



Advancing Research Culture Conversations in Ireland

All-island conference about Research Culture in Ireland with sessions dedicated to Engaged Research; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); Research Assessment.



Research Culture Conference 2024 Speakers

Research Assessment

[Dr Kevin Daly](#)

Kevin Daly is a member of the first cohort of the Young Academy of Ireland (YAI), where he led the successful submission for a One Health project which will be incorporated into one of the Young Academy's five Grand Challenges.

[Perspectives from an Early Career Researcher](#)

The practice of Responsible Research Assessment (RRA) aims to redefine how research and researchers are evaluated in both funding and personnel contexts. Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are uniquely positioned in being most affected by current assessment practises, developments towards RRA, being the vector of RRA practises in the future, and being at the most precarious point of their career. This presentation will offer perspectives on RRA from an ECR, representing the ECR body the Young Academy of Ireland. In particular, we will offer positive suggestions as to how ECRs can be drawn into the development of institutional RRA policies to help create an inclusive higher education environment of the highest quality of research.

[Dr Kay Guccione](#)

Kay Guccione is Head of Research Culture & Researcher Development, and Co-Director of the Lab for Academic Culture, at the University of Glasgow. She is leading *InFrame*

Glasgow's Wellcome funded tri-university collaboration which takes a deep dive into collegiality and research culture. She specialises in mentoring, research supervisor development and research community building – anything that revolves around a good quality conversation – and in 2018 was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in recognition of her impact in this area. Kay is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a qualified leadership coach, and a trustee of the UK Council for Graduate Education with whom she recently worked to develop a Recognised Associate Supervisor Award. She edits blogs on Research Culture, PhD Supervision, and the Hidden Curriculum of the Doctorate.

Collegiality: will we know it when we see it?

Despite a surge in universities seeking to promote collegiality, there is a paucity of systematic knowledge on how this often-intangible quality can be fostered, recognised and rewarded. Consequently, it is challenging to develop frameworks, guidance and processes that recognise and promote such desirable behaviours. In 2020, The University of Glasgow launched a Research Culture Action Plan, that prioritised collegiality as an essential component of a thriving research culture. From this stemmed a programme of work which aimed to envision collegial academic practice and to generate, recognise, and reward collegiality as a foundational component of a thriving research culture. This presentation tells our story through a retrospective lens, offering points for reflection and evaluation on the design and delivery of initiatives to increase collegiality. This presentation will open up questions which examine how we understand the concept of collegiality, what it looks like in practice, its role in research leadership, how we can design structures that encourage it, and how, with reward and recognition in mind, we will know it when we see it.

Dr Marion Boland

Dr Marion Boland is the Head of Research Policy at Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), a statutory body in the Republic of Ireland with responsibility for funding oriented basic and applied research in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics with a strategic focus. Marion manages a diverse portfolio of policy related areas, including Open Science, Data Management, Research Integrity, State Aid, Grant Terms & Conditions and SFI's Gender Strategy. As a signatory of Plan S, Marion represents SFI in cOALition S as Chair of the Taskforce on monitoring the effects of Plan S.

Marion holds a PhD from the Institute of Cancer Research/University of London. Prior to joining SFI, Marion held research positions at Trinity College Dublin, the University of Alberta, University of Cambridge and as a lecturer in Molecular Oncology in the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology, Queen's University Belfast.

Dr Maura Hiney

Maura is Adjunct Professor of Research Integrity at University College Dublin Institute for Discovery, working with the Research Culture Team. She sits on the Irish National Research Integrity Forum and was instrumental in developing the first National Policy on Ensuring

Integrity in Irish Research (updated in 2019 and 2024) and the 2022 Guidelines on Ensuring Integrity in Collaborative Research.

At an international level, she has been involved in advancing RI policy for many years. She is Treasurer of the World Conference on RI Foundation Governing Board, Co-chair of the 8th WCRI, Board Member of the Embassy of Good Science and Vice-Chair of ENRIO until 2022. Maura is Chair of the ALLEA Permanent Working Group on Science and Ethics and co-authored the ALLEA European Code of Conduct for RI 2017 and 2023. She sits on several EU Policy and Stakeholder Advisory Boards for EU projects that research RI and ethics issues.

