



# URMAN Annual Report 2024

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## 1. Overview

### URMAN membership numbers at end of 2024:

- 197 research managers and administrators
- Workvivo URMAN space membership: 82
- LinkedIn URMAN page: 144 members

### Activities in 2024:

Events	Date	Attendees
URMAN BBQ	28 September	18
Erasmus+ Funding for RMA staff	15 November	34
URMAN Christmas Lunch	6 December	25

### Budget:

Balance forward from December 2023	€2694.26
Expenditure in 2024	€974.40
<b>Balance carried forward into 2025</b>	<b>€1719.86</b>

## 2. URMAN Advisory Group

There have been a number of changes to the URMAN Advisory Group membership during the last year. It comprises 6 members who represent different areas / units from across the University including: Jessica Ralston, Paul Huddie, and John Wyatt (Chair). Saswati Ghosh, Oisín O'Connor, and Aoife O'Gorman just joined the Advisory Group in 2024. Over the past year, we have had multiple departures from the Advisory Group, namely Aoife Brady, Meadhbh O'Halloran, Pauline Power, all of whom we thank for their important contribution to URMAN AG over their years of service. The current Chair is John Wyatt who commenced in March 2022 with the current chair role to rotate in December 2024. At the AGM, held on Tuesday 10 December 2024, Paul Huddie took the chair.

We thank Caitriona O'Leary, assigned by UCD Research to provide Secretariat support to the Group, for her support during this Academic Year for URMAN. This ongoing support is very much appreciated.

The terms of reference of the Advisory Group were reviewed by the group with minor changes in Nov 2023 and are presented in **Appendix 2**. The Advisory Group meets once a month, and following the Covid-19 pandemic meets in a hybrid capacity facilitated by UCD Research in the Research Boardroom. As Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted, the resumption of face to face events of interest to URMAN members was enabled. This included events such as:

- the URMAN Christmas Lunch
- Research Culture Initiative consultation
- Presentation from Helen Doyle on Change Management

Online events also continued to be hosted during this reporting period which are outlined in more detail in the relevant Work Group updates, meeting needs of the members unable to attend in person as well as covering very relevant topics with high levels of engagement.

We were also able to support and enhance these events for URMAN members with the remaining URMAN budget carried forward from previous years, with the current budget included in Appendix 1.

## 3. Working Groups

Early in 2019 the URMAN Advisory Group set up 6 Working Groups and their work has continued since then, with some updates to the structure in Summer 2021. It was deemed that three of the Working Groups had come to a natural end point or could be merged together and that an additional Working Group would be required to manage the AIREN project. All Working Groups are chaired by AG members and some have additional involvement from URMAN members. The Terms of Reference and Membership of each Working Group were refreshed and are presented in **Appendix 2 and 4**.

### a. Membership & Communications Working Group:

Membership of URMAN is open to all UCD staff who work in research management and administration. Members self-select if they wish to become a member and join either

through a form on the [website](#) or email [urmanexec@ucd.ie](mailto:urmanexec@ucd.ie). As of December 2024, URMAN has 197 members, up from a total of 181 in the last annual report.

The channels used for URMAN communications include the **URMAN website** at <https://www.ucd.ie/urman/>. The website includes information on URMAN's Advisory Group, Working Groups, Terms of Reference, Annual Reports, Resource Signposting for members, Upcoming and Past Events, News and a link to UCD's Research Services Portal. The Membership and Communications Working Group use Google Groups to manage the URMAN mailing list. Members are kept up to date with URMAN events and activities via this mailing list and events are also posted on the **URMAN Workvivo space**.

The **URMAN LinkedIn Group** has 144 members which is an increase of 22 members in the past 12 months. The group is a way for former UCD staff members to stay in contact with URMAN and where URMAN can post news and events that are open to the public.

