

URMAN Annual Report 2019-20

1. URMAN Advisory Group

The URMAN Advisory Group membership has remained unchanged since last year. It comprises 9 members who represent different areas / units from across the university including: Antonella Ferrecchia, Will Fitzmaurice, Rosemarie Gannon, Aidan McElwaine, Ciara O'Connor, Justin Synnott, Colleen Thomas, Caroline Treacey (Chair), Irene Ward. We also have, and very much appreciate, the support assigned by UCD Research that is provided by Aileen Doyle (Secretary). This year URMAN also received a budget allocation of €5k from UCD Research which has been very valuable in supporting URMAN events and activities (reported under item 2.2 Events).

The Advisory Group meets once a month, and continue to do so remotely via zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic. This year was particularly busy for the Advisory Group. In addition to the regular URMAN Working Group activities, the Group carried out an URMAN Survey (reported under item 3). The Group also led an URMAN proposal, in collaboration with Queens University Belfast and the University of Ulster, to establish an 'All-Island Research Excellence Network – AIREN'. The proposal was submitted to InterTrade Ireland's Synergy Programme in August 2020 and we are very pleased and excited that it has been awarded funding of €19.4k and the Project will commence in January 2021 (reported under item 4).

2. Working Groups

Early in 2019 the URMAN Advisory Group set up 6 Working Groups and their work has continued throughout the last 12 months. The Terms of Reference and Membership of each Working Group are presented in Appendix 1.

2.1 Membership & Communications: 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. The URMAN Survey 2019 indicates that almost 65% of URMAN members were referred by a colleague to join URMAN. The Induction Working Group have also launched some new initiatives to further support new membership. There was a very small turnover in membership during the year as 11 new members joined and 9 members left when their employment in UCD ended. As at September 2020, URMAN has 164 members.

The channels used for URMAN communications include the URMAN website at urman.ucd.ie. The website includes a contact sheet that members can use to submit enquiries / contact the Advisory Group and/or they can use the URMAN dedicated email address at urmanexec@ucd.ie. There is also a mailing list of all members which is used to send out details of URMAN Events and activities. During the year we have also used the UCD Staff E-Zine to increase the visibility of URMAN, its' events and activities and we plan to make more use of this during the coming year.

In May 2020 to help support members during the campus closure we set up an URMAN Google + platform which recently transferred to 'Connected'. Engagement with it to date appears to be relatively low, and we will keep it under review. We continue to use the URMAN LinkedIn which the URMAN Survey 2019 indicates 63% of members use frequently. This year we also invested in a new URMAN stand-up banner with the URMAN logo to use at URMAN physical events, when they resume.

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2.2 Events

Five URMAN Events were held during 2019-20 which are listed in the following Table.

Table 1: URMAN Events held in 2019-20	Date	Attendees
International Researcher Administrators Day	20-Sep-19	32
Research Integrity Workshop w/Jill Boyle	19-Nov-19	26
Festive Social	11-Dec-19	28
Intellectual Property Workshop w/Stephen Donoghue	08-Jan-20	29
Well Being & Health: Working from home for URMAN Members w/ Professor Gary O'Reilly And UCD's EDI mental health peer support group w/Ronan O'Rourke	02-Jun-20	26

The average attendance was 28 members, which is holding steady in comparison to the 2019-2020 average of 29. To support URMAN members who are working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic we held a virtual session on Well Being & Health on June 2nd, which had close to average attendance of an in-person URMAN event. However the COVID-19 restrictions has had an impact on URMAN events as three events scheduled for March, May and June could not take place, including: a Workshop on Research Impact with David Bennett; an information session on Horizon Europe by Aine Moore; and an URMAN networking social event. We will look to reschedule these URMAN events and hold them virtually during Autumn 2020. Our planning for an event on Career Development for Research Managers / Administrations was also put on hold, which we will resume over the coming year. Plans for other URMAN events for 2020-21 will also take on board the many suggestions members made in their responses to the URMAN Survey 2019.