Research and researcher assessment: International initiatives to shift the dial

Debate on the necessity and suitability of research assessment as the most effective way to allocate research funding and make decisions on the recruitment and promotion of researchers has been a persistent and complex issue for decades. The 1970s and 1980s saw economic and political changes that stimulated discussion on using research assessment as part of a shift towards greater funding selectivity of research performing institutions in a resource-limited environment.

The current assessment model has had considerable influence on institutional structures and has undoubtedly had a negative impact on researcher behaviour. In this quantitative system, the prevailing reality for many researchers is that the journals in which they choose to publish their research, and the frequency of those publications, are the most crucial factors determining their career.

Acknowledging the negative impacts of quantitative-based research assessment, this presentation will briefly examine a number of initiatives in Europe and elsewhere that are trying to reform the research assessment system for researchers and their institutions. This new paradigm of assessment seeks to acknowledge and reward research and scholarly activities that contribute more broadly to the research community, the research performing institution and society.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Prof. Rachel Cowen

Rachel is Professor of Inclusive Research and Academic Development and University Academic Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Gender and Sexual Orientation). She has 30 years' experience as a cancer researcher, organisational developer and equalities champion leading on institutional gender strategy, policy and practice developments. She has worked with a network of inspirational colleagues to support academic excellence within a culture that values diversity and prioritises equity of opportunity, reward and recognition. Rachel is a panel chair for the transformed Athena Swan Charter and a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Advance HE. She is also a mentor, coach and champion for diverse and inclusive leadership development supporting the career advancement of colleagues across the university sector.

Reflection on Gender Equality and Challenges for Academic Careers

The University of Manchester has a long-standing commitment to achieving gender equality and has continually assessed and acknowledged inequalities and taken wide-ranging actions since 2008 through the Athena Swan Charter and associated Charter Marks and Awards. Having recently secured Silver Gender, Race Equality Institutional Charter Awards and Disability Employer Leaders Status this presentation will take an intersectional approach and reflect on what has worked and helped ensure female parity across our undergraduate and postgraduate student populations, on our senior leadership team, how we have increased the female professoriate to 30% (from 17% in 2018) and closed our gender pay gap to 12.8%. Evidence-based exemplars will include targeted diverse leadership development programmes, enhanced policies and targeted funding schemes at key academic transition points including financial and careers support for academics returning from extended leave (parental, caring or sick leave). Balanced reflection will highlight remaining policy, practice and cultural challenges, fully acknowledging that progress has been too slow, particularly in addressing intersectional gender, ethnicity and disability inequalities. Despite increasing female representation at senior level, we only have 1.7% female, disabled professors and 2.8% female, ethnic minority professors (with only 1 Black, female professor). Future actions will focus on how we aim to be bolder and faster, ensuring that the burden of this work does not fall on women and minorities but is shared equally across our community, and highlight how we are working internationally with diverse stakeholders to effect positive change.

Prof. Karen McCloskey

Karen McCloskey is Professor of Physiology in the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences at Queen's University Belfast and Deputy Director of the Patrick G. Johnston Centre for Cancer Research.

Professor McCloskey has led equality programmes in academia for more than 10 years, proactively challenging structures, co-creating action plans and driving culture change. She is Director of the Queen's Gender Initiative, a female-focused entity in Queen's University enhancing the participation and progression of women in Queen's, and Academic Lead for Athena Swan (Advance HE Charter for Gender Equality in Academia) in Queen's. As Academic Lead for the Race Equality Charter in Queen's, she has implemented a new Racial Equity Programme to support inclusion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues and students.

Reflections on gender equality and experiences of the Athena Swan Charter

The gender equality programme in Queen's opened in 1999–2000 when a group of senior women challenged the then Vice Chancellor on what was going to be done to address gender inequality. The Queen's Gender Initiative (QGI) was established, and the first gender equality action plan launched initiatives aimed to improve inclusion and progression of women, open to everyone. Progress against the first action plan was recognised with Queen's being awarded one of the first Institutional Athena Swan Silver awards (2007).

