



## **Researcher careers: Ireland, Europe and the future.**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Royal Irish Academy  
Academy House  
19 Dawson Street  
Dublin 2**





### What is IRSA?

IRSA is an umbrella organisation bringing together the Research Staff Associations (RSAs) of the country's academic institutions.

### When did IRSA begin?

The IRSA was established on September 15th, 2007 with a launch in the Royal Irish Academy

### What does IRSA do?

IRSA provides a collective voice for professional contract researchers in Ireland and will:

- Engage with government bodies, funding agencies, professional organisations and other relevant parties to advocate for improvements in policies affecting research staff
- Gather information and build consensus among research staff associations in Ireland regarding best-practice policies for research staff.
- Articulate and promote these policies at National and International level.

### Who are the member institutes?

IRSA is composed of RSAs within the Universities of Ireland with Dr. Gordon Dalton (UCC) holding the role of IRSA President and Dr. Tony McElligot (TCD) as Secretary.

IRSA is open to membership from any RSAs or contract researchers in any Irish University, research centre or other institute. Current members include RSAs from:



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN  
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh



OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH  
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK



Queen's University  
Belfast



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire  
University College Cork, Ireland

### Contact

For more information about the IRSA, researcher careers in Ireland or individual RSAs, go to <http://www.irsa.ie> or email us on [info@irsa.ie](mailto:info@irsa.ie)

## Programme:

12.30 - Registration and Break out session sign-up

Tea/Coffee

13.00 - Welcome address - Gordon Dalton (President IRSA)

13.10 - Policy Speakers

- Stefaan Hermans (DG for Research Office)
- Fiona Kernan (European Research Council)
- Patrick Cunningham (Chief Scientific Advisor to Government)
- Iain Cameron (Research Councils UK)

14.10 - Coffee break

14.30 – Research Staff Association Speakers

- Gordon Dalton – Irish Research Staff Association
- Chris Thompson - UK-Research Staff Association
- David Finger – National Postdoctoral Association (USA)

15.00 - Panel Discussion Chaired by Gordon Dalton

- Stephen Simpson (Science Foundation Ireland)
- Conor O’Carroll (Irish Universities Association)
- Brendan Dollard (Enterprise Ireland)
- Kevin McCarthy (Assistant Secretary of Dept of Education and Skills)
- Orla Feely (UCD & IRCSET Council)
- Dolores Cahill (UCD-Research Careers Framework & Advisory Science Council)
- Karen Hynes (Forfas / IBEC)
- Tennie Videler (VITAE)
- Aidan Hodson (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation)
- Nicholas Canny (Royal Irish Academy)
- Pdraig O’Murchu (Intel)

16.00 - Coffee break

16.10 - Break out sessions





1. **Academic Research Career Paths?** Chair – John Walsh (TRSA)
2. **Transferring to Industry** Chair – Sara Morrissey (DuCRA)
3. **Barriers to Researcher mobility** Chair – Fionnuala Hickey (UCD-RSA)
4. **Engaging with stakeholders** Chair – Tennie Videler (VITAE)





17.00 – Close of forum by Minister Ruairi Quinn – Department of Education and skills

17.10 – Summary of outcomes from break out sessions – Gordon Dalton



17.10 – Wine reception


## IRSA committee

	<p><b><i>Dr. Gordon Dalton – President (ARCS-UCC)</i></b>          Gordon Dalton is the current president of the Irish Research Staff Association (IRSA), and the Chair of the UCC branch of the association, ARCS (Association of Contract Research Staff <a href="http://www.ucc.ie/en/arcs/">http://www.ucc.ie/en/arcs/</a>). Gordon is a senior research fellow working in marine renewable energy economics in HMRC, UCC, funded under the Charles Parson Award.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Tony McElligott – Secretary (TRSA -TCD)</i></b>          Tony McElligott is the current secretary of IRSA. He works as a Research Fellow in the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Trinity College Dublin. He is a member for Trinity research staff Association <a href="http://www.tcdlife.ie/trsa/">http://www.tcdlife.ie/trsa/</a></p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Karen Duffy – Treasurer (GRSA-NUIG)</i></b>          Karen Duffy is the current treasurer of IRSA and is also treasurer of the NUI Galway Research Staff Association (GRSA) <a href="http://www.nuigalway.ie/research_staff_association/">http://www.nuigalway.ie/research_staff_association/</a>.          Karen is GMP Facility Manager with the Regenerative Medicine Institute (REMEDI). Karen has been actively working to bring the GMP Facility to EU GMP standards and to obtain licensed-status from the Irish Medicines Board for manufacture of Investigational Medicinal Product.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Fionnuala Hickey – ordinary member (UCD-RSA)</i></b>          Fionnuala Hickey is the current Vice-Chair of the UCD branch of the association, UCD-RSA <a href="http://panzer.ucd.ie/ucdrsa/">http://panzer.ucd.ie/ucdrsa/</a>.          Fionnuala works as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Diabetes Research Centre in the Conway Institute in UCD, and is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB).</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Sara Morrissey– ordinary member (DuCRA-DCU)</i></b>          Sara Morrissey is a post-doctoral researcher in the Centre for Next Generation Localistaion (CNGL), School of Computing, Dublin City University. She is Chairperson of DuCRA, the DCU Contract Researchers’ Association <a href="http://www.ducra.dcu.ie/">http://www.ducra.dcu.ie/</a>.          Her current post-doc research extends machine translation work on minority languages in the medical domain, including sign languages.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Calum Dickinson – ordinary member (UL)</i></b>          Calum Dickinson is the postdoctoral researcher in electron microscopy at the Materials and Surface Science Institute at the University of Limerick. His position is funded by the HEA under PRTL14, and his research interests of nanomaterials results in both national and international collaborations. He is a member of UL’s Women’s Forum Researchers’ Subcommittee.</p>