In addition to those events listed in table 1, the URMAN AGM took place in February 2020, at which Working Group updates and the results / analysis of the URMAN 2019 survey were presented. The event was open to all URMAN members however attendance was relatively low, and in future therefore, to assure stronger attendance, we will hold the AGM in conjunction with an URMAN Event.

In December 2019 an URMAN budget proposal for €5k 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 2. As much of the budget is to support URMAN in-person events, we wish to request to carry forward much of this budget to support URMAN events and activities post-Covid 19, when they can take place again in-person.

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2.3 Training Provisions

The Training Provisions Working Group terms of reference was bedded down by the start of the 2019-20 academic year. It includes 2 strands with, as outlined in appendix 1, one looking at gaps in current training provisions in UCD and one strand exploring Mentoring to support knowledge exchange and career development for URMAN members. Responses in the URMAN Survey 2019 to specific questions relating to career development, training needs, and mentoring will inform the work on both strands. For instance the survey shows a high level of awareness amongst URMAN respondents of the range of training courses available / offered in UCD, with some good suggestions for other new courses / requirements, and also areas of expertise that URMAN members have and are willing to share, that the Training Provisions Working Group will follow up on. The survey also indicates a strong appetite for a Mentoring Programme amongst URMAN members.

Over the coming weeks we will also ask to meet with the UCD HR Director for People and Organisational Development, Claire O'Malley and her colleagues to discuss and explore some matters highlighted by responses to the URMAN Survey, including:

- 31% of URMAN survey respondents indicated they did not attend any training days in the previous 12 months, yet we note that the university's P4G framework, underpinned by the 70/20/10 model for development, indicates that 10% of staff development is expected to take place through structured courses – formal training and eLearning.
- The lack of funding can be a barrier to training / career development ie. to attend the EARMA Annual Conference and the payment for Professional Association Fees, eligibility restrictions for the Aurora Leadership Programme, the lack of flexible working arrangements to attend training.
- The majority of URMAN survey respondents are in the UCD Research & Innovation Job Family, however survey responses signal strongly that further clarity is needed about UCD Job Families structure, levels, and career pathways.

2.4 Induction

The Induction Working Group launched a number of initiatives during the year to support new research managers and administrators in the university. The Group has reviewed and created a synopsis of existing induction materials that are available within the university to produce '[The URMAN Induction Resource Signpost](#)'. This signposting document is a valuable resource for new Research Managers and Administrators in UCD and is available on the URMAN website and also in Appendix 3 of this Report. Another new initiative is that we now offer an URMAN Induction / Welcome Meeting for new members to meet with the URMAN Advisory Group for an informal coffee and chat on the first Wednesday of each month. This offer to meet has continued virtually since the Covid-19 pandemic. Since it started in February 2020, seven URMAN members have availed of this induction / welcome meeting.

Working together with our Membership & Communications Group, the Induction Group is also continuing to explore new ways to increase awareness of URMAN amongst new staff to encourage membership. Together they have liaised with the UCD Research Communications Manager to arrange for URMAN to be included on the UCD Research Services Portal to help raise awareness and visibility of URMAN. The URMAN email address and weblink are now included on the 'Central Supports' sections of the Portal. The Group has also initiated discussions with UCD HR to set up a process for notifying new Research Managers and Administrators of URMAN when they first join the university / take up a role in research management.

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2.5 Research Area Communities

URMAN currently has 2 Research Area Communities which aim to support local networks of research managers and administrators in the University by creating opportunities to meet, exchange knowledge and network in an informal setting with colleagues from relevant research areas in an informal setting. The Environment network which meet monthly in the Earth Institute having been established through URMAN in 2018. During the year the College of Health and Agricultural Science Research Support Network has established itself with support from URMAN and meets monthly in the Conway Institute. Meetings this year have included a research proposal writing and funding seminar as well as more informal coffee mornings.