Earlier this year, sustained progress in gender equality, EDI and culture resulted in an Institutional Athena Swan Gold award.

In the session we will review what has worked in Queen's and share reflections across structures, culture and how we ensured that intentions became meaningful actions. Essential components of: (1) evidence-based approaches with qualitative/quantitative data; (2) piloting, evaluating and embedding initiatives; (3) establishing and resourcing a Champions network across Queen's to lead gender-equality programmes that are discipline-contextualised will be unpacked. We will consider how active listening and engagement with the whole university community illuminated structures and culture that had become barriers to people's professional development (and negatively impact wellbeing). The impact of our portfolio of new policies, recognising that people bring their whole selves to work and may require specific support e.g. menopause, fertility treatment, hybrid working, maternity leave, carers' network, will be shared, particularly how these also drive culture change by normalising previously taboo conversations.

[Prof. Maggie O'Neill](#)

Maggie O'Neill is Professor in Sociology & Criminology at University College Cork and Director of ISS21, Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century and UCC Futures: Collective Social Futures.

The majority of her empirical research uses participatory action research, ethnographic and biographical methods and participatory arts. She has a long history of working with artists, communities and civil society organisations – statutory and voluntary sector agencies – to create change. Maggie is a Co-I on UCC Wellcome Institutional Grant ERICA, PI on an IRC Advanced Laureate grant EuroBorderWalks and Co-I on an EPA grant Deep Societal Innovation for Sustainability and Human Flourishing (DSIS).

Maggie is an elected member of the Royal Irish Academy, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. An Executive Committee member of the European Sociological Association, and a member, former Vice Chair and Chair of Research Network 3 'Biographical Perspectives on European Societies'.

[Working Together to Create Change: Addressing Gender Based Violence and Coercive Control](#)

In this case study I will provide an example of participatory arts and social action research that is deeply rooted in the values and principles of socially engaged research and an ethic of care. We begin with the emergence of a problem (how to better address and police coercive control in intimate partner relations) through the research process, practice, outcomes and impact – working in partnership with victims/survivors, a police and crime commissioner, a theatre company, university researchers and a police force. The programme, by Open Clasp theatre company, trained all of County Durham and Cleveland Frontline Police Officers and has been delivered at UCC on two occasions to audiences made up of criminal justice agencies and support services. It has also been screened at the Sexual Violence Centre Cork's Community Hub. The performance was streamed globally by

Open Clasp to an audience of 27,000 in 35 countries as part of the UN Campaign to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.

Dr Wendy McLoone

Dr Wendy McLoone is Acting Director of Research at Queen's University Belfast with responsibility for the strategic direction and leadership of professional support services to improve the long-term quality of the University's research and research environment. Prior to this Wendy held the role of Head of Research Development, a cross-university role which provided leadership and support for the development and growth of the research portfolio. Previously Wendy worked for Science Foundation Ireland, developing and successfully leading innovative strategies for funding discovery and translational research. She lectured in Chemical Engineering at Queen's for eight years and was a process engineer for Eli Lilly S.A.

EDI in Research Action Plan – Queen's University Belfast

The presentation will look at Queen's University Belfast's approach to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within research. Central to this initiative is the development and implementation of a multi-phase EDI in Research Action Plan tailored to the specific intricacies of the research landscape.

Phase 1 of the plan focused on the pre-award stage and has been successfully implemented. Analysis revealed disparities in participation and success rates among certain groups in managed bid competitions and applications for internal funding. To address these findings, Phase 1 includes ongoing efforts to develop mitigating actions. Phase 2, currently in progress, extends the focus to the post-award phase. This phase will scrutinise aspects such as recruitment practices, access to resources and infrastructure, publication rates, and career advancement opportunities.

