed funding to further progress their idea. Academy Celebration Event will be held on this day, *all participants will be invited to attend.*

(viii) Awards Celebration, 9th October 2018 – The Round Room at The Mansion House

You're invited to enjoy our annual Awards Celebration together with the SEI community, made up of Ireland's leading business leaders, academia, media, and the country's most impactful social entrepreneurs.

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, outlined above, in order to successfully complete the programme and join the SEI Alumni Network and avail of other opportunities;
- Open-minded and honest engagement;
- Willingness to participate in group events and share knowledge;
- Active involvement with the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Alumni Network.

6 – Application Form Questions

Application Questions

Q1. The Problem

The Academy looks to support individuals who are addressing a significant issue or problem in Ireland. This section is your opportunity to outline the detail and urgency of this social problem

- a. **What is the social problem that you wish to address? 0/200**
- b. **How does this problem affect the lives of those experiencing it? 0/200**
- c. **What are the key obstacles that are preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today? 0/200**

Q2. 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. **Please tell us about your idea for tackling this problem and any work that you have done to date, for example research, piloting, etc. 0/200**
- b. **How do you know that your particular idea would solve the problem? 0/200**
- c. **How is your idea different from the work of other organisations trying to solve this problem? 0/200**

Q3. 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. 0/150**
- 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. 0/150**
- c. **What impact would you like to have created in three years time? 0/150**

Q4. 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? Please outline as specifically as you can your goals and what you want to achieve.**
- b. **What challenges do you think you might face if participating in The Academy? 0/150**
- c. **Please tell us why you feel it is the right time for you to take part in this programme. 0/150**

Q5. Beyond the Academy

Here we would like to hear more about your future plans for your idea

- a. If you are not selected to take part in The Academy, what are the first steps you will take to further your idea? 0/150
- b. What will happen if this idea is not developed? 0/150

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.

This section is **entirely optional** and your responses in this section will not be marked

- a. Is there a question you wished we had asked? (optional) 0/30
- b. What would your response have been? (optional) 0/100
- c. Link to a video/media coverage/other documentation: (optional)

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 on our website at www.socialentrepreneurs.ie.

What is the closing date for applications?

Applications must be submitted before 5pm Friday 23rd of March 2018.

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?

Under the Support section on our website you can select The Academy programme, the 'Apply' button is on The Academy page. From here you can click through to login to edit your application.

How do I ensure that my work is saved?

After you've registered and have entered the applications portal you will be able to start your application. Upon selection of the programme you're applying for, you will need to enter the Application Name and **press 'Save+Next'**. All your work after this **will be automatically saved**. While you will be able to navigate from one application form to the other without losing your work (although, we do not recommend doing this – you should only fill in the fields for the programme you're applying for), you will only be able to submit an application for one programme. After submission you will not be able to make any changes, so please ensure that you are submitting an application for the programme you intend to apply for.

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

All questions in the application are required unless marked 'optional'. **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 in June and September. In addition, participants will be expected to take part in several learning group sessions and mentorship sessions with their fellow participants.

How many applicants will be selected to participate in The Academy in 2018?

This year we are running two Academies for Social Entrepreneurs – one in Dublin and one in Galway, at the same time. Each will have up to 15 spaces available.

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. The Eligibility criteria is listed in this document and in the actual application form.

What do you mean by 'Ireland'?

The term 'Ireland' refers to both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Applicants based in Northern Ireland must be able and willing to work to develop their project in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

My idea is for a project outside Ireland, am I eligible?

No. If your project activities only take place outside Ireland and the communities benefiting from your activities are outside Ireland then you are not eligible to apply.

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.

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.

I am a past recipient of support from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland - can I apply again?

You are not eligible to apply for the same programme with the same project. If you are a previous Academy participant, you are not be eligible to apply for The Academy with the same project, but you could consider applying for the Awards programme if your project is eligible.

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

We will let you know whether you have been selected to take part in The Academy for Social Entrepreneurs Bootcamp by April 26th at the latest.

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

We unfortunately can't help people when it comes to filling in their applications (for obvious reasons) - 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. Our website is also an excellent source of information. In addition, our Applications Help Line will be open every work day (weekends and bank holidays excluded) from February 14th – March 23rd from 11am-1pm at 01-902-2571.

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

The programme will begin in May 2018 and run until November 2018.

How is Social Entrepreneurs Ireland funded?

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is funded by a range of private foundations, corporate partners and individuals.