2.6 Communities of Practice

The Communities of Practice Working Group was initially set up in 2019 with the primary purpose of looking into URMAN's status as a Community of Practice in the university. It was confirmed then with UCD Agile that URMAN is indeed the longest and most established Community of Practice in UCD. Since then the Working Group has remained in place, largely to keep a distant eye and interest in what other Communities of Practice there are in the university and to identify if/when there are any opportunities to connect with them. There may also be opportunities for URMAN to participate in some of UCD's Work Smarter Together events, and/or to identify potential work areas for future UCD Agile projects.

3. URMAN Survey 2019

During 2019 the Advisory Group carried out a Survey of URMAN members. The survey was open from 11 November – 13 December 2019 and received 38 responses, representing ~25% of URMAN membership. Similarly to URMAN Surveys previously carried out in 2014 & 2016, the purpose of the URMAN Survey 2019 was to:

- Map the research support expertise available in UCD
- Map the research support expertise of URMAN members - Your Expertise
- Understand how URMAN can support you in your role

In addition, the URMAN Survey 2019 also included 2 new sections to help:

- Understand how your career development is supported
- Grow the URMAN network even further

The new section on Your Career Development was to follow up on matters that were highlighted in the URMAN Sub-Committee Report on 'Skills, Competency and Professional Development Needs of University Research Managers and Administrators' that was issued in 2018. It also provides baseline data to help us understand and assess the impact of Job Families and other university initiatives that are being introduced.

A summary of the Survey 2019 responses was presented at the AGM that took place in February 2020, and is included in Appendix 4 of this Report. As stated above in section 2.3 we wish to engage with UCD HR to explore / progress some of the key points and observations particularly relating to Career Development, Training, and Mentoring that the URMAN Survey 20219 has highlighted.

4. AIREN – All-Island Research Excellence Network

The URMAN Advisory Group led an URMAN proposal, in collaboration with Queens University Belfast (QUB) and the University of Ulster (UU), to establish a Network of University Research Managers and Administrators between our 3 universities, with the long-term goal of setting up an All-Island Research Excellence Network (AIREN). The Network will be proactive and develop new ways to support existing / build new cross-border collaborations between universities and industry in the post Brexit era and COVID-19. We will work together to optimise opportunities available through: Ireland's 'New Programme of Government' mission for a Shared Island; Horizon Europe programme from 2021-2027: other new Programmes that will arise as the impact of Brexit unfolds; COVID-19 research, and preparedness for other future pandemics.

The AIREN proposal (attached in a separate document as Appendix 5) was submitted to InterTrade Ireland's Synergy Programme in August 2020. At the end of September we were informed that it has been approved for funding of €19.4k, and the formal contract / letter of offer is currently being processed by the UCD Grant Registration Team. The AIREN Project will start in January 2021 and run for 2 years until December 2022 to deliver the following actions and initiatives:

(1) Share Research Management Best Practice & Knowledge

This action involves holding 6 Virtual / Away Days across the 3 participant universities to identify and share best practice areas in Research, Impact and Innovation/Enterprise with each other, both administrative and academic. Learning from each other will greatly enhance the professional service and support we provide to the academic community, industry, and other stakeholders for the benefit of cross-border collaboration.

(2) Identify and Develop Research Thematic Areas & Maximise Funding Opportunities

We will compile a calendar of funding programmes to raise university and industry awareness of the pipeline of funding opportunities available to support cross-border collaboration. This will be presented through a series of 3 Workshops that will also facilitate university researchers and industry partners to connect with each other to collaborate and prepare funding applications, and together maximise the all-Ireland funding awarded through competitive funding programmes. Current areas of established collaboration include Life & Health Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Environment/Sustainability. The Network will also identify additional, established and emerging, research thematic areas with 'All-Island' potential.

(3) All-Island Research Excellence Network

We will hold a Conference event to launch the All-Island Research Excellence Network (AIREN), the establishment of which will follow best international practice and provide an all-island network for research management professionals from Northern Ireland and Ireland, strengthening their contribution to support research. The Conference will be open to all Universities, Research Organisations/ Institutes, Industry, Enterprise Centres, and Research Funding Bodies from across Northern Ireland and Ireland inviting wide participation and attendance from all stakeholders in the research sector.