Future directions outlined in the presentation encompass the continual monitoring of Phase 1's effectiveness, the provision of external EDI training for researchers, and the completion of intersectional postgraduate research (PGR) analyses for Phase 2. Additionally, strategies will be developed and implemented to ensure the formulation of a robust Phase 2 Action Plan.

By sharing insights from this initiative, the presentation aims to contribute to broader discussions on fostering inclusive research environments and advancing EDI principles in academia.

Dr Thandiwe Hara (*Tan-dee*)

Dr Hara is the Co-Author of the Equity and inclusivity in research funding report, and she is leading the implementation of the report's recommendations at the University of Oxford, and across the Higher Education Sector. She is trained in public health and has significant

experience in the implementation of strategic initiatives, evidence-based practice, partnership development, public engagement, and inclusive research and innovation.

She was previously jointly appointed to lead on Regional innovation and Engagement at the University of Oxford, and as the Strategy Development Executive at OxLEP. She is also a Non-Executive Director for Citizen and community involvement at NHS Devon where she Chairs the Quality and Patient Experience Committee. She is a Trustee for Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council, and she has previously served as public governor for University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust.

[Equity and inclusivity in Research Funding : Tackling Barriers to Change](#)

In January 2023, the University of Oxford published the report *Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding: Barriers and Delivering Change*. The report investigated and identified the systemic barriers and challenges that individuals in marginalised groups face to secure research funding. It also set out recommendations for how Universities and funders could make their funding schemes and systems more equitable and accessible to a diverse range of researchers, thinkers, and innovators.

While many of the recommendations may be readily implemented by organisations acting unilaterally, several require coordinated action by universities and funders working together to deliver sector-wide change. In this presentation, Thandie will provide an overview of the findings of the reports, and how Higher Education institutions have come together to make positive change in the research funding ecosystem, and how you can join them.

Engaged Research

[Key concepts in Engaged Research & Creating our Future initiative](#)

[Dr Martin Galvin and Dr Niall Smith](#)

[Dr Niall Smith](#)

Niall Smith was awarded his PhD in astrophysics at UCD, he is Head of Research at MTU and Head of Blackrock Castle Observatory (BCO) which was awarded the “Outstanding Contribution to STEM Communication 2023” from SFI. Niall was awarded the 2020 Science Foundation Ireland “Research Image of the Year” for leading a team examining the efficacy of masks against covid which was catalysed by research undertaken at BCO. He was the academic representative on the steering committee for the development of the National Space Strategy (2019–2025). He was a member of the Expert Committee for the Government’s Creating Our Future initiative (2021/22). Niall is a regular contributor to radio and print media and writes a monthly space column in the Irish Examiner since 2016.

Dr Martin Galvin

Dr Martin Galvin is Head of Research Culture, Engagement and Impact in the Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation at UCC. He is Co-Director of the UNIC Centre for City Futures, collaborating with partners in ten European Universities and their Municipalities, to address the social, economic and environment challenges facing Post Industrial Cities. UNIC partners have co-designed a first in Europe joint 'Engaged Research' strategy focussed on enabling NGOs, citizens, public sector and business to co-produce solutions to local challenges. As Co-Chair of the EU Coalition of the Willing 'Living Labs' initiative, Martin brings a distinct focus on co-creation as an approach to advance higher education societal engagement, especially open innovation approaches that advance public inclusion. He is Higher Education Reform Expert with the Erasmus+ SPHERE Consortium, providing support to the modernization of higher education in Partner Countries neighbouring the EU and National Steering Group member of Irelands Campus Engage initiative, supporting engaged research, community engaged learning, volunteering and partnerships across the Irish Higher Education System.

Addressing SOCIETAL CHALLENGES Together/Engaged Research for Impact: Fundamentals

Martin's presentation focuses on how Engaged Research is contributing to our conversations around shaping our Research Culture. Building on national and international Frameworks, Martin provides insights into the principles and practices of Engaged Research thus building a picture as to how we can support a research culture that engages with society and in a tangible way embeds knowledge partnerships into research endeavours to address societal challenges.