	<p><b><i>Dr. John Walsh – ordinary member</i></b>  Dr. John Walsh is a contract researcher with the Centre for Contemporary Irish History, Department of History, Trinity College Dublin. John also lectures with the School of Education, Trinity College. John Walsh is Chairperson of the Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA) <a href="http://www.tcdlife.ie/trsa/">http://www.tcdlife.ie/trsa/</a>.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Paul Ferguson – ordinary member and IT</i></b>  Paul Ferguson is a postdoctoral researcher in CLARITY: Centre of Sensor Web Technologies in Dublin City University. His research is focussed broadly in the area of information management and retrieval. Paul is also a member of the executive committee of DuCRA: DCU Contract Researcher's Association <a href="http://www.ducra.dcu.ie/">http://www.ducra.dcu.ie/</a>.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. David Foley – ordinary member</i></b>  David Foley is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Drug Discovery Division in the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology, at Queens University Belfast. He is currently involved in various outreach programmes in Northern Ireland, including RSC ChemNet and Sentinus, and is Chair of the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences Postdoctoral Society <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/mdbs/Research/postdoc/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/mdbs/Research/postdoc/</a> . Additionally he serves as the Northern Ireland representative for the UK Research Staff Association.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Catherine Higgins</i></b>  Catherine Higgins is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Drug Discovery Division of the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology, at Queens University Belfast. She is a committee member of the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences Postdoctoral Society <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/mdbs/Research/postdoc/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/mdbs/Research/postdoc/</a> .</p>





## Speakers

	<p><b><i>Stefaan Hermans</i></b>  Head of Unit, DG for Research, European Commission</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Fiona Kernan</i></b>  Fiona Kernan, with a B.Sc. from University College Dublin and Ph.D. from Trinity College Dublin, joined the European Research Council Executive Agency as a research programme officer in 2009. She currently works on the ERC Advanced Investigator Grant scheme. Previous to this, Fiona Kernan worked for the European Science Foundation and the European Commission's Directorate for Research and Innovation.</p>

	<p><b><i>Prof. Patrick Cunningham</i></b>  Patrick Cunningham is Chief Scientific Adviser to the Irish Government and Professor of Animal Genetics in Trinity College, University of Dublin. He was formerly Deputy Director (Research) in An Foras Talúntais (1980 - 1988), visiting Professor at the Economic Development Institute, World Bank (1988) and Director of the Animal Production and Health Division, Food &amp; Agriculture Organisation of the UN, Rome (1990 - 93). He has published extensively on the genetics of domesticated animals. He is co-founder of the biotechnology company IdentiGEN. He has been President of the European and World Associations of Animal Production, and served on the European Life Sciences Group which advised Commissioner Busquin. In 2008 he led the Irish team behind the successful bid to host the “European City of Science” event in Dublin, in 2012.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Iain Cameron</i></b>  Iain Cameron is head of the Research Councils UK (RCUK) Research Careers and Diversity Unit. His unit is responsible for co-ordinating the generic aspects of research careers and related diversity issues across the UK Research Councils and has specific responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the Skills Training agenda and for implementation by the UK Research Councils of the recommendations of the “Roberts’ Report – SET for Success”. He works closely with the UK Government Office of Science and Innovation (OSI) and liaises with the UK Higher Education Funding Councils and other funders. Iain represents the UK on the EC Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility and participates in several international networks.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Chris Thompson</i></b>  Chris completed his EPSRC funded PhD at the University of Sheffield in 2007 in Software Engineering, where he remained for a postdoctoral position looking at how teams develop software. At the University of Hull in 2009 he undertook research in eLearning solutions for doctoral and postdoctoral training. He joined the committee of UKRSA in 2010 and co-authored their report “Understanding research staff associations and their impact”. With the birth of his first child he has taken a career break and is currently teaching part time for both the Open University and University of Hull.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. David Finger</i></b>  L. David Finger, Ph.D. is currently a Marie Curie International Incoming Fellow (MC-IIF) at the University of Sheffield and a member of the Board of Director (BoD) of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). Before becoming an MC-IIF, David was a postdoctoral fellow at the City of Hope (COH) Beckman Research Institute near Los Angeles. David earned his B.A. in biochemistry from Ithaca College. After a three month internship in the Department of Vaccine Serology at Merck, Inc. in West Point, PA, David moved to Los Angeles to earn his doctorate in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Before becoming a member of the BoD of the NPA, David previously served as Chair (2009) and Vice Chair (2010) of the Outreach Committee in addition to volunteering (2007-2009) for several other sub-committees of the Meetings Committee.</p>