The Advisory Group look forward very much to working on this Project and the opportunities it presents for URMAN members and the university.

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Appendix 1 - URMAN Working Groups: Terms of Reference and Membership

1. **Training Provisions 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 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.

2. **Induction:** To design and deliver an Induction Session for new research managers and administrators in UCD. The session should draw on induction templates and toolkits provided by HR and compliment the other induction programmes that are already provided for new staff within the university. The key purpose of the URMAN induction is to support URMAN membership and knowledge exchange.

3. **Communities of Practice:** Discussions with UCD Agile confirm that URMAN is effectively the first and most established Community of Practice (CoP) in UCD. Explore and plan CoP type initiatives to enhance the visibility of URMAN and to demonstrate its' value to the University, including holding an inaugural (annual) URMAN Keynote Event with an invited high profile guest speaker. Establish and track metrics and testimonials that demonstrate and showcase the effectiveness and benefit of URMAN. Link with URMAN Events Working Group re URMAN CoP events. Link up with other UCD CoP(s) and UCD Agile if / where relevant to support URMAN initiatives.

4. **Membership & Communications Working Group:** Manage the URMAN Membership registrations, particularly liaising with the Induction Working Group to identify and include new members. Maintain the URMAN website and social media accounts, including URMAN LinkedIn and Twitter. 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 same as relevant.

5. **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 compliment, 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.

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6. **Research Area Communities Working Group:** The Research Area Communities Working Group supports local for of Research Managers and Administrators in UCD who on specific research areas to meet up informally once a month and exchange information with each other about funding, new opportunities, and other developments. The Group aims to develop a sense of community amongst research support staff who work in the same thematic area, and links also with the URMAN Induction Working Group as it welcomes and supports new staff working in the area. The Working Group has supported the establishment of two local communities in Environmental research and research aligned to the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences. URMAN will seek to extend and support this model to 2 other of UCD's Research Thematic Areas in the coming year.

URMAN Advisory Group and Working Group Members as at September 2020

URMAN Advisory Group	Caroline Treacey (Chair), Aileen Doyle (Secretary) Antonella Ferrecchia, Will Fitzmaurice, Rosemarie Gannon, Aidan McElwaine, Ciara O'Connor, Justin Synnott, Colleen Thomas, Irene Ward.
Training Provisions Working Group	Justin Synnott (Chair), Conor McDermott, Ciara O'Connor, Rosemarie Gannon.
Induction Working Group	Ciara O'Connor (Chair), Aidan McElwaine, Rosemarie Gannon, Irene Ward.
Communities of Practice Working Group	Aidan McElwaine (Chair), Will Fitzmaurice, Caroline Treacey.
Membership & Communications Working Group	Irene Ward (Chair), Valerie Norton, Cathy Quinn.
Events Working Group	Colleen Thomas and Antonella Ferrecchia (Co-Chairs), Sinead McGinley, Erin Finnerty, Yvonne Smith, Aidan McElwaine.
Research Thematic Working Group: Environment, and CHAS	Will Fitzmaurice (Chair), Niamh McLoughlin, Aisling Jackman.

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Appendix 2 - URMAN Budget Statement as at September 2020

Date	Event	Budgeted Cost	Allocated Expenses	Over/Under
November 19, 2019	Research Integrity Workshop w/Jill Boyle	€ 175	€ 57.89	€ 117.11
December 11, 2019	Festive Social	€ 350		
	Catering		€ 255.00	
	Supplies (reimbursable expenses)		€ 0.00	€ 95.00
January 8, 2020	Intellectual Property Workshop w/Stephen O'Donoghue	€ 175	€ 54.48	€ 120.52
February 5, 2020	URMAN AGM	€ 175	€ 68.10	€ 106.90
May 26, 2020	Horizon Europe Briefing w/Aine More	€ 175		
Mar-20	Impact for Research Administrators Workshop w/David Bennet	€ 175		
Apr-20	Mentoring (collaboration w/women@STEM)	€ 800		
May-20	Overheads Workshop w/Aiden McElwaine & Stephen Manuel (postponed from October 2019)	€ 175		
Jun-20	Year-End Networking	€ 275		
Jun-20	WHEF Priorities for International Research Conference - Colleen Thomas delegate (£190)	€ 211	€ 211.00	€ 0.00
Sep-20	Invite EARMA speaker/Keynote Irish Universities Network	€ 1,000		
	Materials	€ 300		
	URMAN Induction meetings for new UCD research admin	€ 200		
	URMAN pop-up banner and collateral	€ 200		
	Banner		€ 147.60	€ 52.40
	Travel to build external collaborations w/Irish universities	€ 525		
		€ 4,911	€ 794.07	€ 491.93