High-Impact Case Studies

Denise Heffernan

Denise Heffernan is a human-centred researcher, and design lead for the IDEATE project at Nimbus Research Centre, MTU. She is actively involved in a wide range of research and industry projects, as well as interdepartmental collaborations within MTU. She contributes to research, teaching, and learning. Her research interests include playful design, human-centred research methodologies, and inclusive design.

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Advanced Laureate grant EuroBorderWalks and Co-I on an EPA grant Deep Societal Innovation for Sustainability and Human Flourishing (DSIS).

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[Breakout Sessions](#)

[Ciara O'Halloran, Dr Mary Galvin and Denise Heffernana](#)

[Ciara O'Halloran](#)

Ciara O'Halloran is Programme Officer for Research Culture, Engagement and Impact at University College Cork. She is a co-creation specialist and certified project manager who works at micro (project), meso (organisational) and macro (eco-system) levels – to embed and mainstream engaged, participatory and design-led approaches and professional practices for positive societal impact and transformation. She is day-to-day coordinator of CityLabs – the UNIC European University Alliance's urban living lab; living lab lead for NPA Hybes (Hybrid Energy Solutions for Building, Transportation, Mobility and Infrastructure) and team member for EU Horizon Europe CATALISI (Collaboration, Action, Transformation, Adaptation, Learning, Innovation, Sustainability, and Impact) for transforming Higher Education Institutions.

Former Associate Director for a multidisciplinary strategic design and project management consultancy, Ciara has over 20 years' experience working with local community, national public sector and European projects that employ co-creation approaches to tackle complex challenges.

Dr Mary Galvin

Dr Mary Galvin is Head of Department of Applied Social Studies and IDEATE Co-Lead, at Munster Technological University (MTU). With a PhD in Psychology from University College Cork, she has previously held academic and research positions across Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Maynooth University. These positions have mostly been in the areas of digital health (EU and EI funded projects) and design innovation. Her research interests are within the inclusive design of products and services, particularly in the context of health and social care.

Denise Heffernan

See above w/ Prof. Maggie O'Neill – High-Impact Case Studies

The IDEATE project, in collaboration with DEPENDR's Public Service Transformation Unit, aims to minimise the digital divide through the design of more inclusive digital Public Services. Denise Heffernan, Design Lead of the IDEATE project, will discuss their approach to engaging and collaborating with stakeholders, sharing lessons learned and practical advice for fostering meaningful engagement and dialogue between public services, academia, designers and the public.

Together Denise Heffernan, Mary Galvin, and Ciara O'Halloran will be bringing their expertise to deliver and lead a participatory co-creative workshop on exploring Engaged Research in practice.

Participant workshop

Part A: Applying engaged research approach to one of the 'Creating our Future' challenges.

Part B: Exploring the opportunities and challenges engaged research presents.

Panel discussion

Dr Emma Doris

Emma Dorris is the Engaged Research Manager at UCD Research. She has a PhD in molecular medicine and a Master of Public Policy. She also acts as programme manager for the PPI Ignite Network @ UCD. She has a background in biomedical research and is an internationally recognised specialist in the involvement of public stakeholders in research that is not public-facing. She is a member of the European Commission's Community of Practice on Citizen Engagement for Knowledge Valorisation and acts as an external advisor on a number of international funding and research improvement initiatives. Emma has authored a number of articles in the area of public involvement and has a passion for improving research culture across all disciplines. She has a particular interest in policy and practices related to public/citizen involvement in research and in developing ways to build

capacity at systems level towards more relevant and impactful research. She is a long-term advocate of open science practices and improved research culture.

Dr Stefan Müller

Stefan Müller is Assistant Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations at University College Dublin, specialising in political representation, party competition, public opinion, and quantitative text analysis. Stefan is leading two funded research projects: the first assesses environmental and energy policies under the NexSys SFI Strategic Partnership Programme, while the second, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, focuses on the analysis of grant peer review. Stefan is a core member of the Connected_Politics Lab at UCD, co-author of an open-source package for quantitative text analysis, maintainer of the Irish Polling Indicator, and a member of Young Academy Ireland.
