

# AIREN CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



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## CONFERENCE THEME

### LOOKING AHEAD

The Future of Research Management and Administration on the Island of Ireland in an Era of Change and Disruption

Thursday 3rd April 2025  
The Convention Center Dublin

# AIREN CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

10:00 - 10:30 **Registration and Welcome Tea/Coffee**

10:30 - 10:40 **Welcome Address and Opening Remarks**

## **Welcome and Opening Address** **Dr John Bartlett**

Head of Research, ATU Sligo and Chair of AIREN Governance Committee

10:40 - 11:40 **Building Our Networks**

A focused panel session bringing together representatives from **AIREN**, **NIRPN** and **IRMPA** to share their strategic objectives and collaboration opportunities. This session will emphasise the importance of network integration and partnership development in advancing research management excellence.

### **Sinéad McGinley**

Research Partner, UCD Research & Innovation, UCD and Chair of AIREN

**Chris Browne** Head of Research Strategy and Engagement, Research & Enterprise Directorate, Queen's University Belfast and NIRPN Chair

**Jane Kavanagh** - Head of Research Operations, Teagasc and Chair of IRMPA Steering Committee

11:10 - 12:10 **Innovation and Technology Session**

### **KEYNOTE**

***Approachable AI for Research Managers and Administrators: Building confidence through understanding***

***Rupert Lorraine*** Director of the Arts Institute, The Bridge (Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business), University of Plymouth

**PANEL  
DISCUSSION**

**Practical Implementation Strategies for  
Research Management Technologies:**

This session will address contemporary technological solutions and their practical application in research management, focusing on efficiency and operational excellence.

**Rupert Lorraine** - Director of the Arts Institute, The Bridge (Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business), University of Plymouth

**Mark Kelly** - Founder of AI Ireland

**Liam Cleere** - Senior Manager, UCD Research & Innovation, UCD

**12:10 - 13:00 Lunch Break and Networking**

**13:00 -  
14:00 Professional Excellence in Research  
Governance Session**

**KEYNOTE** *Evolution of the National Landscape in relation to Research Integrity- Insights from the National Research Integrity Forum 2015-2024*

**Prof. Anita Maguire** - Inaugural Chair of NRIF, Head of School of Chemistry, Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Director of ABCRF, UCC

**PANEL  
DISCUSSION**

**Advancing Professional Standards in Research Ethics and Governance**

This session will explore how research managers can establish and maintain exemplary research governance systems, focusing on ethics, open research, integrity, security, IP and compliance frameworks while fostering a culture of research excellence.

**Prof. Anita Maguire** - Inaugural Chair of NRIF, Head of School of Chemistry, Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Director of ABCRF, UCC

**Dr Brendan Jennings** - Vice President, Research & Innovation, TU Dublin

**Dr Niall Smith** - Head of Research, Munster TU

**14:00 -  
14:30 Navigating the Future - Framework 10  
Preparation Session**

A comprehensive overview of the upcoming Framework 10 Programme, addressing key aspects of preparation and engagement. The session will explore the evolution from Horizon Europe, examine the concept of effective lobbying in the research context, and outline the crucial role of Research Support Offices in positioning institutions for success.

**Dr Sean McCarthy**, Hyperion Ltd.

15:00 –  
16:00

## Cross-Border Collaboration Session

### KEYNOTE

***Signposts on the Road to Sustainable Cross-Border Cooperation: An exploration of key elements that make cross-border cooperation work effectively, successfully and sustainably.***

***Peter Osborne*** - Chair of the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

### PANEL DISCUSSION

#### **Developing and Sustaining Cross-Border Research Partnerships**

This final session will address the strategic development of sustainable research partnerships and infrastructure, emphasising the crucial role of Research Managers and Administrators in fostering cross-border collaborations.

***Dr John Bartlett*** - Head of Research, ATU Sligo and Chair of AIREN Governance Committee

***Francine Moran*** - Principal Lecturer in Sustainability and Social Responsibility, North West Regional College

***Grainne Lennon*** - International Funding and Collaborations Broker, InterTradeIreland

***Peter Osborne*** - Chair of the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

16:00 -  
16:15

## Closing Remarks - Charting the Path Forward

A strategic overview synthesising key insights from the day and concrete actions for advancing cross-border research management collaboration and excellence.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Welcome Address



**Dr. John Bartlett**  
**Head of Research at Atlantic Technological University Sligo**

John is Head of Research at Atlantic Technological University Sligo (previously Institute of Technology Sligo), responsible for developing a research culture based on scholarship, multi-disciplinarity and collaboration, including the development of policy, strategy, administrative systems, quality assurance, budgets, capital infrastructure and project initiatives with internal and external stakeholders/agencies. Dr. Bartlett was founding Director of the Centre for Sustainability and founder of the Contract Research Unit at IT, Sligo. He has been Principal Investigator on a number of large-scale research programmes funded by HEA (PRTL), EPA, EU (INTERREG), and other agencies. He has worked with a number of agencies to contribute to regional and national policy development in Ireland in the areas of sustainability, public services and health innovation.