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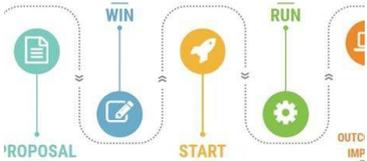
Appendix 3 – The URMAN Induction Signpost



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>https://urman.ucd.ie</p>	<p><u>URMAN Website</u> URMAN holds regular networking and information events throughout the year and provides resources to members. Sign up on the membership tab: 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 informal welcome and induction over coffee.</p>
 <p>http://www.ucd.ie/research/portal</p>	<p><u>UCD Research & Innovation Services Portal</u> 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>http://www.ucd.ie/peopledevelopment/ourservices/newtucd</p>	<p><u>UCD People & Organisation Development: Supporting New Starters in UCD</u> UCD People & Organisation Development, a part of HR, have a landing page for Supporting New Starters. This provides links to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Work@UCD page ● the UCD onboarding page available through InfoHub which provides comprehensive checklists, information and actions pre-arrival, first week and first month ● information on booking the centralised Orientation for New Employees Programme which is run a number of times per year ● information on the Local Induction Process which includes a Local Induction Checklist and Employee Orientation Policy document and a number of other resources.

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Appendix 4 – URMAN Survey 2019

URMAN SURVEY 2019

Purpose of Survey

- Map the research support expertise available in UCD
- Map the expertise of URMAN members - Your Expertise
- Understand how URMAN can support you in your role

URMAN Survey 2019 included 2 new sections to help us to:

- Understand how your career development is supported
- Grow the URMAN network even further

Survey open from 11 November – 13 December 2019
38 Responses



2019 SURVEY: EXPERTISE IN UCD



Work in UCD
15% 1-2 years
28% 3-6 years
54% over 7 years

Where Current Role Sits
23% Schools
18% Central University Office
15% Research / PI Group
10% Funded Centres
8% UCD Institutes
5% Colleges
5% Thematic Areas
2.6% each in Library and other

Job Titles
36 respondents, 29 different titles !

UCD Job Families
82% in R&I Mgmt
5% each in Library and Financial Mgmt
3% Academic Programmes & Ops
5% 'I don't know'

14% 'I don't know' in Career Development Section

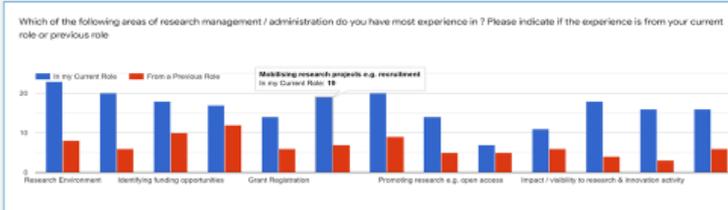
Current Role Duration
15% < 12 months
38% 1-2 years
36% 3-6 years
0% 7-10 years
8% 10-15 years
3% > 15 years

Career Level
51% don't know
13% each in Levels 3&4
8% Level 6
5% each in Levels 2&5
2.5% each in Levels 1&7