## Panelists

	<p><b><i>Dr. Conor O'Carroll</i></b>  As head of the Research Office at the Irish Universities Association (IUA.) Dr. O'Carroll is responsible for the coordination of research policy across all seven Irish universities. He is also responsible for the FP7 Marie Curie, Research Potential Programmes and Network of Mobility Centres in Ireland. He represents Ireland on a number of European bodies responsible for the development of research careers (currently on the European Research Area review committee).</p>
	<p><b><i>Prof. Dolores Cahill</i></b>  Prof. Cahill is Professor of Translational Science at UCD. She was appointed by Irish Minister of Trade, Industry and Enterprise as Member of the Advisory Science Council (ASC) 2005-present (<a href="http://www.sciencecouncil.ie">www.sciencecouncil.ie</a>) and is currently the chairperson on the Advisory Science Council Task Force on Researchers Careers. In addition Prof. Cahill is an Independent Observer and Rapporteur for the Evaluation of the European Union Framework 7 (FP7) Health Theme.</p>
	<p><b><i>Dr. Stephen Simpson</i></b>  Dr. Stephen Simpson joined SFI on 31 July 2008 from the internationally-renowned "Science" journal based in Cambridge, UK, where he held the position of Associate Editor from 2000 to 2005 and Senior Editor since 2005. Along with his particular experience in areas of biomedicine, immunology, human genetics, molecular cell biology, cancer and HIV, Dr Simpson came to SFI with a comprehensive publication record and wide international representation, along with experience of research leadership and collaboration with academia and industry. He currently holds the position of Director of lifesciences within SFI.</p>
	<p><b><i>Brendan Dollard</i></b>  Enterprise Ireland</p>
	<p><b><i>Prof. Nicholas Canny</i></b>  Professor Nicholas Canny, is Director of the Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities at National University of Ireland, Galway, and President of the Royal Academy from 2008-11. His 1976 study <i>The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: a Pattern Established, 1565-76</i> brought him to international attention. It was awarded the Irish Historical Research prize, as was his more recent work on <i>Irish History: Making Ireland British, 1580-1650</i> (Oxford, 2001). He served in Spring 2005 as professeur invité at the École des Hautes Études, Paris and in 2005-6 Parnell Senior Research Fellow at Magdalene College Cambridge. He was in 1995, elected member of the Academia Europaea, in 2005 as a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, and in 2007 as a Member of the American Philosophical Society.</p>
	<p><b><i>Kevin McCarthy</i></b>  Kevin McCarthy was appointed as an Assistant Secretary in the then Department of Education and Science in June 2008. He has overall responsibility for higher education policy within the Department. He has previously held positions of Director, Ministerial Policy Adviser and Principal Officer within the Department and has had various responsibilities across the areas of Finance, Corporate Services, Central Policy and Higher Education. Prior to joining the Department in 2002, Kevin worked in the Department of Health and Children and in the health sector.</p>

	<p><b>Prof. Orla Feely</b> Orla Feely received the B.E. degree in electronic engineering from University College Dublin in 1986, and the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1990 and 1992, respectively. Since 1992 she has been with the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering at University College Dublin, where she is currently an Associate Professor. Her research interests lie in the area of nonlinear dynamics of electronic circuits. She is a Council Member of the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology.</p>
	<p><b>Karen Hynes</b> “Karen Hynes is manager of Innovation Policy in Forfás. Forfás is Ireland’s policy advisory body for enterprise and science and provides research and secretariat support for Advisory Science Council on Science Technology and Innovation”.</p>
	<p><b>Dr. Tennie Videler</b> Tennie Videler is a programme manager for Vitae, an organisation set up to support postgraduate researchers and research staff. Previously she was a researcher herself, completing a doctorate and several years of post-doctoral research in different fields of structural biology. Tennie joined Vitae in the 2008 and is the person dedicated to making contact with researchers. She writes and commissions resources for researchers and speaks at events. Tennie runs bespoke researcher career related workshops. This year she has been involved in setting up the UK research staff association, UKRSA.</p>
	<p><b>Aidan Hodson</b> Aidan Hodson heads a unit within the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation with responsibility for EU and International science and technology policy as well as for funding and policy oversight of Science Foundation Ireland and, following its transfer to the Department in 2010, the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions. Aidan previously served in the relevant Departments dealing with fisheries, telecommunications and a number of energy-related areas.</p>

