Sustainability Project Grant

Introduction

Our University's Sustainability Project Grants aim to help propel the University along its journey towards sustainability.

These grants – established in 2020 – have a total annual grant pool of $20,000. Grants are capped at $5,000 per project. Co-funding from other sources is encouraged and the Sustainability Office could help with suggestions for co-funding options.

The Evaluation Committee not allocate all the funding pool annually if the applications do not reach a suitable standard.

Application criteria

Any student team, staff team or individual at our University is eligible to apply. All applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposed project with a member of the Sustainability Office before lodging an application: sustainability@otago.ac.nz.

Successful applications would generally:

- Support the sustainability goals our University has set in its Sustainability Strategic Framework 2017 – 2021 or the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Include an element of educational or cultural change among students and/or staff, or be highly visible to staff and students
- Involve strong engagement

Proposed projects will be assessed against eight criteria, but the Evaluation Committee also recognises:

- Projects involving significant education and cultural benefits may not always result in large on-campus direct sustainability outcomes
- Projects with overall organisational benefits might not score highly against all criteria

So, projects that will distribute this grant funding across campuses, divisions or faculties may be given additional weighting.

The funding criteria for sustainability-focussed projects at this University are:

Please note: While criteria 1 to 3 are more important than 4 to 8, projects' links to any criteria are beneficial.

1. Having proposed benefits that include:
    a. Avoiding or minimising CO_2 emissions, energy use or waste; or
    b. Enhancing native biodiversity; or
    c. Other sustainability benefits;
2. The ability to spark educational or cultural change among students and/or staff.
    Considerations include the project's:
    a. Visibility (e.g. will the project communicate the University's commitment to sustainability to staff, students and the community?);

b. Predicted effect on students and/or staff, and their level of involvement (e.g. how often they will see the project and interact with it, or its effects);

c. Degree of integration with the curriculum and strategic research areas;

3. Partnering with current or proposed research projects at our University;
4. Having a publicity strategy to raise awareness of the project, its results and sustainability generally;
5. Having the potential to be a model (Scaled up or generalised for other areas at our University);
6. The probability of attracting other funding sources as well (such as Dunedin City Council grants);
7. Links – if any – between the project and our University's Green Your Scene sustainability initiative for staff and students;
8. The financial return on the grant's investment.

Examples of possible successful applications could be:

- Creating and installing on-campus signs that educate users and visitors about features of environmental, cultural and historic significance;
- Collating and developing resources for academic staff so learning about the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals is more accessible
- Supporting the development of a residential college project aimed at winning Green Your Scene's top prize, a Kōwhai award

Consultation with property services

Our Property Services Division supports the facilities and grounds that host our teaching, research, learning, work and social interactions, so project proposals need to include consultation with property services about any changes that affect:

- Building structures;
- Electric lighting
- Power systems;
- Buildings' reticulated services (such as pipes for clean water, waste water, gas etc)
- Ventilation and heating systems;
- The grounds and ground maintenance;
- Internal fittings in public areas

The consultation aims to ensure changes are compatible with existing systems and infrastructure, and comply with relevant standards and building codes.

For co-ordination purposes, it is recommended potential projects contact the Property Services Division through the Sustainability Office.

Property services will have final right of refusal on proposed projects, based on the relevant standards and building codes (see section 4 of the application form).

Application Process

<mark>This year, applications are due by 11.59pm Monday 31 August 2020.</mark>

Applications will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee that comprises the Head of the Sustainability Office and a minimum of two representatives from the University's Sustainability Taskforce and Advisory Group (STAG).

After submitting a written application, you may have to do a five minute verbal presentation about the project to the Evaluation Committee, followed by a 10 minute question-and-answer session.

If the committee's feedback means the application has to be modified, up to five working days will be allowed for the modifications.

Applicants will be notified of the selection process' results about four weeks after applications close. Successful applications will be notified and publicised on University channels, such as internal social media Yammer, the sustainability web pages on the University website and external social media platforms.

Entire successful applications may also be provided to future applicants to help them prepare a proposal. If an application contains any details not to be made public for any reason, this will need to be made clear in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback on their proposal, possibly with suggestions for enhancing it so the enhanced proposal can be submitted during a subsequent round of project grants.

Evaluating, reporting and promoting

Successful applicants will be required to provide periodic updates on the progress of their project. For promotional purposes, successful applicants are strongly encouraged to provide photographs or short videos – iPhone and android quality is acceptable at high resolution – of various stages of the project.

Successful applicants will also be required to provide a final written report upon competition of their project, which needs to include an evidence-based evaluation of the extent the project achieved its desired outputs and outcomes. The photos in this report need to be … and any videos need to be (quality needed for web etc).

<mark>For the 2020 grants, please provide the final report to the Sustainability Office by Monday 24 May 2021.</mark> A template for the final report is available on the Sustainability Office's web page.

Applicants must respond in a timely manner to all the Sustainability Office's requests for evaluation activities (e.g. updates, before and after photographs, final reports, evaluation surveys etc).

For promotional purposes, positive project outcomes will be promoted on the sustainability pages on the University's web site, social media and other channels as appropriate.

Responsibility for implementation

While the Sustainability Office may provide guidance on developing a grant application, it is the responsibility of the project's proponent/s to ensure the project is implemented after a grant is awarded.

Projects are expected to be well progressed within a year of the grant being awarded – one of the grant scheme's purposes is to expedite meaningful sustainability projects at our University.

When projects are continuously delayed, the Sustainability Office reserves the right to terminate grant agreements – after reasonable notification – and seek the return of the remaining grant funding. This is to ensure the grants produce valuable contributions towards sustainability at our University.

Sustainability Project Grants – final report guide

Successful applicants will also be required to provide a final written report upon competition of their project, which needs to include an evidence-based evaluation of the extent the project achieved its desired outputs and outcomes.

This report should be provided a year after the grant has been received.

The report needs to contain photos (quality needed for web, marketing etc) and can also contain videos (quality needed for web etc).

All final reports will be used for promotional purposes and will be added to the Sustainability Office's web pages.

As a guide, all final reports should include:

- The project's title
- The proponent/s of the project
- The year the grant was received
- The date the project was completed
- What the project aimed to achieve with the grant funding
- How the project was implemented, including successes and challenges
- An evidence-based evaluation of the extent the project achieved its desired outputs and outcomes, including any unexpected benefits
- How the project's impact was measured (e.g. through engagement)
- If the project could be replicated in other areas
- How the project could be done differently, if relevant (for anyone interested in introducing the project elsewhere)
- Lots of appropriate quality photos or an appropriate quality video showing the initiative being implemented
- Anything else that is relevant

UNIVERSITY of OTAGO
Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND
SAPERE AUDE

Sustainability Project Grant