For several years, up until the Summer of 2024, URMAN manage an internal **Google Currents** Community for its members, through which they could communicate, share information and learn about URMAN events. Following UCD's implementation of **Workvivo**, it was decided to cease using Google Currents and to create an URMAN 'Space' (<https://ucd.workvivo.com/spaces/73249/feed>). This space went live in July 2024 and is managed by the Membership and Communications WG. All existing URMAN members have been invited to join it and all new URMAN members are now automatically added. By December 2024 half of members had requested or been given access to the URMAN Space.

**Induction coffee mornings** for new members, which have largely not been run in recent years remain on offer to new members via the URMAN website. In 2025 the Membership and Communications WG plan to hold these quarterly, subject to request.

#### b. Events Working Group

In 2024 only three events were organised by URMAN. This was partly due to a large selection of other RMA-related events being run, by AIREN, the UCD Research Culture project and UCD Research throughout the year, and partly due to members failing to request any additional ideas.

Three URMAN Events were held during 2024 which are listed in the following Table.

<b>Table 1: URMAN Events held in 2023-24</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
URMAN BBQ	28 September	18
Erasmus+ Funding for RMA staff	15 November	34
URMAN Christmas Lunch	6 December	25

The average attendance was 26 members, which is higher than the 2022-2023 average of 19. Two of the events were held in-person and one was held online. Despite our small numbers the events committee continued to organise both social events as well as the Erasmus+ Funding webinar which proved popular amongst members. The novelty of an in-person BBQ off campus proved incredibly popular, as our membership valued the opportunity to meet and network in an informal environment. The city centre location also meant that colleagues from the Irish Marie Curie office were able to attend, increasing our

reach even further. Our members indicated that the event made them feel valued and offered an invaluable opportunity to network with colleagues from across the city.

Plans for other URMAN events for 2025 will continue to respond to member needs and work in tandem with AIREN, the UCD Research Culture project and UCD Research.

In December 2019 an URMAN budget proposal for €5000 was approved by UCD Research Senior Managers. This budget enables the Events Working Group and Advisory Group to deliver a stronger programme of events that better respond to member interests. A statement of how this budget allocation has been used to date is presented in **Appendix 1**. As much of the budget is to support URMAN in-person events, there was a significant surplus (€2694.26) at the start of 2024. This surplus facilitated the larger BBQ event. As the only expenditure in 2024 related to the two in-person events, we are carrying over a surplus (€1693.43) into 2025.

#### **c. Career Development Working Group**

The Career Development Working Group has maintained the same terms of reference which was previously in place for the Training Provisions Working Group. As outlined in **Appendix 3** it includes two strands:

- 1- Looking to fill gaps in career development initiatives for URMAN members
- 2- Exploring mentoring to support knowledge exchange and career development for URMAN members.

Following on from the creation of the URMAN Career Development LinkedIn Learning pathway for the Research & Innovation Job Family, the URMAN Members Survey highlighted that although a majority of members (74%) are aware they are in the R&I Job family, a majority of members (63%) were unable to identify their job level or their role did not easily map to these levels.

Following the success of the joint Community of Practice event with the UCD Project Management Community of Practice in October 2023, the CDWG has continued to explore its stated goal in the 2022/23 annual report to focus on self-identifying key gaps in the skill sets of members which can then be used to inform the future provision of relevant CPD and more informal knowledge-sharing. A joint workshop with the Doctoral Network CoP focused on these themes is planned for the 2025 calendar year.

#### **d. AIREN Working Group**

The URMAN AIREN Working Group established in July 2021 continues to lead and manage the 'All-Island Research Excellence Network – AIREN' project. AIREN is led by UCD URMAN in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster with support from Inter-Trade Ireland's Synergy programme (from January 2021 to March 2023). Since December 2023, AIREN has received additional funding from Higher Education Authority (HEA) to continue its activities until 4th August 2025. The overall aim of AIREN is to support cross border collaborations between universities and industry, particularly in the post-Brexit era. The timeliness and relevance of AIREN is heightened in the current research landscape with the increase in funding programmes specifically aimed at supporting all-island initiatives and North / South collaboration – including the HEA North South Research

Programme 2021, with 62 collaborative projects awarded across the island totalling €37.3m, and the current SFI Co-Centres Research programme with a fund of €73m available from 3 jurisdictions – Ireland, Northern Ireland and the UK.