Contract Status
44% Permanent
46% Fixed Term
10% CID

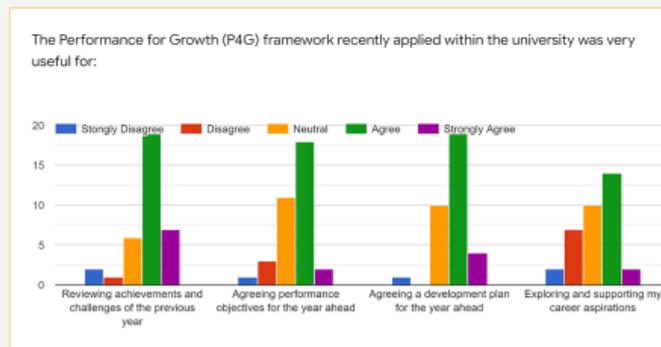
72% with > 90% of role in research support

SURVEY: YOUR EXPERTISE



- Less than 10 respondents**
Commercialising research / technology transfer
- 10-15 respondents**
Grant Registration; Promoting Research e.g. open access; Measuring & benchmarking research performance
- Funding Agencies**
National, H2020, Interreg, UCD Internal Schemes, and others more niche
- Willing to Share**
Moving from research to research administration; Open Access; Project Management; Managing Research Partners and Stakeholders; Patient Involvement

SURVEY: YOUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT



- P4G**
Less positive response re 'exploring & supporting my career aspirations'
- Job Families**
60% Disagree / Strongly Disagree that Job Family helps identify career development pathway
14% 'I don't know my Job Family'
17% Disagree / Strongly Disagree their Job Family assignment is accurate

SURVEY: TRAINING

Most Relevant Training Courses

HR: *Building Relationships; Communicating Effectively; Creative Thinking and Innovation Solutions; Planning & Prioritisation Skills; Stakeholder Management; 'Organisation & Time Management*

IT: *Security Awareness Training; Excel Expert; Microsoft Project*

Library: *Writing a Data Management Plan; Google Tools for Administrators; Creating Quick and Easy Graphics; Advanced Twitter*

Other: *All scored high AGILE, EDI, Finance E-procurement*

Good Awareness of training courses ~80%

Mentoring: good interest
Mobility Programmes: good interest
Induction: mixed responses

My Development Workspace
 > 68% unaware / not using

Other Courses Needed
 Graphical design for effective presentations Research Finance specific courses
 Finance and HR and how they work together
 Course for those at a senior level
 GDPR assistance
 Networking with Key Stakeholders;
 H2020 / ERC On-line participant portal

Funding for Training
 18 Responses, 14 Comments
 4 Funding not an issue
 EARMA Conference, Eligibility for Aurora, Flexible Working, Professional Association Fees

Days Training Attended
 31% no training days
 41% 1-3 days
 26% 4-7 days.



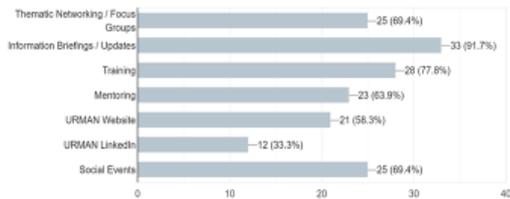
SURVEY: URMAN'S ROLE

Top 4 Challenges You Face
 62% Career Progression
 53% Recognition in UCD
 38% Operational Support
 21% Access to Information / communications

Want from URMAN
 Training & Professional Development Opportunities
 A forum to Share Knowledge & Best Practice
 Influence Policies & Procedures
 Accredited Training
 Networking Events

Suggestions for future Events
 Reports to National Funders
 Managing Finances and Project Schedules
 Planning, Capturing and Communicating Impact
 Project Governance

How do you think the URMAN network should interact ?
 36 responses



80% use URMAN Website at some stage in the year

63% LinkedIn

26% did not attend URMAN Events



SURVEY: URMAN MEMBERSHIP

How did you hear about URMAN ?
34 responses



74% of URMAN Members have referred / advised a colleague in UCD to join URMAN



Thank You



Appendix 5 – AIREN Proposal submitted to InterTrade Ireland Synergy Programme

AIREN Proposal and Letters of Support from UCD, UU and QUB, attached as separate documents.