## Session : Building Our Networks



**Sinead McGinley**  
**Research Partner in UCD Research & Innovation & AIREN Chair**

Sinéad has been the Chair of AIREN, a network dedicated to supporting research managers and administrators across the island of Ireland, since September 2023. Sinéad is a Research Partner in UCD Research & Innovation, providing strategic support to academics across the university to deliver research impact at scale in areas of national and global need. She helps foster collaborations across disciplines, developing and driving major strategic research initiatives to deliver cross-cutting opportunities for UCD's research community in the area of sustainability. Sinéad has 25 years' experience in research project management. Prior to joining UCD in 2016, she worked in the voluntary and public sectors.



**Chris Browne**  
**Head of Research Strategy & Engagement, Queen's University Belfast & NIRPN Chair**

Chris is the Head of Research Strategy & Engagement at Queen's University Belfast. As part of his remit, he acts as institutional REF Manager. Chris has extensive experience in research strategy and policy, and heads up a team with responsibility for research culture, research quality and assessment, impact and engagement, research information and systems, internal/external research policy, and postdoctoral researcher support. He also leads the Northern Ireland Research Professionals Network and is closely engaged with AIREN and ARMA.



**Jane Kavanagh**  
**Head of Research Development and Walsh Scholarships, Teagasc & IRMPA Steering Committee Chair**

Jane is an experienced research management professional with over 20 years of leadership in research operations, governance and strategic development. As Head of Research Development and Walsh Scholarships at Teagasc, she oversees a €7 million budget, leading initiatives to enhance research governance, operational efficiency, and talent development. She also manages the Walsh Scholars Programme, supporting over 240 PhD and MSc students, ensuring high-quality research training and career development opportunities. Jane currently chairs the Irish Research Managers and Professionals Association (IRMPA), working to establish it as a formal association to strengthen the research management profession in Ireland. Passionate about fostering collaboration and innovation, she is particularly interested in exploring AI's role in enhancing research productivity and efficiency.

## Keynote Speakers



**Rupert Lorraine**  
**Director, The Bridge, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business, University of Plymouth**

Rupert leads strategic development at the University of Plymouth's Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business. An enthusiastic AI advocate, he has published articles and delivered keynotes on responsible AI implementation to organizations including ARMA UK and various Chambers of Commerce. With expertise in strategic partnerships and securing multi-million-pound funding for creative economy projects, Rupert brings valuable insights on integrating emerging technologies into research management practices. As a Chartered Manager and Collaboration Champion for the National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange, he combines practical business innovation experience with academic leadership to address contemporary challenges in research management and administration.



**Prof. Anita Maguire**  
**Head of School of Chemistry, University College Cork & Inaugural Chair of NRIF**

Prof. Maguire brings exceptional expertise in research governance and integrity as the inaugural Chair of the National Forum on Research Integrity in Ireland (2015-2024). Currently serving as Head of the School of Chemistry at UCC following two terms as Vice President for Research & Innovation (2011-21), she leads a distinguished research team in synthetic organic chemistry within SSPC, The Research Ireland Research Centre for Pharmaceuticals. Her leadership has guided 60 PhD students, 9 MSc students, and 47 postdocs, many now working in the global pharmaceutical sector. Prof. Maguire's international recognition includes chairing the ERC Advanced Grants Evaluation panel for Synthetic Chemistry & Materials and membership on Imperial College London's International Advisory Board. Elected as a Member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2014, she served as Vice President (2019-22) and chaired its Diversity Committee (2019-2023), demonstrating her commitment to excellence and inclusivity in research governance.



**Peter Osborne**  
**Chair of The Centre for Cross Border Cooperation**

Peter has been involved in good relations and reconciliation most of his life working in the private sector and with many public agencies and Councils in Ireland, North and South. He was Chair of the Community Relations Council and prior to that, for ten years, he was Commissioner then Chair of the Parades Commission. He was also an elected representative for 12 years and on the board of the International Fund for Ireland. Peter founded and chaired Landmark East (now Eastside Property), a property-based social enterprise with assets of approximately £10 million. Peter is chair of the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation and is a member of the Policing Board. He is chair of the Integrated Education Fund and of Remembering Srebrenica in Northern Ireland.

## Panelists

### Innovation and Technology Session: Practical Implementation Strategies for Research Management Technologies



**Mark Kelly**  
**Founder, AI Ireland**

Mark Kelly is a globally recognised leader in artificial intelligence, celebrated for his TEDx talks and best-selling books, *AI Unleashed* and *AI Essentials*. As the founder of AI Ireland, he is on a mission to help 1 million people on the island of Ireland become AI-literate, believing that understanding AI is key to creating a better, more inclusive society. Through his pioneering work in AI staffing and digital transformation, Mark has shaped strategies for AI adoption across North America and Europe. With insights from over 650 AI applications and on-the-record conversations with 750+ AI experts, he provides practical solutions to drive innovation and elevate customer experiences. A master at making AI accessible, Mark's work has been featured in major publications, positioning him as a key innovator in the AI revolution. Guided by his vision, he empowers individuals and organisations to harness AI responsibly, transforming not just businesses but also the communities they serve.