### **AIREN Events held 2021-24**

To date AIREN has also held 9 virtual events, 3 of which took place since January 2022, for research managers and administrators in UCD, QUB and Ulster to share knowledge and best practice in research management. The two workshop events were also attended by representatives from other institutions and research bodies:

- Organisational Structures for Research Management & Development, 12th May 2021
- North / South Research Collaboration Opportunities, Workshop 30th June 2021
- Governance & Management of Large-Scale Research Centres, 8th September 2021
- Developing global partnerships /networks to develop research collaborations, 10th November 2021
- North / South Workshop on Industry Academia Research Collaboration, Workshop 8th December 2021
- Research Impact, 26th January 2022
- Supporting PhD & Postdoctoral Researchers, 9th March 2022
- The Role of Research Support Professionals in Research Culture, 15th June 2022
- EDI webinar titled Fostering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Management and Administration: A North-South Perspective was held on 10th October 2024.
- AIREN hosted a workshop titled “From Insights to Impact: North-South Research Programme Impact Workshop” as a part of the HEA’s North South Research Programme Conference in Dublin on 28th November, 2024. Following the workshop, AIREN will work closely with different projects under the NSRP programme to develop impact case studies.
- Webinar titled Mind Matters: Enhancing Mental Health and Well-being in Research Management and Administration Professionals Across the Island of Ireland will take place on 5th December, 2024.
- The biennial conference of AIREN is scheduled for 3rd April, 2025 in The Convention Centre, Dublin.

**Submitted to VPRII 10/01/2025**

**Appendix 1 - URMAN Budget Statement as at Dec 2024**

Reporting Period: 10 Jan 2024 - 31 December 2024

A/C Balance forward 10/01/24	€2694.26
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<b>Expenditure</b>		
URMAN barbeque at Odeon, Dublin (28/09/24)		€500
URMAN Christmas lunch [Gather & Gather] (10/12/24)		€456.40
URMAN Christmas lunch additional costs (Oisin O'Connor)		€18.00
<b>Expenditure total 2024</b>		<b>€974.40</b>

<b>Balance 31/12/24</b>		<b>€1719.86</b>
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## Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference - UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network (URMAN)

Title	UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network (URMAN)
Purpose	To provide a network within UCD for Research Managers and Administrators to deliver benefits to the University and those individuals working within the research management and administration space.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved recognition and identity for the profession of research administration and management</li> <li>● Improved opportunities to share knowledge and best practice with a view to developing standardised processes and procedures where appropriate.</li> <li>● To provide a “voice” to the groups in terms of lobbying and influencing UCD policies and practices as they pertain to research activities</li> <li>● To identify common training and professional development requirements for the group and ensure delivery of same.</li> <li>● To provide a forum for engagement with outside parties – e.g. funders, NCPs, IUA, EUA etc.</li> </ul>
Authority / Champion	VP for Research, Innovation and Impact
Secretariat	To be provided by UCD Research
Membership	Self-Selection to the Network by eligible employees as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All personnel providing services to the research community in UCD</li> </ul>
Advisory Group (AG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The advisory group (AG) will provide oversight to URMAN.</li> <li>● This group will have 8-9 members drawn from URMAN members.</li> <li>● Appointment to the AG will be by self-nomination. If more than 8 members volunteer initially then an election will take place.</li> <li>● Annually 3 members of the group should step down to allow for new members within the AG.</li> <li>● No member can serve on the AG for more than 5 consecutive years.</li> <li>● The group will have a rotating chair (selected by the AG members). The chair should rotate at least every twenty four months.</li> <li>● UCD Research will provide the secretariat.</li> <li>● The purpose of the group is to strive towards the achievement of the objectives outlined above.</li> </ul>
Quorum	The advisory group will have a quorum of 5 members. In the absence of the Chair the advisory group members present will appoint a Chair.
Sub-groups	From time to time it may be necessary to set up sub-groups to look into specific projects. Each sub-group should have at least one member of the advisory group to act as a communications link between the sub-group and the advisory group.
Established	September 2013
Reviewed & amended	Reviewed May 2018. Amended April 2019 to increase AG membership from 6-8 members to 8-9 members, and to increase quorum from 4 members to 5 members. Reviewed November 2021. Reviewed November 2023.
Next review date	September 2025

### Appendix 3 - URMAN Working Groups: Terms of Reference and Membership

1. **Membership & Communications Working Group:** Manage the URMAN Membership registrations and induction process. Maintain the URMAN website and mailing list and email account. Manage URMAN LinkedIn and Google Currents accounts. Advise on and co-ordinate all URMAN EXEC communications to URMAN members, and to other units within the university as required. Carry out URMAN surveys with the URMAN membership every 2-3 years and liaise with UCD units such as HR on the same as relevant.
2. **Events Working Group:** The Events Working Group plan and organise regular URMAN Events to support career development, training, and knowledge sharing for URMAN members. URMAN Events complement, and address gaps, in the current training and development provisions that are offered in the university; and add value by designing / tailoring the URMAN Events to specifically meet URMAN member needs. Events typically cover topics from across the entire research project life-cycle / researcher journey. Suggestions and requests for URMAN Events are submitted from URMAN members through various channels including the URMAN Advisory Group, the URMAN Website, and URMAN Survey, and are also informed by needs identified through the work of other URMAN Working Groups.
3. **Career Development Working Group:** There are 2 strands to this Working Group:
  - *Identify Gaps in Current Training Provisions in UCD:* Drawing on the mapping of training provisions carried out by the URMAN Careers Development Working Group (Report appendix 3.1) identify where there are gaps in the training provisions offered in UCD and where new training provisions (including on-line provisions) are required to support URMAN members. In collaboration with HR this will help inform the university of training required to support the core and functional competencies for the Research Management Job Family.
  - *Mentoring Programme:* Explore requirements and appetite within URMAN for a Mentoring Programme to support knowledge exchange and career development for URMAN members. This should be carried out in collaboration with UCD HR and draw on the expertise, training and resources that UCD HR provides to support the roll out of Mentoring in the University.
4. **AIREN Working Group:** The AIREN Working Group will project manage and deliver the AIREN Project which is a 2-year project between UCD (lead institution), Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, and is funded by the InterTradeIreland Synergy Programme. AIREN aims to: share knowledge and best practice in research management; raise awareness of funding opportunities to support North South collaboration; establish an all-island research excellence network for research managers and administrators. Project management includes: setting up the project; holding monthly Project Team Meetings; liaising with and reporting (6-monthly reports) to the funding sponsor; managing the AIREN Project budget; developing and maintaining the AIREN webportal; managing the AIREN email account; preparing / sending AIREN event notices and post-event follow up. Project delivery includes holding 6 Away Day events, 3 Workshops and 1 Conference, and each of the 3 participating universities takes a lead in organising a number of events. UCD is also the lead organisation for organising the AIREN Conference (October 2022).

**Appendix 4 - URMAN Advisory Group and Working Group Members at December 2024**

URMAN Advisory Group	Aoife Brady, Meadhbh O'Halloran, Jessica Ralston, Sinead McGinley, Saswati Ghosh, Oisín O'Connor and John Wyatt (Chair) Secretariat provided by UCD Research
Membership & Communications Working Group	Jessica Ralston, Aoife Brady (chair) and Paul Huddie
Events Working Group	Meadhbh O'Halloran (Co-Chairs), Aisling Jackman, Caitriona Devery and Oisín O'Connor
Career Development Working Group	John Wyatt (Chair), Aoife Brady, Conor McDermott, Tara Hughes
AIREN Working Group	Jessican Ralston (Chair), Matt Sheridan, Caroline Treacey, Sinead McGinley, John Wyatt, and Saswati Ghosh

Appendix 5 - URMAN Induction Resources Signposts

UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network (URMAN) URMAN

Induction Resource Signposts

There is a wealth of information relevant to induction and orientation for new staff available on the UCD website, accessible in a number of locations but all linked through the **UCD People & Organisation Development: Supporting New Starters in UCD page**. A part of this includes local induction. However, sometimes the most relevant support can actually come from relationships across different units in the University. URMAN, the **UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network** was established in 2013 to facilitate these relationships, especially for Research Managers and Administrators, who may be hired in centralised support units or directly working with researchers in many capacities. URMAN has created this summary document to help signpost the information that is available, with particular reference to Research Managers and Administrators moving into new roles in UCD.