**Liam Cleere**  
**Senior Manager in UCD Research & Innovation**

Liam joined University College Dublin (UCD) in 2005 and works as a Senior Manager in UCD Research & Innovation. He leads the Research Analytics and Impact team. This team helps to develop research impact, promote the research reputation of the university and inform research strategy through the use of advanced analytics and systems. He has over 19 years of experience in research systems, strategic planning and business intelligence. In addition, Liam has over 10 years management consulting and project management experience in Ireland and overseas. Prior to UCD, he worked at Deloitte, Accenture, Rolls-Royce & Bentley motorcars. He graduated with first class honours in both his primary degree in Mechanical Engineering and in his postgraduate Master of Business Administration (MBA).

## Professional Excellence in Research Governance Session: Advancing Professional Standards in Research Ethics and Governance



**Dr. Niall Smith**  
**Head of Research, Munster Technological University**

Dr. Smith oversees MTU's €31 million annual research portfolio spanning science, engineering, arts, and music. With an astrophysics background, he leads MTU's involvement as Ireland's only Associate Technical Institute of CERN-ATLAS. His governance expertise is reflected in his recent service on the Expert Committee for the Government's Creating Our Future initiative, which informed Ireland's national R&I Strategy. As Founder-Director of the award-winning Blackrock Castle Observatory, he has reached over 1.5 million visitors and provides educational support to 10,000+ students annually while coordinating Ireland's National Space Week. Dr. Smith served as the Higher Education representative on the National Steering Group for Ireland's Space Strategy for Enterprise (2019-2023) and is currently Deputy Chair of the National Steering Committee for the Space R&I Strategy. His research spans ultra-high precision photometry and small satellite applications, showcasing his commitment to research excellence and innovation across disciplines.



**Dr. Brendan Jennings**  
**Vice President, Research & Innovation, Technological University Dublin**

Brendan is the Vice President for Research and Innovation at Technological University Dublin where he is responsible the planning, development and implementation of research and innovation initiatives in support of the university's vision, mission and strategic direction. Prior to joining TU Dublin, he was interim Director of CONNECT, the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Research Centre for Future Networks and Communications, head-quartered in Trinity College Dublin and comprising 250+ researchers across 10 HEIs. He spent 15+ years in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), where he was responsible for developing and leading a team of researchers working in communications networks and service management. During this time Brendan was appointed WIT's first Head of Graduate Studies, where he led the introduction of Structured PhD programmes and research student structures/ supports across the institute. He has a strong interest in Open Research and the future of scholarly communication, currently representing Ireland on the EUA Expert Group on Open Science and chairing the IReL Advisory Committee. He also chairs the National Research Integrity Forum Steering Group.

## Cross-Border Collaboration Session: Developing and Sustaining Cross-Border Research Partnerships



**Francine Moran**  
**Principal Lecturer in Sustainability and Social Responsibility, North West Regional College**

Francine brings over 18 years of experience in sustainability education, having taught Waste Management, Biology Environmental Conservation and Management. As the College's former Sustainability Champion, she now leads implementation of sustainability strategies across curriculum and operations. A Carbon Literacy certified trainer, Francine heads the Sustainable Development Working Group for the Network of Networks, connecting vocational training organizations across Europe. Her expertise spans education for sustainability, vocational waste management training, environmental impact assessments, community recycling, green construction and waste reuse projects.





**Grainne Lennon**  
**International Funding and Collaborations Broker,**  
**InterTradeIreland.**

In her role, Grainne manages InterTradeIreland's support for North/South cooperation on Horizon Europe and international collaborative opportunities for North/South research partnerships through secretariat of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership. Grainne is a chartered accountant by background.

## Featured Speaker



**Dr. Sean McCarthy**  
**Founder, Hyperion**

Dr. McCarthy has been involved in all aspects of European Research since 1980. He has been active as a researcher, research manager, research group leader, and company director. Today he specialises in helping organisations design and implement their European Research Strategies. In 2017 the European Commission published a list of the top 100 universities and research organisations participating in Horizon 2020. Dr. McCarthy has delivered training courses in 74 of these top 100 universities and research organisations.

## Moderators



**Dr. Claire O'Connell**  
**Scientist-turned-writer**

Claire is a scientist turned writer, podcast host and MC. She studied science at University College Dublin, graduating in 1998 with a PhD in cell biology. She also holds a Master's in Science Communication from Dublin City University. Since 2005, she has written extensively for The Irish Times and other outlets, including Silicon Republic. Claire has published two non-fiction books with the Royal Irish Academy and she hosts the monthly ADAPT Radio podcast. In 2016, she was named Irish Science Writer of the Year.



**Phillip Smyth**  
**Scientist, Broadcaster, and Science**  
**Communicator**

Phil is a scientist, television personality, and science communicator from Ireland, with a passion for making complex scientific concepts accessible and engaging for all audiences. With a background in physics, engineering and innovation, he has worked extensively in science education and public engagement, bringing research to life through television, live events, and outreach initiatives..



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