 <p><a href="https://urman.ucd.ie">https://urman.ucd.ie</a></p>	<p><a href="#">URMAN Website</a></p> <p>URMAN holds regular networking and information events throughout the year and provides resources to members. <b>Sign up on the membership tab:</b> URMAN welcomes applications from all personnel with a research manager or administrator role in UCD and all personnel in Support Units providing services to Researchers. New members are invited to meet with members of the Advisory Group for a monthly <b>informal welcome and induction</b> over coffee. If you would like to become more involved, <b>consider joining one of our working groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Events Working Group</li> <li>● Membership &amp; Communications Working Group</li> <li>● Career Development Working Group</li> <li>● AIREN Working Group</li> </ul> <p>Join the conversations in our <a href="#">Google Currents Community</a> and <a href="#">LinkedIn URMAN network</a>. You can get in touch with URMAN Advisory Group through <a href="mailto:urmanexec@ucd.ie">urmanexec@ucd.ie</a></p>
 <p><a href="https://airen.network/">https://airen.network/</a></p>	<p><a href="#">All-Island Research Excellence Network</a></p> <p>University College Dublin (UCD), Ulster University (Ulster) and Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) have joined forces to connect Research Managers and Administrators across the island of Ireland. The AIREN project, which runs from 2021 – 2023, is being delivered with support from InterTrade Ireland’s Synergy initiative.</p> <p><b>Sign up on the membership tab</b>, and join the Away Days, Workshops and Conference to deliver the following 3 objectives:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Share Research Management best practice and knowledge</li> <li>● Identify and develop research thematic areas and maximise funding opportunities</li> <li>● Establish an All-Island Research Excellence Network</li> </ul>
 <p><a href="https://earma.wildapricot.org/">https://earma.wildapricot.org/</a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>EARMA – European Association of Research Managers and Administrators</u></a></p> <p>UCD is an institutional member of EARMA, so all research managers and administrators working in UCD are eligible to be members. This can be arranged through the institutional contact point, Andrea Forde, or by emailing <a href="mailto:urmanexec@ucd.ie">urmanexec@ucd.ie</a>. EARMA provides a useful European network, and provides training and events throughout the year, including an annual conference.</p>
 <p><a href="http://www.ucd.ie/research/portal">http://www.ucd.ie/research/portal</a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>UCD Research &amp; Innovation Services Portal</u></a></p> <p>The UCD Researcher Portal includes a comprehensive suite of documents, information and points of contact, spanning the entire research project lifecycle, based on the “researcher journey”. It is a “one stop shop” of virtually all the resources needed to manage Research within UCD.</p>
 <p><a href="http://www.ucd.ie/peopledevelopment/ourservices/newtucd">http://www.ucd.ie/peopledevelopment/ourservices/newtucd</a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>UCD People &amp; Organisation Development: Supporting New Starters in UCD</u></a></p> <p>UCD People &amp; Organisation Development, a part of HR, has a landing page for Supporting New Starters. This provides links to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the <b>Work@UCD</b> page</li> <li>● the <b>UCD onboarding page</b> is available through InfoHub which provides comprehensive checklists, information and actions pre-arrival, first week and first month</li> <li>● information on booking the centralised <b>Orientation for New Employees</b> Programme which is run a number of times per year</li> <li>● information on the <b>Local Induction Process</b> which includes a Local Induction Checklist and Employee Orientation Policy document and a number of other resources.</li> </ul>